

Potomac-Bethesda Rotary Club News

Rotary Club Calendar

February 5 – 6:30pm Meeting–Hunters Inn

Christine Clapp, Founder, Spoken with Authority



Christine Clapp will tell us how to find our voice and inspire others. She has over a decade of speaking experience and a truly unique background in the field of communication – as a professional and an academic. After working on Capitol Hill for five years as a communications aide, Christine founded a communications training and coaching business in 2008. Called “Spoken with Authority”, her venture is dedicated to advancing the careers of talented, young professionals by giving them confidence

as speakers. Additionally, Christine has taught public speaking to undergraduates since 2001, and currently is a lecturer at The George Washington University. Christine earned two degrees in communication: a bachelor’s degree from Willamette University, where she debated at the national and international levels, and a master’s degree from the University of Maryland, College Park. An active member of the U.S. Senate chapter of Toastmasters International, Christine received the organization’s highest educational distinction, “Distinguished Toastmaster”, in June 2008.

February 10 – 7pm Manna Food Center

February 12 – 6:30pm Meeting–Hunters Inn

February 14 – 8am to Noon - Water Mini-Summit

4-H Center, University of Maryland

Speaker: Paul Faeth, CEO, Global Water Challenge

February 19 – 6:30pm Meeting–Hunters Inn

District Governor Elect Paul Frey

February 26 – 6:30pm Meeting–Hunters Inn

March 14 – 8am Literacy Mini-Summit

Rockville Library

March 25 – 11:30am - Rotary Day at Gallaudet Univ.

March 30 – Rotary Foundation Dinner – Greenbelt

April 18 – 8am District Assembly - Holiday Inn, Laurel

April 25 – 6:30 pm Potomac-Bethesda Rotary Club

International Night at the Austrian Embassy

January 29 Meeting Report

Alan Grant returned from a cruise to South America sporting a tan and circulated 36 thank-you letters from third graders at the Hebrew Academy who received their Rotary dictionaries in December (some of the letters are shown on page 2). It appears that **Bernard**



Henry’s teaching classes at L'Academie de Cuisine on Thursday nights and his plan to open a bistro in Falls Church, Virginia, will necessitate a change in Rotary venues. Bernard met with **Nabil Bedewi** and will be continuing to work on our International Night program. **President Todd Nitkin** plans to

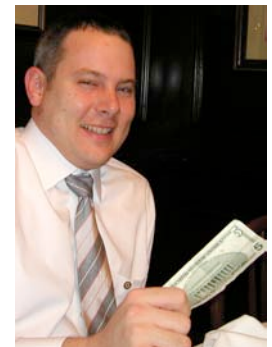
have all 150 seats filled at the Austrian Embassy on April 25 as he is extending invitations to the members of the Ethiopian Church who support the orphanage in Addis Ababa. Todd received a letter from **George Mattamal’s** sister who is caring for 68



orphans in India (the letter is reproduced on page 3). President Todd was the speaker for the evening and talked about the child survival project in Liberia. He gave a history of the country that was involved in the bloodiest African



civil war for twenty years. The result has been a number of young people who have lost limbs and are beggars. **President Elect Noel Howard** suggested that a prostheses project similar to the one in Basra, Iraq, would be of help. During the happy bucks portion of the evening, **Jason Hamel**



said he was so pleased to be a dad, his first child having been born only two months ago. Contributed was \$31 for the foundation and \$49 for polio eradication.

www.pb-rotary.org www.rotary7620.org www.rotary.org

February 5, 2009 - Page 1

Potomac-Bethesda Rotary Club News

Thank You Letters from Students Receiving Potomac-Bethesda Rotary Club Dictionaries

Dear Mr. Grant,

Enclosed please find letters from the third graders thanking you and other members of the Rotary Club for the generous donations of student dictionaries. As we did not have information as to where we could send these letters, we were hoping that you would be able to share them with the other members of your club. Thank you very much again for your generosity. The students are really enjoying their dictionaries.

All the best.

Sincerely,

Debbie Schopf

Arriane Levine

Hebrew Academy

Some of the Letters Received:

Dear Rotary Members,

Thank you for the wonderful dictionary! The dictionary has everything I want to know in it. I thought the longest word was so cool! I got to learn about Presidents, states, countries, sign language, the Declaration of Independence, maps and more.

Maayan

Dear Rotary Club Members,

Thank you for the dictionaries. Now we can learn many words. I like that we can now learn sign language and sign my name.

Rachel

Dear Rotary Members,

Thank you for the wonderful dictionary. I can't believe that it has Braille and sign language. I also can't believe that it has the Solar Systems. I never thought that the earth is so small.

Jonah

Dear Rotary Club Members,

Thank you for the wonderful dictionary. I love it. One of the things I love is in the back, it has lots of other things.

Shana (drew a heart)

Dear Rotary Members,

Thank you for the wonderful dictionary. It is so cool that it has Braille, the longest word, sign language and everything you want to know. We are going to learn more words and see what they mean.

Elina

Dear Rotary Members,

Thank you for the wonderful dictionary. I learned how to write my name in sign language. I saw there was a Hebrew calendar and I was happy because I'm an Israeli.

Talia

Dear Rotary Club Members,

Thank you for the dictionaries. It was so much fun getting our dictionaries. It has a lot of information about the Presidents, countries and religions. It even has the longest English word! There are a lot of facts we can look up.

Sincerely, Jordyn

Dear Rotary Members,

Thank you for the wonderful dictionary. I really like that there is the Declaration of Independence. I also like it has the longest word.

From your friend Tani

Dear Rotary Club Members,

Thank you for the dictionaries. Now we can look up words instead of asking the teacher how to spell it. It was very generous of you to give the dictionaries

to us when we did not do anything for you.

Sincerely, Nava

Dear Rotary Club members,

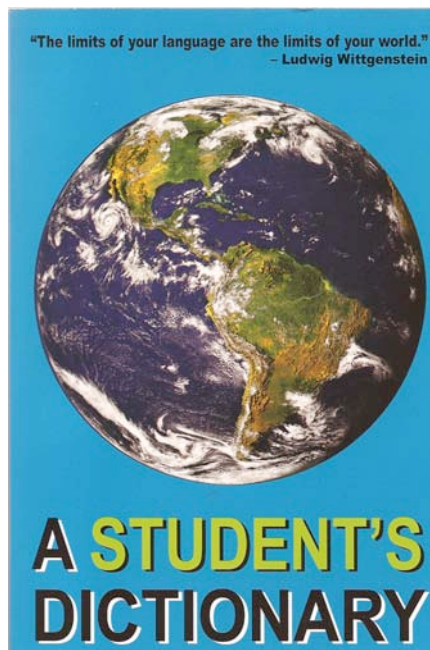
Thank you for the dictionaries. It was very nice, generous and I'm grateful to you for giving me a dictionary from your own money. It's very cool how they have measurements and tell information about states and presidents.

Coby

Dear Rotary Club Members,

Thank you for the dictionaries. Now we can look up words we do not know instead of asking the teachers. I like it a lot.

Zachery



Potomac-Bethesda Rotary Club News

Letter from George Mattamal's Sister in India

Sr. Valeria



PAX CHRISTI

St. Teresa's Convent,
Manalikai Post - 629 164,
Kanyakumari Dist., Tamil Nadu.
Phone : 04651 - 289225

Dear Dr. Nitkin,

Happy Christmas and a very Happy New Year from Sr. Valeria who is the sister of Mr. Mattamal. I came to know about you through my brother that you are the eminent person to coordinate many programmes in the club and your leadership, guidance and volunteer devotion to the club enrich the members of the association to act in higher level. I am much glad to hear the charitable and sustainable work that you and your club members have done inside USA and overseas too. I have seen your photos in the letter which was sent by my brother. Your special talent would benefit many youngsters to be excellent in doing social work. I want to know more about your club.

I am living in St. Teresa's convent Manalikai, a mission community where I am one of the pioneers of this southern mission, in Tamil Nadu, which is extreme South in India Map. It's a good place, has a good climate. We have got good monsoon rain for past two months. Now it is cold season, not like USA, deep cold climate, but pleasant cold.

Most of our people are rubber tapers because there are many rubber estates here. Please do come to visit our place and spend with us in India which is much different from USA. People are hard workers and enjoy their life with minimum, which is the style in India everywhere.

Here we are educating the people in schools as well as conducting family units in the evening time, visiting all the houses and giving. Counseling to the poor people. We are waiting for your visit in India, and expecting your reply.

May God bless you and your family members and all your enterprises. I assure my sincere prayer, I per this letter, with all the wishes.

With love, Sr. Valeria CTC

"Miracle On The Hudson" Has Historical Predecessor Involving Dick Gordon & Family

by Matthew B. Stannard,

San Francisco Chronicle, January 24, 2009

When Danville pilot Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger III safely landed a commercial airliner on the Hudson River last week and was hailed as a hero, his accomplishment was called unprecedented. But Maureen Gordon knew better.

"I was saying, 'Wow, this is so similar to what we went through,' " she said. "Except ours was more fantastic in a way."

Gordon, 54, and a handful of other people - including several who live in the Bay Area - have been experiencing a unique case of déjà vu. In October 1956, they were passengers aboard a commercial aircraft that also lost two engines, forcing the pilot to land on open water - in their case, the Pacific Ocean.

Like the 155 passengers and crew of the US Airways jetliner piloted by Sullenberger, the survival of the 31 people aboard Pan American World Airways Flight 943 became an international tale of good fortune. And they, too, credited their crew and a Bay Area pilot - Capt. Richard Ogg - with nerves of steel for their survival.

"Our captain was a pillar of strength," said Jane Gordon, 86, Maureen's mother, speaking by phone from her home in Maryland. "He was just wonderful. I'm sure he was scared to death, but you'd never know it."

Flight 943 took off for San Francisco from Hawaii on Oct. 15, 1956, at 8:30 p.m. The Boeing 377 Stratocruiser, dubbed the Clipper Sovereign of the Skies, was a pinnacle of 1950s luxury designed to appeal to movie stars and the well heeled.

Aboard the Clipper were 25 passengers; the cargo hold was packed with luggage and 44 cases of live canaries.

Trouble over the Pacific

About 3:30 a.m. San Francisco time Oct. 16, as the plane passed over the empty heart of the Pacific Ocean, Capt. Ogg, 42, of Saratoga, a pilot with 15 years at Pan Am, turned on the plane's PA system.

"Sorry to wake you up," he said.

Potomac-Bethesda Rotary Club News

Jane Gordon was already awake in the berths in the plane's tail, trying to quiet her 18-month-old twins, Maureen and Elizabeth. Gordon had been suffering a premonition of death since leaving the Philippines, where her husband, Richard, had a State Department posting.

"I was praying when ... we heard this terrible rumble of one engine, and then right after that the other one," she said.

Two engines of the Boeing 377 had lost power. The two remaining engines kept the plane aloft, but their straining consumed more fuel - and provided less speed.

Ogg had a choice of two bad options: keep going or turn back. "If we had to ditch near the Farallones, that's bad news, because it's always choppy and rough out there," recalled Pat Pimsner of San Carlos, the plane's purser. "And we had headwinds going back if we turned around."

Ogg came up with a third option: a risky water landing in the middle of the Pacific.

Help from the Coast Guard

The plane had recently been in contact with the U.S. Coast Guard cutter Pontchartrain in the Pacific below, where it served as a communications relay for airplanes crossing the sea.

"We were the midpoint. We were the point of no return," said Doak Walker of Juneau, Alaska, a radioman on the Pontchartrain that day. "They knew they couldn't make it all the way. ... They'd rather go down next to us."

For hours, Flight 943 circled over the cutter, burning off fuel. Pimsner and the flight crew cleared the cabin of loose objects and reminded the passengers how to inflate their life jackets.

Pimsner recalled that a Boeing 377 that had crashed in the ocean the previous year had shattered its tail on impact, so she cleared the rear berth area and parked the Gordons in their seats.

"At that time they didn't have infant seat belts," Pimsner said. "So I put each child in one of the parents' laps, and then I threw pillows all over the floor in front of them." Several times before dawn, the Coast Guardsmen on the ship below told Ogg they were ready for his attempted landing. The pilot made a dry

run as the sun rose, then pulled up and continued to circle.

"The ocean was flat, but they wanted more daylight. By the time we got daylight and they could see, the ocean was picking up again," recalled Dick Olson, the Pontchartrain's boatswain's mate of the watch that day.

Looking good and then ...

Shortly before 8 a.m., Pimsner and the rest of the cabin crew told passengers to assume crash positions, strap themselves in and extinguish cigarettes. Jane and Richard Gordon clung to the twins, and the plane headed for the sea at 90 nautical mph.

Olson, now a 73-year-old Danville resident, recalled watching from the Pontchartrain as the plane approached the sea. Ogg's landing seemed to be going well, he said. But "before he settled down, the wings caught a swell," Olson said.

The plane whipped around, its nose shattering and the tail - as Pimsner had feared - snapping away. The crew of the Pontchartrain watched in horror.

"When we saw that hit and explode, we just knew nobody could survive that," said Walker, the radioman. "It crashed a mile away, but we could feel it. We just knew nobody could survive that."

But moments later, as the spray cleared, the Pontchartrain's crew could see tiny figures walking on the wings of the floating, shattered plane.

"We steamed full steam to get there," Olson said.

As his passengers were rescued, Ogg - as Sullenberger would do years later - went twice through the plane searching for anybody left behind. Pimsner accompanied him until they stepped out of the sinking plane.

"He let me go first," she said. "Always a gentleman."

Then Ogg stepped off the plane's wing. About 21 minutes after he had landed it, the Clipper Sovereign of the Skies disappeared underwater.

All passengers were safe. The sole injury was Maureen Gordon, one of the twins, who was torn from her mother's arms, bumped her head and was knocked out. She quickly recovered.

All part of the job

It took days for the Pontchartrain to steam to San Francisco, its officers' quarters packed with plane passengers. The press swarmed the survivors.

Potomac-Bethesda Rotary Club News



Pan American Flight 943 moments before landing in the Pacific on Oct. 16, 1956. The Boeing 377 Stratocruiser had lost power to two of its four engines and had to risk an emergency water landing

Pan American Flight 943 lands in the Pacific on Oct. 16, 1956. The Boeing 377 Stratocruiser had lost power to two of its four engines and had to risk an emergency water landing.



Passengers of the ill-fated PAA Flight 943 scramble into life rafts from the wing just before the "Sovereign of the Skies" slipped beneath the waters of the Pacific. Passengers can be seen on the wing (left) as one raft pulls away (right).



Life rafts pull away from the "Sovereign of the Skies" just before the broken craft settles to her grave in the Pacific Ocean on Oct. 16, 1956.



William Simpson / US Coast Guard

Photos by William Simpson / US Coast Guard

"We had a certain job to do," Ogg told reporters. "We had to do it right or else."

His widow, Peggy, recalled those words last week as she watched coverage of Sullenberger in New York.

"I think they are very similar people. Very calm. Always doing their very best - learning everything they can," she said. "They were preparing for this, and it didn't catch them off guard."

Maureen Gordon retained no memory of her brush with death, but she was left with a sense of destiny that she now feels she shares with the survivors of the Hudson River landing.

"You just feel like there's a reason for your life, that God spared you for a reason," she said. "I feel that way for these people, too."

Pimsner remains proud of the competence and helpfulness of the passengers and crew of Flight 943, traits she said she could see in the stories of those who splash landed in the Hudson.

If she had one word of advice to offer those lucky passengers, she said, it would be this:

"Don't do it again," she said. And she laughed.

Message from Treasurer Alan Cookson

Invoice for 1st Quarter (January - March), 2009

At the Board's directive and in accordance with By-Laws, we are billing for this quarter in advance.

Potomac Bethesda Club Dues	\$25.00
Rotary District Dues	\$15.00
Rotary International Dues	\$15.00
Rotary Foundation*	\$25.00
Meals: 12 @ \$25.00 each**	\$300.00
Grand Total:	\$380.00

Please make the payments ASAP, payable at the meeting or mail to address below. Checks should be made payable to Rotary Club of Potomac-Bethesda.

Alan H. Cookson
Treasurer, Rotary Club of Potomac-Bethesda,
15717 Bondy Lane,
Darnestown MD 20878-2114
Tel: 301-869-6326 rjcookson@aol.com

*Voluntary payment. No member is required to pay this amount as a condition to membership in this club

www.pb-rotary.org www.rotary7620.org www.rotary.org

February 5, 2009 - Page 5