



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

June 12, 2019

www.exchangeclubofgreaternewburyport.org

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

Scholarship winner takes path less well travelled

By Stuart Deane

The annual scholarship meeting on June 4 was a most interesting affair with our recipient going on to study acting after dealing with anxiety and depression throughout her high school years. She was accompanied by her parents, one originally from Germany and the other from Brazil.

Lively conversations ricocheted around the table as backgrounds were explored, Exchange Club programs explained and, in a surprise development, the conversation switched to Portuguese between new member Regina Correia-Branco and our guests from Brazil.

As we awaited the arrival of our meals, your editor outlined the Exchange program of service, including the ACE scholarship for a student who has overcome difficulty, and introduced our selection, Isabella Riethmueller.

“I started school at the Immaculate Conception,” she began. “I looked different, and kids in kindergarten tell you exactly what they’re thinking. I was never picked for anything. I wasn’t like my other classmates. I was no one’s friend. Consequently, I developed anxiety and self-esteem issues. In the larger high school, you have to be a self-advocate. You have to be tough. Depression caused me to drop out. I was self-harming. I was less than one hundred pounds. People looked at me weirdly. Social media was not my friend. I couldn’t go to school. I didn’t have the will, but my mother dragged me out of



bed every morning for home schooling. That didn’t work. Finally, I joined a program at the high school called The Academy, which is for students with emotional issues. Slowly, I got better. The turning point was getting into improvisation and rehearsals and singing to become a promising actress. That saved my life. If not for that, I wouldn’t be here.”

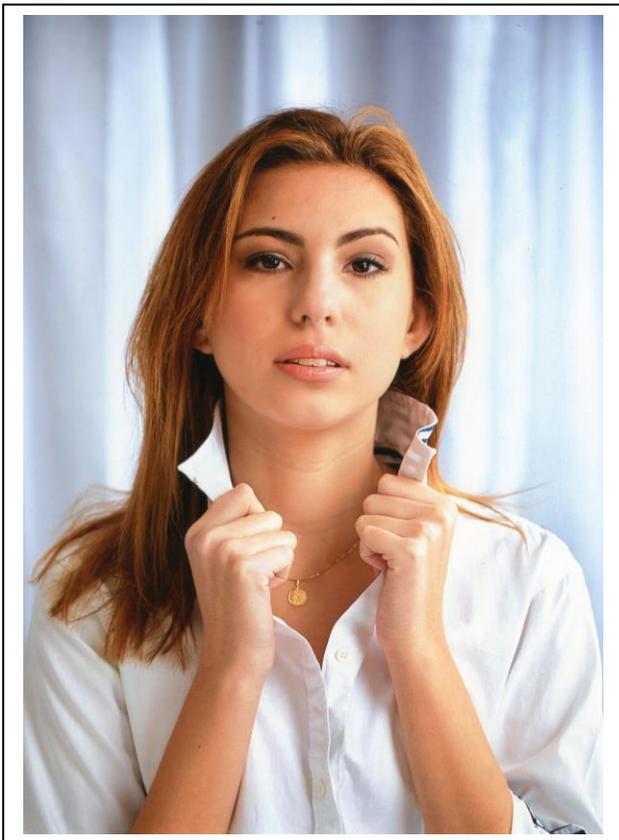
Along the way, she has performed in Newburyport playwright Anna Smulowitz’s play “Terezen” about the Holocaust, with performances in both Prague and Cuba.

“Now, instead of going right to college (I was accepted at Wheaton and chose to defer), I have been accepted at a theater school that was founded by David Mamet. William H. Macey and Glenn Close have attended. I got in with a scholarship. I’m moving to New York on August 1 to work professionally as an actress for the next three years.”

“May I say,” said her mother Bianca, “your club is different in looking for kids who have gone through hard times. I’m very proud of Bella. Her path has not been easy. I applaud you for your approach.”

Added her father Sven, “One teacher saw the potential Bella had. One college saw the potential. Your (Exchange Club) scholarship was the only one she was eligible for. That’s a shame.”

Said yours truly in presenting the scholarship, “Your path has been different than any recipient we’ve honored before, but maybe it’s a case of Robert Frost’s “The road less well travelled” that will make all the difference.



Lt. Derek Hines Race Gallery



Schedule

- June 15: Annual Lt. Derek Hines Flag Day Road Race, 10 a.m. set-up, 5:30 p.m. tear-down
- June 18: Installation of Officers at the 5 Collins Street home of member Barbara Griffith at 6 p.m.
- June 25: President Erin Fournier’s Program Development Meeting
- July 17-20: National Convention in Norfolk, Virginia