



**District Governor  
John D. Mitchell**

## **Governor's Newsletter**

### **District 7490**

**Serving Bergen, Hudson  
& Passaic Counties**

**New Jersey, USA**

**August, 2019**



### **Governor's Message for August.**

Allow me to share with you, my fellow Rotarians, that I'm feeling a bit guilty about all the fun I'm having serving as your Governor. By the time you are reading this, I will have completed 20% of my club visits and I must say, I have been so impressed by the dedication of the Rotarians I have had the privilege to meet.

Each Club is certainly proud of their own history, personality and culture, but the common theme with every Club I have visited so far is that they are all searching for new and better ways to keep the Rotarians they have and to attract new members.

We discussed a variety of ways to keep our incumbent members happy and nothing beats finding out why a member joined Rotary in the first place, and then looking for ways to fulfill that quest. Sometimes, it's as simple as joining an existing Club committee or the Club agreeing to form a brand new committee. The latter is sometimes difficult if long-time members are resistant to change. Obviously, each Club can and will decide what's in their best interest, but new ideas should not be rejected out of hand. In fact, a number of Clubs in our District that have enjoyed a nice growth spurt by did so simply accepting and then implementing out-of-the-box ideas. Give it a shot. What do you have to lose?

During a number of my Club visits, I had the honor of inducting a bunch of new members. Interestingly, the new members didn't materialize out of thin air. Somebody in the Club asked them to join. While there is a wealth of materials on-line to help attract new members, there is nothing better than simply asking someone...and while I'm on that subject, please update your rosters to reflect your actual club membership.

Being a Rotarian should be viewed as the honor it is and prospective members should be educated on the great things our organization has achieved over our fabulous history.

Each of us should have our "elevator speech" at the ready, and then be prepared to provide more detail if asked.

Lastly, the Fair Lawn Sunrise Club has enjoyed remarkable growth over the last year. Their former Club President, John Cosgrove, is now our District's Assistant Membership Chair. I've asked John to visit as many clubs as he can to impart some of the tricks of the trade he so successfully implemented. Don't hesitate to ask John to be a speaker at one of your club meetings. John can be reached at 201-572-5637, [icosgrove@atlantichandling.com](mailto:icosgrove@atlantichandling.com)

Enjoy the rest of the summer!

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### **Newsletter Editor**

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## PDG Lenny Agrusti and Fair Lawn Sunrise Club's John Cosgrove Speak on District Membership Increase.



**Past District Governor Leonard A. Agrusti, Chairman of the District's Membership Committee, speaking on Aug. 5 of the increase in Rotary membership over the last year.**

Past District Governor Leonard A. Agrusti earlier this month addressed the issue of membership, both in District 7490 and for Rotary International.

Speaking at the District Staff Meeting on August 5, Lenny spoke of how membership in the 52 clubs of Bergen, Hudson and Passaic Counties had increased from 1,175 people in July, 2018, to 1,239 people at the beginning of last month – an increase of 64 members representing a percentage increase of 5.4-percent.

Some 80,000 people joined Rotary clubs throughout the world in 2018 - 2019, he said, while 66,000 others left for one reason or another. Contrasting the membership retention rate of RI vs. District 7490, Lenny noted that RI's retention rate stands at 77-percent while that of our District is at 87-percent.

But Lenny cautioned, rather than boast of its superior retention rate over that of Rotary International, that retention rate should be a cause for concern, because, he said, in the previous year, our retention rate stood at 91-percent.

Although RI's membership grew by approximately 14,000 people, Lenny said, 18 clubs throughout the world were disbanded for one reason or another, whereas District 7490, added two clubs – the Jersey City Golden Door Rotary Club on March 15 and the Kearny Rotary Club on June 27.

In his remarks, Lenny added a second cautionary note: while District 7490's campaign to increase membership appears to have been successful, he warned that such campaigns generally tend to be temporary, producing only short-term results.

In discussing both why people leave Rotary as well as of those who remain, Lenny said that surveys indicate that 31-percent of people who quit Rotary say they did so either because Rotary has become too expensive for them or too time-consuming. Another 21-percent of those who quit, he added, said they did so because they were disappointed with scope of their clubs' activity.

Throughout his remarks, Lenny stressed that clubs must *engage* their members, that is, that all members of the club should have something to do, something that causes them to feel committed to the club. He also said that friendship is a key component in membership retention, with 77-percent of members saying that friendship within Rotary and the club's community service are the two major reasons they remain in Rotary.

Lenny also discussed the selection of membership. While some people may not be a good fit for one club, he said, they could easily fit in with another. Members who are more disposed to contribute only financially to a club rather than engage in service projects, Lenny cautioned, would be the people most likely to leave Rotary.

In a reversal of the idea that older people influence younger people, such as parents who influence the actions of their adult children, Lenny said that younger people are more apt to entice their parents to join Rotary.

Speaking of the District's Membership Committee, Lenny said that the panel is made up of five people, including John Cosgrove who last year served as President of the Fair Lawn Sunrise Club. That club, Lenny reminded his audience, added 18 new members to its ranks in the year ending in June. The members of his committee, he said, are willing to visit clubs and offer tips on recruiting and retention for those who wish it. Clubs should do periodic membership assessments.

Lenny then invited John to discuss with his audience how the Fair Lawn Sunrise club managed to increase its membership.

### ***John Cosgrove Speaks of Club's Membership Increase.***

In his discussion, John said that the Fair Lawn club created a membership committee that was itself made up of people who represent all shades of Rotary. People who are active, he said, want to *stay* active.

*(Continued on Page 3, Col. 1)*



**John Cosgrove of the Fair Lawn Sunrise Rotary Club discussing the club's membership increase by 18 people at the Aug. 5 District Staff Meeting as Past District Governor Leonard A. Agrusti listens.**

## Reports and Activities of the District Staff Meeting Held on August 5.

### ***John Cosgrove Speaks of Club's Membership Increase.*** (Continued from Page 2, Col. 2)

Discussing what service programs were of interest to Rotarians in Fair Lawn, John said that they focused their energies on local concerns, that is, those that are of concern to the area of Fair Lawn.

With an emphasis on attracting younger people, John said that clubs should consider the needs of their members. As an example, he noted that while the Fair Lawn Sunrise club meets at 7:30 a.m. on Tuesday mornings, some members are unable to meet at that hour. In order to accommodate them, he said, the Club conducts one evening meeting a month. He also said that the club ends every meeting with a talk on membership.

John said also that when installing new members, their relatives are invited to attend, and finally, he suggested that clubs post their activities on social media outlets, such as Facebook, Instagram or Twitter.

### ***PDG Bonnie Sirower Talks on Sept. 15 Family Picnic.***

Past District Governor Bonnie F. Sirower spoke on August 5 of District 7490's annual Family Picnic, which this year, will take place on Sunday, Sept. 15 at Woodland Park in Hasbrouck Heights. She encouraged her audience to attend the picnic as a means of meeting other Rotarians in a social, rather than business setting.



**Past District Governor Bonnie F. Sirower discussing Rotary District 7490's annual Family Picnic at the Aug. 5 District Staff Meeting.**

Bonnie also said that the District's annual food-gathering drive, normally held on the Saturday preceding Halloween, will this year be held on March 14, 2020 and like previous efforts, will also be held Paterson.

### ***PDG Nikki Mederos Receives Fourth Paul Harris.***

Rick Saltarelli, chairman of District 7490's Paul Harris Society, on August 5 presented Past District Governor Niurka "Nikki" Mederos with her fourth Paul Harris Fellowship. That designation indicates, Rick explained, that the Fellow has either donated \$4,000 to the Rotary Foundation's Annual Programs Fund, or that \$4,000 has been donated to the Annual Program's Fund in his or her name.



**Rick Saltarelli, Chairman of District 7490's Paul Harris Society, presenting Past District Governor Niurka "Nikki" Mederos with her fourth Paul Harris Fellowship denoting her \$4,000 in contributions to the Rotary Foundation's Annual Programs Fund.**

### ***Bob Kilroy Says MFAC Can Help Clubs on Veterans.***



**Robert Kilroy of the Secaucus Rotary Club, Chairman of District 7490's Military Family Assistance Council (MFAC) telling Rotarians that the MFAC is willing to help clubs in service projects benefiting veterans of military service.**



## Distirct Governor John D. Mitchell Speaks on Membership and Pays Tribute to the Late Eileen Geoff.



**District Governor John D. Mitchell speaking at his second District Staff Meeting on Aug. 5., in which he paid tribute to the late Eileen Geoff of the Fort Lee Rotary Club and in which he emphasized the need to attract new people to Rotary.**

In his remarks at the Aug. 5 District Staff Meeting, District Governor John D. Mitchell began by paying homage to Eileen Geoff, a member of the Fort Lee Rotary Club who died recently. In his remarks, Governor John said that although Eileen was blind, one would not have realized that fact, due to the scope of her activities on behalf of Rotary and of her other activities.

Speaking of membership, Governor John reiterated the point made earlier in the evening by Past District Governor Leonard A. Agrusti on the need to keep newly-installed members *engaged* in Rotary. He also urged Rotarians to seek the advice of John Cosgrove, the Fair Lawn Sunrise Rotary Club's Immediate Past President, when planning new membership drives, noting that that club last year added 18 new members.

With district governors obliged to conduct Official Visits to all Rotary clubs in the districts they serve, and with him expected to visit 52 clubs by early 2020, Governor John announced that he has begun those visits.

With the District having chartered two clubs in the year ending on June 30, he also announced that the District was working toward the chartering of a Rotary club in Weehawken, with 25 people having expressed an interest in joining.

Governor John also discussed two initiatives: saying that he hopes to make "a new pitch" in support of Rotary International's PolioPlus campaign. He also urged members of his audience to participate in the Rotary Leadership Institute's (RLI) seminar next spring.

Finally, he urged Rotarians to participate in next spring's District Conference, which he said will take place during the week of May 7 in Lake George, N.Y.

Earlier in the evening, Governor John presented Carl Hassett of the Mid-Bergen Rotary Club with a lapel pin denoting his status as the District's new Governor-elect. Carl will succeed John as the District's 64<sup>th</sup> Governor on July 1, 2020.



**District Governor John D. Mitchell on August 5 as he presented Governor-elect Carl Hassett with a lapel pin denoting his new position.**

## Membership Corner.

*By Past District Governor Leonard A. Agrusti  
Chairman, District Membership Committee*



**Past District Governor Leonard A. Agrusti, Chairman of District 7490's Membership Retention Committee.**

Well, last month congratulations were in order, however this month I am the bearer of bad news. I received a report from RI that specifies that our District dropped from the end June from 1,239 members to 1,085.

We are now in a crisis situation where we have until November to increase our membership back above 1,200. Looking at the reports, I noticed that some of the clubs have not updated their membership after June 30.

Some clubs reduced their active membership by making some members honorary members which reduces their roster. Also, some of the clubs have not reported to RI their new members. As you induct new members you must report to RI from the date of induction.

Our District Governor has seen a number of clubs bring in new members from July 1, but these new members have not been reported to RI. There are 13 clubs who still have not synced ClubRunner to RI which we continuously encouraged and taught the clubs for the past three years. ***Please sign on to the District website and sync your club to RI.***

The new Rotary Year started in July. Lets' make a New Rotary Year Resolution that each member bring in one new member in the next 12 months. In the past we have had no problems getting members.

The top reasons people join Rotary are to meet new people and to get involved in their communities. We should reach out for potential candidates for membership to our friends and families. We should reach out to business associates and professional acquaintances.

Consider also connecting with young leaders who are already connected to Rotary through Rotaract, RYLA, peace fellowships, Youth Exchange and other programs. We should never forget to check online for membership leads for prospective members.

Our best friend is social media. Update your websites sharing information about your clubs' achievements and activities.

The most important way of course is TO ASK! Ask someone to come to a meeting as a guest.

Our best-selling tool is our Rotary Pin, wear it every day. It is a perfect way to start a conversation about Rotary.

The pin means that a Rotarian is here to help people. We give more than we take. Each club does something for the community; let the prospective member know what your club does. From there you can go on to tell the prospective member what we do in the world.

The best example is Eliminating Polio. In 1987 Polio infected 1,000 people every day. In 2010, Polio infected 1,000 people per year. In 2018 there were only 33 cases of Polio. Since 1985, Rotary contributed more than \$1.9 billion to fight the disease.

We can also be proud of what we do with the children with congenital heart disease in the Rotary District 7490 Gift of Life program, where we have saved over 1,000 lives by doing surgery on these children who then got a second chance on life, thanks to Rotary.

It is very important for each club to have a Membership Committee. This committee should have a plan on how to increase membership. A strategy must be put into place on how to attract members.

The committee should be led by a person with lots of enthusiasm, charismatic, organized and dedicated to achieving the goal of increasing membership. This cannot be a committee of one. New members should be on this committee. They have contact with new people and new ideas and are full of enthusiasm.

Each and every member of the club should participate. The Membership Committee is very important and has been proven to be effective in the past year by the Fair Lawn Sunrise Club. This club doubled their membership. Kudos to the Fair Lawn Sunrise Club with an increase of 18 members.

Please send me your club's membership chairs contact information so I may keep them updated on new ideas and the dates of our membership seminars. My membership team will also help with any questions that you may have concerning membership.

My email is: mealen26@gmail.com.

Lenny

***Leonard (Lenny) Agrusti, PDG  
District Membership Chair***

## Paramus Rotary Myanmar Water Wells on Track; Club Awards \$35,000 this Year in Scholarships.

### *Paramus Clean Water Project Moving Forward.*

The Paramus Rotary Club Myanmar Humanitarian Clean Water Project is moving forward.

The last five wells have been started and are on track to be completed within the next six months. Providing clean drinking water helps people to learn and to better themselves.

Once the daily effort of sourcing and carrying water is made secure and local, people do better overall and can focus on other needs.



One of the water wells in Myanmar that was constructed by the Paramus Rotary Club.

### *Club Donating \$35,000 in Scholarships this Year.*

Over the last three weeks of meetings, the recipients of Paramus Rotary Club's scholarships have been attendees sharing their appreciation as scholarship recipients as well as information about their selected colleges, their college subject majors, and intended career plans. They were all VERY appreciative, eloquent and certainly validated the club's Scholarship Committee selections.

In just the last 20 years scholarships have been awarded to over 270 students totaling some \$675,000. This year the Paramus Rotary Club was able to provide \$35,000 in scholarships among seven students residing in Paramus.



Pictured with the students is Immediate Past President Diane Vassile-Falcone, as well as Emil Geering and Nick Laganella, who have helped fund several of the scholarships awarded this year.



Ray Hough and Nick Laganella with two students who had been awarded scholarships by the Paramus Rotary Club.



## Paramus Rotary Sunshine Club Welcomes District Governor and Donates to Alliance for Smiles.

### *Club Welcomes District Governor John D. Mitchell.*

The Paramus Sunrise Rotary Club on July 30 welcomed District Governor John D. Mitchell on his Official Visit to the Club.



District Governor John D. Mitchell addressing members of the Paramus Sunrise Rotary Club during his Official Visit to the Club on July 30. The banner to Governor John's left highlights the "Object of Rotary" listing the principles by which Rotary International is governed.



District Governor John D. Mitchell meets with the Paramus Sunrise Rotary Club's Board of Directors during his Official Visit to the Club on July 30. To Governor John's right is the Club's President, Derek Jacobson.



District Governor John D. Mitchell with members of the Paramus Sunrise Rotary Club during his Official Visit to the Club on July 30.

### *Club Donates to Alliance for Smiles Mission in Egypt.*

As the Chair of the District Alliance for Smiles Committee, Patricia LaRocco, was able to visit the Paramus Sunrise Rotary Club and receive a check for an Alliance for Smiles mission to Aswan, Egypt, that will take place in November, 2019. This project includes a Global Grant written by District 7720. Many Rotary Clubs and Districts donate regularly to five to six missions every year by Alliance for Smiles. Their mission is to provide free reconstructive surgery for babies and children in under-served populations in developing countries, suffering from cleft lip and/or cleft palate anomalies.



Dr. Patricia C. LaRocco of the Fair Lawn Rotary Club, Chairwoman of District 7490's Alliance for Smiles Committee, on Aug. 6 as she receives a check from Derek Jacobson, President of the Paramus Sunrise Rotary Club.

### Members of the Jersey City Rotary Club Package Feminine Hygiene Products for Girls and Young Women.



Corrado Vasquez and Dianne F. Vasquez preparing feminine hygiene products at the Jersey City Rotary Club's meeting at Zinburger's Wine & Burger Bar on August 15. The project is part of the Jersey City Rotary Club's ongoing service program in support of *The Flow Initiative* and a companion program *End Period Poverty*.



Members and guests of the Jersey City Rotary Club on August 15, packaged 240 bags of feminine hygiene products for young women and girls in need.



Cynthia Vazquez, Jujo Conol, Eiko La Boria and Stephen Stamos on Aug. 15, packaging feminine hygiene products during the Jersey City Rotary Club's service project at Zinburger Wine & Burger Bar in Jersey City.



Patrik Patel and Yolanda M. Jaco at the Jersey City Rotary Club's Aug. 15 service project, preparing bags of feminine hygiene products for distribution to community centers and to at least one high school. The project took place at Zinburger's Wine & Burger Bar in Jersey City.



Erica Perez and Jennifer R. Aitken at Zinburger's Wine & Burger Bar at the Jersey City Rotary Club's service project on Aug. 15, preparing bags of feminine hygiene products.

### BH/R Rotary Packages Toiletries for Eva's Village.



Members of the Bergen Highlands Ramsey Rotary Club prepare 100 toiletries packages for distribution to Eva's Village, with the Club working in conjunction with the Mahwah Regional Chamber of Commerce (MRCC) and the Young Professionals Network (YPN.)