



## Q&A with Tony Wagner - Rotary president looks for hands-on projects

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Tony Wagner has been a member of the South Portland/Cape Elizabeth Rotary Club for 25 years. Last month, he started a one-year term as president of the organization. Wagner, 57, is a resident of Cape Elizabeth and works as the business manager for Intelligent Controls, an electronics company in Saco. Last week, he sat down with The Current to talk about his experience in the club, his goals for the coming year as president and the person he'd like to invite to a Rotary Club meeting.

**Q:** How long have you served as a member of the South Portland/Cape Elizabeth Rotary Club?

**A:** Twenty-five years, since 1982 when I moved here from the New York area. It was an opportunity to meet people, being new in town, and to do some charitable work.

**Q:** What programs is your Rotary Club involved in?

**A:** We have one for the sixth grade in South Portland, which has to do with getting discount books through Nonesuch Books. We have one through the library in Cape Elizabeth, the Lonely Book Club. We encourage kids to take books out, and we reward them with gift certificates to buy books. Literacy is part of what we're trying to do on a worldwide basis this year. Literacy is big, also health and hunger and water projects. Under that, we work the soup kitchen in town. We're working overseas on a project, sustainable harvest. That's where you give people the tools and help them plant their own food so they're self-sufficient.

**Q:** What are your goals for your term as president?

**A:** The Polio Plus Campaign, I've been a big supporter of that since 1985. We've reduced the amount of polio by 99.5 percent worldwide. The complete eradication of polio is important to me on a worldwide level. On the local level, working with the Friends of Mill Creek Park. The pump house needs to be repaired. We surround the pump house every Christmas with our tree lot. Then maybe some work on the bandstand. We want to do another hands-on project in Cape Elizabeth, maybe some upgrades to Fort Williams - the picnic shelter, some light construction work. Back in South Portland, we're looking very hard at buying solar trash compactors for the city. That gets rid of open trash cans and environmental concerns associated with that.

**Q:** What's your greatest memory from the past 25 years as a member of the Rotary Club?

**A:** We have a thing called the Paul Harris Fellowship award, and if you donate \$1,000 to the foundation, you can nominate someone for that. We've done our families and some residents in town - recently, Gus Barber of Barber Foods and Henry Adams,

who's been heavily involved in the community for 40 years. Being able to give them those awards is most memorable for me. It's nice to be able to recognize those people for what they've done, especially because they're both my neighbors.

Q: Other than working and serving on the Rotary Club, how do you spend your time?

A: I like sailing, I like racquetball, I'm trying golf. My wife and I like doing a lot of work around the house. We also have a cabin in upstate New York.

Q: If you could have any guest speaker at a Rotary Club meeting, who would you invite?

A: I guess the pope because he would certainly be different. We've had our share of politicians, and we've had some interesting local characters. The president might be too political, but the pope would be very interesting, mainly to see what he would think of the work we do compared to what he does at the church.

Q: If you could invite any three people over for dinner, who would you invite and what would you make?

A: First, my wife would make it because people would leave if I made it. Everyone knows she's the cook; that's no secret. I think I would have Joan Benoit, maybe Dodge Morgan, the sailor who sailed around the world, and the president of Outward Bound, because I really think that school up at Hurricane Island is fantastic. I don't even know his name. I've been there. I'm a graduate. When I retire, I hope to go back and teach there. I would serve an organically grown, health-food dinner. I'd have to consult my wife.