

# EARLY BIRD WEEKLY



NewbergRotaryEarlybirds.org

December 22, 2022

Newberg High School Choir was the opening act for our speaker. Let me tell you, it was tough picking a few images from the 120 that I shot. These kids killed it for energy, creativity, and vocal talent.



A great example is this one that could be our new Imagine Rotary poster child!

Another is our Choir Director, Matthew Fletcher. It's not so hard to fathom where the ensemble's energy comes from.



And no image speaks inclusion like a choir brawl where everyone is invited to the fight. No, it wasn't really that. I was just too busy clicking the shutter to remember the song and its message. (link to pix in email)



**Dr. Stephen Phillips**, Superintendent, Newberg Public Schools, was last week's speaker with his classification talk.

Why Rotary? "Because my boss told me I should go. And eight of our school board members are Rotarians." But also because Raquel invited him and he saw Rotary at work at Pancake Breakfast, Summerfest, Beyond Backpacks and the Christmas Auction. He had not known any of this about Rotary before now.

Steve opened by comparing Rotary's 4 Way Test with Socrates' [Triple Filter Test](#). "Well," concluded Socrates, "if what you want to tell me is neither **True** nor **Good** nor even **Useful**, why tell it to me at all?"

Steve was born and raised in Parma, ID, a stone's throw from the Oregon border. He graduated Idaho State in Pocatello, ID where the wrestling team made State five years in a row but football made ten wins in forty years (tongue in cheek).

One of nine kids Steve milked cows and raised crops to feed them. Of course, as a kid, he whined about getting up at 4:00 am to milk cows, do school and school work, and sports. But looks back on it now with fond gratitude.

At the age of 8 he took charge of the calf shed feeding, watering, changing bedding and keeping the calves, well, alive. His grandfather

taught him the #1 cure for scours (diarrhea that can lead to fatal dehydration) in calves is shoving a dirt clod down its throat and leading it to water.

Calves, he's learned, are easier to handle

than most adults.

He says he has been shaving his head since high school because he was losing it anyway.

Steve has had his mind on teaching since his middle school days. Not for idealism sake, he just really wanted to coach.

Growing up, he stayed the night at a friend's. In the morning the friend's dad was in his slippers at 8:00 am. "Doesn't your dad have a job?" Steve asked.

"It's Saturday. What do you mean?" replied the friend to dairy farmer's son, Steve.

Funny how different cultures can be as close as the schoolyard buddy.

Speaking of culture, he learned the difference again when teaching math and rugby in Tonga. In Parma, ID, when a parent gets a call from school about their kid, you see the kid the next day in school. In Tonga, that kid may not be healed enough to make it back to school for a week.

Philosophy: Beware the soft bigotry of low expectations (rationalizing low performance for race, gender, household income or home life). Average is a comfort addiction. Above average is a willingness to trip, fall, rise and repeat until success is realized.

Also, see others not for what they are, but what they could be. A "warm demander" pushes kids out of love and determination. A "cool demander" is simply demanding.



On the home front, they have five kids at home and have been foster parents for years. They "kept" the 30th one.

Q: Can you do the Haka war dance?

A: The Tongans tried but they're not as good as the All Blacks.

Somehow that led to the topic of cannibalism and the ritual of eating defeated tribal chiefs to consume their power. (What side dish goes with defeated chief?)