

# TWO LIGHTS

Rotary Club of South Portland – Cape Elizabeth  
February 3, 2021



*Together, we see a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change – across the globe, in our communities, and in ourselves.*

## Upcoming Dates:

**February 10** – Hank Berg, Casco Bay Lines GM, Off to the Islands!

**February 17** – Board meeting following the club meeting

## OPENING WORDS

February 3: Nancy Hawes shared words written by Paul Harris in 1945 in My Road to Rotary; here is a portion of it:

*“When stripped of all formalities and creeds, fellowship flourishes. Members are entitled to their own opinions on questions of controversial nature. The platform is broad enough to include all sorts and conditions of men just so they be friendly, tolerant of the views of others and unselfish. Friendship was the foundation rock on which Rotary was built and tolerance is the element which holds it together.”*

## What's New With Our Members

Happy Birthday to:

🍰 Nancy Irving - Feb 13

🍰 Anne Marie McCoubrey - Feb 13

*Happy Anniversary to Chuck & Melissa Redman - Feb 12*

*Our deepest sympathies to the family and friends of past president Wayne Goodrich - see below.*

**Thank You, Brian!** – Our profit from the tree sale would have been significantly lower if we had paid Brian Bagdasarian for his professional services in creating an e-commerce site, coordinating curbside pickup, and setting us up on Shopify. Plus showing us all how to do all that! Brian benefited club members by providing a way for all of us to participate safely in the tree sale, whether behind the scenes or on the lot. More important than his contributions to the club and to us as club members though, was Brian’s contribution to the community. He allowed almost 2,000 residents of South Portland and Cape Elizabeth to continue their holiday tradition of purchasing their tree in a safe manner, whether it was through online sales or contact-free on-lot sales. Many customers commented on how much they appreciated the efforts we had made to allow them to feel comfortable on the lot, and this could not have happened without Brian’s efforts. Therefore in gratitude for Brian’s contributions to the club and the community, the club named him as a Paul Harris Fellow.



And good news – Brian offered to continue helping us next year!

**“Data is King”** – This is a quote from Brian and represents the new motto for the tree sale as we move into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. His dad Dave Bagdasarian Sr. gave us a synopsis of how the tree sale went and some of the statistics, mostly provided through Shopify. Here are some of the highlights:

- 🌲 We sold 1900 trees, and had 15 tabletop trees left over.
- 🌲 We sold 480 wreaths, which went quickly.
- 🌲 Over 35 members worked on the lot.
- 🌲 We sold out in 17 days, but we lost 1 ½ days to weather, so really we sold out in 15 ½ days!
- 🌲 We had very few customers contacting us about problems with the website, and those were all resolved satisfactorily.
- 🌲 We charged sales tax (on the sales price) rather than use tax (on our cost) for the first time and Shopify made it very easy to do that. (We paid the state about \$5,200 for sales tax.)
- 🌲 We did curbside pickup successfully for the first time and learned ways to make it better in succeeding years.

- 🌲 Sales to the islands were very successful (thank you Matt McAleney) – be sure to tune in to our speaker next week from Casco Bay Lines who provided the transportation for us.
- 🌲 We couldn't have done it without the help of the South Portland football team (and the board plans to come up with a way to express our appreciation) – thank you Aaron!!
- 🌲 An unintended benefit of asking all customers to pay with a card was that we didn't have to count cash and make daily bank deposits. (We still had cash on the lot though – a few customers paid with cash and many customers gave us cash tips.)
- 🌲 Over 8% of the visitors to our online site actually made a purchase – apparently this is an astonishingly high percentage.
- 🌲 The online sales, nearly all of which involved curbside pickup, made up 15% of our sales.
- 🌲 We have a treasure trove of data from Shopify which will help us to guide planning for next year.
- 🌲 Our sales revenue was slightly over \$101,000 and we netted over \$47,000. For comparison, this was about \$1,000 less than the profit for the previous record-high two years, which is outstanding considering the changes we had to make this year and the additional investment in software.



**The Data King** – The reports about all the data that can be mined from Shopify reminded many more tenured club members of our original tree sale data king, Wayne Goodrich. Wayne was obsessed with gathering and maintaining data from the sale and would predict how much revenue we would take in on any given day during the sale based on prior history.

I met Wayne on the day that I moved to South Portland in 1989 – he lived in the condo 2 doors down and he came over to introduce himself and ask if he could borrow a corkscrew. My family and I didn't quite know what to make of Wayne and we came to refer to him as the corkscrew guy.

Wayne joined Rotary in 1990 because, as he was famous for saying, he “had no friends.” This was pretty ironic because like many of us in the club, I learned that you could never ask for a better friend. Wanting to share his good fortune, and because I was new in town, Wayne invited me to attend a club meeting in the fall of 1991. Paul Harris comments in My Road to Rotary on how meaningful Rotary is to many Rotarians and I feel the same – what a gift Wayne gave me!

Wayne was club president in 1996-97, followed by Jim Russell and then me. By virtue of the fact that I was the 7<sup>th</sup> (? – or something like that) female member of the club, I was often the first woman to hold various positions in the club and I relied heavily on Wayne and Jim, both of whom were happy to coach me. They not only taught me what I needed to know but provided invaluable moral support throughout.

Wayne was a recruiting consultant and for several years he and Kathy Ray were business partners. He and his wife Ellie also taught bridge lessons and ran bridge clubs, a game that was well suited to their keen intelligence.

Wayne gave a classification talk at our club one time, and in the talk he mentioned that he always liked to arrive for appointments **exactly on time**, because if he was late he was wasting your time, but if he was early he was wasting his own time. A few months later he invited me to go to the Red Sox for Maine Day with his family. Wouldn't you know, we walked into Fenway as they were playing the National Anthem – how did he do that!

Sharon Livingston, wife of Alec who recently passed away (☹) shared a typical Wayne story: “My kids always remember the time he showed up at our front door with road kill (I think it was a turkey) and wanted to know if Alec wanted to cook it!”



**A Successful WinterFest Too!** – We were scheduled to have WinterFest this past weekend but we were forced to cancel it with the exception of 3 virtual contests for which contestants submitted pictures of their cardboard sled, snowman or winter activity. Tony reported on the non-event at this week's meeting. Most notable was that of the previous sponsors/advertisers that we approached, they all agreed to re-up *even though they knew it was likely that WinterFest would not happen!* Notice that I said this was true of the sponsors “that we approached” – for obvious reasons we did not approach a half dozen restaurants who were previous WinterFest supporters. Instead we thanked them for their prior support by including their advertisement in our booklet free of charge, and they were very grateful.

If you were able to make it to the tree lot, you know that we put up banners for our sponsors at the tree lot, and also printed booklets with WinterFest advertisements that we distributed to tree customers. We are still hoping to hold the fireworks sometime before the end of the Rotary year. After deducting the \$5,000-ish cost of the booklet and the fireworks, WinterFest will have netted \$30,000 – well done!

**Another Memorable Character** – This picture of former member Thurston Holt kind of says it all! I mentioned some of the kind things that club members said about Thurston last week, but Anne sent me his obituary and rather than re-type it all, I'll send it along with the bulletin – he was a fascinating man.



**Answers to the February Rotary Magazine Quiz** – I guess I didn't provide any instructions for what to do if you knew the answers but go ahead and score yourself:

1. What unusual combination is featured in an article about Mark Burchill of the Santa Rosa, CA club?  
*He belongs to both the local Rotary club and also Toastmasters (p. 13)*
2. What is located at 1560 Sherman Avenue, Evanston, Ill?  
*The current headquarters of RI (p. 53)*
3. What is Victor Fleming of the Little Rock, Arkansas club famous for?  
*He creates the crossword puzzle which appears in each month's issue (p. 61)*
4. What Maine Chef was featured in a Food Article in the current issue?  
*Nicholas Orgo of the Bridgton-Lake Region club (p. 64)*

**ROTARY CLUB OF SOUTH  
PORTLAND/CAPE ELIZABETH, MAINE**

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