

CLUB NEWS

August 27, 2024



The Wilmington
Rotary
Club



Founded April 1915 • A Century of Service Above Self

President Paul focuses on growth, image

Embracing Rotary's role as a leadership organization is a top goal for the 2024-25 Rotary year, President **Paul Lawler** said at his installation June 25.

At a dinner at Cameron Art Museum, he outlined goals that include stimulating conversations about how our community should address the challenges of growth; communicating Rotary's goals and accomplishments to the public; and strengthening the club by getting more members more involved.

Paul began by listing Rotary's various aspects, including social, business networking, philanthropy and service.

"Rotarians are or were leaders in their career fields and their civic endeavors," he said. "When RI chooses a major endeavor such as fighting polio or promoting peace, Rotary is taking a leadership action.

"When our club chooses to address a community issue with our time, treasure and talent, we are making a leadership action here.

"What is Rotary? At its core, it is a leadership organization."

He proposed putting that leadership to work in shaping the future.

"Around here, there's no bigger issue than how the area adapts to growth. We're one of the fastest growing areas in one of the fastest growing states in the nation."

He cited retired UNCW Chancellor (and former Rotarian) Zito Sartarelli's prediction that Wilmington is becoming the center of a continuous metropolis extending from Myrtle Beach, S.C. to Jacksonville.

"Will we continue to enjoy the community that attracted so many of us here?" Paul asked. "What do we need to be thinking about to be sure the growth and change is 'beneficial for all concerned?'" He plans to personally invite the region's "thought leaders" to hear these programs and to join in the discussion about managing growth.

For more on this, see the sidebar below.

Concerning our public image, Paul said, "Wilmington Rotary has a great story to tell with its service and leadership. But the story doesn't always get out. And that's true for Rotary across the board. We need to get that story out." Rotary International, he noted, considers "image" in two ways: what our members think of our club and how the public views it.

Rotary discusses image both as self-image—what do we think of our club?—and as external image. "A good image supports membership, fundraising and support for our activities," Paul said. "The community ought to know more about Wilmington Rotary and we're going to tell them."

Concerning how to strengthen the club, he noted that, just like Rotary at large, this club brings in a great number of members each year, but also loses members. "This churn is not good for our club."

The best solution for this is to get new members actively involved from the beginning. "RI research finds that



President Paul Lawler

if new members stay in the club for two years then they will be long-term Rotarians," Paul noted. "RI research also finds that new members tend to stay if they feel welcomed and involved. That will be our focus."

A Membership Engagement Committee, revived last year under Past President **Nancy Bullock**, is working to give new members better opportunities to serve and to lead. For more on this, SEE: *page 4*.

Likewise, all first-year Rotarians are being invited to manage sales of Attractions coupon books, one of our fund-raising projects, and to decide how to use the proceeds. SEE: *page 8*.

Concerning service, Paul encouraged participation in a series of family-friendly projects being planned now. For more, SEE: *page 2*.

"Each of these initiatives," Paul concluded, "is an ambitious goal in and of itself. But each is also crafted to reinforce all of the others. . . . The sum will be greater than its parts."

Programs raise questions about area's future

Among President **Paul Lawler**'s initiatives is a monthly series of programs examining issues that will affect Wilmington and the region as its explosive growth continues. He wants us, as a club, to consider: "What will this growth mean for all of us? Will we still find what we love about the area in another ten, twenty, or more years? Or will this be a very different Wilmington?"

The first two of those programs, in July and August, looked back at the region's history, and at its current and future water supply. Future topics include demographic growth projections; economic outlook; education, transportation, recreation and health care; region-wide cooperation; and strategies for leaders to use in preparing for growth and change.



Board raises member dues but payments still lagging

To meet the cost of running the club, our Board of Directors voted July 15 to raise quarterly dues by \$25.

For active members, total quarterly dues will be \$300. Rule of 85 members will pay \$125 per quarter, plus \$20 for lunch for every meeting they attend. The Rule of 85 applies to any member whose age plus years of Rotary membership equals 85 or more.

Despite the rate increases, which take effect Oct. 1, the club's cash flow remains a big enough problem that some bills may not be paid on time.

Treasurer **Larry Sackett** has asked that all members review their billing statements, which are sent by email, and make sure their dues are current. Invoices for dues are payable on receipt.

Club dues pay for our meeting space, our meals, and such operating costs as printing. They also include dues to Rotary International and District 7730.

The club's operating budget for the 2024-25 fiscal year anticipates \$159,835 in income and \$162,395 in expenses, a deficit of \$4,059.

Major expense categories are:

- Meals \$78,720
- Meeting space \$14,400
- International dues \$15,398
- District dues \$9,900
- all other \$43,977

Club dues go into an operating account that is totally separate from our tax-exempt charitable foundation. The foundation supports our projects; it's where the proceeds from our fund-raisers go. Under both IRS and Rotary International rules, money from our foundation can never be used for club expenses, Larry explained.

Club policy requires members to pay dues upon receipt. This allows for a 30-day grace period. But if dues aren't paid within 90 days, delinquent members will be notified that they have only ten more days to catch up before being dropped from membership.

While it's rare for an individual's arrears to become that serious, the cash-flow issue is serious. As of Aug. 21, Larry reported, \$10,137 in dues were 60 days or more past due. "We do not have enough money in the bank to pay all our first quarter obligations."

Index makes meeting videos easy to find

Since early in the pandemic, our weekly meetings have been streamed online and recorded; those videos are on a private YouTube channel.

Now, Technology Committee member **Cleve Callison** has announced, all those meetings since June 2, 2020 are linked from a single online index.

Available only to our members, a link to that index can be found in the "For Rotarians" section of our website's home page:

www.wilmingtonrotaryclub.org

Service project for families planned at Miracle Field

The club's first family-friendly volunteer opportunity will be at the Miracle Field Saturday morning, Sept. 21.

Rotarians and their families are invited to help The Miracle League of Wilmington, a program offered through ACCESS of Wilmington.



David Grandey

Hours are 9:15 to 11:30 a.m. The Miracle Field, designed for athletes with disabilities, is at 5510 Olsen Park Lane, off North College Road near Laney High School. Volunteers serve as buddies to players at Miracle League baseball/tee-ball games. They support players in playing the game, including batting, base-running, and fielding, and providing motivational support and directional cues. Buddies don't need experience

with baseball. The most important part of the job is to have fun and encourage the player to have fun, too.

In keeping with our family-friendly mission, Rotarians are encouraged to bring their children. Those 14 and older can volunteer independently. Younger kids are welcome, but should have an adult nearby to assist as needed.

Volunteers should park at the concessions area or on the grass to leave spaces for Miracle League families.

To sign up, or if you have questions, contact **Dori Bishara** at 702-281-2776

or dorinebishara@gmail.com

This is the first project organized by a new committee chaired by President-nominee **David Grandey**. The purpose is to encourage participation by younger Rotarians by sponsoring projects that families with children can join. The club is hoping to schedule one of these each quarter, ideally on Saturday mornings.

In a presentation on July 16, David said these projects should "partner with other organizations in our community," as with the Miracle League.

\$10,000 in grant requests awaiting District OK

Our Board of Directors has approved four proposed District Grant projects for a total of \$10,000, including the hoped-for District match.

Rotary District 7730 funds half of the club projects that it approves for matching grants. The balance will come from our charitable foundation.

These grants will go to:

The dental clinic the club operates

in cooperation with St. Mary Clinic; St. Mary Catholic School's library; First Fruits Ministry; and the Good Shepherd Center.

The Board will also consider grants funded wholly by our own foundation.

Single-page proposals with all pertinent details should be sent to Grants Committee chair **Ernie Olds** by email: eolds@beckermorgan.com.



New board and officers during June 25 installation banquet at Cameron Art Museum: President Paul Lawler, Laura Lisle, Secretary Elliot O'Neal, Treasurer Larry Sackett, President-nominee David Grandey, Chris Utesch, President-elect Debby Gomulka, Ramona Farrell, Christina Ferris, Stacy Ankrum, Peter Maloff, Tiffany Kitchen, Donna Shiro, Taft Martin, Jack Clark, and Bob Kitchen. Not present: Matt Hilliard and Tyler Wooden.

Scenes from presidential installation banquet



Peter Maloff scrutinizes artwork in one of the Cameron Art Museum's galleries.



Patricia Lawler, Julie Rehder and Clint Meyer.



Nancy Bullock and Ken Morris.



During the banquet, diners saw a slide show of the club's work during 2023-24, and a tribute to Past President Nancy Bullock.



Nick Rhodes, Marty Conley and Lil Conley



Outgoing District Governor Allen Quigley chats with guest David Sink of Leland Rotary Club and Mollie Shiftlet.



Dori Bishara, Hansen Matthews, guest Matt Barbour and Ben David during social hour.

For details about Paul Lawler's agenda as the club's president, SEE: *page 1*.

New focus on clubs, attendance and staff morale replaces Student of the Month awards at Williston

After thirteen years, our Student of the Month awards at Williston Middle School have come to an end. Our Williston Legacy Project continues, however, with new initiatives to meet the school's most urgent needs.

At the end of the school year in June, Jo McDonnell, Williston's new principal, met with **Laura Lisle**, **Donna Shiro**, and **Steve Yates** to discuss what the school most needs for 2024-25. The principal's emphasis was on improving students' grades and overall performance.

She made two immediate requests to bolster staff morale and improve student attendance. Attendance drops significantly on the last day of the week. McDonnell believes one way to get better attendance on Fridays is to increase the number of school clubs that meet on Fridays. But the school's budget doesn't include the money to establish more clubs.

Our committee agreed to support that request, and contributed \$5,000. Once the new clubs are organized and meeting, McDonnell expects to reach out to our membership to offer



Marquee sign at Williston Middle School expresses gratitude for our club's gift of \$7,000 for student clubs and teacher T-shirts.



Our gift bought T-shirts for Williston faculty and staff, featuring the Rotary Wheel emblem along with Williston's tiger logo.

relevant expertise to those groups.

Her second immediate need was to boost faculty morale. We honored her request for \$2,000 to design and print Williston teacher T-shirts.

Both those contributions came from the Williston Legacy Committee's \$7,000 budget, approved by our Board of Directors last year. This came from the club's foundation.

Steve Yates reports that McDonnell is considering other needs that our club may be able to help fill.

In other Williston news, volunteers from our club helped to serve a catered teacher and staff appreciation lunch on June 5. Our club paid for the meal, catered by Chipotle.

This is an annual event meant to help with faculty and staff morale.

Lisle wins record raffle pot, CART fund gains \$2,700



The King of Clubs doesn't just describe us; it's the card that won Laura Lisle the biggest-ever prize in our weekly raffle Aug. 6. Two-thirds of the pot went to the CART fund for research into Alzheimer's disease.

A record prize for the club's weekly raffle resulted in \$2,700 going to the CART fund for Alzheimer's disease research on Aug. 6. With only six of the original 52 cards remaining in the deck, Rotarian **Laura Lisle** drew the lucky King of Clubs to win a third of the \$4,183 in the pot.

As week after week passed with no winner, many members decided to try their luck, resulting in an all-time record of \$451 in tickets sold just Aug. 6. Some bought as many as twenty tickets—as Laura did that day. That entitled her to draw two cards after one of her tickets was the fourth one pulled. Her odds were one in three; the deck also held a second winning ticket, the Queen of Clubs.

CART is a Rotary-sponsored charity. The late **Ann LaReau** was our club's leading advocate for that cause.

Raffle tickets are on sale at every meeting for \$1 each, or ten tickets for \$5. The holders of the four tickets pulled win \$5; the fourth winner draws a card (or two) from the deck. Each week without a winner means the pot grows, and the number of cards in the deck shrinks.



Rotarians including Mark Ihnat, Elliot O'Neal, Gabe Rich, Paul Lawler, Dale Lazar, and Lauren Matthews at Fifth Wednesday social July 31.

Rotarians mingle, work on golf swings at social

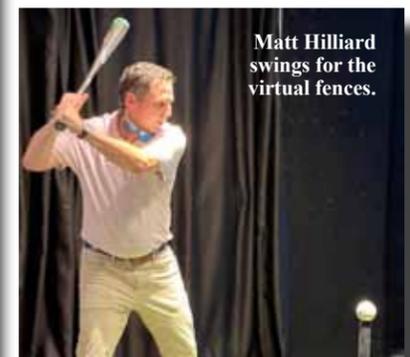


Spectators marvel at fellow duffers' technique. Left: Stacy Ankrum. Right: Taft Martin, Melissa White, Bob Kitchen, Hansen Matthews, Charlotte Davis, Mollie Shiflet, Tiffany Kitchen, among others.

The latest of our Fifth Wednesday socials took place July 31 at Rounds Golf in Mayfaire. Members of all area Rotary Clubs are invited to these informal get-togethers. This time, in addition to beverages and snacks, participants enjoyed the venue's high-tech facilities for practicing golf and baseball swings.



Mark Ihnat follows through on his tee shot.



Matt Hilliard swings for the virtual fences.

Checklist is aid for new members



Tiffany Kitchen



Christina Ferris

To help new Rotarians get their bearings and get involved with club activities, the Membership Engagement Committee has prepared a list of resources.

This is provided to all new members at their pre-induction orientation. It is also available for download from the "Documents" section of the club website. That can be found at www.wilmingtonrotaryclub.org.

The file, in MS-Word format, includes contacts for major committees and projects and suggestions about such information sources as this newsletter, the club's handbook, and the Rotary 101 course.

Tiffany Kitchen and **Christina Ferris**, the committee's co-chairs, described this and other retention initiatives at the July 30 meeting.

Newsletter photos by Robby Collins, John Meyer, Donna Shiro, and Aimeé Viola.

Club helps teachers to obtain necessary classroom supplies

Part of the club's support for education is to offer financial support to new teachers in the New Hanover County schools. Because school budgets are chronically inadequate to provide necessary school supplies, teachers are forced to dig into their own pockets to buy items for their students' use.

That is why we attend the orientation for new teachers at the beginning of each school year and give them gift cards. This year, Laura Lisle reported to the club on Aug. 20, we presented \$35 Staples gift cards to fifty-five first-year teachers.



Laura Lisle reports to the club on gift-card donations at new teachers' orientation.



Returning member Jamie Stokley, Mark Ihnat, Secretary Elliot O'Neal, and new member Jason Smith. Jamie and Jason were inducted into the club on Aug. 20. Mark sponsored Jason for membership.

Club welcomes new, returning members

The club's rolls expanded by two on Aug. 20, when a new member was inducted and a former member rejoined.

Jason Smith is an assistant district attorney for New Hanover and Pender Counties. He was sponsored for mem-

bership by **Mark Ihnat**.

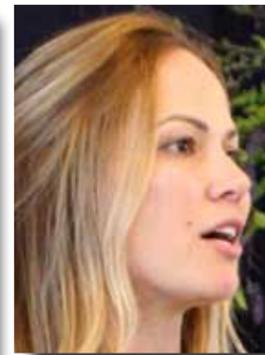
Jamie Stokley, who first joined the club on July 13, 2021, returned as a member after a one-year hiatus. She owns Helping Hands of the Cape Fear, a home health-care agency.



Coast Guard color guard begins our Aug. 13 meeting. See details on next page.



Jones: U.S. Navy on D-Day



Martin: child abuse



Lickey: Peace Centers



Fonvielle: 500-year history



Neal: Frying Pan Tower



Wilson: Cameron Museum



Shew: Cape Fear River



Tillis: U.S. Senate



Wu: U.S. Coast Guard



Holloman: water pipelines

War and peace, history and politics, salt water and fresh, fine arts are among recent program topics.

History, art, politics, child abuse, and the Cape Fear River have been among recent topics for our weekly programs.

At the June 4 meeting, Rotarian **Wilbur Jones**, a retired Navy officer and military historian, discussed the U.S. Navy's role in the "Overlord" invasion of France on D-Day, June 6, 1944.

Rebecca Martin, child abuse prevention coordinator for the Good Shepherd Center, spoke June 11 about how to be an effective advocate for children in peril.

The Rotary Peace Center at UNC-Chapel Hill and Duke University was the topic for our June 18 meeting. Rotarian **Randy Lickey**, host area coordinator, described this and the other seven Rotary Peace Centers around the world.

We had no lunch meeting June 25; President **Paul Lawler's** induction banquet took place that night. For more on that, SEE: *pages 1 and 3*. The club did not meet July 2 because of the Independence Day holiday.

On July 9, retired UNCW history Professor **Chris Fonvielle** offered a compressed review of the 500-year history since the first Europeans visited the Cape Fear region.

The abandoned Frying Pan Light Tower, in the ocean off Cape Fear, was the topic of **Richard Neal's** presentation July 16. Neal bought the government-surplus tower and is making it a destination and a center for research.

Cameron Art Museum Director

Heather Wilson spoke July 23 about the museum's history, its current exhibitions, and its arts education programs. For details about our June 25 presidential installation banquet hosted at the CAM, SEE: *pages 1 and 3*.

UNCW **Professor Roger Shew** spoke July 30 about the history, ecology, and future of the Cape Fear River, including the effects of channel dredging and global warming on the river basin's wetlands and downtown's waterfront.

Our Aug. 6 speaker was second-term **U.S. Senator Thom Tillis**, (R-N.C.) He discussed recent congressional legislation and other federal-government issues.

On Aug 13, during Coast Guard Week, **Lt. Cmdr. Mike Wu** spoke about the Coast Guard's 234-year history in Wilmington. Wu is chief of the Prevention Department of Sector North Carolina.

Tim Holloman, director of the Lower Cape Fear Water and Sewer Authority spoke Aug. 20 about his agency's work to supply water from the Cape Fear River to local utilities in New Hanover and surrounding counties.



Marty Conley presents PHF pins to son Craig Conley and daughter Sarah Ruffner Aug. 6.

With gifts, Conley honors son, daughter as Paul Harris Fellows

Rotarian **Marty Conley** has contributed \$2,000 to The Rotary Foundation in the names of his son and daughter. At our

Aug. 6 meeting, both of them became Paul Harris Fellows in recognition of those gifts.

Marty helped Foundation Co-chair **R.B. Richey** make the presentations to **Craig Conley** and **Sarah Ruffner**. Marty himself is a Paul Harris Fellow "plus three," reflecting previous gifts of \$4,000 or more to the Foundation.



Track Foundation giving status

Each club member should have recently received two PDF files by email from our Rotary Foundation Committee. The Foundation History Report offers step-by-step instructions to find your giving history on the Rotary International website. The Foundation Comparison file explains the purposes and differences between the Rotary Foundation and our club's charitable foundation.



Past President Nancy Bullock shows off the Governor's Award the club earned for the 2023-24 Rotary year. Presented by Rotary District 7730, the award recognizes achievements such as membership growth, public outreach, and contributions to The Rotary Foundation.



Mayor Bill Saffo and Lt. Cmdr. Mike Wu with Wilmington City Council proclamation for Coast Guard Week.

Upcoming programs & events

TUESDAY, AUGUST 27

District governor's visit, **C.J. Crooks** of the Jacksonville Rotary Club, 2024-25 governor for Rotary District 7730.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3

The rare, unique and threatened Venus's flytrap, with naturalist and ecology educator **Andy Wood**.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

Making sense of North Carolina's population changes, with **Nathan Dollar**, director of Carolina Demography.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 16

Board of Directors meeting, 5:15 p.m., LS3P Architects conference room, 101 N. Third Street, Fifth Floor.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17

The newly created Community Justice Center, with Rotarian **Ben David**, retiring district attorney.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21

Peace Pole ceremony at Rotary Wheel Garden, Greenfield Park, with District Governor **C.J. Crooks**. Morning; time to be announced.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24

Not-for-profits day: a look at the area's major charitable organizations, with Rotarian **Teresa Huffmon**.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 1

A Wilmington-grown business: software for managing homeowners' associations, with **Lisa Leith** of Vantaca.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 8

Will we still have mobility in 2040? The future of transportation, with **Mike Kozlosky** of WMPO.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15

A vision for Thalian Hall. With **Shane Fernando** of Thalian Hall Center for the Performing Arts.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 21

Board of Directors meeting, 5:15 p.m., LS3P Architects conference room, 101 N. Third Street, Fifth Floor.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 22

Vocational Fellowship Day, 12:00 noon, box lunches and workplace tours at a variety of sites. Rotarians will have a chance to choose from a list of venues to visit.

Program ideas welcome

Have a suggestion for a future speaker or program topic? Contact Paul Lawler, president and committee chair, at paul@enjoywilmington.com

Rotary news briefs

District leaders take office: Our club was well represented at the District 7730 annual meeting June 29. Beginning their terms were District Governor C.J. Crooks and Assistant Governor Cathy Barlow of this club, who oversees the six clubs of Area 3. Other Wilmington Rotarians holding district positions are Dale Lazar, membership chair; and Tolis Vardakis, international service chair.

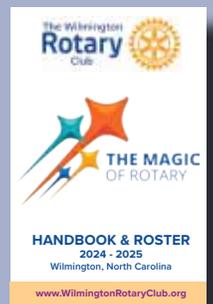
Grant protects Ukrainian orphans: The club has given \$1,500 to help an orphanage in Chernihiv, Ukraine, build a bomb shelter for children and staff. On the front lines during the early days of the Russian invasion in 2022, Chernihiv remains under threat from bomb and missile attacks. International Projects Committee Chair Gabe Rich passed on the orphanage's thanks at the June 11 meeting.

Host families needed for international student: A high school student from Italy will be living in Wilmington this coming school year, part of the Rotary Youth Exchange. Two host families are needed, President-elect Debby Gomulka said at the July 31 meeting. Interested in hosting this student for several months? Contact Debby.

Vocational Fellowship Day set for October: The annual program that lets Rotarians visit their colleagues' workplaces will be Oct. 22. Instead of our regular lunch meeting, members will divide among half a dozen or more venues for box lunches and tours. A list of host sites and a sign-up sheet will be distributed soon. Want your business or non-profit included? See Ramona Farrell.

New members to sell Attractions books: For years, one of the club's fund-raisers was selling the Attractions coupon books. The club keeps half of each book's \$30 cover price. This year, at the suggestion of Past President Mike Beaudoin, the club's newest members will take charge of sales, and will choose a project to be funded by the proceeds. Book sales begin soon, and the project to be funded remains to be determined.

New club handbook is at the printer: This pocket-size directory, with contact information about our members, as well as useful facts about the club's current leadership, committee structure, and history, will be distributed to all members starting in early September. The handbook contains material for use of Rotarians only, and should not be shared with non-members or used for solicitation.



Blood drive continues: Wilmington's Rotary Clubs, along with a Kiwanis Club and a Masonic Lodge, sponsor monthly drives to help replenish the Red Cross's blood supply. Members participated on July 25 and Aug. 22. The next date, in September, will be announced by email.

Board of Directors Meeting *Get In Touch*

5:15 pm, 3rd Monday of each Month
LS3P Architects conference room
101 N. Third Street, Fifth Floor
Wilmington, NC 28401

President Paul Lawler 910-409-2425
Pres.-Elect Debby Gomulka 910-352-7339
Secretary Elliott O'Neal 910-397-3613
Newsletter Editor John Meyer 910-297-7251
Webmaster John Meyer 910-297-7251

Submit News Items

Send photos or other information for the newsletter to jmeyer1@ec.rr.com. Please include all pertinent details: names, dates, etc.

Website

www.WilmingtonRotaryClub.org