

Potomac-Bethesda Rotary Club News

Rotary Calendar

January 17 - 6:30pm Meeting-Hunters Inn



Ken Watter

Ken Watter is a CPA, Certified Financial Planner and a stand-up comic. He's appeared at clubs and colleges throughout Maryland, Virginia, DC and West Virginia, including the DC Improv and the Baltimore Comedy Factory. Ken is a frequent public speaker and the former host of Financial Weekly,

which aired on WMET radio from 1997 through 2003. He has two children in college, is a past president of the North Bethesda Kiwanis Club, practices in Bethesda, MD and lives in Gaithersburg.

Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar

Bourgelie Ampion from Nantes, France

Studying Law at Howard University

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. Registrations and payments are due by January 16th. See www.rotary7620.org for more information.

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 29 - International Night

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New Member for the New Year



George Mattamal is welcomed into the Rotary Club by President Don Smith.

Ambassadorial Scholar Saori Murakami Speaks to Our Rotary Club

"Ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much for being here to listen to my speech. First, I am really grateful to have this kind of opportunity to speak in front of many people. Thank you very much again.

Let me introduce myself. My name is Saori Murakami. I am from Japan. My sponsor district is 2510 and this is the western part of Hokkaido, but I had studied in Kobe for 6 years in my undergraduate. Originally, I was



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born in Hokkaido. So I love Hokkaido. That is one reason why I applied for the Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship in Hokkaido. Another reason is the Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship has very unique characteristics. The strong tie among Rotarians and scholars, the unique system of counselors, the precious opportunity to meet various kinds of people: everything was attractive for me. Without hesitation, I decided to apply for this Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship.

My sponsor club is Rumoi Rotary club. Rumoi Rotary club is very small and the number of the members is only around 30 people. Rumoi is faced with Japan Sea and most of the population is engaged in fishing or farming. The total population is only 20,000. Until I finished my high school, I had lived in Rumoi city.

Now I am a student of American University and the department is School of International Service (SIS). My major is International Development and concentration is micro-small enterprise support. The reason why I chose this area is that I would like to contribute to the job creation in the developing countries, especially in Africa. In developing countries, as many people know, the poverty is one of the biggest problems. And the unemployment deteriorates the situation very much.

I wrote my Bachelor thesis on urbanization and informal sector in Africa with the case study of Kenya. Because of the stagnation of economy, the huge number of labor force is

under unemployment in Africa. And because they can not find jobs in the formal sector, they go into the huge informal sector, or informal economy. Their life in the informal sector is very severe. But at the same time, the informal sector becomes the safety valve for the poor people in Africa. I just learned the severe situation of the informal sector and the poor people. I could not learn the way to support the unemployed people or the people in the informal sector, so I would like to acquire the skills which enable me to help the poor and unemployed people. For example, in my graduate school, I decided to make my



concentration micro-small enterprise support. I plan to obtain the skills such as marketing analysis, accounting, small-business running, and business management in my university in line with the general problem of international development.

Regarding my interest and future dream, I felt the need to see the reality in developing countries and need to work in the field of development before I start my graduate study. As a result, this determination led me to Kolkata, India. I was working for a vocational training NGO in Kolkata, India for almost one year, from 2005 to 2006. The name of the NGO is Balrampur Institute of Vocational Aid (BIVA). This NGO was pretty new and did not get any fund from outside. They are run by the Balrampur Chini Mill Group, which is the biggest sugar company in West Bengal. That is to say, the establishment of this NGO was a

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part of corporate social responsibility. This is one reason why I decided to work for Indian NGO, not Western NGO. I wanted to see how they run the NGO and collect the demand of local poor people by the viewpoint of Indians.

My role in the NGO was a research assistant and to do the marketing research to sell the products of trainees through the way of Fair Trade. We used the way of Fair Trade to sell the trainee-made products but the reality was severe. There is harsh competition among Fair Trade NGOs and vocational training NGOs. I was overwhelmed by the fact that to sell one product is a very difficult thing.

I learned a lot of things there and this experience revealed my strength and weaknesses. This is a big motivation to study International Development very hard in American University. During this master's course, I would like to supplement my weaknesses. And now I feel that this graduate school enables me to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge for the future work in the development field.

In the future, I would like to work for an international organization as a professional to alleviate the global poverty. Hopefully, the field should be related with the job creation. Now just I finished only one semester in the United States, but after the graduation of American University, I will surely work in the field of development and contribute to the reduction of the global poverty problem. Thank you very much for listening to my speech."



We welcomed to the Rotary Club meeting Flo Richman from the Annandale Rotary Club. Dr. Richman is Dean of Nursing at Northern Virginia Community College.

Literacy Project Hits The Road With A Renowned African Explorer

By Susie Ma Rotary International News - 26 December 2007

African explorer Kingsley Holgate has teamed up with U.S. and South African Rotary clubs on a humanitarian mission through 33 African nations to distribute books to poor children.

The books come from a literacy project spearheaded by District 5890 in Texas and District 9300 in South Africa. The project, called "books for the world," strives to provide reading and writing materials where few are available. U.S. clubs collect the books and South African clubs distribute them.

The project started after a meeting between Charlie Clemmons, past governor of District 5890 in Texas, and Edward Pope, past governor of District 9300 in South Africa.

"I said 'We'll bury you in books'," Clemmons recalled of that meeting in 2000. "So for the last seven years, we've been working on burying them in books, and for the last seven years they've been increasing distribution."

The project got a big boost this year when Rotarians from District 9300 began working

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with Holgate to distribute the books and bring publicity to the project.

Holgate, who has been compared to Scottish adventurer David Livingstone, has been trekking through Africa with his wife and son for the past decade. His journeys have been featured on National Geographic Television. In April 2007 he started a yearlong expedition around the rim of Africa. He and his team are distributing mobile libraries – beige trunks with the Rotary emblem that contain books and pencils – to schools and libraries along the way. He is also giving away mosquito nets and eyeglasses as part of his mission.

Holgate is now halfway through his expedition and recently passed through Guinea West Africa, where he gave away mosquito nets, pencils, and books to children at a school for the deaf.

“With Kingsley going around the rim, he’s making people aware that Rotary is out there and has resources available,” Clemmons says.

The book project has shipped 19 containers of books from Houston to Johannesburg, South Africa, this year. Each 40-foot container weighs 42,000 pounds and contains at least 50,000 books. District 9300 in South Africa recently opened a new distribution center to keep up with demand and donations.

The books come from schools, libraries, individuals, and Rotary clubs in 16 states in the United States as well as Canada and Australia. Not only are the donated books getting a second life – but so are the containers. They are large enough to be converted into classrooms, medical clinics, or libraries.



Explorer Kingsley Holgate (right), delivers reading material to children in Ghana as part of his humanitarian mission around the rim of Africa. The books were collected by Rotary clubs in the U.S. and distributed by clubs in South Africa.

The project operates on individual, club, and corporate donations as well as grants from the Rotary Foundation. The project was awarded a US\$12,500 Matching

Grant from the Foundation this year. It costs \$7,700 to purchase a container and ship it to South Africa.

Last year 20 containers were purchased and shipped at the cost of \$134,800. This year Rotarians estimate they will spend \$288,000 to send books valued at \$20 million.

“It’s all volunteer,” Clemmons said. “Every dollar in the program goes into books or containers or shipping.”

***Please send news articles and photos to
BobNelson20854@yahoo.com
by January 23 for inclusion
in the next newsletter.***