

# CLUB NEWS

## Be A Gift To The World

### Today's Program

Welcome & Call to Order

Pledge of Allegiance & Invocation

Introduction of Visiting Rotarians & Guests

Happy/Sad Dollars

Card Raffle: \$42

Announcements

Member/Rotary Minute

Speaker/Program: Club Assembly for Rockin the Ville

Four Way Test

### Upcoming Programs

5/9/2016 - Rockin The Ville Celebration

### Rotary Calendar

May 7 - Rockin the Ville!



### Rotary News

More than a million refugees from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan streamed into the European Union last year. Most entered via Greece after a harrowing raft trip across the Aegean Sea from Turkey. Once there, they made their way north, often on foot, traveling more than 1,000 miles through the rugged mountains of the Balkan countries toward Germany.

That was the uncertain odyssey facing Muhammad Mallah Hamza, a 26-year-old ethnic Kurd, in late 2014 when he decided to leave his native Syria. The trip would lead the recent college graduate to a picturesque Austrian village - and into the arms of a local Rotary club that would allow him to begin a new life while helping others in his situation.

Mallah Hamza is, as they say in Austria, sympathisch - that is, immediately likable, with a calm demeanor and an easy smile that disappears only when he speaks about the situation he left in Syria. As a recent graduate of Damascus University with a degree in English literature, he explains, he was about to lose his exemption from serving in the army of Syrian dictator Bashar Assad and being forced to fight the array of rebel groups, including Islamic State (ISIS), that are opposed to Assad's rule. "I did not want to die fighting ISIS," he says.

Mallah Hamza's perilous two-month journey from Syria to Styria was routine for refugees making their way from the Middle East to the relative safety of Europe. He first crossed the Syrian border into Turkey, where human traffickers arranged passage on a 9-foot-long rubber raft bound for Greece. The tiny vessel held seven others and was barely fit for the crossing. "It rained so hard that night," Mallah Hamza says, describing the passage. "It was horrible."



## Leadership/Committees

President: Alex Arntz

President-Elect: Randy Myers

Secretary: Skip Williams

Treasurer: Helene Mixon

Sergeant-At-Arms: Dave Bordiuk

Imm. Past Pres: Wayne Putman

Board Members:

Brian Anderson; Greg Hyland  
Skip Williams

Club Admin: Yeadon Smith (Chair)

Helene Mixon; Jimmy Lewis

Membership: Thomas Taylor  
(chair)

Karla Fields; Skip Williams

Brian Anderson; Greg Hyland;  
Blair Campbell

Service Projects: Avery Greenlee

Thomas Taylor; Dave Bordiuk

John Gieseke; Caroline Miler;

Ross Settle

Wayne Putman

Foundation Chair: Randy Myers

Jamie Moore; Wayne Putman

Helene Mixon; Mike Kreft

PR Chair: Terry Moore - (Chair)

Brian Anderson; Terri Lee Moore

Social Chair: Terri Lee Moore

Jamie Moore; Mike Kreft;

Skip Williams; Caroline Miler

Ten Star Rotarian: Skip Williams;

Avery Greenlee

Once in Greece, Mallah Hamza surrendered to police and was placed in temporary detention to begin the process of requesting asylum. Here, he says, he learned that many – perhaps even most – people in Europe do not want the refugees. “The police treated us like animals,” he says. “For three days, they did not give us food or water. They wore masks and touched us with gloves as if we carried disease.”

From Greece, Mallah Hamza set out on a tortuous, nerve-wracking journey north. It began with a two-week trek through the woods to the Albanian frontier, where he and a fellow refugee befriended a border guard who hid them in an apartment in the capital, Tirana. From Albania, more furtive border crossings by night and plenty of bribes paid to police and hotel receptionists took them through Montenegro, Serbia, Hungary, and finally Austria, where they wound up at the Traiskirchen refugee camp, 20 miles south of Vienna. In Traiskirchen, Mallah Hamza lodged a formal application for Austrian asylum and was reassigned to a shelter in the village of Edelsbach, not far from Feldbach.

The final stop of Mallah Hamza’s journey proved particularly fateful, both for him and for the Rotary Club of Feldbach. On his first morning at the shelter, he wandered into Edelsbach to get some bread and found himself face to face with 69-year-old baker Fritz Hummel. The rapport between the two men was immediate, and they struck up a close friendship. “Fritz Hummel treated me like a son,” Mallah Hamza says. Hummel is just as affectionate: “He’s a great kid,” he says.

## Member Birthdays/Anniversaries/Membership Years

Brandon Lutes Birthday 5/15

Alex Arntz - 4 years - 5/23

Avery Greenlee - 5 yrs - 5/13

Terri Lee London - 5 years - 5/13

Helene Mixon - 5 years - 5/13

Rachel Sheridan - 5 years - 5/13

Dave Bordiuk - 5 years - 5/13

Mike Kreft - 5 years - 5/13

Sheryl McAlister - 5 years - 5/13

Terry Moore - 5 years - 5/13

Skip Williams - 5 years - 5/13

## Area Clubs

Summerville Oakbrook: Mon 7:30 am

N Charleston: Mon 12:30pm

East Cooper: Tues 7:30am

Charleston: Tues 12:30pm

Goose Creek: Tues 12:45pm

St. John's: Weds 7:30am

Daniel Island: Weds 7:30am

Mt. Pleasant: Weds 12:30pm

Summerville Lunch: Weds 1:30pm

Moncks Corner: Thurs 12:30pm

St. Andrews: Thurs 12:30p

N Charleston: Thurs 7:30am

Charleston: Fri 7:30am

