

**Regular Minutes of the Houston Cy-Fair Lions Club  
Tuesday May 9, 2017 at 7PM at the Lions Den**

**Members: 13**

**Guests: 5**

President Paul opened the meeting promptly by his watch. Lion Robert Berry led the pledges to the flags. Lion Merrell gave prayer. Lion Chuck reported that he spoke with Lion Don today, and he has a very bad cold. He will try to come to the Installation Banquet on June 13. There was no song. Guests were introduced: our speaker Rafa Bejar, his brother-in-law Adam, Gary Ginn and his wife Christy, guests of Lion Chuck, (Gary is a Park Ranger at Bane Park), and Sixto from Venezuela, guest of Lion Stedman.

Rafa Bejar spoke to us on Texas Public Policy Foundation. He works for school choice, promoting independence and democracy. His parents are from Cuba, his father was a physician, and he was born in the US. He has worked all over the world, including spending time in Siberia. He explained that school choice allows parents to use state funds for their child to attend alternative schools. Texas has 5.3 million children in schools, which is 10% of our nation's children. Texas has over 1000 Independent School Districts, which employ 673,000 people, half of which are teachers. Texas schools would be the 7<sup>th</sup> largest employer in the entire world. The US ranks 17<sup>th</sup> in Reading, 18<sup>th</sup> in Math, and 26<sup>th</sup> in Science. 25% of Texas students fail to graduate. "Throwing money at a problem doesn't solve the problem." The Cy-Fair Independent School District contains 84 schools, with 49% considered economically disadvantaged. CFISD employs 14,000 staff, with about half of those being teachers. Texas now has the A-F school rating system, to bring accountability to schools. CFISD taxpayers are \$3.509 billion in debt due to bonds, etc. They CFISD Superintendent makes \$390,000 per year. Overall, Cy-Fair schools are better than average, with only 1 failing school in the district, but he does not know the name of that school, but will send that information to Lion Keith. Even the best school may not be the perfect school for every student, as different children learn differently, and have different interests. The ratios between 1992-2015 have shown student enrollment up 48%, number of teachers up by 56%, and all other staff (administrators, and other ancillary workers) up by 66%. Looking at Houston Independent School District, which has 281 schools with 106 of those are low performing or failing schools. HISD has a debt of \$4.2 billion. Rafa reminded us of a definition of insanity: doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results. Parents with financial means have options to send their child to a private school or to home school them. The demand for Charter Schools is increasing. Charter schools have fewer regulations than public schools, but do not receive public funding. Allowing school choice increases a child performance, and thus improves public schools in that area. He reported that President Trump, both Texas Senators, Governor Abbott, Lt. Gov. Patrick and 84% of Republican voters support school choice. An Education Savings Account is an account managed by parents using state funds for schooling for that child. ESA's are not vouchers, but give increased choice to the parents and can use monies for private school, tutoring, textbooks, on line classes, etc. ESA's don't take monies from the public schools, but allow funds allotted to a child to follow that child. Senate Bill 3, a Texas school choice bill, has passed the Texas Senate, and goes on to the House, would give the most robust school choices to parents. It is not about public schools vs. school choices, but what is right for each child. Students who are struggling in their assigned schools affect the learning of other students, and having different options can help everyone to learn better.

Lion Chuck, seconded by Lion Keith, motioned to dispense with the Secretary's and Treasurer's reports tonight. Motion passed.

Lion Bob reported that they were making progress on cleaning and fixing up the facility. Cleaning has started, but some things will need to wait until there is no baseball to be thoroughly cleaned. He requested help for general cleaning of things like coolers, detailing appliances, wiping walls, etc. Lion Chuck said he would come and clean the pop corn machine tomorrow, and clean up another plastic recycling container for plastics. Lion Bob reported that the thresholds under the concession stand door is a major problem, as the door is wider than normal, and needs to keep vermin out.

There will be baseball this weekend, 30-50 games, as this is the last week of regulation league baseball. President Paul said he still needs workers for the mid and closing shifts on Saturday.

Lion Chuck discussed an email he received from one of our Texas Lions Camp parents requesting funding for their three children to attend Camp Sign, for hearing impaired children, in Conroe later this summer. It costs \$200 per child to attend. Lion Sandy explained that we have sponsored their 3 children to Texas Lions Camp for several years. The parents attended one Camper program, and they are also deaf. The children attend the Texas School for the Deaf in Austin, and the parents have moved to that area to be closer to the children. Lion Becca suggested we have the parents contact Lions Clubs near them for assistance, as we try to assist those in our community.

President Paul reported an Eagle Scout Candidate who would like to collect used eyeglasses, and was looking for a sponsor and some place to recycle his collection. It was discussed that this was not a high achieving Eagle Scout Project. Lion Becca explained that the Eagle Scout Advisor will set the limit of the number of eyeglasses he needs to collect. The sponsoring organization can also set limits, like asking for the boxes he used in his collection. President Paul will contact him about sponsoring his project.

Lion Becca will present two scholarships to Montgomery High School students next Monday evening.

At the PSC meeting, a flyer for openings for Club projects at the Texas Lions Camp was passed out. We need the entire Club to work, not just one or two people. Lion Chuck recommended that we go on a Friday evening to see the Awards Ceremony. The Secretary is to email this list to all members.

Lion Becca discussed Scout Day Camp, where she proposed that the Webelo Scouts make a chair that comes apart and slides together to help the boys earn their Building Badge. She needs \$700 to fund this project for the Soaring Eagle District Day Camp to purchase hardwoods. Motion was made to fund the project by Lion Chuck, seconded by Lion Keith. It was asked what would become of the chairs, and Lion Becca reported that the kids would keep the chairs they made. She has someone who would laser Houston Cy-Fair Lions Club on the side of each chair. Lion Merrell asked if these kids could work at the concession stand to help earn monies for this project. Lion Becca explained these are younger children. Lion Bob asked why the parents weren't helping to pay for these chairs, that he figured would cost us \$18 per chair. Lion Sandy suggested we pay for half of the costs, and let the parents pay for the rest. Lion Becca explained that she will have to cut other projects to cover this one. Motion was offered for vote, and it failed to pass.

Lion Keith, seconded by Lion Bob, motioned that we purchase the smaller chili and cheese dispenser as discussed, without spouts, that is easier to clean, and has thermostatic heat controls. Motion passed.

Lion Stedman thanked everyone for helping to elect him as District Humanitarian Relief Fund Director.

Lion Chuck motioned, seconded by Lion Bob, that we allow the Houston Library at the other side of the parking lot to conduct a Blood Drive in our meeting facility on Friday May 26 from 10AM to 4PM. They promised they would clean up and provide supplies for the restrooms. Motion passed. Lion Merrell requested we do Vision Screening at the blood drive. We have been asked to sell concessions for the event. Lion Merrell suggested we give away small bags of popcorn, as we have a plethora of those small popcorn bags.

Lion Keith thanked Lions Merrell and Julie for posting our meeting room rental availability on their neighborhood websites.

Lion Chuck reported that the State Lions Club Museum is requesting Lions memorabilia and we could donate some of the items in our closet.

With no further business, meeting adjourned at 9:07PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandy Martin, Secretary