

Potomac-Bethesda Rotary Club News

Rotary Club Calendar

March 26 – 6:30pm Meeting - Normandie Farm

John DeDakis, CNN Senior Copy Editor



Author John DeDakis will be speaking on his experiences as a journalist and a novelist. DeDakis is senior copy editor for CNN's "The Situation Room," anchored by Wolf Blitzer. He worked as a television correspondent for many years, interviewing such newsmakers as Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan and Alfred Hitchcock, before joining CNN in 1988. He received an Emmy for his role in CNN's coverage of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. "Fast Track" is the story of a

young woman journalist, Lark Chadwick, who launches an investigation into the mysterious events surrounding the deaths of her parents 25 years ago, when the aunt who raised her dies suspiciously. He is a lecturer at American University, Washington, DC where he teaches a journalism and writing class for student interns during the summer. He is also an adjunct professor at Regent University, where he taught newswriting to grad students online in 2008. In June 2009, he will be teaching an online class through Regent University on how to write a novel.

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

**March 30 – 7pm Rotary Foundation Dinner -
Martins Crosswinds - Greenbelt**

April 2 – 6:30pm Meeting - Normandie Farm

Ed Meagher, Aleethia Foundation for Wounded Troops

April 9 – 6:30pm Meeting - Normandie Farm

Debby Siebert - Marylanders for Sustainable Power

April 14 – 7pm Manna Food Center

April 16 – 6:30pm Meeting - Normandie Farm

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

April 23 – No meeting

April 25 – International Night at the Austrian Embassy

April 30– 6:30pm Meeting–Normandie Farm

Amgad Fayad - Information Security

May 7– 6:30pm Meeting–Normandie Farm

May 9– Fix-Up Day@Jewish Foundation Group Home

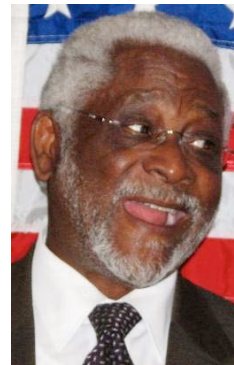
March 19 Meeting Report

Our special guest speaker was Raymond Alcide Joseph, Haiti's Ambassador to the US. His abbreviated address follows:

"Haiti, the so-called poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, contributed greatly to the greatness of America.

Having defeated the mighty French army of Napoleon Bonaparte, on January 1, 1804, Haiti declared its

independence and became the second independent nation in the Americas, second only to the United States of America.



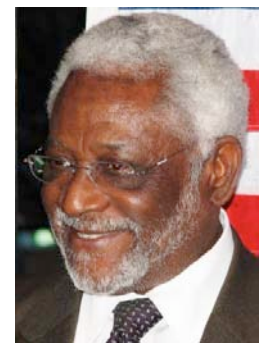
With the loss of their wealthiest colony, the French also lost their military headquarters in the New World. Their dream of conquering America came to naught. Thus, were they forced to sell the Louisiana Territory. That transaction resulted in the young American nation doubling its territory in one swoop. It was a

big feat, because Louisiana comprised that vast expanse of land west of the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains to the west, and from the Gulf of Mexico in the south to the Canadian border in the north. Today that territory embraces 13 states, which were purchased from the French for \$15 million, or about three cents (\$.03) an acre. The biggest real estate deal in history! In return, the United States, a



slave-owning power, slapped an embargo on Haiti which lasted approximately 60 years. This injustice was undone by President Lincoln who finally recognized Haiti as a free state. And the name of Frederick Douglass, the Black abolitionist, will remain forever enshrined in Haitian history for his advocacy role for Haiti.

South America also benefited from Haiti's independence. Simon Bolivar, the liberator of Grand Columbia, departed from Haitian shores with men, weapons, ammunition and other resources to carry out his successful campaign to liberate at least four countries, including Venezuela and Colombia, from



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Spain. In acknowledgement of Haiti's contribution, the "Libertador" adopted the red-and-blue Haitian flag to which was added a gold band on top.

A country with such a rich past, Haiti has suffered from the ostracism of racist countries that dominated the world. We also acknowledge that the leadership of Haiti had failed for the most part in defending the interests of the masses and in taking care of the land.

It ensues that Haiti has become a symbol of what should never have happened to a nation which was the beacon of freedom in the world. Even its environment has suffered the onslaught of nature, as four destructive hurricanes and storms (Fay, Gustav, Hanna and Ike) amply demonstrated in August and September of last year. The statistics are disturbing and depressing: 800 killed, 60% of our harvest destroyed and some 800,000 left homeless. World Bank President Robert Zoelick put the damage at \$1 billion, or nearly 15% of GDP.

It is in this context that we are urging the United States to halt deportation of Haitians living illegally here. Haiti cannot, at this time, accommodate the more than 30,000 of its citizens that Homeland Security has targeted for deportation.



We are asking all friends of Haiti to urge the Obama administration to grant Temporary Protected Status (TPS) to Haitians living illegally in America. By providing them with TPS, the new administration would be helping to stabilize Haiti and to put it on the path to

development. For the Haitians here contribute greatly to the economy back home. Their annual remittances of more than \$1.5 billion to families and relatives amount to nearly a quarter of Haiti's GDP.

As for you, Rotarians, I would encourage you to stay engaged in Haiti. Your conference on potable water in



late 2007, coupled with other humanitarian projects, is the kind of help that Haiti needs.

I am hopeful that a new day is dawning for Haiti. The recent visit of the Secretary General of the United Nations, accompanied by former President Clinton, Wyclef Jean, Dr. Paul Farmer and a group of businessmen looking for opportunities to invest sends a positive signal. A conference of donor countries on Haiti in Washington next month reinforces my optimism that Haiti is being considered as a priority at a time when the competition is very keen for dwindling resources."

[Thanks to President Elect Noel Howard for the article and Nabil Bedewi for the photos]

Service Above Self Spans Generations

By Antoinette Tuscano RI News – 23 March 2009



Members of the Rotary Club of Rushden Higham (From left): Steve Wilkins, Rachel Thompson, Natalie Parker, Mark Lees, Elizabeth Maurice, Rebekah Hawkins, Claire Mercer, Pat Keogh, Rachel Hawkins, Hayley Sansome, Karen Kearns, Steve Jones, Michelle Withers, Miranda Barley, Jo Underwood, Marie Gallacher, Michelle Jones, and Alison Baker. Photo courtesy of Rotary Today

At a glance, the members of the Rotary Club of Rushden Higham, Northamptonshire, may look different from their counterparts in England. Of the 20 members, all but four are female, and their average age is about 32.

At its core, though, the club has the same service-oriented spirit and fellowship as the more than 33,000 other Rotary clubs worldwide.

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Three former members of the Rotaract Club of Rushden – Miranda Barley, Claire Mercer, and Steve Wilkins – came up with the idea to launch a new Rotary club after they had turned 30 and could no longer qualify for Rotaract. They looked at joining existing Rotary clubs, but the members were mostly men and older than they were. They decided that forming a new club, with casual evening meetings and lots of hands-on service projects, would better meet their needs. The new club was sponsored by the Rotary Club of Rushden, with the help of two Rotarians from that club – Jim Kearns and Mark Winfield.

"People of all ages, both men and women, have different things to contribute to Rotary, and I think this is partly what makes the Rotary movement so good," says Barley, the new club's president.

To recruit more members, the group started advertising in the local paper and used fliers to publicize a launch night in April 2008. Former members of the Rotaract clubs of Kettering and Northampton joined, then invited their friends and colleagues. After several months, the original core of 3 grew to 20. The club received its charter earlier this year.

"I think that we have a good mix of people who are all very different, and I enjoy the social aspect," says Barley. "I only knew about four of the members before we started the club and have now met another 16."

So far, the club's service projects have included painting a fence in a children's play area, picking up litter, assisting with community events, and helping out at a local shelter.

"For me, it's about using Rotary to put something back into the community where I live," says Barley. "In the future, I would like to see us become heavily involved with projects within the local community so that we can really try and make a difference, gain more members – both men and women – and raise the profile of the club and Rotary."

Rotary Centers Have Potential To Change The World

By Arnold R. Grahl RI News – 19 March 2009



Colin Spurway (left), of Scotland, a 2003-05 Rotary World Peace Fellow, visits a field to learn about crops during his work with Mercy Corps. Spurway, now a manager with BBC World Service Trust, recently spoke to regional Rotary Foundation coordinators urging them to give the Peace Fellowships program a higher profile. Photo Courtesy of Colin Spurway

The Rotary World Peace Fellowships program makes a difference.

Colin Spurway, a 2003-05 peace fellow, says the program equipped him to make the world a more peaceful, just, and sustainable place. Speaking to regional Rotary Foundation coordinators (RRFCs) during a training meeting in

Chicago, Spurway thanked The Rotary Foundation for its support of the Rotary Centers for International Studies in peace and conflict resolution, and he urged the RRFCs to promote them.

"Only Rotary has the combination of financial capacity, internationalism, patience, and worldview to invest in something as imaginative, hopeful, progressive – but intangible – as peace," he said.

Spurway, a native of Scotland, added that peace is not a goal that can simply be checked off a list. "Peace is a continuing process. It is slow, long-term work."

In introducing Spurway to the RRFCs, Duane Sterling, Rotary Centers Committee member and aide to the RI president-nominee, suggested that the peace studies program receives less publicity than it deserves.

"The Rotary Centers come in right behind polio in priority," said Sterling. "But we are not giving it the kind of attention we need to be giving it. The program has one of the greatest potentials to change the world for generations to come."

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Spurway studied at the Rotary Center at the University of Queensland and spent his fourth semester at the University of California, Berkeley.

"My experience of the fellowship was made particularly rich by the semester in Berkeley," Spurway told the RRFCS. "But I know that I speak for the overwhelming majority of alumni when I say that the fellowship has proven to be of great value after graduation."

After managing peace-building and development programs for international charities in South and Central Asia, Spurway now works for the BBC World Service Trust in London as a manager for international development projects in Bangladesh.

He said the peace studies program contributes substantially to Rotary's image. It is also a feather in the cap of the participating universities.

Eddie Blender, Rotary Centers Major Gifts Initiative chair, said US\$40 million has been raised toward the goal of creating a \$95 million endowment fund by 2015 to sustain the program.

Alluding to a famous speech that Robert F. Kennedy made at the University of Cape Town, South Africa, in 1966, Blender called the approximately 400 graduates of the program "our ripples of hope. With them and with our peace centers, peace is possible."

Suriname Project Delivers Clean Water To 10,000

By Joseph Derr RI News – 19 March 2009

The small South American nation of Suriname may only have three Rotary clubs, but Rotarians there have made a big impact with projects to improve access to clean water.

Illegal mining has caused mercury contamination in many rivers and streams in Suriname, affecting the lives of thousands.

Focusing on the indigenous communities of Kajapatie and Abenaston, the Rotary Club of Paramaribo worked with clubs in Germany, the Netherlands, and the United States on a US\$73,000 project for a new safe-water system. These funds helped purchase holding tanks, filters, pumps, and other equipment, all powered by solar panels. The club received Matching Grant support from The Rotary Foundation and also

partnered with the Georg Fischer Bicentenary Foundation, the Alcoa Foundation, and the Canada Fund for additional financial support.

Paramaribo club members have completed seven water projects in recent years, investing a total of \$350,000 to provide clean drinking water for an estimated 10,000 people. Other projects assisted different communities, including those of the Maroon people, who are the descendants of 18th century runaway slaves.



Surinamese children enjoy water from a pump, part of a clean water system installed by Rotarians. Photo courtesy of Rotary Club of Paramaribo

"These projects have been so enormously successful because in the planning stages, the local populations were actively involved in all aspects of the clean water facilities. Nothing was carried out without the village elders' consent and knowledge," says Paramaribo club member Anton Brandon, one of the key organizers for the projects.

The clubs also emphasized community involvement to ensure the projects' sustainability. Villagers helped install underground water mains and were trained on system maintenance, Brandon says.

*Please send news articles and photos
to Bob.Nelson@NASA.gov
for inclusion in the newsletter*

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