



ROTARY CLUB OF BENICIA

Alex Lobban — Cambodia—Through the Eyes of a Benicia Rotarian

Past-President Alex Lobban visited rural Cambodia in January 2018 to visit the site of his International project: *Supporting an after school sports program in Kompheim Village.* With 50 soccer balls and 3 full sets of soccer uniforms in his checked baggage, he discovered a country still in recovery from the atrocities of the 'Khmer Rouge' regime of the 1970s, but whose people light up a room despite their challenging circumstances.



Alex began his journey in San Francisco and flew to Hong Kong, where he met up with his brother, Nick. Nick served as his videographer, photographer and pack mule for the trip. The two brothers then flew on to Siem Reap, Cambodia and lodged at the Sojourn Boutique Villas. Siem Reap is a bustling tourist city. But the next day, the brothers traveled to Kompheim Village, traveling along dirt roads to remote areas, and then turning off onto another remote road, even more isolated.

When Nick and Alex arrived at the school, there were five structures that serve grades 1 - 12. The students attend a government run school in the morning, and then attend this school in the afternoon, primarily to learn English which will ultimately allow the students access to jobs in the tourism industry since they will be able to speak and understand English.

A quarter mile up the road is the “soccer field.” However the soccer field almost resembles a construction site as it contains various pieces of debris, even nails. Ironically, the kids play barefooted. The field is now raked on a regular basis.

One of the buildings that Alex showed us was completely built using recycled plastic bottles for insulation. Plastic is a tourism issue and this method of recycling is beneficial. Alex also showed us a picture of some women making soft stuffed toys to sell to tourists. The money helps support these women and their families by providing them with a career.



Samnang, a 22 year old young man from Cambodia, an orphan who was adopted at 15-years of age, is the current soccer coach at the school. Our club funded his salary of approximately \$1000/year. Alex felt that it was a pleasure to get to train him in coaching methodology.

Alex also took a tuk tuk to see the water buffalo. He visited *Free to Shine*, an organization to empower girls with an education — to get them in school, and to help them stay



in school — all to help prevent sex trafficking. Another side trip was a to visit Ho Chi Min City, formerly Saigon in Vietnam. Alex said it was so crowded, and yet an amazing city. He viewed the tunnels of the Vietcong and found it somewhat claustrophobic.

Alex’s biggest take-away from his journey was the realization of what we have and what the people of these third world countries DO NOT HAVE. Alex, you made your vision as president a reality. Our club was privileged to help support your project and happy that it was a success. Thank you, Alex.



More pictures of Alex’s amazing trip to Siem Reap are posted on our Benicia Rotary website. Go to www.beniciarotary.org, click on the **History** tab, scroll down to **Successes**, and click on **Siem Reap, Cambodia** on the 12th bullet.



Noteworthy

- * **Martha Christopher** said YES to being our club president 2019-2020! Congratulations Martha! We are pleased that you accepted the nomination.
- * Anyone wanting to have their **Paul Harris** award framed, see Steve McClure.
- * **Liberty High School 4th Annual Golf tournament** is Wednesday, April 18th. It is a 9-hole shotgun start at 2:00PM at Blue Rock Springs and includes dinner catered by Nani from *Eviarita's*. More information is included at the end of this bulletin, or you can visit www.beniciarotary.org, click on events and click on Liberty High School 4th Annual Golf Tournament.
- * If you or your business is interested in placing an ad in the **Liberty High School Yearbook**, you can! All business ads are tax deductible and will go to support the LHS Yearbook. More information is included at the end of this bulletin.
- * The annual **BEF Run for Education is April 22**. There are now over 200 runners signed up, but volunteers are still needed. Our club is a Platinum sponsor which means we have a few slots for runners at no cost. If interested, contact Darrel Doi. You can also visit www.beniciarotary.org, click on history, click on successes, and click on Benicia Education Foundation located in the 9th bulleted item. Workers are still needed, too!
- * **André Lewis** is supporting **Girls' State** for 2 girls from BHS and LHS. Valero donated \$200 to help André reach his goal.
- * Jon Dwyer recently saw **Beverly White** at a St. Patrick's Day event in Pleasant Hill. Apparently, her husband, Shel, has been in the hospital recently. She is on our recipient list for our bulletin and appreciates keeping in touch. We hope that Shel's health is improving!



HAPPY DOLLARS

* **Jack Bell celebrated his 81st birthday!** Nothing special for his birthday other than a friend from SF took him to lunch at First Street Cafe here in Benicia! Jack donated \$100 to the Rotary Club of Benicia Foundation and \$100 to Rotary International Foundation. Since Jack is our traditional song leader for birthday songs, he led his own song! **Happy Birthday, Jack!**



* **Jim Trimble** donated \$20 to Andre’s Girls’ State project.

* **Susan Hurl** cleared her throat twice and was fined \$5 for TWO TICKLES.



***Karen McClure**, a guest today, was told that Steve McClure’s allowance was insufficient!

* **Steve McClure** donated \$100 as his son, Zach, committed to **Holy Names** which is in the Oakland Hills — on a golf scholarship. Steve also mentioned that he recently moved to Cordelia. Steve donated \$100 to water wells in Bukani. You, too, can donate to this project either at our club, or by visiting www.beniciarotary.org, click on History, click on Successes, and click on the last bulleted item, Bukani, Uganda. **Remember, this is Steve’s International project as president.**

* **Reg Page** visited the **Aerospace Museum of California** located on the former site of McClellan AFB. He thoroughly enjoyed his visit, urged us to also go sometime. He donated \$20.



Liberty HS

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All business ads are tax deductible and will go to support the great yearbook tradition at Liberty High School.
 For additional information please contact:
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Special Instructions:



Liberty High School's Fourth Annual
Swing to Success Golf Tournament



Wednesday, April 18th
 1:30 p.m.-6:00 p.m.
 Blue Rock Springs Golf Club
 655 Columbus Parkway Vallejo, CA

We are delighted to report that our golf tournaments have been a huge success! The generous support, enthusiasm and encouragement we received from the community was overwhelming. Many of the players pulled us aside at the reception to ask that we be sure to save them a spot for the next tournament and several told us it was one of the best fundraising golf tournaments they'd ever been to!

Due to the generosity of players, donors and volunteers, Liberty High School was able to achieve our goal of starting a golf program in Fall 2015 with the support of Blue Rock Springs Golf Club. We continued this program and had a student participate in the tournament last year and we hope to have 4 participate this year. Many of these students would not have the opportunity to participate in this character-building extracurricular activity without this help. While many young people thrive in Benicia's nurturing community and are involved in various activities and sports, not all students have been so lucky due to financial difficulties or other hardships.

One of our golfers who participated in the tournament last year Tobie Albar had never picked up a golf club until his time with the golf club. Now Tobie who has graduated from Liberty continues playing golf and plans on playing in the tournament every year. The ongoing enthusiasm I see as Club Leader is amazing these kids enjoy being outside and try something that is so foreign to them. We have seen an increasing amount of participating every year and I forget what it was like before we had golf at Liberty; it has become a staple of what we do at Liberty.

We need the community's support to ensure this program can continue! If you participated in the tournament in any way (player, sponsor, volunteer, advisor, ...), it cannot be overstated how much your immense support means to us and we hope you can assist us this year.

We appreciate any support you can offer this year—whether it be donations, sponsorship or participation in our fun 9-hole golf tournament. The tournament fee is \$50 including dinner with prizes and contests.

Thank you in advance!

For more information, please contact Jim Trimble at 707 334-6050 or email JET2626@sbcglobal.net or Chris Winder at 650-477-0936 or email cwinder@beniciaunified.org

Sincerely,

Jim Trimble
 Liberty High School Mentor

Chris Winder
 Liberty High School Teacher

Non-profit EIN: 30-0385724