

# Potomac-Bethesda Rotary Club News

## Rotary Calendar



January 10 - 6:30pm  
Meeting-Hunters Inn  
Installation of  
New Member  
**George Mattamal**  
January 14 - 6:30pm  
Mid-year District  
Leadership Meeting  
at the BWI-Ramada.  
\$15 per person

January 17 - 6:30pm Meeting-Hunters Inn

January 17 - 8:00pm

Board of Directors Meeting

January 24 - 6:30pm Meeting-Hunters Inn

Robert Kalinoski - Microlending

January 26 - 8am to Noon

Mini-Summit on Hunger, BWI-Ramada

\$10 per person includes a continental  
breakfast. Registrations and payments are  
due by no later than January 16th.

January 31 - 6:30pm Meeting-Hunters Inn

Neil McDonald

Award-Winning Journalist

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation

February 7 - 6:30pm Meeting-Hunters Inn

February 11 - 6:30pm District Leadership  
Meeting at the BWI-Ramada. \$15 per person

February 12 - 7pm Manna Food Center

February 14 - 6:30pm Meeting-Hunters Inn

February 21- 6:30pm Meeting-Hunters Inn

February 28 - 6:30pm Meeting-Hunters Inn

March 6 - 6:30pm Meeting-Hunters Inn

March 11 - 7pm Manna Food Center

March 13 - 6:30pm Meeting-Hunters Inn

March 20 - 6:30pm Meeting-Hunters Inn

March 29 -

International Night at the Hungarian Embassy

## Rotary Club Kicks Off New Year with Wine and Cheese Social



## President Don Smith in the News:

Quote from the Gazette Newspaper on December 26, 2007, regarding a neighbor's request to cut down 50 trees: "Who would want to move out here just to cut all their trees?" said neighbor **Don Smith**, who said he opposed the original plan. "The reason we moved out here were the trees, the canal, the things I love. You want to preserve those."

See January 9 Gazette article on page 2.

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## **Advocates Seek More Protection For Trees On Private Lots**

by Erin Donaghue, Gazette Staff Writer, January 9, 2008

Potomac resident **Don Smith** said he moved to his wooded property that borders the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal for the scenic beauty. Trees, he said, are an integral part of the area's natural aesthetic.

"It's heaven," he said. "The trees and the canal are the things I love."

That's why, one day in December, Smith was dismayed to discover that his neighbor was cutting large trees on his property.

"To cut trees without having to is very unfortunate," Smith said. "It's very sad."

Potomac residents like Smith are raising concerns that more regulation is needed for saving individual trees on smaller, private plots of land. Currently in Montgomery County, there are no rules that govern the conservation of such trees, said Councilman Roger Berliner (D-Dist. 1) of Potomac.

Berliner, along with Councilman Marc Elrich (D-At large) of Takoma Park have participated in an informal task force to look at the needs of preserving individual trees. The proposed tree ordinance, which is still being developed and should be introduced within the next six months, would require homeowners to get permission from the county before cutting down healthy trees.

While Montgomery County does currently have a Forest Conservation Law that requires the replacement of a certain percentage of cut trees, it currently only applies to lots that are 40,000 square feet – just short of one acre – or more.



*Potomac resident Don Smith, an advocate for trees, enjoys some fresh air on his wooded property. Smith said he was upset when a nearby property owner cut down trees on his neighboring lot –Gazette Photo by J. Adam Fenster*

"I like to see this as a way to fill the hole that the Forest Conservation Law leaves behind," said environmental advocate Ginny Barnes, president of the West Montgomery County Citizens Association. The issue of particular concern in wooded Potomac, where residents say homeowners can have a collective impact on the decrease of forest cover in Montgomery County. Twenty-eight percent of

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the county consisted of forest in 2000, compared to 45 percent in 1973, according to a Montgomery County forest preservation task force.

"It's important as more of the area becomes developed," said Kate Anderson, a Potomac area environmental advocate. Anderson said her property abuts a wooded area shared by four or five homeowners that is vulnerable to depletion should even one homeowner decide to cut down trees.

Trees on individual lots are also at risk in light of infill development, advocates say.

"Pretty soon, the whole character of the community is changed," Barnes said.

Some towns in Montgomery County, including Takoma Park, have an existing tree ordinance for private lots.

"Other communities throughout the country and in Montgomery County have addressed this issue," Berliner said. "We're trying to take the best of those approaches."

For some, however, such an ordinance would come uncomfortably close to violating individual property rights.

"There's a legitimate question with respect to the right of the individual property owner versus the larger societal and community interest in trees," Berliner said. "We fully expect some pushback."

Berliner said he is accepting community input through the task force, which includes residents and developers. The public will have opportunity to comment on the proposed legislation after it is drafted, Berliner said.

Potomac resident Aris Mardirossian, who recently reached an agreement with the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning

Commission to cut down four nut trees on his River Road property to which he said his children are allergic, said he supports the plan. But he also said that homeowners should be afforded some sense of property about the trees on their land.

"If it's done correctly, I think it's a good idea," Mardirossian said. "But you can't direct every aspect of people's lives so much that people get tired and leave Montgomery County."

Mardirossian originally requested cutting more than 50 trees on the property.

Barnes said that the proposal for a tree ordinance shouldn't interfere with individual property rights.

"I can't go and build a guest house in my backyard without seeking permission [from the county]," she said. "I don't see this as being any different." – Gazette Newspaper

## ***Iraqi Diplomat Thanks Rotary For Limb Project***

By Heather Maher *The Rotarian*

In her efforts to provide artificial limbs to people in Iraq, Rotarian Linda Smythe has worked closely with Samir Sumaidaie, Iraq's ambassador to the United States.

Smythe, a former diplomat who is chair and founder of the Basra Prosthetics Project, recently arranged for Sumaidaie to speak at the Rotary Club of Washington, D.C.

"I have always associated the activities of Rotary with humanity and caring," he told the audience, which included ambassadors and senior government officials.

In a moving address, Sumaidaie shared a deeply personal account of the daily struggle of Iraqi civilians. *continued on Page 4*

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**Iraqi Ambassador Samir Sumaidaie**

"I want to talk to you about Iraq today not in a political sense, but from the perspective of ordinary people, from the perspective of women, old men – regular folks that have the same aspirations, fears, worries, and hopes as you have, and as every human being has," he said.

Smythe, of the Rotary Club of Montgomery Village, Md., says an estimated 50,000 people have lost limbs in Iraq – 5,000 in Basra alone. The Basra project, which has sent prostheses to Iraq and trained doctors to fit people with artificial limbs since 2003, is supported by several Rotary clubs in the Washington, D.C., area, and the U.S. State Department, which has recently awarded a \$1.5 million grant to the effort. In addition, several companies, such as the Hanger

Orthopedic Group, provide prostheses at a discounted price. Sumaidaie encourages the Iraqi Ministry of Health in Baghdad to participate, Smythe said. "He and the embassy staff are very involved with the project."

Jim Brookshire, president of the Washington, D.C., club, called Rotarians' response to Sumaidaie's speech "extraordinary." "We're a fortunate club – we have 60 or so honorary members who are ambassadors," Brookshire said. When Sumaidaie gave his address, "the response was particularly warm, probably partly because he took off on the 'everyman' theme. The club really does operate that way. There's a sense of equality among all members." Sumaidaie urged the audience to support nongovernmental organizations and people trying to make a difference, explaining that people in Iraq "must not feel that they are isolated, must not feel that they are abandoned. They must feel that the world cares about them, encourages them, and supports them." Find out more about the Basra Prosthetics Project at [www.basraproject.com](http://www.basraproject.com)



***In Memoriam:  
Andrew Winters,  
Potomac Rotary  
Club***

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## **Rotarians Provide Emergency Supplies After Peru Quake**

Rotarian Bruce Dearnley recalls the destruction he saw while delivering aid to Peruvians whose homes had been devastated by an earthquake in August.

“Where they could, the residents tried to build some shelter within the confines of their now-empty property,” he says. “They used corn sacks and bamboo poles, or whatever they could find, to keep out the wind and dampness. Many came up to me and said they were cold, and could I give them a blanket.”

Dearnley was just one of the Rotarians who took action after the quake rocked Peru’s coastline south of Lima, killing more than 500 and ravaging homes, hospitals, and schools in the cities of Chincha, Ica, and Pisco. A member of the Rotary Club of Blue Bell, Pa., USA, he worked closely with local Rotarians to distribute ShelterBoxes, which typically include a tent, stove, blankets, and cooking utensils. Peruvian Rotarians were instrumental in providing support, Dearnley says. “Several took the entire week off to help us, and many offered home hospitality. The benefits of a group of worldwide and united Rotarians working together to help improve life for those less fortunate were plainly evident during our stay in Peru.”

Members of the Rotary Club of Chincha provided blankets, clothing, food, medicine, vaccines, and water in the immediate

aftermath of the earthquake, and they collected money for public latrines, tents, and tarpaulins, as well as community education on sanitation techniques. The club is also fundraising to help fabricate quake-proof cement blocks, which will replace the unstable adobe bricks commonly used to build houses.

Back in the United States, the Rotary Club of Shoreline Breakfast (Seattle), Wash., joined forces with the Consulate General of Peru and Seattle’s Peruvian community to ship two containers of emergency supplies. The club also ran two fundraising booths at a local farmers’ market and collected several thousand dollars to benefit the Rotary Club of Pisco’s disaster relief efforts, says Scott Saunders, the Shoreline Breakfast club’s international service chair. His club plans to make recovery efforts in Pisco the focus of its next major international project.

Another West Coast club, the Rotary Club of Cambria, Calif., passed the hat at a meeting and raised \$1,868 to help buy two ShelterBoxes for Chincha. If you would like to publicize your club’s efforts to help communities in Peru, write to [relief@rotary.org](mailto:relief@rotary.org). – from the *Rotarian*

**Please send news articles and photos  
to [Bob Nelson@NASA.gov](mailto:Bob.Nelson@NASA.gov)  
By Monday, January 14,  
for inclusion in the next newsletter.**