

Potomac-Bethesda Rotary Club News

Rotary Calendar

September 11 – 6:30pm Meeting Location Changed to
Normandie Farm Restaurant

Winy Yirga-Keefe and Rahel M. Beyene
EthioGreen Management

EthioGreen LLC is a registered import/export company located in Washington, DC featuring wholesome fresh produced and grown products from Ethiopia to health and wellness conscious consumers. Their goal is to disseminate products and service while educating the community about the benefits of choosing mindfully, thereby promoting sustainable living and a healthy lifestyle. They believe that implementing small fundamental changes in the choices we make everyday will have a large impact on the future of healthy families in our community and protect the earth we live in for generations to come.

September 11 – 8:00pm Board of Directors Meeting

September 13 – Membership Development Seminar
BWI Ramada

September 18 – 6:30pm Meeting – Hunters Inn

Amy Jo O'Hearn on Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's
"Light The Night"

September 25 – 6:30pm Meeting – Hunters Inn

Tom Leitzer on Maryland Initiative To Provide Health
Care For The Uninsured

October 2 - 6:30pm Meeting – Hunters Inn

Steve Naron on Biking the Entire C&O Canal

October 9 - 6:30pm Meeting – Hunters Inn

October 16 - 6:30pm Meeting – Hunters Inn

October 18 - Potomac Day

October 23 -- 6:30pm Meeting – Hunters Inn

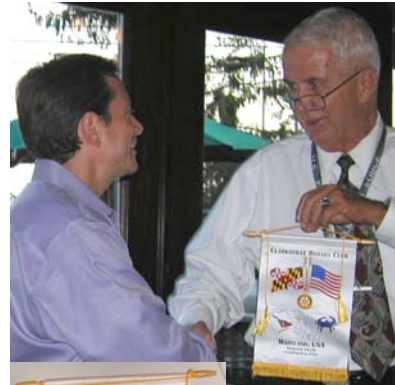
Kanae Tsutsumi, Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar

October 25 – Rotary Leadership Institute

Marriott Courtyard, Frederick

September 4 Meeting Report

President **Todd Nitkin** announced next week's meeting will be held at Normandie Farm Restaurant. After the board meeting on September 11, Todd will be travelling to Liberia. **President Elect Noel Howard** is heading to the Outer Banks of North Carolina this week. There is a meeting coming up on Tuesday at the Ethiopian Embassy to discuss the possibility of hosting the 2009 International Night there. **Rotarian Bob Pelletier** presented the first new club banner from Clarksville Rotary Club to President Todd. **Gerald Aldridge** described the mission of Montgomery Works, a job placement and training service funded by the government. Over 12,000 people contact



has two locations in Gaithersburg and Wheaton and this week will be hosting a two-day recruiting

program for 80 people to staff a new cinema and drafthouse in Wheaton. When businesses close, they host a



job fair to assist employees to find another job. An example of a recent job fair was when the Holiday Inn in Chevy Chase closed for remodeling and transition to a Courtyard Hotel. Their

motto is "Right Employees, Right Job, Right Now". **Bob Pelletier** is a state employee and described a program to "Hire Vets First". Jeffrey Immelt, Chairman and CEO is quoted in the "Hire Vets First" brochure, "Veterans understand integrity, strength and dedication which is why GE looks to hire from the military and put those employees in positions of growth." Thanks to Gerald and Bob for a great presentation. **Klaus Ordemann** presented the club with a brand new U.S. flag.

Montgomery Works during the year (www.montgomeryworks.com). The statewide website, www.mvejobs.com, posts 50 to 100 new jobs each week ranging from hotel staff to executive positions. Montgomery Works



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Rotarian Jason Hamel Ascends Mount Rainer; Unfurls Potomac-Bethesda Club Banner

By Rotarian Jason Hamel, September 3, 2008

First off, I want to thank the entire club for their support of my cause. I was touched by the generosity that every member showed to me. It sent me off on a very high note.

The climb was the most difficult, dangerous, exciting, fun, miserable, and challenging thing I have ever done. I thought that climbing 13,000+ ft. Wheeler Peak in New Mexico without training would have prepared me better for 14,410 ft Mount Rainier, but Mt. Rainier is a much more technical mountain than Wheeler Peak. After a training session last Friday, 8 of us, along with 3 guides began our attempt of Mt. Rainier early Saturday morning. Late that afternoon, only 7 of us made it to Camp Muir after battling a fierce snowstorm to get there. One of our team had already turned around. At 6:30 p.m. all of us were in bed desperately trying to sleep, but most of us, including myself, only slept for about an hour. We were roused at 12:30 a.m. early Sunday morning, strapped on our gear, and began the final push by headlamp. It was quite dark outside, but the stars were amazing. The darkness also hid many dangers that luckily our guides knew of and were there to help us. We began our trek by going across the Cowlitz glacier and dodging falling rocks and huge crevasses until we got to Cathedral Gap. As we climbed Cathedral Gap, another member of our climb asked to turn back, but was denied because the trail was so narrow and steep, so she was forced to wait until we reached the ridge. Once on the ridge, we proceeded to the crevasse filled area called The Flats, which in fact are not very flat, but instead steep and filled with deep crevasses. At this point another climber asked to turn back and our group was down to 5. During the break, we were told to consume 200-300 calories, but I could barely stomach half of a granola bar before a giant wave of nausea hit me. Another climber shared my symptoms, but we continued on. As we began our ascent up Disappointment Cleaver, it lived up to its name. I began to dry heave uncontrollably (a symptom of altitude sickness) and the guide asked that I turn around before the next stretch of trail makes it



The Man and the Mountain

impossible for me to do so. Without argument, I agreed. My fellow climber with similar symptoms continued on and his dry heaving hit during the next stretch of trail and he was forced to continue on to the top of Disappointment Cleaver where the sickness hit him much worse than it hit me. He along with 2 more climbers turned around at that point. In the end, only one of our group of eight made it to the summit and she was employed by the guide service. While I didn't "Top Out", I reached my "High Point" and proudly displayed my Rotary Flag. All of the climbers gave everything they had and were very fortunate to turn around when they did because we had an even fiercer snowstorm to contend with on the way down. In the end we were all proud of our personal accomplishments and even more proud of the money and awareness we raised to support the mission of Big City Mountaineers. I look forward to seeing the entire club when I return next week and boring each member with more details of my climb!

Yours in Rotary,
Jason Hamel

*Rotarians serve
dinner to the
homeless at
Sophia House
on August 12
(Photo by Scott
Janco)*



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The following two articles show Rotary Club activities appearing in newspapers in Potomac and in Vancouver, Canada

Rotary Club Of Potomac Honors Citizens Of The Year

by Erin Donaghue, Nick Kirkpatrick The Gazette



Alison Malmon was honored as a Citizen of the Year on July 23 by the Potomac Rotary Club.

Potomac native Alison Malmon was a freshman in college at the University of Pennsylvania in 2000 when her older brother, Brian, took his own life. When her brother died, he was 22 – Malmon was 18. Brian Malmon was gregarious, outgoing, and funny, Malmon said – a college student at Columbia University, he was interested in journalism and political science and sang in an a cappella group on campus.

But after three years of college at Columbia, he took a leave of absence from school and returned to his parents' Potomac home. Malmon said she and her parents noticed a drastic change in his behavior.

"He would retreat into his room and spend hours in his room, not wanting to talk with anybody," Malmon said.

Malmon said that her brother had been struggling with mental illness – a combination of depression and schizophrenia – for some time, but felt ashamed and alone. His friends at school had also noticed a change, Malmon said, but were unsure of what to do. On campus, it seemed as though there was little support for those struggling with mental illness, though as Malmon would soon discover, her brother had not been alone in his struggle. "I dove into research and found the majority of mental health disorders present

themselves at high school and college age – it's not that abnormal for a student to go off to college and start experiencing mental health issues," Malmon said.

Malmon said she recognized a widespread need for dialogue about mental health on college campuses, and so she started an awareness group at the University of Pennsylvania. After a friend transferred to Georgetown University and started a chapter there, the groups caught on. Malmon is now the executive director of Active Minds, a Washington, D.C., nonprofit that raises awareness about mental health in college students, with more than 140 chapters on college campuses in the United States and Canada.

Malmon is set to be honored today as a "Citizen of the Year" by the Rotary Club of Potomac, a local chapter of Rotary International, a group dedicated to service. The group honors community members who have demonstrated "service above self," and recipients are chosen by the Rotary Club of Potomac after being nominated by the community.

"The motto of Rotary is service above self, and when you have something very painful happen, sometimes it's hard to think about anything but yourself," said the Rev. Anne Benefield, president of the Rotary Club of Potomac. "What we liked about her is she took a tragic situation and addressed it by trying to help others."

This year, the award was split into two categories – local and national.

Malmon will receive the citizen of the year national community service award because her work began at a local level and spread to have national significance, Benefield said.

Betty Halls, a resident of Asbury Methodist Village in Gaithersburg, will be honored by the Rotary Club with the citizen of the year local community service award. Halls has been a long time volunteer at the Interfaith Clothing center in Rockville, run by Interfaith Works, a group that provides assistance such as housing, clothes, family services and emergency support to those living in poverty.

Halls has also been a long time volunteer at her church, Geneva Presbyterian in Potomac. Halls was nominated by Benefield, who is a reverend at the church.

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"We felt like what they were doing represented two very different types of service," Benefield said. Halls, she said, often works behind the scenes but finds ways to benefit the community - including going out of her way to deliver clothing to the Interfaith Clothing Center and organizing the coffee service after church.

"She's someone who gets up and goes across the tracks to see what the needs are, and just helps out," said Guy Semmes of the Rotary Club.

Semmes said the groups hope to continue honoring residents who are making a difference. For Malmon, she hopes Active Minds will help young people struggling with mental problems to realize they are not alone and that others in a similar situation can combat the disorder. She's not sure that a support group on campus would have changed her brother's suicide, but she does know one thing. "To know that having mental illness wasn't a life sentence - I think that would have had a huge impact on him."

Rotary's New Face

Michael McCarthy-Vancouver Courier-August 13, 2008
Tom Crean stands at the back of the schoolroom, a smile on his face. As executive producer of a new TV show called The Scoop, he doesn't need to be on the set, but today's shoot is the first of what he plans as a 13-part series and he wants to understand television production.

Crean is not normally a TV producer. He's a business owner who served until last month as president of the Downtown Rotary Club of Vancouver. Crean is also incoming chair of the public relations committee for Rotary District 5040, which represents most of the province's clubs. The TV show shooting here today, for which his PR committee has already raised \$30,000, represents the first of many new media projects that Rotary has planned for 2009 to publicize its work. The old-fashioned Rotary of casual lunches in quiet backrooms among retired executives is rapidly disappearing.

"Cut and print," cries the director, and the kids on the set relax. Today's shoot being filmed at Grandview elementary is about Zany World board game, created by suburban mother Schelle Markwart as a tool to teach her three young sons about self-respect and respect for others. Rotary will be buying 500 sets of the

game to distribute to local elementary school students as incentives to learn. The new face of Rotary may utilize TV, video, print and online media to get its message out, but Crean says the service club emphasizes traditional values such as respect for others.

Its club motto remains "Service Above Self." Focusing on youth is the key plank in the club's new strategy to re-energize itself and build for the future. And it has to move if it's going to survive.

In the past six months since Crean joined the PR committee, he claims his committee has sent out more than 400 press releases to 70 media outlets. Rotary International headquarters in Chicago says no other club has ever attempted such an energetic approach, but to date the committee hasn't had a single reply. "We have an image problem," says Crean. "It's time to take another approach."

"When I became president of the downtown Rotary club, I took a look around and saw that many of our members are getting on in years," says Crean during a break in the shooting. "Only 15 members of my Club are younger than me at 51, and I've been a member 29 years. Most of our members are in the 60s and 70s. In the 1980s our club membership was over 400 people. We were down last year another 10 per cent to 125 members. We have to turn this trend around."

Rotary is all about building community, says Crean, and these days society is saturated by corporate messages that often have an unintended effect of reducing people's commitment to their local community. Kids, especially, live in a global environment, dwelling in cyberspace where they often don't even know their neighbours. "If people in service who care about community want to maintain and build stronger communities in which we care about the old, the disabled and the poor," he says, "then we have to find ways to connect to younger people and get them involved in our work. So that's what we are doing, and we are doing it using media that kids can relate to, like video."

First admitted in 1987, women are today the fastest growing segment of the club's membership and hold many leadership positions. More than 2,000 women serve as club presidents and are rapidly assuming regional leadership roles.

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Rotary first came to Vancouver when the downtown chapter—the oldest club in the Lower Mainland—was chartered in 1913 as club No. 61. Today District 5040, which serves much of the province, includes 2,000 members in 52 B.C. clubs. Aside from the Downtown Club to which Crean belongs, there are nine other clubs in Vancouver.

"I've been with the downtown club 28 years myself," says Crean, who operates Kearney Funeral Services as a family business. Married 25 years and with three children aged 14 to 23, Crean has served on an endless number of Rotary boards and committees, working his way up to the top job of club president last year. However, it's his new work as the incoming chair of the district's PR board where he really hopes to get things rolling.

"I think the club really has to drop its long standing policy of not promoting itself and get out there and tell people what we do and what we stand for," says Crean. "If you ask most people about Rotary, they have this quaint idea we're a bunch of old fogies chewing on stale pot roasts and smoking big cigars in back rooms. If we want to continue fundraising for our projects and supporting the community to the degree we've enjoyed in the past, we really need to change our image. Rebranding Rotary is what we have to do. To date, Rotary has done a good job of talking to itself. Now we need to talk to the public."

Among those ambitious plans, Crean lists off several new media projects, including The Scoop, an upcoming TV show to be broadcast on Shaw Community TV. It will also be distributed via video clips, DVDs and online media. Rotary has big plans to tap into the 2010 Olympic Games, especially with its HomeStay Project.

Over the past several Olympics local Rotarians have hosted thousands of visiting Rotarians in their homes, and donated all fees to a legacy fund. In Salt Lake City, that meant buying land and building a city park downtown. Here in Vancouver, Crean wants to expand the scope of the HomeStay project. He will urge Rotarians to spread the word to their friends about a similar project of Vanoc, which has agreed to partner with Rotary in housing guests to the city. Crean anticipates raising well over \$1 million from Rotarians, the proceeds to go towards a youth project in the DTES. Plans are not yet final, but could include detox

and rehab facilities or an aboriginal housing project. Crean says it won't be a shooting gallery, but a facility that espouses Rotarian values such as self-respect and respect for others.

City of Vancouver director of community relations Gary Eng supports Rotary's plans and says that the city respects Rotary's role and reputation in the community and will do whatever it can to help. "We've met a few times already with Tom and no projects have been chosen, but I am sure that Rotary would be a good partner and we would welcome their financial support."

Mayor Sam Sullivan has also endorsed Rotary's HomeStay program and, in a written letter to the PR committee, welcomes its financial contribution to Olympic Legacy programs.

Crean's PR committee enjoys the support of Rotary's top brass. Incoming regional governor Bob Blacker supports the need for new publicity to secure new people who "care about community," and not just for his own service club either. Blacker, 59, has been with the New Westminster Royal City Club since 1996. Married for 37 years with three children, the retired police inspector says Rotary is not the only community service club suffering these days for lack of new energy. Apathy towards participation in public life is epidemic.

"Not tooting our own horn means we have not been getting new people on board," says Blacker. "People don't have any idea what we do at Rotary and we run the risk of dying on the vine if we don't do something. We are not the only service club in this same position. Publicity for the sake of publicity is not our game plan. It's new and younger members we want, and public participation in what we do."

Aside from local projects, Blacker cites Rotary's many international programs and argues Rotary doesn't suffer from the kind of bureaucracy and inefficiency that plagues many NGOs. "We are like a mini UN," he says.

"But we may actually do more work than the UN does. We have so many connections around the world. That's a message we have to take to the kids, definitely. Interact, Rotoract, our student exchanges, the Youth Leadership Awards are like our farm system for the future. We need to get the word out to the kids, and to

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the public, about what we do to support kids."

While Blacker and Crean may represent the new face of Rotary, there are many senior members who think the idea of "tooting your own horn" doesn't fit with their concept of Rotary. For some members, Rotary is an exclusive business club to meet and network with other business people. This is a club that didn't allow women until 1987.

Harvey Malcolm, 77, joined the downtown club in 1970. In 1993-94 he was president of the club, which meets Tuesdays at noon at the prestigious Terminal City Club. A transportation consultant, he doesn't get out to every Rotary meeting but keeps abreast of Rotary news. Malcolm hasn't heard anything about the need for Rotary to change its traditional ways and is skeptical of Crean's plans to obtain publicity.

"Rotary has done a good job raising money given the circumstances," says Malcolm. "We just raised \$136,000 for the Hard of Hearing Foundation. I support the idea of raising awareness of Rotary, but it's easier to do in smaller communities where you drive into town and see a sign by the side of the road."

Malcolm says changes to Rotary must come from the members and be approved by the club's hierarchy.

"Tom has a tendency to go off on tangents of his own, and some other members have done the same in the past," says Malcolm. "Some of those projects left me ill. People get carried away sometimes and they don't always have the support of the entire club. There could be negative feedback and whiplash. It could have some harebrained scheme that goes nowhere. We have to be very careful with these things."

So, just by shooting a TV episode as a pilot program to promote Rotary does not guarantee that Crean will win the votes, and necessary funding, of enough Rotary members to pay for an entire 13-part weekly series. Shooting, editing and producing quality programming for TV can cost up to \$1,000 a minute. If enough clubs and members decide that publicity is good for the club, maybe they will dig deep to support the TV series and other plans the District's PR committee may develop. If not, all bets are off.

"Is Rotary getting old?" ponders Norm Binion, president of the Rotary Club of North Vancouver. "Yes, I have to assume it is aging due to the aging baby boomer population. I believe youth and energy, as

well as experience, are needed to survive. The feedback I have received is that Rotary seems a bit old fashioned, perceived somewhat as a 'good old boys' organization. At the same time, most of these same people also perceive Rotary as providing valuable community services. Any successful organization must metamorphasize in some ways to survive and this almost always requires change."

Back at the video shoot at Grandview elementary, Interactor Rebecca Ronaghan, 18, thinks Rotary is the real deal. Not only does she get to play a part on TV in this first segment of The Scoop, she understands that Rotary is footing the bill for this video shoot and future shows, all of which will be focused on youth in some way.

"I'll be telling all my friends on Facebook, and using MSN web messenger," she says. "I'll tell them I'm going to be on TV and they can be, too. Lions Gate Rotary has really supported my Interact club and Rotary International helps make connections all around the world. The fact that they are connecting with youth is fantastic. Rotary has the ability to really make a difference."

At the glistening glass Shaw tower on West Cordova Street, Shaw TV director of programming Michael Herringer is supportive of the concept for The Scoop. The idea of focusing on the projects that Rotary finances within the community, with an emphasis on the youth involved and not on "men in suits," is one that matches Shaw's mandate to provide coverage of community issues. While it's too early for Herringer to comment on the series, he promises to support the show with airtime if Rotary finances the production costs.

"Our commercial media is all about earning a profit," says Crean. "God help us if, as Kalle Lasn at Adbusters Magazine says, 'we are what we watch.' It's time to offer programming from a different point of view, about the good things that are happening in our community we never hear about. Our challenge with the TV show is to provide content that is dramatic as well as entertaining. I'm sure that when people finally see what Rotary is doing, they'll get behind us to do a lot more. There are a lot of exciting developments in our community that deal with difficult issues, and it's about time we heard some good news."

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