



The Navigator

The Exchange Club of Greater Newburyport

P.O. Box 31, Newburyport, MA 01950

Meetings 1st and 3rd Tuesdays at 6 p.m.

April 14, 2021

www.exchangeclubofgreaternewburyport.org

President-Jane Collins, Secretary-Stuart Deane, Treasurer-Barbara Griffith, President Elect-Steve DiCamillo
Newsletter Editor-Stuart Deane

District President, Regional VP join Zoom meeting

By Stuart Deane

With the last-minute cancellation of our guest speaker, District President Sharon Birchall and Region 12 VP Joe Dudek helped fill the breach with a general discussion of club projects, child abuse prevention and the need for growth in membership. (See next page for photo.)

“Thanks for all you do for your community,” said Joe. “You’re a strong club with a lot of activities and a lot of awards. You’re still moving forward, still maintaining visibility, still doing the work.”

That work includes the recent preparation of Easter baskets to accompany “Operation Warming Hearts” Easter dinners distributed to local homes and the donation of baby diapers and wipes to Community Services (right). Thanks go to Barbara Griffith and Mike Viccaro for organizing each.

Plans for September’s “Field of Honor” look like a go, while Yankee Homecoming and “Kids’ Day in the Park” are still up in the air.

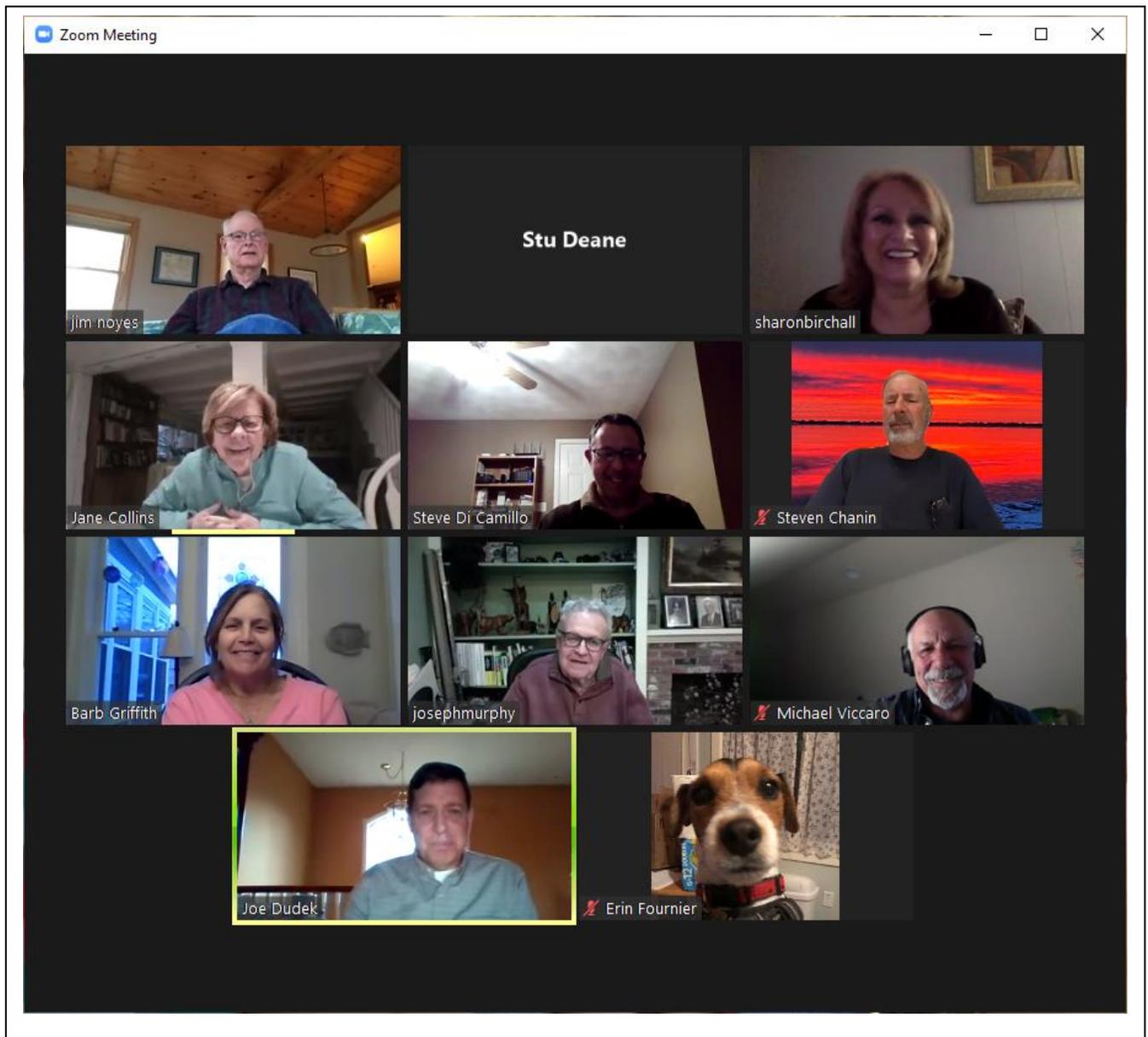
Both Joe and Sharon pledged their help for boosting membership and encouraged local members to “bring new energy” to the district level by serving as officers.

“National does a great job of training,” said Sharon. “I encourage you to continue on.”

Schedule

- April 20: Regular Meeting (outside at the Griffith house?)
- April 24: On-site 10:30 a.m. meeting at community raised-bed gardens on Rte. 113 in West Newbury
- April 27: Board of Directors





Welcome Sign

Discussions are continuing around the city on erecting a welcome sign with the logos of city service clubs and organizations at the I-95/Rte. 113 exit at the head of the Gloria Braunhardt biking/hiking trail.



Letters

Breaking the cycle of abuse

To the editor:

April is "Prevention of Child Abuse Month" for the National Exchange Club, a month in which we would normally hang blue ribbons around Market Square.

Children are society's most vulnerable members. What happens to them in their early years can impact the rest of their lives, resulting in lost personal potential and a greater cost for society.

The measure and the consequence of child abuse is "the failure to thrive," whether physically, emotionally or cognitively.

Child abuse can involve physical harm, sexual abuse, emotional trauma or simple neglect, all of which may mean that a child could ultimately be less than he or she could be. That also means, of course, that society as a whole is less than it could be.

Abused children often do less well in school, face more dire medical issues, suffer emotional issues, come in more frequent contact with the law, and often require a lifetime of economic support.

So what to do?

The most desirable solution is to prevent it to begin with. Stable families in decent housing with a sustainable income are under less pressure and therefore less likely to transfer stress onto a child.

If, however, such an environment does not exist, early intervention may be necessary to break the cycle of abuse. The Michael B. Christensen Community and Family Support Center in Lawrence is the New England District Exchange Clubs' model for changing parenting behaviors in the Greater Merrimack Valley.

Reads the website: "The Michael B. Christensen Com-

munity and Family Support Center teaches parents skills and information to raise a stable family. The center seeks to reduce child abuse and neglect by helping families to develop the necessary social supports and coping skills that may be lacking."

Goals are: Increasing parental and child resiliency, helping develop a network and concrete support system available when needed, developing effective parenting skills, helping parents understand child development, developing social and emotional competency in all family members, and increasing effective decision-making skills. Services include: Strength-based family education, financial literacy, parent education classes, a parent aide program, a supervised visitation center, home visits, and referral to other programs and resources.

Said one parent, "I've learned more about myself, my children and the parent I want to be than I would have ever imagined." Failure to prevent in the first place or to remediate along the way means that the problem continues to ripple on over time and potentially throughout society, often at great cost to the taxpayer in social services and even incarceration.

As the old saying goes: "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." But the deeper gain is in the development and the dignity of each individual child.

Reporting abuse to the Department of Children and Families (DCF), by the way, may be done anonymously.

JANE COLLINS

President

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Newburyport**