

# Potomac-Bethesda Rotary Club News

## Rotary Club Calendar

February 26 – 6:30pm Meeting–Hunters Inn

Guido Adelfio, Bethesda Travel Center



Guido is a second generation Rotarian and joined Bethesda Chevy Chase Rotary in 1983. He served as Club President in 1989-90 and District Secretary for Governor Larry Margolis. In 2004, together with another Bethesda Chevy Chase Rotarian, he helped co-found

MetroBethesda Rotary Club. Bethesda Travel Center has been custom planning vacations to Italy and Europe since 1961. Founded by his parents, Guido has taken over the reigns at Bethesda Travel, providing the imaginative vacations that their clients have come to know and expect. Guido's driving principle is "Get out & do stuff! There's a whole world out there and if we aren't careful we'll end up living our entire lives in these same four walls!"

March 5 – 6:30pm Meeting–Hunters Inn

Navy Pilot Trevor Estes

March 10 – 7pm Manna Food Center

March 12 – 6:30pm Meeting–Hunters Inn

Haitian Ambassador Raymond Joseph

March 14 – 8am Literacy Mini-Summit - Rockville

March 19 – 6:30pm Meeting–Hunters Inn

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

March 26 – 6:30pm Meeting–Hunters Inn

March 27-28 – RI President's Conference, Greenbelt

March 30 – Rotary Foundation Dinner – Greenbelt

April 14 – 7pm Manna Food Center

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

April 25 – International Night at the Austrian Embassy

### February 19 Meeting Report

President Elect Noel Howard

introduced our District Governor

Elect Paul Frey. Paul described

the banner that he presented from his Carroll Creek Rotary Club featuring the church spires in Frederick. Paul honored Bob Nelson with a theme banner for his district and RI bylaws change

initiatives and for working with him on the District



Assembly (April 18, 2009) and the District Conference (April 22-25, 2010). Since last August Bob has also been preparing Paul's District Newsletter. Paul

presented Noel with one of Frank Devlyn's books. He also noted that Alex and Steve Naron are so active in the Manna Food Center program and Jerry Gross has attended the



Rotary Leadership Institute. He was pleased that Potomac-Bethesda was one of only 719 clubs in the world that have achieved \$100 per capita donations to the Rotary Foundation Annual Programs Fund. He thanked Noel for attending all of the Presidents Elect training to date, so Noel is taking his role as Club President seriously. Due to a family emergency last month, Paul was unable to attend the Rotary

International

Assembly, so this month he received in-home training from RI Training Leader Abe Clymer. He described the theme for the year, "The Future



of Rotary is in Your Hands". The Presidential emphases for next year are unchanged and include Health, Hunger, Water and Literacy. The membership goal is a net gain of one new member per club. Paul met his wife Laurie in high school and worked for many years in the food service industry prior to forming his own management consulting company. Since Noel works for the Navy, Paul mentioned that he had a contract for a Navy food service assessment that had him stay overnight on a naval carrier. His oldest daughter gave him his first grandson last December. There are three clubs in Frederick with 160, 215 and 40 members respectively for the morning, noon and evening clubs. There is a new Rotary Club on the horizon in Urbana

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("Southern Frederick County") with 35 members ready to charter. He encouraged everyone to evaluate whether what you are doing as a club is working. He emphasized the recruitment of youthful and diverse members and noted that young professionals want to serve others and want to join Rotary for networking. "What can we do to grow

membership?" He enumerated a business approach where we reflect on Rotary's mission, look for people who fit, provide excellent orientation and training, stay close to them, get them involved, have fun and ask them, "how are we doing?." In District 7620 Paul is promoting leadership development, membership, youth programs and strategic planning. Paul gave a call to action saying "have the courage to lead and have the courage to support those who have the courage to lead".



We welcomed **Nadim Salti** back to the club to help celebrate **Caesar Kavadoy's** birthday. **Dick Gordon** missed the meeting in order to be interviewed by ABC News. **Nabil Bedewi** mentioned that the International Night Invitation has been distributed with this week's newsletter. **Art Blitz** will be checking with Jewish Group Homes for a home renovation project in the April timeframe. **Noel** is planning another feed the homeless night at Sophia House in March.

## *District Goals/Initiatives for 2009-2010*

1. Support President John Kenny's goals as outlined in the RI Strategic Plan and in the Presidential Citation brochure.
2. Support, promote, and celebrate the club initiatives in District 7620.
3. Focus on enhancing Leadership Development within the clubs and within the district.
4. Focus on the utilization of the newly revised district-wide Strategic Plan.
5. Enhance and support youth-related initiatives within clubs and within the district.
6. Enhance and support Membership initiatives that will allow the district to add clubs, and that will assist clubs in growing and retaining membership (add at least 100 net new club members, not including club extensions).
7. Enhance and support club and district initiatives that will promote the Rotary brand-locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally (Public Relations).
8. All clubs will set and achieve Foundation giving goals that will allow them to contribute to The Rotary Foundation, at a level appropriate for their club.
9. All clubs will set and achieve PolioPlus giving goals, in support of the District's PolioPlus giving goals, to help Rotary International achieve the Rotary \$200 million challenge.



*"The function of leadership is to develop more leaders, not more followers."~ Ralph Nader*

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## **Potomac Resident Continues Battle Against Polio: Dr. John Sever Helped Start Rotary International Effort to Eradicate Disease**

by Erin Donaghue, Gazette Staff Writer, February 25, 2009

The easily prevented disease, which can cause paralysis and death, was once endemic in 125 countries. Today, largely through the efforts of the PolioPlus Program — run as a partnership among Rotary International, the World Health Organization, the Centers for Disease Control, the United Nation's Children's Funds and local governments worldwide — the disease has declined 99 percent in prevalence, and is endemic in only four countries.

Rotary International credits Sever with bringing polio immunization efforts to the forefront of Rotary's international work more than 20 years ago, and today, the group is closer than ever to reaching its goal of eradication. "I'm very anxious to get the job completed," said Sever, 76, a pediatrician, professor emeritus of pediatrics at Children's National Medical Center and George Washington University Medical Center, and a medical researcher focusing on microbiology and infectious disease. Sever, a longtime member of the Rotary Club of Potomac, has met with national leaders including President Bill Clinton, testified before Congress, and traveled the world to help Rotary reach its goal.

"He's very well-respected internationally for the work in his career, and he's well-known to a lot of the epidemiologists and scientists working on polio eradication," said Carol Pandak, manager of Rotary's PolioPlus Division.

So why polio? At the time Sever began his work, less than half the children at risk for the disease were being immunized. As a member of the Rotary's Health, Hunger and Humanity Committee, Sever recommended beginning a polio immunization program in 1979 and

Rotary launched the PolioPlus program in 1985. Prevention, he said, was relatively inexpensive and simple. "It could be given by essentially untrained people — all you do is drop two drops in the mouth of a child," Sever said.

Over the years, the program has found international partners including local governments, raised awareness, secured funding, mobilized volunteers worldwide and even gone door to door. Recently, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation awarded a \$255 million grant to Rotary, which is currently raising \$100 million in matching grants toward polio immunization.



*Potomac resident Dr. John Sever has a simple mission: to completely eradicate polio.*

By several accounts, Sever is a humble man who doesn't like to boast about his accomplishments. But by the same accounts, what he has accomplished along with the PolioPlus program is extraordinary. Sever recalls attending "National Immunization Days" in India when a parade through the streets would announce that local villagers could bring their children to be immunized. Each child would have a finger marked to identify that they had received it, Sever said. In Alexandria, Egypt, Sever recalls knocking on each door in high-rise apartment buildings to immunize children, and marking the door with chalk when the job was complete.

"You learn very quickly that you should take the elevator to the top and walk down floor by floor," Sever said. National Immunization Days—in which volunteers set up stations or "fixed posts" to conduct immunizations— and door-to-door visits are typical activities conducted by Rotary volunteers worldwide. Rotarians even hop on trains to get the job done, Sever said.

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"I just had this strong, powerful feeling of 'wow, this is someone who is making a difference in the world,'" said Rev. Anne Benefield, who heads the Potomac Rotary, describing the first time she met Sever.

Benefield was inspired to join the Rotary by a comment her father — also a Rotarian involved in polio eradication — made as he was dying of pancreatic cancer in 1995. "He said, 'I really don't have any regrets. I have a wonderful family and a great career — the one thing I'm sorry I won't get to see is the completion of PolioPlus,'" she said. Benefield didn't realize when she joined the Potomac Rotary that the man who helped found the program was also a member.

Many experts say polio has fallen off the radar of most people in the United States, largely because it's a problem that no longer exists in their backyards. The last naturally occurring case here was in 1979, according to Sever. But where it does continue to exist — mostly in Nigeria, India, Pakistan and Afghanistan — its effects are devastating. Civil unrest and cultural barriers continue to pose challenges for Rotary volunteers in those areas, Sever said, and a new short film entitled "The Final Inch" that recounts the battle against polio is set to air this year on HBO. The film was nominated for an Oscar.

Sever credits the hard work of volunteers worldwide who have continued to push for eradication. "If it wasn't for persistence and enthusiasm, this program would have never been successful," Sever said. "We've stayed with it."

## **RI President's Message**

March 2009

At the International Assembly in January, we were privileged to host a special guest from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation: Microsoft founder Bill Gates Jr., who had come to speak to the incoming Rotary officers on the Gates Foundation's involvement in PolioPlus. A few moments into his remarks, the room

erupted in cheers at the announcement that Rotary's US\$100 Million Challenge had become Rotary's US\$200 Million Challenge: The Gates Foundation would commit an additional \$250 million of funding, over and above its initial \$100 million contribution, and Rotary would agree to raise an additional \$100 million match by 30 June 2012.

This is a tremendous vote of confidence in our work, and its implications are spectacular. When we succeed in meeting this challenge, Rotary and the Gates Foundation will have brought an additional \$555 million of new funding to the polio eradication effort, at the time when it is most needed. Only four countries are still polio endemic, but those four present the greatest practical and epidemiological challenges. We are close to the final hurdle of this race — but the final hurdle is also the highest and will require the greatest effort from us all.

This money will be used for operational support, surveillance, and social mobilization — vital aspects for the success of the campaign. In order to make the world polio-free, we must be vigilant for signs of new cases, we must coordinate well-planned and well-executed immunization days, and we must keep all our efforts organized for maximum efficiency and effectiveness. The hiring of town criers, the purchase of megaphones, the transportation of lab samples and vaccines, the mapping of villages to be sure not one child is missed — all of these needs are being met with the support of this challenge grant.

We are already close to halfway to raising our first \$100 million; in the three years ahead, we must, and will, raise a full \$200 million. We ask every Rotary club to carry out at least one fundraising event for polio eradication in each of these three years, and we especially ask newer Rotarians, and newer clubs, to be a strong part of this effort. We are so close to eradicating polio. We are so close to making this Rotary dream real. We should all be part of this incredible effort and this page in Rotary history.

Dong Kurn (D.K.) Lee President, Rotary International

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## Australian Districts Provide Relief To Victims Of Wildfires

By Ryan Hyland RI News – 24 February 2009

*Members of the Rotary clubs of Hawthorn and Boroondara, Victoria, Australia, are transforming an unused nursing home into a temporary shelter for residents left homeless by the wildfires. Photo courtesy of the Rotary Club of Hawthorn*

Rotary districts in Victoria, Australia, are bringing relief to families victimized by a series of devastating wildfires that swept across the state this month, killing more than 200 people and leaving thousands homeless.

As the scale of the disaster becomes clearer, Rotary clubs in districts 9780, 9790, 9800, 9810, and 9820 are excavating debris and providing food, clothes, tools, and short-term shelter to those affected by the blaze. District 9800 has also established an emergency fund for medium- to long-term assistance for rebuilding.

"Victorian clubs are doing a tremendous job at rallying to help those in need, both in donations and relief projects," says District Governor Jim Studebaker. "Rotary will be there when the fire is out and the dust settles. It's clear that many communities are going to need long-term help rebuilding." The process of rebuilding is unlikely to begin for months, and it will take many years to replace homes lost in the fire, says Joan Janka, president of the Rotary Club of Hawthorn, near Melbourne.

Just days after the fire started, her club partnered with members of the Rotary Club of Boroondara to turn a vacant nursing home into a temporary shelter for up to 60 displaced residents. "Volunteers worked very hard and extremely fast to transform an unusable residence into a clean, fully functional living facility," says Janka. "It's a huge effort put forth by Rotarians."

Members donated and purchased furniture, bedding, and kitchen supplies. They also cleaned, painted, and repaired 30 bedrooms, dining areas, and six common areas, which are furnished with couches, tables, and TVs.



Rotarians are working with the Boroondara City Council to identify the families with the most need to occupy the facility. All units should be completed within the next week, says Janka.

Norman Kenyon, an honorary member of the Rotary Club of Eaglehawk, was helping a friend clean up when he learned that the fire had spread to his part of town. When he returned later that day, he found his home had burned

to the ground.

Club members gave Kenyon clothes and bought most of his meals.

"Rotarians helped me immensely. Literally every member of Eaglehawk offered their home for me to stay," says Kenyon. "I can see the benefits to being a Rotarian. They are like one big family. Rotary has been remarkable, not only to me but to other fire victims."

Philip Archer, director of marketing and membership for District 9800, is helping coordinate efforts among the five districts. Eaglehawk's response is just one of many throughout Victoria.

In addition to hands-on relief initiatives, clubs are also funneling resources and funds to the Rotary International District 9800 Bushfire Recovery Fund.

"We're doing a good, old-fashioned Rotary assault on affected areas," says Archer. "Rotary will be there helping extensively in the rebuilding and recovery of communities affected."

For more information visit District 9800's Web site at [www.rotarydistrict9800.org.au](http://www.rotarydistrict9800.org.au)

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