



Edgard Garcia, President 2016-2017

Celebrate Rotary

Number 36 for The Week of May 18, 2017

## Program

The speaker, Harrell Glenn Crowson, was introduced.

Mr. Crowson was born in 1948 and attended college at Imperial Valley College and at San Diego State University. He was a Brawley police officer from 1969-1972 and subsequently held positions as a Parks and Recreation Director, City Manager, and General Manager of various cities and special districts. He is retired and currently resides in Desert Hot Springs, California.

Mr. Crowson initially spoke to us about the butcher boy, Billy Cook, who killed a number of people, took a Riverside County Deputy Sheriff (Homer Waltrip) hostage and left him alive after bragging about killing a family in Oklahoma. He later kidnapped James Burke and Forrest Damron who were forced to drive him around for about a week. They were afraid to jump Billy Cook, because his deformed right eye was always opened and they didn't know when he was asleep.

Billy Cook was tried in Oklahoma and sentenced to 300 years in Alcatraz Federal Prison. However Imperial County petitioned the court for his return to the Imperial Valley to stand trial for the murder of Robert Dewey (a salesman from Seattle). It took the twelve-member jury (including William Tondro, the father of our own Bud Tondro) a total of 50 minutes to find him guilty of murder. At the request of Assistant Prosecuting Attorney, Charles F. Sturdevant (who some of us knew), Judge Mouser sentenced Billy to death. At 10:03 a.m. on December 12, 1953 Billy Cook was executed in the gas chamber at San Quentin Prison, but only after having a last meal that included fried chicken and pumpkin pie. Nothing like dying on a full stomach.

Mr. Crowson then spoke to us about the January 7, 1965 abduction, rape and murder of ten-year-old Brenda Sue Sayers from Brawley, California. As part of the background on the book, he interviewed Oren Fox, the victim's parents, and other investigators, witnesses and relatives.

Robert Pennington (as recounted by our speaker) murdered 10 year old Brenda Sue Sayers of Brawley in a savage manner and left her body in a irrigation stand pipe. As it turns out Oren Fox had to notify the little girl's family at District Attorney Hamilton's request. During the first trial attorney Jim Morrow (Pennington's attorney) and Judge George Kirk argued over the question of the defendant's mental capacity. Pennington was tried a second time and finally changed his plea and accepted life in prison without parol. Pennington later committed suicide by slitting his left arm with a razor blade and died on February 22, 1966.

### ***Whining and Fining***

There was no whining and fining as the members of the El Centro Rotary Club looked pitifully impoverished and the Prez took pity on the group.

### **Pledge, Prayer and Song**

President Edgard began the meeting with the pledge led by Bill Thomas, the blessing/ prayer by Erik Freeman and the patriotic song led by the President and the President Elect Kris Becker.

### **POT**

Clifford Caldwell was somehow able to win the \$27.00 weekly drawing. However, he did not win the large pot which carries over to next week.

### *Announcements*

Kris Becker (our President Elect) left a form letter for each of the members to select the committees on which they want to serve next year.

Kris also pointed out that the Highway Cleanup would be held this Saturday. Be at the In & Out Birger on 4<sup>th</sup> Street and Wake at 7:00 a.m. in the morning to help.

Randy Miles reminded us that the Pioneers Museum was having its Third Annual Wine Tasting Event at 6:30 p.m. at the El Centro Old Post Office Pavilion. The event is called "Art, Music, Wine!" but not particularly in that order. The evening will feature wines from Baja California's Valle de Guadalupe (i.e. Baja California Wines). Call Randy Miles about tickets.

### **Visiting Rotarians and Guests of Rotarians**

Mitch of the Albuquerque Del Sol Rotary Club was introduced.

Erik Freeman introduced Tom DuBose (guest) and Harrell Glenn Crowson (guest) the speaker for today.