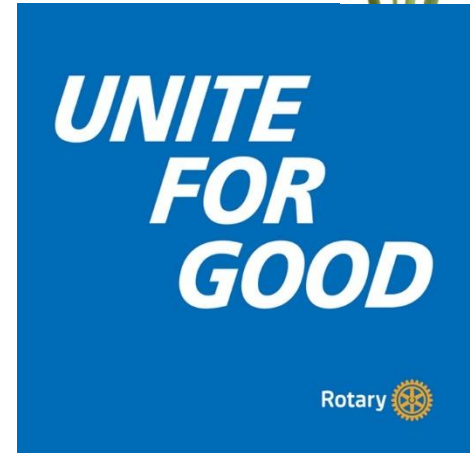


Milford Rotary Chat March 19, 2026



Meeting Minutes: 3/12/26 SBC Restaurant 12:15PM

WELCOME:

Everyone recited The Pledge of Allegiance.

Father Dick Popilowski gave us a Prayer:

Gracious God, We gather today in fellowship, grateful for the opportunity to serve together. Inspire us to live each day with Service Above Self seeing the needs around us with clear eyes and generous hearts. Bless our work, our community, and all who depend on our involvement. Help us have a successful PROM event so that we can support many worthy causes. May our actions reflect compassion, fairness and goodwill. Amen.

Tom Margius, sight unseen, was able to recite The 4-Way Test.

GUESTS:

Joshua Torres, Ray Carissimi's guest

Dave Espisoto had a few members of the State Wrestling Championship team as guests: Tommy Mahon (State Champion), Zach Lund (Captain), and , Shane Trevethan (Senior).

DO GOOD:

Phil Ucci congratulated the Foran Wrestling team on their State Championship.

Win Smith congratulated the Wrestling team and noted he is back from his recent trip to Vietnam.

Matt Fama was happy his brother is coming to visit from Virginia.

Martine Fairbairn was happy to be back at our meeting. (She was a Milford Rotarian before moving to Essex.)

Tom Margius had a noted about a family tiff with an AI generated picture, was happy about upcoming spring and noted that former wrestlers make great champion Bicycle Track Racers.

Don Wetmore was happy to have recently attend the President Elect Training Conference in Framingham, Mass. (He is the Governor-Elect for our District.) He said the conference has 400 president-elects from Southern Canada and New England. He also noted an App available [Rotary Club Locator](#) that you can use to find Rotary Meetings worldwide.

Carrie Reed noted that we currently have \$9,200 in sponsorship monies for the Prom event. She had a story about a bag and Tracy O'Brien as well as a recap of her Manicure/Pedicure wrestling match from last week's meeting.

Tad Smith echoed what his brother Win said about their recent Vietnam trip. He gave a 10,000 dong Vietnam denomination that I guess isn't worth much as per Win's to Joe Barnes that "you hold more dong in your hand than money"!

Christine Early noted we need to by tickets for the upcoming Prom Event.

Tracy O'Brien noted 3 things: She has already something on 3/21 and won't make the Prom Event, had her 65th Birthday on Monday and is now Medicare Eligible, and was able to celebrate her birthday with her mother who is 89 and shares the same birthday with her.

Phil Ucci thanked everyone who helped recently at Beth El – 114 were served. The next event is Saturday the 21st.

Roger Pocock noted he celebrated 'another' birthday last week.

Lorna Sura was happy to babysit her 2 grandchildren one of which is a ball of fire and the other is calm. She reported that Glen (her significant other) had biventricular/pacemaker surgery this morning and is recovering.

GUEST SPEAKER:

Martine Fairbairn, a former Milford Rotary Club Member and one of the founding members of the Nambale School in Kenya was our speaker today. She had been a member of our club until moving to the Mystic/Old Saybrook area. She started with international water projects and evolved with Rev. Evalyn Wakhusama, a Yale Graduate. Evalyn founded and is the Director

of the school in Kenya. It began with 1 grade and moved up to 9th grade. The school was started in 2009 with 30 kids and no electric. It now has 547 kids, 100% of whom go onto higher education. The school is the top scoring school in the area, class sizes are about 30, it has been 16 years in operation, and receives zero federal monies. The students speak Swahili and by ages 5 to 6 learn a second language. Sports are important at the school.

About 1/3 of the students are sponsored, and 2/3 pay fees. There is a serious vetting process for the sponsored students. She noted an influx of foreigners into Kenya, giving the example of a recent influx of Chinese students.

She spoke of a project that Esther, a receptionist at the Nambale Magnet School, in her early 30s runs a farm that produces their own fertilizer by composting. She runs from being the receptionist to changing into boots and managing the farm. 60% of the food is from the farm and 100% is recycled. She also spoke of their significant work on how they developed their clean water systems. The club donated \$2000 toward the school.



Announcements:

Dick Popilowski noted that currently 70 tickets have been sold for the Prom Event on 3/21. Paul Gargano has been working with Gina Gaglione-Belinkie on Raffle Prizes. One of the prizes is a ride in Roger Pocock’s Austin Martin to Gary Opin’s house where he will give a ride in his boat from his dock. There are also several signed music albums.

Bill Parry gave a report on his recent President Elect Training Seminar in Framingham, Mass. He was extremely energetic about Rotary and it’s impact. He noted that there are 500 Rotarians that volunteer to help with Rotary International. From his experience at the meetings, our club is one of the best clubs in the Geographic Area of 7 Districts from Southern Canada, Vermont, Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Connecticut. We are so lucky to have so many ingrained and continual events. Also, our club structure with moving up the chairs provides continually new vitality to our club. He also said that Don Wetmore was ‘loved’ and ‘Apple of the District’s Eye’ at the meetings as per being Governor-Elect. Don said the two most important events in his life were getting his wife to marry him and joining Rotary. Paul Mangels, our District Treasurer, is also well liked, involved and important in our District.

Dave Esposito requested some donation from Milford Rotary Club for the 62 State Championship Wrestlers. They were 31-2, Won the State Championship. He said the 2 Captains Raised \$3,500 for Avery’s Army (Pediatric Research Charity).

3/21 is the [Prom Redux](#).

3/26 6PM Next Lobster Bake Meeting at Lise Robinson’s Office at 612 Wheeler’s Farms Road, Milford

4/9 Norm Parcells lunch Monroe Rotary hosting. Our recipient Dave Adams is flying up from Florida to receive the award.

4/12 & 10/19 are the next Shred events. Matt Fama has agreed to head these events to benefit Boys and Girls Club

6/14 5K Run in the Park – Dan German is “running” aka chairing this event

Upcoming Club Meetings:

3/19/26 Christine Prete – [Shopping Anyway](#)

3/26/26 Dominic Mantuano – [CT Burns Care Foundation](#)

4/2/26 Michele Steinlauf – [Food-2-Kids](#)

4/9/26 No Lunch Meeting for Milford Rotary (Norm Parcell’s Luncheon at Whitney Farms)

4/16/26 Leonora Rodriguez – [Milford Senior Center](#)

Scribe: Tom Margius

Board Meeting the Second Thursday, 5:30 PM social, 6 PM meeting every month unless noted otherwise

[Who’s Who for the July 1, 2025- June 30, 2026 Rotary Year](#)

Officers:	Sergeant-At-Arms: Dave Adams	1 st Year Board of Dir:	2nd Year Board of Dir:
President – Lorna Sura	Assistant Sergeant-At-Arms: Joe Barnes	Matt Fama	Gary Johnson
President-Elect – Bill Parry	Treasurer: Tracy O’Brien	Evelyn Karam	Cherie Malona
Vice President – Lise Robinson	Asst Treasurer: Adam Kasowitz	Joe Barnes	Bob Bogert
Secretary – Dick Popilowski	Phil Ucci III (Immediate Past President)	Carrie Reed	Dave Adams
Membership Chairman – Gary Johnson	Beth-El meal leaders- Dave Adams		Phil Ucci III - IPP

Your Rotary Chat Team: Scribes: Greg Schmitt & Win Smith, Jr Setting/Editing/Circulation: Tom Margius

Milford Rotary, PO Box 381, Milford, CT www.milfordrotary.org

Every spring is the only spring, a perpetual astonishment.

— Ellis Peters