

# The 5390 Roundup

Rotary District 5390 • Montana

*The Rotary motto Service Above Self conveys the humanitarian spirit of the organization's more than 1.2 million members. Strong fellowship among Rotarians and meaningful community and international service projects characterize Rotary worldwide.*



## From Sint Nicholaas and Sinterklaas to Saint Nick and Santa Claus: An American Comedy (Author wishes to remain anonymous)

When I was a five(ish) year old child it was traditional in Holland to celebrate “Sinterklaas avond” (Santa Claus Eve) on the evening of December the 5th, the night before St. Nicholas’ day. Saint Nicholas was Bishop of Myra (present day Turkey) in the early fourth century; he died on December 6, 343. It is not entirely clear how historical the stories about him are – being a cynic I would submit that most of them were indeed just stories. He appeared never to have been formally canonized, but very early after his death he was already known as “Saint Nicholas”, the patron saint of (especially) children and sailors. Officially, i.e., in the Roman Catholic Calendar, his feast is considered “optional”. Whatever, in my youth it was a very popular occasion and the major day of the winter in which children received their presents; Christmas was, at that time, considered a holiday for adults. Even now the St. Nicholas holiday is still widely celebrated in Holland, with Sinterklaas arriving by boat from Spain (why Spain, I have no idea) in early December, accompanied by his little helpers (“Black Petes”) with bags over their shoulders carrying presents for the “good” children, and a “rod” of twigs in their hands to punish the naughty ones, all very politically incorrect of course!

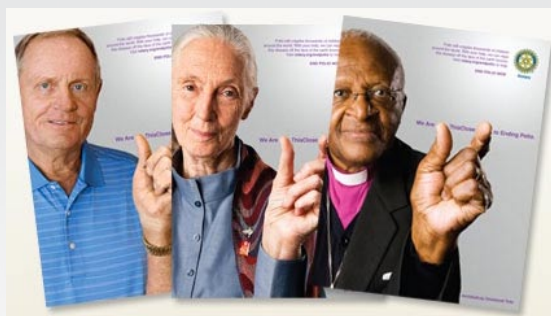
One would have thought that the Dutch brought the St. Nicholas tradition with them to New Amsterdam, but there is no evidence of that. Later, the “Pennsylvania Dutch” (actually Deutsch, i.e., German) appear to have kept the feast of St. Nicholas – I don’t know in what form.

The present-day Santa Claus was reborn after the revolution, in New York, as one of the expressions of the colony’s Dutch roots.

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## We’re This Close...

Rotary and its global polio eradication partners have made significant progress in ridding the world of the disease.



## CLUB NEWS

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St. Nicholas even became the patron saint of the New York Historical Society and of the city itself. But the modern Santa Claus (at least in elementary form) was an invention of Washington Irving, described in his Knickerbocker's History of New York as a jolly Dutch burger with a clay pipe. He was pictured more like the modern Saint Nick in the 1823 poem "A Visit from St. Nicholas" (better known as "The Night before Christmas"): He had a broad face and a little round belly, that shook, when he laughed, like a bowlful of jelly. He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf .. Notice that his "timing" was sneakily switched to Christmas, by more than two weeks from his official feast day.

The further transition to the Santa Claus as we now know him was heavily influenced by front pages of the Saturday Evening Post and, especially, by the post-war Coca Cola advertisements which picture him in what we now think is the "classical" image of the jolly old man in a red suit – far removed from the St. Nicholas dressed as a bishop with miter and scepter, the way he is still pictured in "the old country". But then, Christmas isn't what it used to be either!

I wish you, with Santa: "Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good night"!



## ROTARY OF GREAT FALLS Club Dates to Remember

by Jeremiah Johnson

Dec 14                  Evan Barrett - Governor's Office  
Dec 21                  Annual Family Holiday Luncheon

## WHITEHALL ROTARY CLUB

The Whitehall High School Interact Club has been working on a new town park for several years. In October, members assembled a picnic table shade shelter. The Silver Tower Park is a cooperative effort between the Interact Club, Whitehall Garden Club, Whitehall veterans and the Town of Whitehall.



## ATTENTION ALL DISTRICTS

The following Rotarians are not getting their news letters because the following emails are returning:

### Bounceback Report

NAME	EMAIL ADDRESS
Duane Johnson	camelinaguy@yahoo.com
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## POLIO NEWS

**POLIO IN RETREAT**  
by JW (Joop) Thiessen, MD

According to a recent article in Scientific American (by Robert Fortner, October 28, 2010), new cases of poliomyelitis are nearly eliminated where virus once flourished, i.e., in countries where polio was endemic. Particularly in India, specifically in the states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, which have produced nearly 5000 cases in this decade alone, this year, even at the height of the season, new cases hovered near zero. The months of August and September used to produce an average of 140 cases, but during September and October, zero cases were seen, with less than ten cases in July and August together.

Worldwide, polio cases have been reduced from about 350,000 in 1988 by 99 percent, with only a few countries still showing cases appearing. Of the four countries where transmission of the virus still takes place (India, Nigeria, Afghanistan and Pakistan), India has demonstrated the lowest efficacy of the oral virus, requiring numerous doses per child to produce immunity. Since 2005, a trivalent vaccine (aimed at the three types of polio virus) was introduced – as type 2 virus of polio is now eliminated worldwide, a bivalent vaccine was used which has demonstrated excellent effectiveness, as demonstrated above. Nevertheless, to bring about a complete eradication of polio in India, it has been estimated that the millions of newborns in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh every year need to receive multiple doses of vaccine, which still requires a major effort given the problems in reaching the (extremely poor) at-risk population and the scant health infrastructure, complicated by extensive flooding, especially in Bihar. This not just renders the target populations difficult to reach, but is also complicated by multiple gastrointestinal challenges threatening already taxed immune systems.

Polio was supposed to be eradicated by the year 2000, a goal set by the World Health Organization in 1988. WHO, together with the US Centers of Disease Control, UNICEF, and, of course, Rotary International have been very effective (at enormous costs) to reduce the incidence of polio to nearly zero. Polio was completely eradicated in North and South America by 1994, in Australia and China by 2000, and in Europe by 2002.

In African countries, cultural animosities sometimes interfered in eliminating the threat of polio. For example, in 2003 in Nigeria, a Herculean effort was mounted to inoculate 15 million children, but prominent leaders in that country warned that the vaccine was part of an imperialist plot to keep Nigeria's population down. It took a few years, working with religious and traditional leaders in local populations and convincing national Nigerian leaders, that a major vaccination effort produced dramatic results: last year a total of 300 cases of polio were reported; this year only a few cases occurred. These and the following data were derived from another article in Scientific American (by Elizabeth Svoboda, August 10, 2010).

This year, WHO initiated a vaccination drive targeting 85 million children in 19 West African countries, and in some other countries where polio is still endemic (including India and Afghanistan). Still, the fight against polio is far from over – it is estimated that annually 1000 cases still occur worldwide, with a global economic cost of some \$700 million. The vulnerability of inadequately vaccinated populations may cause a mushrooming of a few cases into dozens: e.g., in April an outbreak occurred in Tajikistan.

It may be a surprise to many Rotarians that a total eradication hasn't been arrived at yet, notwithstanding the enormous efforts and financial outlays applied so far. It is not uncommon, however, that the "tail end" of any public health measure is often as long as the duration of the most productive period. In the case of infectious disease, many (especially childhood) diseases have practically disappeared, primarily because of routine vaccinations in early life which have been going on for decades. We are now in a situation where people begin to express doubts whether their children should still be vaccinated, potentially creating a situation where one single (imported) case may cause an outburst of cases in a now inadequately protected population. A classical example of this is the outbreak of an 1874 measles epidemic in Fiji, which killed over 40,000 people, reportedly after one Fijian and his two sons returned from Australia where they had contracted the disease. And, finally, that the effect of a pathogen in an unprotected population may cause a spread word-wide was, even in this century, demonstrated a number of times – one of the most infamous examples being the "Spanish Flu", a pandemic that lasted from 1918 to 1920, and killed an estimated three percent of the world population, roughly 50 million people (about 675,000 of these in the U.S. alone) and an infection rate of some 500 million.

In other words: there is no reason to be complacent. Infectious diseases are still around the corner, even after a "total eradication" campaign. It is still worth a major effort to reduce, if at all possible to zero, the threat of devastating diseases such as polio. And it is worthwhile noting that there are still massive deaths from diseases that could be prevented by measures of a public health nature – improving hygiene, cleaning water sources, eradicating pathogens carried by parasites such as mosquitoes (a million deaths a year from malaria!), nematodes, etc. It is in this field that Rotary can also make a big difference. The Rotary International and our District's emphases on improving water quality in developing countries, for example, may help prevent millions of deaths, at a cost of a fraction of that of the smallpox and polio eradications. I am, of course, not saying that the latter efforts were not (awful term) "cost effective", but only that even our own District and its clubs may contribute, in a measurable way, to the world's health and, through that, to peace. Let's increase our own contributions to that goal too!!



## **SOME OF THE AWARDS TO DESERVING CLUBS PRESENTED AT THE ROTARY DISTRICT FOUNDATION DINNER HELD RECENTLY IN MISSOULA**





# HAMILTON ROTARY CLUB BELL RINGERS





## CLUB NEWS

### HAMILTON ROTARY CLUB

Here are some photos of our speaker at our 11/1/2010 meeting, Chris Daum. Chris heads Renewable Energy Supply, and discussed her business which provides Solar Energy equipment to facilitate Green power.



Here are photos of our two speakers on 11/15/2010.

First, Heather Mousley from Ravalli County "BEAR" (Business Expansion and Retention) spoke about training programs working with employers and prospective employees.



Here a photo taken on 11/11/2010 at BJ's Restaurant where members of our Hamilton Rotary Club were preparing Dictionaries for distribution to grade school children here in the Bitterroot.



Our second speaker was Delynn Gardner, who represented the "On-The-Job Training" program.





## CLUB NEWS

### HAMILTON ROTARY INTERACT CLUB



## ROTARY COORDINATORS & CHAIRS

### TIPS FOR PUBLICIZING CLUB ACTIVITIES

With so many opportunities to publicize your club's projects and activities, it may be difficult to know where to begin. Rotary International offers many outlets through which you may be able to publicize your club's success stories to an international audience. Before you submit a story, ask yourself these questions:

- Was our project or activity a success?
- Can other clubs learn and be inspired by our story?
- Can other clubs replicate our success?

A story that includes the following elements has a greater chance of receiving coverage in an RI publication:

- Demonstrates a unique or innovative approach to addressing a problem or challenge
- Focuses on action and hands-on participation by Rotarians
- Explains why the activity was undertaken and what positive outcomes resulted from it
- Includes high resolution, action-oriented photos of the activity

Please send concise descriptions of newsworthy activities, along with action-oriented photos, to your RI staff liaisons. They can share your submissions with RI's communications and editorial staff for consideration as a story in one of RI's publications or on the RI website.

- View a reference list of RI's publications and media outlets

Another easy way to share your project success stories with Rotarians around the world is to submit a description of your project for possible inclusion in RI's database of model projects on ProjectLINK. Simply fill out the ProjectLINK Model Project Submission Form, and e-mail it to Rotary International. If selected for inclusion as a model project, Rotarians will be able to read about your club's success and may choose to replicate your strategies in their own communities.

For tips and resources to help you promote your club activities and enhance Rotary's image through other media, please visit the Public Relations section of the RI website.

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