

Potomac-Bethesda Rotary Club News

Rotary Club Calendar

**December 15 - 6:30pm – Meeting - Normandie Farm
Bob Hanson,**

Past Rotary District Governor

Bob owns a working beef cattle farm in North Potomac, which is the last working farm near the District of Columbia. Bob started farming in 1941 with his Dad, raising prize Angus Beef cattle. He had a custom farming business and farmed over 2,300 acres in Montgomery County. He graduated from the University of Maryland and completed Graduate work at the Wharton School of Finance. He served in Japan as a Lieutenant in the Air Force. After the War he became involved in the brokerage business, a member of the New York Stock Exchange and still kept the farm which he and his wife JoAnne had then purchased from his parents. He retired from the brokerage business and returned to Mt Prospect Farms in the late 1980's.



In 1945 Bob addressed the Rockville Rotary club as the first National President of the Rural Youth of the U.S.A., a federation of youth organizations with a membership of over six million. He was invited into the Rotary Club of Rockville in 1953 and served as President in 1959 -60 when he founded the Potomac Rotary club. In 1982-3 he was the District Governor of RI District 762 when the Montgomery Village Rotary Club was founded. Bob is a Paul Harris Fellow, Rotary benefactor and major gift donor. Bob has 3 grown sons and five grandchildren. His eldest son, John, is a past President of the Bethesda-Chase Rotary Club and youngest son, Tim, is a past President of the Washington, DC, Rotary Club.

[See additional newspaper article on page 2].

**December 22 - 6:30pm - Holiday Party
at Normandie Farm Restaurant**

December 29 – No Meeting

2012

January 5 – 6:30pm - Service Project at Manna

January 10 – 7pm – Manna Food Center Packing

January 12 - 6:30pm – Meeting - Normandie Farm

Dr. Michelle Thaller, NASA

January 19 - 6:30pm – Meeting - Normandie Farm

Philip Tarnoff, "The Road Ahead"

January 26 - 6:30pm – Social - Normandie Farm

February 2- 6:30pm – Service Project

February 9 – 6:30pm – Meeting - Normandie Farm

Bob Hester - Metro

February 14 – 7pm – Manna Food Center Packing

February 16 – 6:30pm – Meeting - Normandie Farm

Bob Pelletier, Jay Davies

Rotary World Curling Fellowship

February 23 – 6:30pm – Social - Normandie Farm

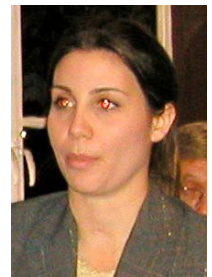
December 8 Meeting Report



Stephanie Glineur is a Rotary Ambassadorial student working as a post-doctoral researcher at the National Institutes of Health in the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. She grew up in Brussels, went to school in Liège and obtained her PhD last April. Stephanie had worked in research

in Crohn's disease and Bronchiolitis. Thanks to Rotary she has the opportunity to work here with a world-wide team of experts researching what happens when the Bronchiolitis virus enters the body. Bronchiolitis can develop into pneumonia and can result in death, so it is a major health problem. The research community is attempting to develop a vaccine after a failed attempt two decades ago.

Sara (Dispenza) Bannon was invited by Phil Meade who met her at a neighbor's party. Sara said it was an honor to come and speak to the Rotary Club. She grew up in a small town in Ohio and at age 17 went to Belgium as a Rotary Youth Exchange Student. Sara travelled to Belgium in a wheelchair as she was recovering from surgery for a knee injury. The first week she needed a doctor to come to the house, and the bill was only \$20 under state-run healthcare. She initially didn't speak French, but gained proficiency



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during the year. The food was fabulous and she quickly gained thirty pounds. There were several trips around the country and a Holocaust survivor took Sara and several other exchange students to a concentration camp where he had survived. Her experience with Rotary has shaped her life and she is presently working at the American Society for International Law (ASIL).



At ASIL, Sara oversees accounting, administration, compliance, technology and human resources. She remarked that "the law is the fabric of how nations really deal with each other." Thanks so much to Phil Meade for arranging the great program focusing on Belgium.

The club sang "Happy Birthday" to Noel Howard and everyone enjoyed a delicious cake. Noel's wife Gladys accompanied him on this special occasion.



Visiting Rotarians were Jon Van Winkle from the Wheaton-Kensington Rotary Club and Cristina Bautista from the Rotary Club of Olympia in the Philippines.

Hanson Family Farm in North Potomac Is Working to the End

187 houses, townhouses planned for 170 acres near Quince Orchard and Travilah road

By Cody Calamaio, *The Gazette*, July 21, 2010

Saturday morning still operates like it always has on the Hanson Farm. Animals are fed first as the family wakes up to morning chores before filing into the kitchen for a sourdough pancake breakfast. "Then we do all the talking about the farm, what work needs to be done, and share any news," Robert Hanson said standing by the kitchen sink. When he and his wife JoAnne built their house in 1964, they started with the kitchen and built the rest of house around it. That kitchen will someday be a baseball field since the Montgomery County Council unanimously approved residential re-zoning of the 170-acre North Potomac farm near the intersection of Travilah and Quince Orchard roads on June 15.

Though they had watched neighbor's farms close, Robert and JoAnne Hanson were determined to live the twilight of their lives on the farm they loved and where they raised their three sons. JoAnne Hanson died June 25 at the age of 84.

When the family decides to sell, the property would be developed with 187 single-family homes and townhouses, and at least 10 acres of parkland dedicated to the county park system.

Plans have not changed for Robert Hanson, 86, who continues to live and work on the farm. The family does not intend to sell the farm until Robert dies, and no developer has been selected.

"Our process is to continue doing what we've done in the past because it was clear that's what dad wanted to do," eldest son John said. "He grew up with the idea that he was going to be a farmer. He paid for my mother's wedding ring by selling pigs."

The family-operated farm has existed for three generations, and currently raises and sells black Angus cattle.

"I love every inch of this place and I know every inch of it. I've enjoyed it for years but I know it has to be developed someday," Robert Hanson said.

The 2002 Potomac Subregion Master Plan recommended that the farm be rezoned residential.

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While the guidelines were being developed, Montgomery County Park and Planning staff asked the family about its thoughts for the future, John Hanson said.

[Top photo] Robert Hanson, right, and his son, John Hanson, raise black Angus cattle and grow hay on the family's farm at the intersection of Travilah and Quince Orchard roads. The 170-acre property is to become a residential development, as recommended in the 2002 Potomac Subregion Master Plan. Tin Nguyen/The Gazette.



[Bottom photo] Robert Hanson loads hay for his Black Angus cattle at his North Potomac farm in January 2010



The family was shown several rough plans for the redevelopment of the farm and got involved early in the process to help guide the development toward something they would be happy with.

"It had baseball diamond in the park and the pitcher's mound was about where mom's kitchen was," John Hanson said about the original designs. "That's when we decided we better start paying attention."

The Hansons kept the community involved through meetings and outreach efforts beginning two years ago.

"That's why it's been a long process, but one where we tried to give everyone an opportunity to speak to," John Hanson said.

"We recognize that they have been very good stewards of the land and their interest in continuing to be stewards of the land even when they will no longer be owning the land is reflected in work with they've done with the community and work with the county," said Dan Drazan, president of the North Potomac Citizen's Association.

Since the 1940s, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts have camped on farm, John Hanson said. Travilah

Elementary School students also visit every year to learn about agriculture.

"There are a lot of roots here" John Hanson said.

"That's one reason why nobody wants it to change."

Shadows of the past

The re-zoning marks the end of a farming tradition, but also echoes of bigger changes because the Hanson Farm is the last major working farm in the Potomac subregion, which includes Potomac, Travilah and Darnestown and encompasses 66 square miles

bounded by Interstates 270 and 495 on the east, the Potomac River on the south, Seneca Creek on the west, and Darnestown Road and the City of Rockville on the north. When Robert's parents, Minna and William C. Hanson, purchased the land in 1941, the community was full of booming agriculture businesses.

"It was an agrarian society where you knew your neighbors and you helped them when they needed help and they helped you,"

Robert Hanson said.

In his youth, Robert rode a horse 13 miles to Landon School in Bethesda, had a lucrative pig business, and then was one of the founders of the Montgomery County Agricultural Fair. After spending time in the Air Force and working as a member of New York Stock Exchange in Washington, D.C., Robert moved his family from Bethesda to the farm he grew up on after purchasing a parcel of land from his father in 1964.

While the Hanson families worked their land selling grain, wheat, soy beans and cattle, they watched other farms close and new neighborhoods dot the landscape, John Hanson said.

"It's not evolving into an urban area, but it's in transition. Things are always changing. You go from a stop sign to a stop light," John said. "There is less and less tolerance for a tractor going 15 miles per hour going down the road."

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Developers made attractive offers to buy property from people who had labored on farms their entire lives, Robert Hanson said. The Hanson family was approached many times over the years to sell, he said. "People realized they could live more comfortably instead of worrying about where next dollar would come from," Robert Hanson said. "But it was a good life, and you lived day by day."

As farms closed, and development crept in, the Hanson Farm's business suffered because there was no longer nearby infrastructure, such as truck routes, to support agriculture, John Hanson said. They stopped producing grain in 1987.

"When you're way off here surrounded by housing, it doesn't work," John Hanson said.

Rapid development beginning in the 1950s spurred the county's creation of the Agricultural Reserve in 1980 to protect 93,000 acres of the county's agricultural lands, said Montgomery County agricultural services manager Jeremy Criss. Remaining farms beyond the reserve's borders, which encompasses the uppermost third of the county and does not reach Potomac, experience the pressures of outside development, he said.

The county has approximately 79,000 acres of agriculture assessed lands today, 10,000 of which are outside of the Ag Reserve, Criss said. At the time of the reserve's creation in 1980, the county had 128,000 acres of agriculture assessed lands.

One farm closed in 2009 and no farms have closed to date in 2010, Criss said. The economic recession has lessened the demand for new housing developments that may buy farms, he said.

Family will keep its roots

Even with development looming, the Hanson family's roots will not be severed from the property. Of the original 170 acres, the Hanson family will retain a two-acre property.

Robert Hanson's youngest son, Tim Hanson, followed his father and owns the house he built next door. Tim Hanson lives with his wife, and two daughters – the fourth generation of Hansons to live and work on the family farm. The girls have a few sheep they care for, and hope to move some of the horses to their property after their grandfather's farm is sold.

"They've grown up enjoying this very special experience," said Tim's wife, Alicia Hanson.

Tim and Alicia Hanson's property will remain untouched by the looming development, but they acknowledge that things will never be the same.

"The real connection is through the family, and that is fleeting," Alicia Hanson said. "You have to appreciate it while it lasts."

Celebrating the Family of Rotary

Rotary International News – 13 December 2011



Sophia is a Rotary Youth Exchange Student from Erkrath, Germany, staying with host families in Canada. Photo by Kim Rixon

You can see it in their faces.

The joy that spills forth as Rotarians take part in service projects, locally or internationally, says volumes about why more than 1.2 million people around the globe belong to Rotary clubs and are committed to making the world a better place.

Throughout the year, Rotarians have and continue to share pictures of their Rotary experience on our Family of Rotary group pool on Flickr. The above photo gallery is a sample of the more than 900 photos (and counting) that have been added to our Flickr group. Upload a photo of your own .

Family Month celebrates the family of Rotary, which, in addition to individual Rotarians, includes all of those who are involved in Rotary's work from Rotary Foundation program alumni to participants in Rotary youth programs in thousands of communities around the world.

Spouses and children of Rotarians play a vital role in Rotary too. Rotary clubs benefit immensely when they strive to achieve a balanced interaction between Rotarians and their families, enhancing home lives and family interactions.

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

Winter Fundraising Event

SEEDS-HAITI, INC.

cordially invites you to celebrate this season of giving
with an evening of dinner and Haitian entertainment

Friday December 16, 2011

7:30 pm

Tragara Ristorante

4935 Cordell Avenue, Bethesda, MD 20814

Program includes:

- *Buffet Dinner*
- *KaNu Folkloric Dance Theatre*
- *Konpa Music by DJ Relax*
 - *Door Prizes*
 - *Silent Auction*

\$65 per person

Seating Limited

Donations are welcome!

**All Proceeds from this event will benefit
The Good Samaritain School
in Arcahaie, Haiti**

For Tickets or to contribute, please contact:

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Washington, DC 20035

Telephone: 240.381.0113

No admittance without a ticket