

Help Others Enjoy The Holidays!

Bill Foussard invited club members and their families and friends to join him in two upcoming events which he organizes to help the elderly and less fortunate enjoy the holiday season. The first is **Thanksgiving Meals on Wheels**. Bill announced that this Thanksgiving Day will be the 47th time that hundreds of volunteers will help provide Thanksgiving dinner to almost 20,000 individuals throughout the Twin Cities. Volunteers have already begun organizing the mammoth undertaking but most will volunteer on Thanksgiving Day through tasks ranging from preparing and packing meals to delivering them. Preparation and packing begins at Cretin-Derham High School at 2:00 a.m. and hundreds of individuals and families arrive about 8:00 to begin deliveries.

For 14 years Bill has also organized **Dinner With Santa** at the White Bear Lake Country Inn. Over 100 senior citizens are invited to the Inn for Christmas dinner, gifts and song as well as one-on-one conversations with Santa. This year's event will begin at 4:30 on December 19th and lasts about two and a half hours.

MARK YOUR ROTARY CALENDAR

**Rotary Holiday Party
December 28th
Manitou Grill
Stay tuned for more details**

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:

"I am a firm believer in the people. If given the truth, they can be depended upon to meet any national crisis. The great point is to bring them the real facts."

- Abraham Lincoln

ROTARY CLOTHING DRIVE FOR YOUTH OF WHITE BEAR LAKE

Bring clothing for the White Bear Lake Education Foundation

"closet" —

Winter Wear...boots of various sizes are in dire need...also coats, hats, scarves, water proof gloves, mittens and snow pants (new or gently used!)

Bring clothing to the Wednesday morning meeting.

.PROGRAM: Steve Carlson introduced **Four Star Air Force General Bruce Carlson (Retired)** to present a program on the Islamic conflict in the Mideast. After participating in the Air Force ROTC program at UMD, General Carlson entered the Air Force upon graduation in 1971. He served as a command pilot with more than 3900 flying hours including fighter aircraft and he commanded the 49th fighter wing, the nation's first stealth fighter wing. General Carlson also served in the offices of the Secretary of the Air Force, Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Later in his career he was responsible for development, testing, acquisition and sustaining all Air Force weapons systems and many other duties. He was the recipient of many distinguished awards and decorations.

In what he describes the grand divide; the Sunni - Shiite conflict, General Carlson focused his remarks on the Mideast from 1946 to the present but explained the basis of the conflict began in the 7th Century following the establishment of Christianity in the region. The Islam (meaning submission to god) religion was founded by the prophet Mohammed. He established the first Islamic state, a theocracy in Medina, a city in current day Saudi Arabia located north of Mecca. He later spread the faith through the Ottoman empire. He died in 632 and had no direct heir or successor. Followers of the religion divided into two branches; the Sunni and the Shiites. The Sunni (90% of Muslims) believe the prophet's advisor, abu Bakr, to be the first rightful successor or caliph of Mohammed and leader of the faith and state. The Sunni believed succeeding caliphs to be leaders of the Muslim world and dominated the region until the Ottoman empire was divided following WWI. The Shiites believe Ali, Mohammed's cousin and brother-in-law to be Mahdi, "the right guided one" and the only true religious leader. After centuries without a visible leader the Shiites believed the ascension of the Ayatollah Khomeini to be the return of the Mahdi.

The two branches have been starkly divided since the 7th century and continue to be so today but share their anger for the west and Israel. The Shiites are concentrated in Iran, Iraq and Lebanon; the Sunni in the remainder of the Mideast. The Shiites blame the west for the suffering of the region through the post WWI division and the later establishment of the state of Israel. General Carlson described the power of wealth through oil, disproportionate division of that wealth as well as corrupt government as factors compounding the regional and international strife. He went into detail of other factions including Al Qaeda, Al Shabab, Hamas and Hezbollah and the radicalization of some Muslims but there is not enough space in this bulletin to report on all of it so I hope you listened. It was a great presentation. Thanks General and Steve.

Writer of the week: Mark Sather

Rotary Club of White Bear—building friendships and improving lives through hands-on projects in the White Bear area and around the globe

