

Potomac-Bethesda Rotary Club News

Rotary Calendar

- March 6 - 6:30pm Meeting—Hunters Inn
Neil McDonald, Award-Winning Journalist
Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
Welcome District Governor Rich Carson
- March 10 - 7pm Rotary Friendship Dinner
O'Donnell's Restaurant, Kentlands
- March 11 - 7pm Manna Food Center
- March 13 - 6:30pm Meeting—Hunters Inn
MicroFinance Club at Georgetown University
Eugene Goldberg, Cole Magrath
Mo Narang, Alex Siegel
- Four undergraduate Georgetown University students are starting a Microfinance Club to work with needy entrepreneurs in DC. They will present their business plan for microfinancing.
- March 20 - 6:30pm Meeting—Hunters Inn
- March 26 - Rotary at Gallaudet University
- March 27 - No meeting
- March 29 - 9am Rotary District
Mini-Summit on Literacy, Rockville Library
- March 29 - International Night
at the Hungarian Embassy
- May 2-4 - DisCon08 - Gaithersburg Hilton
Rotary District 7620 Conference

February 28 Meeting Report

President Elect **Todd Nitkin** gave his first-hand report on Northern Uganda which the United Nations has called the most neglected humanitarian crisis in the world. Todd described the history of Uganda and showed photos of children with extended bellies suffering from



malnutrition. The infant mortality rate is 86/1000 and the life expectancy is 45 years. The following background information on Uganda is from the US State Department and the group Todd works with, Medical Teams International.

[Photos on this page provided by Todd Nitkin]



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The Republic of Uganda is a landlocked country in East Africa, bordered on the east by Kenya, the north by Sudan, on the west by the Democratic Republic of the Congo, on the southwest by Rwanda, and on the south by Tanzania. The southern part of the country includes a substantial portion of Lake Victoria, within which it shares borders with Kenya and Tanzania. The total population is 30 million and the capital is Kampala where over a million people reside. Uganda's population is predominately rural, and its population density highest in the southern regions. English is the official language. Britain granted internal self-government to Uganda in 1961, with the first elections held on March 1, 1961. Benedicto Kiwanuka of the Democratic Party became the first Chief Minister. Uganda maintained its Commonwealth membership. A second round of elections in April 1962 elected members to a new National Assembly. Milton Obote, leader of the majority coalition in the National Assembly, became prime minister and led Uganda to formal independence on October 9, 1962. Political maneuvering climaxed in February 1966, when Prime Minister Milton Obote suspended the constitution, assumed

all government powers, and removed the ceremonial president and vice president. In September 1967, a new constitution proclaimed Uganda a republic, gave the president even greater powers, and abolished the traditional kingdoms. On January 25, 1971, Obote's government was ousted in a military coup led by armed forces commander Idi Amin Dada. Amin declared himself president, dissolved the parliament, and amended the constitution to give himself absolute power. Idi Amin's 8-year rule produced economic decline, social disintegration, and massive human rights violations. The Acholi and Langi ethnic groups were particular objects of Amin's political persecution because they had supported Obote and made up a large part of the army. In 1978, the International Commission of Jurists estimated that more than

100,000 Ugandans had been murdered during Amin's reign of terror; some authorities place the figure much higher. In October 1978, Tanzanian armed forces repulsed an incursion of Amin's troops into Tanzanian territory. The Tanzanian force, backed by Ugandan exiles, waged a war of liberation against Amin's troops and Libyan soldiers sent to help him. On April 11, 1979, Kampala was captured, and Amin fled with his remaining forces. In succeeding years, supporters of a centralized state vied with those in favor of a loose federation and a strong role for tribally-based local kingdoms.



After Amin's removal, the Uganda National Liberation Front formed an interim government with Yusuf Lule as president. This government adopted a ministerial system of administration and created a quasi-parliamentary organ known as the National Consultative Commission (NCC). The NCC and the Lule cabinet reflected widely differing political views. In June 1979, following a dispute over the extent of presidential powers, the NCC replaced Lule with Godfrey Binaisa. In a

continuing dispute over the powers of the interim presidency, Binaisa was removed in May 1980. Thereafter, Uganda was ruled by a military commission chaired by Paulo Muwanga. December 1980 elections returned the UPC to power under the leadership of President Obote, with Muwanga serving as vice president. Under Obote, the security forces had one of the world's worst human rights records. In their efforts to stamp out an insurgency led by Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Army (NRA), they laid waste to a substantial section of the country, especially in the Luwero area north of Kampala.

Obote ruled until July 27, 1985, when an army brigade, composed mostly of ethnic Acholi troops and commanded by Lt. Gen. Basilio Olara-Okello, took

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Kampala and proclaimed a military government. Obote fled to exile in Zambia. The new regime, headed by former defense force commander Gen. Tito Okello (no relation to Lt. Gen. Olara-Okello), opened negotiations with Museveni's insurgent forces and pledged to improve respect for human rights, end tribal rivalry, and conduct free and fair elections. In the meantime, massive human rights violations continued as the Okello government murdered civilians and ravaged the countryside in order to destroy the NRA's support.

Negotiations between the Okello government and the NRA were conducted in Nairobi in the fall of 1985, with Kenyan President Daniel Moi seeking a cease-fire and a coalition government in Uganda. Although agreeing in late 1985 to a cease-fire, the NRA continued fighting, seized Kampala in late January 1986, and assumed control of the country, forcing Okello to flee north into Sudan. Museveni's forces organized a government with Museveni as president and dominated by the political grouping called the National Resistance Movement (NRM or the "Movement").

A referendum was held in March 2000 on whether Uganda should retain the Movement system, with limited operation of political parties, or adopt multi-party politics. Although 70% of voters endorsed retention of the Movement system, the referendum was widely criticized for low voter turnout and unfair restrictions on Movement opponents. Museveni was reelected to a second five-year term in March 2001. Parliamentary elections were held in June 2001, and more than 50% of contested seats were won by newcomers. Movement supporters nevertheless remained in firm control of the legislative branch. Observers believed that the 2001 presidential and parliamentary elections generally reflected the will of the electorate; however, both were marred by serious irregularities, particularly in the period leading up to the elections, such as restrictions on political party activities, incidents of violence, voter intimidation, and fraud.

A Constitutional Review Commission (CRC) issued a report proposing comprehensive constitutional change

in December 2003. The government, however, took issue with many CRC recommendations and made counter-proposals in September 2004. A July 2005 national referendum resulted in the adoption of a multiparty system of government and the subsequent inclusion of opposition parties in elections and government.

In February 2006, the country held its first multiparty general elections since President Museveni came to power in 1986. The election generally reflected the will of the people, although serious irregularities occurred. Ruling NRM candidate President Museveni was declared the winner with 59.26% of the vote, giving him a third term in office following the passage of a controversial amendment in June 2005 to eliminate presidential term limits. Opposition FDC leader Kizza Besigye captured 37.39% of the vote, while the remaining contestants received less than 2% of the vote each, according to official figures from the Electoral Commission.

The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a militia led by Joseph Kony, has been terrorizing northern Uganda since 1986. The Ugandan government tried to immobilize LRA camps in southern Sudan but their efforts only increased violence and forced 1.5 million people to flee their homes. More than 25,000 children have been abducted and forcibly conscripted in the LRA since 1986.

In early 2004, LRA attacks expanded into Lira district, Uganda. Fearing additional attacks, more than 471,000 people (54 percent of Lira's population) left their homes. The government created 28 police-patrolled internally displaced people (IDP) camps in Lira district. Following a decrease in violence, the Ugandan government began a resettlement program in April 2006, encouraging IDPs to return to their villages and reestablish livelihoods. Resettled Ugandans can once again farm their own land and provide food for their families, some for the first time in a decade. However, security is fragile and rebel attacks still occur.

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President Elect Todd Nitkin is working with Medical Teams International that began an emergency health care program in 2004 in the Lira, Apac and Pader districts. The project has provided direct health care services, community health education and immunizations for 140,000 displaced people in 10 camps. Medical Teams International also sent ten volunteer medical teams to work with in-country medical staff to provide direct medical services and primary health care education in the IDP camps. They also sent two shipments of medical supplies for distribution to clinics in Lira and Pader districts.

Thanks so much Todd for an excellent presentation!

Son of GSE Alums Crusades for Clean Water

By Tiffany Woods RI News - 17 December 2007 *Ryan Hreljac (left), founder of Ryan's Well Foundation, saved his money as a kid to finance a well in Uganda.*

Ryan Hreljac is a typical 16-year-old. He plays sports, spends time on the computer, loves to sleep, and is up to his neck in schoolwork. But there's one thing that makes him stand out, besides his lanky 6-foot-6-inch frame.

He's the founder of Ryan's Well Foundation, a nonprofit organization in Kemptville, Ont., Canada. It has raised more than US\$3 million to fund nearly 320 water projects serving almost 500,000 people in 14 countries since it was created in 2001, according to his mother, Susan, who is its executive director. She participated in a Rotary Foundation Group Study Exchange (GSE) to France in 1992-93. Her husband, Mark, traveled on a GSE to Mexico in 1991-92.

Ryan's interest in clean water started when he was just six years old. His first-grade teacher, during a school charity drive for developing countries, rattled off a list of items that their donations could buy. She said \$70 could fund a well. As Ryan recalls, she told the class that people were dying because they didn't have access to clean water and that some had to walk

several kilometers to get a drink.

"I thought that was unfair, so I decided to do something about it," says Ryan, who was named a Paul Harris Fellow in 2004. "I went home and said, 'Can I have \$70 to build a well in Africa?'"

"Being good parents, we ignored him," his mother says. "One night at dinner he was still pestering us. He said, 'You don't get it. Someone just died because they didn't have clean water.' I thought, 'Whoa.'"

They decided to let him do extra chores to earn the money. Ryan collected pinecones for his grandmother's craft projects, vacuumed, and washed windows. "If he didn't do a good job, I'd make him redo it," Susan says.



Ryan saved the money he earned in a cookie tin. Four months later, he reached his goal and presented his tin to an official at WaterCan, a charity dedicated to clean water.

He was told, however, that a well would actually cost about \$2,000. "I said I'd do more chores," Ryan recalls. He kept doing them, but in the meantime his story picked up momentum in the media, and donations started coming in. In 2000, he traveled to Uganda to visit the well that he helped finance.

Ryan has since become the face of his foundation, which has worked on water projects with Rotary clubs and has a Rotarian board member. He's also given numerous speeches to various groups, including Rotarians, Rotaractors, and Interactors.

For other young people - or anyone - looking to make a difference, Ryan offers this advice: "Find something that you're passionate about. The world is a huge puzzle. You have to figure out where your piece fits. My piece was clean water. You don't have to devote your life to something. Have fun - but at the end of the day, it's important to lend a hand and give back."

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The 28th Annual International Night

sponsored by the Potomac-Bethesda Rotary Club
Saturday, March 29th, 6:30 PM

at
The Embassy of Hungary
3910 Shoemaker St., NW, Washington, DC 20008

*Please join us in
honoring the area's*

Rotary Ambassadorial Scholars

Students representing:
Congo, France, Italy, Japan, Korea

and attending the following universities:
American, George Washington, Georgetown, Howard, Maryland

will present on:
What they liked and what they learned.
What the program meant to them.
Their impressions of the area and their plans.

Enjoy French/Mediterranean/International Cuisine & wine

RSVP before March 9, 2008, Attendance is limited
\$60 per person
with checks to Potomac-Bethesda Rotary Club
PO Box 59311, Potomac, MD 20859-9311
Information www.pb-rotary.org
Questions: rotary.pb@gmail.com

FRIENDSHIP DINNER

**Rotary Clubs of Northern Montgomery County &
Bethesda-Chevy Chase
Monday, 10 March 2008
6:30 PM (Dinner 7:00 PM)**

O'Donnell's Restaurant, Kentlands
Cash Bar

Mixed Salad, Rolls/ Rum Rolls, Vegetable of Day,
Choice of (two) Desserts, and Coffee, Tea or Soda

Choice of Entree

Fresh Vegetable Penne	\$ 32.25
Herb Roasted Chicken	32.25
O'Donnell's Crab Cakes	34.75
Filet Mignon (7 oz)	45.75

Price includes Tax and Gratuity

Reservation through (and your check to) your Club's
representative by March 6th or Barry Thompson,
13201 Moran Dr., N. Potomac, MD 20878
BHT1113@aol.com

Enjoy an Evening with your
Fellow Rotarians and Guests

The Object of Rotary

The Object of Rotary is to encourage and foster the ideal of service as a basis of worthy enterprise and, in particular, to encourage and foster:

- * FIRST. The development of acquaintance as an opportunity for service;
- * SECOND. High ethical standards in business and professions, the recognition of the worthiness of all useful occupations, and the dignifying of each Rotarian's occupation as an opportunity to serve society;
- * THIRD. The application of the ideal of service in each Rotarian's personal, business, and community life;
- * FOURTH. The advancement of international understanding, goodwill, and peace through a world fellowship of business and professional persons united in the ideal of service.

Rotary is looking for men/women in a variety of professions – just a few vocations are listed below:

**Small Business Owners
Physicians
Insurance brokers/agents
Pharmacists
Optician
Banking and Wealth Management
Journalist/writers
Rotary Shares by
Growing Rotary Membership!**

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