



The Navigator

The Exchange Club of Greater Newburyport

P.O. Box 31, Newburyport, MA 01950

Meetings 1st and 3rd Tuesdays at 6 p.m. at Starboard Galley
May 28, 2019

www.exchangeclubofgreaternewburyport.org

President-Jim Noyes, Secretary-Stuart Deane, Treasurer-Barbara Griffith, President Elect-Erin Fournier
Newsletter Editor-Stuart Deane

A future Prime Minister?

By Stuart Deane

The May 21 meeting featured another new member and the appearance by a guest speaker from the Pacific half-island nation of Timor-Leste.

Joining the club was Regina Correia Branco (top, center), a retired bursar from Northern Essex Community College, sponsored by Patty McGrath.

As we awaited our meals, Marcos Pinto was introduced by Christin Walth, a past speaker, who is hosting Marcos on his stay in Newburyport, sponsored by USAID in the hopes of “promoting new leaders rather than fighting wars later.”

For 450 years, Timor was a colony of Portugal, said Christin, “and not in a benevolent way.” The half island won independence in 1973 but was subsequently overtaken by Indonesia before regaining independence in 2002 as Timor-Leste – the youngest nation in Asia “and perhaps the world.”

With 49% unemployment, the nation faces terrible poverty, though families take in relatives to prevent homelessness. Many children eat three meals a day of rice porridge. Life is particularly difficult in the dry season and in rural areas. Food is the number-one import for the nation of 1.3 million.

Marcos, who is here to study U.S. responses to assorted social issues, described the issue of early marriage and childbirth in his own country and the need for better nutrition to raise healthier babies.

The Timor-Leste political structure includes a president, a prime minister, a parliament and the judiciary, but the system is unstable with frequent scrapping of programs in each new administration.



Marcos himself has three goals: the first to make connections, to develop skills and to pick up knowledge, the second to join a political party and become mayor of his municipality and the long-term third of becoming prime minister.

The rest of the meeting was dedicated to a discussion of developing solutions to solid waste, water quality, education, nutrition and internet issues in a developing country.

Schedule

June 4: Annual Scholarship Meeting

June 18: Installation of Officers at the 5 Collins St. home of Barbara Griffith, presided over by new District President Ken Leone.

June 25: Program Development Meeting