







Founded April 1915 • A Century of Service Above Self

Targeted recruiting boosting club's numbers

The club's recruiting efforts are paying off, with 14 prospects "in the pipeline," Membership Committee Chair **Joe Owen** reported to the club on Jan. 7.

As of that date, he said, nine of those prospective members were already in the formal application process. And by Feb. 25, nine new members had been inducted.

Joe explained that each of the committee's members was focusing on a specific category of prospects. His own emphasis is on recruiting top executives. **Mark Ihnat** if focused on candidates younger than 40. **David Andrews**, retired from his job as Pender County manager, is aiming his efforts at government officials.



Joe Owen and Mark Ihnat report on their membership recruiting efforts at the Jan. 7 meeting.

"We work hard to make sure we get a diverse group," Joe said.

When he made his report, the club

had 163 members: 108 men and 55 women. Average age of all members was 64. The male average was 68; females, a youthful 58. We also had 49 "Rule of 85" members, those whose ages plus years of Rotary membership add up to 85 or more.

"So we're still old," Joe observed. Mark noted that he and other fairly new members have valued the club's mission, ethics, service to the community, and relationships among members. "You're going to be sitting next to someone who can get things done." In talking up Rotary to prospective members, he said, he's never seen any hesitation "when I tell them who we are and what we do."

For newest members, SEE: page 7.

Honorees named for 2025 Leaders in Service Awards

This year's fourth annual Leaders in Service Awards will go to: **James "Chip" Mahan** of Live Oak Bank in the private-sector category; Rotarian **Ben David**, formerly district attorney, in the governmental category; and **Margaret Weller-Stargell** of the Coastal Horizons Center in the non-profit category.

In addition to these three honorees, our Board is expected to approve a Legacy Award recipient. That decision will be made at a special meeting the afternoon of March 4.

The Legacy Award recognizes lifetime achievements and is not necessarily presented every year. Nominations for the Legacy Award are accepted only from this club's members.

The three main Leaders in Service honorees were selected from 22 nominations that came from both Rotarians and the general public.

The awards will be presented at a gala banquet on May 13 at UNCW's Burney Center.

As of Feb. 25, sponsorship commitments totaled just under \$80,000, approaching our overall goal of \$110,000 gross revenue. A portion of that goal will come from individual ticket sales, which will begin later this spring.



David Grandey, Jack Clark, Heather Evans, Timeka Gray of First Fruits, Worth Merritt, Paul Lawler, Bob Kitchen, Dori Bishara, and Dori's friend Matt Barbour.

Right: Bob and Heather go back for another load.

Volunteers distribute food as part of \$2,000 District Grant project

Rotarians helped First Fruits ministry deliver food to needy families Feb. 15, part of the hands-on component of a District Grant project. That supplied \$2,000 to buy the carts used to carry groceries to recipients' cars.



Rookie teachers recognized for ninth year

Five beginning teachers in New Hanover County Schools got recognition and monetary awards Feb. 18, through our ninth annual "Rookie Teachers of the Year" program.

They were selected by a committee of educators. The top honor, a \$1,000 gift card and a crystal trophy shaped like an apple, went to Mattie Johnson, a ninth- and tenth-grade English teacher at Ashley High School.

received \$500 each, were Jeff

Bell, who teaches graphic design and video production at New Hanover High School; David Quartuccio, a special-education teacher at J.C. Roe School; Lilah Rossell, who teaches first grade at Alderman Elementary School; and Deirdre Taylor, a fifth-grade teacher at Holly Tree Elementary School.

Presenting the awards was New Hanover County Schools Interim Superintendent Christopher Barnes.

Teaching is a demanding and challeng-



The other four finalists, who Lilah Rossell, Deirdre Taylor, Mattie Johnson, David Quaruccio, Jeff Bel

ing profession, and too many public school teachers leave the profession after just a few years. Since 2017, our club has been trying to remedy that with this public and tangible show of support for "rookie" teachers.

In cooperation with our awards program, the school district operates a "Beginning Teacher Support Program" to inspire and promote leadership among those new educators. That includes more than 300 teachers with less than three years of full-time classroom experience.



Trivia and costume contests enliven holiday party Our pre-Christmas holiday party on Dec. 17 featured a festive

lunch, games, music, a high-stakes raffle, and numerous prizes.

A Christmas trivia contest, emceed by Chris Utesch and Katie Tate, pitted tables against each other. Those seated at the winning table got gift cards for cakes, donated by Rotarian Cat Marinich.

In the holiday attire contest, Albert Sementa, Chris Hoenig, and **Richard Formo** were finalists. The winner, Cat Marinich, won a trophy and a \$125 gift card donated by Rotarian April Jones.

Tickets for the raffle were \$5 each, and four were drawn. The first three winners got \$50 gift cards donated by First Carolina Bank. The fourth winner got another of April's \$125 gift cards, plus half of the pot, which amounted to \$525 for **Katie Crosby**. The other half of the pot went to the Salvation Army.

Donna Cameron organized the party, and got help from the lectern from **Donna Shiro**.



Albert Sementa, Cat Marinich. Chris Hoenig. and Richard Formo were deemed best dressed, Cat took top honors in the holiday attire competition.

Chris Utesch and Katie Tate, emcees for the day's trivia contest, rocked some festive Xmas wear of their own





you for a year of service in eeding lunch to the club.

We send help to victims of California's wildfires

The Board of Directors voted Feb. 17 to send \$5,000 to the Rotary district that includes Los Angeles, to help victims of the devastating wildfires in that region.

The funds will be directed to District 5300. has established a dedicated relief fund for fire victims. Rotarians are supporting organizations working in Los Angeles County that have expertise in natural-disaster recovery.

SEE: www.district5300.org/ca-wild-fires/ Our club has also donated to help victims of wildfires on Maui in Hawaii and of Hurricane Helene's flooding in western North Carolina.

We remember how in 2018, Rotarians from around the nation sent help to us after the Hurricane Florence caused hardships here.

Club cleans up in kettle gifts to Salvation Army

Our volunteer bell-ringers, supplemented by Christmas party raffle proceeds, collected \$5,753.96 for the Salvation Army on three Tuesdays during December 2024. The special holiday raffle on Dec. 17 contributed \$525 of that total. This year's campaign was led by **David Brown**.

Revised raffle rewards some **youthful players**

Our new \$5, single-ticket raffle began with a bang in January, with two of the first winners being young guests of the club.

First instant winner, on Jan. 7, was Gabriel Archibald, a member of the Hoggard High School Interact Club, and a participant in this year's Rotary Youth Leadership Awards. He took home \$125, half of that day's pot. The balance went to the CART fund for Alzheimer's research.

Then on Jan. 21, Past President Stacy Ankrum's daughter **Addison**—who is a Brownie Girl Scout held the lucky ticket. She won \$60. (As well as selling some Girl Scout cookies.)

In the new raffle, tickets cost \$5, only one is drawn, and the winner gets fifty percent of that day's "pot."



Gabriel Archibald's lucky ticket, with Clint Meyer.



New Year's crawl draws party crowd

A fun-loving crew of Rotarians from several area clubs enjoyed a progressive party billed as a "New Years crawl" on Jan. 29. Part of our Fifth Wednesday social series, this had originally been scheduled for December and called a "Christmas Crawl." The event had to be postponed a month because of bad weather.

The party started at the Hannah Block Historic USO, then proceeded to the Children's Museum and finally the Concorde bar. where the crowd dined on pizza donated by Rotarian **Alex White**'s restaurant.

The party's organizers were Cat Marinich and Dori Bishara.

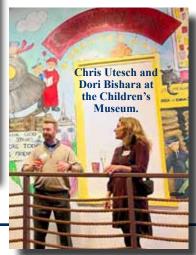




David Sink of Leland Rotary Club with our own Mollie Shiflet, Paul Lawler, and Heather Evans at the Concorde bar's fire pit.



Gabe Rich shows professional interest n exhibit at the Children's Museum



Elliott O'Neal with Charles **Boney and Chris Boney of LS3P** architects after they praised his long service with their firm at our Jan. 21 meeting.



O'Neal honored for 58 years with LS3P firm

tary received gifts and praise on has been secretary since 1995. Jan. 21 to mark his retirement from LS3P Associates. Elliott O'Neal **Jr.** worked for that firm and its predecessor, Boney Architects, for 58 years and nine months!

His tenure as a Rotarian is slight- new putter.

The club's long-serving secre- ly shorter, dating only to 1984. He

Two guests, the brothers Charles and Chris Boney, attended our meeting to present Elliott with a plaque and other gifts. Recognizing his interest in golf, those included a

Board reminds officials about Rotary's efforts in polio vaccination

Feb. 28 email to members: "We are all aware that one of Rotary's longest-lived programs is its fight against the scourge of polio. RI and its members have donated millions directly to the polio fight and this club sponsored an Orthopedic Clinic in operation for 81 years, from 1922 to 2003, dealing with the effects of the disease. How polio is addressed is now being debated as never before.

"The club's Board of Directors wished to be sure that decision-makers are aware of all that this club and Rotary have done to fight the disease. The Board approved a letter to educate decision-makers about Rotary's past work and its ongoing work on this terrible disease. The letter outlining this history will go to our elected officials and other clubs. It was vetted by the North Carolina Board Member on the RI Board." ~ President Paul Lawler

Inducted Feb. 18 were Ed Albright, Peter Miller, Spencer Parker, Lavn Cromwell, Richard Trubia, and Cara Stretch. (Presiding was Secretary Elliott O'Neal Jr.)



Brian McMerty joined on Jan. 21 and delivered his new-member address to the club on Feb. 18.



Thomas Mussoni, with sponsor Gabe Rich, and Chris Smith, with sponsor Kaitlyn Richards, at their induction Feb. 25.

Membership growth continues in new year

Our rolls expanded by eight members in January and February. For more on our Membership Committee's recruiting efforts, SEE: page 1.

Brian McMerty joined on Jan. 21, sponsored by Mark DeLoach. Brian's business is the private-equity firm Arris Partners. He received this club's Leaders in Service award in 2024. He gave his new-member talk on Feb. 18.

Inducted Feb. 18 were Ed Albright, owner of Yard2Kitchen Organic Gardens, sponsored by Ray Bahar; Peter Miller, development director for Cape Fear United Way, sponsored by **Don**na Cameron; Spencer Parker, an agent with Farm Bureau Insurance, sponsored by Chris Hoenig: Lavne Cromwell, a real estate agent with Momentum Companies, sponsored by Joe Owen; Richard Trubia, a retired teacher, sponsored by Paul Lawler; and Cara Stretch, CEO of the Cape Fear Collective, sponsored by Kaitlyn Richards.

Joining Feb. 25 were **Chris Smith**, a major in the New Hanover County Sheriff's Department, sponsored by Kaitlyn Richards; and Thomas Mussoni, head of the medical non-profit SAIL Central America, sponsored by Gabe Rich.

Charlie Brown, lumber dealer and community leader, dies at age 89 Charles W. Brown, Sr., a Rotarian for more ily to Wilmington and, with his brother-in-

than half a century, died Dec. 23, 2024, just law, bought West Coast Lumber Company. days short of his 90th birthday. He was a member of the club from 1968 to 2022. He tive community member. He loved reunions was president for 1980-81.

in the Ivanhoe community of Bladen County. He graduated from Franklin High School in Harrells and Davidson College. He mar-rian Church, as well as a coach and player for ried his college sweetheart, and Sigma Phi Epsilon Queen of Hearts, Elizabeth "Bettty" Bell. After he served six months service in the Army, the newlyweds returned to Ivanhoe, where he worked for the family lumber his passion for hunting and fishing in his bebusiness. In 1965, he moved his young fam- loved Ivanhoe with friends and family.

Charles served as a church leader and acof his large extended family and exploring Born December 29, 1934, Charlie grew up the world. He filled numerous leadership positions at both Black River Presbyterian Church and St. Andrews-Covenant Presbytechurch-league basketball and softball teams.

He also served the Salvation Army, the Azalea Festival, Wilmington Jaycees, and the Rotary Club. For most of his life, he shared



Charlie Brown owned a lumber company and was a nearly life-long Rotarian.

Bill Rose, 81, was retired Navy officer, finance professional, sports fan

fully on Dec. 15, 2024, due to complications Pacific and, in 1968, on small river craft in of pneumonia. He had been an active mem- Vietnam with the River Patrol Forces. He reber of this club since 1989.

Bill was born Jan. 12, 1943, in Wilmington commander after 20 years. but grew up in Wallace, where he became an Eagle Scout. He played football for Wallace-Rose Hill High School, graduating in 1961.

He earned a business degree at UNC-Chathough he always called his favorite teams commercial real estate broker. "Turkeys!" when they were not winning by at least 20 points.

Rotarian William N. Rose, Jr. died peace- officer, doing both shipboard duty in the mained in the Naval Reserves and retired as a

Bill and his wife Kay lived in Wrightsville Beach. After his Navy service, he worked in finance, notably at Carolina Savings and Loan, later Carolina Savings Bank, where pel Hill. Bill was a devoted fan of Tar Heel he became president before its merger with sports, especially football. That was even BB&T. He then started a second career as a

His civic service also included leadership positions with the Wilmington Family In 1965, after college, Bill became a Navy YMCA and the region's Boy Scout council.



banker and commercial real estate broker.



Boys & Girls Homes staff with our gift basket for the Rotary Cottage boys.

Rotary Cottage boys get gift baskets for Valentine's Day

The boys living in the Rotary Cottage at the Boys & Girls Homes of N.C. got gift baskets for Valentine's Day, courtesy of our club. Lynne Hershey took the lead in collecting donations of snacks and candy, which filled a small basket for the cottage's staff and a big one for the boys.

Want to learn more about this institution? Rotary Day at the Lake Waccamaw campus is scheduled for March 22. All club members are encouraged to attend. The day includes lunch and a tour of the campus and specifically the Rotary cottage. Anyone interested in attending should contact **Allan Lusk** by email: allanglusk@gmail.com

Past President Mike Beaudoin lauded for long, varied service

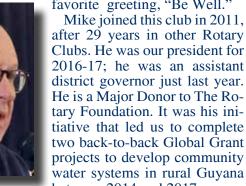
On Feb. 4, our Past President Mike Beaudoin was supposed to have received a RISE pin, representing

"Rotarian in Service Excellence," for his many contributions to this club's international efforts. But Mike was unable to attend because of his serious illness.

The month before, Mike told some of his fellow Rotarians, "As most of you know, I'm in the middle of suffering from my liposarcoma cancer and the third type of chemo infusion treatments. I recently took

number three of what will be eight total thru March." But typical for Mike, he closed that message (an apology that his health prevented him from doing more for the Rookie Teachers awards program) with his long-time

favorite greeting, "Be Well."



Mike in February 2024.

after 29 years in other Rotary Clubs. He was our president for 2016-17; he was an assistant district governor just last year. He is a Major Donor to The Rotary Foundation. It was his initiative that led us to complete two back-to-back Global Grant projects to develop community water systems in rural Guyana between 2014 and 2017.

Steve Yates reported on Feb.

25 that Mike appreciates getting cards, emails or text messages, but that phone calls are not appropriate.









Foundation giver is Major Donor, Paul Harris Fellows recognized

On Feb. 4, **Tolis Vardakis** be- Paul Harris Fellow for his \$1,000 came the club's second Major gift to the Foundation. He re-Donor, in recognition of gifts to ceived a medal and pin. The Rotary Foundation totalling \$10,000. The other member with lia was **Jessika Jarrell**, grandthat status is **Mike Beaudoin**.

R.B. Richey and Ramona Farrell, the club's Foundation cochairs, presented the honor.

Also that day, two new Paul Harris Fellows and a "Plus Two" were recognized for their giving.

Peter Maloff became a new

Also getting PHF paraphernadaughter of Rotarian Dale Smith. because of his gifts in her name.

On top of the initial fellowship, each additional \$1,000 merits "plus" status, and more pins.

Larry Sackett got a "Plus Two" pin, in recognition of \$3,000 given to the Foundation.

Vote set on updated club constitution and bylaws

The Board of Directors voted on Feb. 17 to amend the club's governing documents. The full membership will be asked to endorse the changes at the March 18 meeting.

President Paul Lawler sent copies of the proposed updated constitution and bylaws in an email Feb. 26. They are also available for download under the "Documents" tab on the club website.

A committee—Al Butler, III, Jack Clark and Peter Maloff—recommended the updates after reviewing the current documents and Rotary Internation's model constitution and recommended appropriate updates. Al will explain the changes on March 18.

Major amendments include adding the immdiate past president to the Board of Directors; deleting the attendance requirement for members; specifying duties for officers and directors; making Board minutes promptly available to all members; clarifying how members can be dropped for failure to pay dues; and adding a provision for temporary suspension of membership.













Newsletter photos

by Robby Collins, Dori Bishara, David Grandey, Allan Lusk, John Meyer, Dan Parks, & Donna Shiro



In addition to club projects, both international and local, recent meeting programs have covered a range of topics including economics, sustainable yards and gardens, a local business's rapid growth, and two perspectives on the results, both financial and in performance, of our public hospital's sale to a private company.

The last meeting of 2024 was our annual holiday party, presided over by Rotarians Donna Shiro and Donna Cameron. For pictures and more info about that event, SEE: page 3.

Dr. Mouhcine Guettabi, economist with UNC-Wilmington's Cameron School of Business, began our year Jan. 7 with his annual review of both the local and national economies.

Landscaping with native plants and protecting our urban tree canopy was the topic Jan. 14. Patti Achee, a landscape designer with Transforming Spaces, and Margee Herring with the Alliance for Cape Fear Trees spoke.

For more on their involvement with our Rotary Wheel Garden, SEE: page 8.

Planning and coordinating freight shipping and storage—in a word, logistics—is the business of Ryan Legg, our Jan. 21 speaker. He told us about the growth of his Mega Corp.

On Jan. 28, Jon Martell, founder of the Cape Rich: international projects Fear Five Star Group, discussed problems with management and performance at New Hanover Regional Medical Center since its sale to the private Novant medical group.

The Feb. 4 program was presented by our International Projects Committee, introduced by Rotarian Gabe Rich. Members visited tables to hear specifics about groups doing work abroad that our club has supported. For more on this, including the featured projects, SEE: page 6.

How the endowment from the hospital's sale is being invested and used in the community was the topic Feb. 11. Our speaker was **Dan** Winslow, CEO of the New Hanover Community Endowment.

Our annual Rookie Teachers of the Year awards were presented on Feb. 18. Guest speaker was **Dr. Christoper Barnes**, interim superintendent of the New Hanover County School district. For more on this, including the winners' names and photos, SEE: page 2.

Transformation of the Cape Fear Museum, which will re-open next year with all-new exhibits in the Project Grace building at Third and Grace Streets downtown, was the topic of our Feb. 25 program. Kate Baillon, the museum's director, gave a presentation that included a virtual walk-through of the new building.







Have ideas for topics?

Our program committee is always looking for suggested speaker and topics, especially concerning how our region is coping with growth, or focused on innovative local businesses. Send your suggestions, whether for subjects, speakers, or both, to Paul Lawler.

Members learn about international project partners

Our Feb. 4 program, presented by health education for girls. the International Projects Committee, provided Rotarians with details despite its name works mostly in about non-profits we support that Ecuador, proving cataract surgery. are working in other countries.

a table with information about its work. After a five-minute presentation at each table, members rotated to the next. As committee chair Gabe Rich explained, "It's like speed dating."

Private efforts like these have become more vital to fill gaps in aid left by the gutting of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Those with presentations were: **Kiva** microlendingto farmers and entrepreneurs in Central America.

Lift up the Vulnerable, providing meals and school uniforms in war-ravaged South Sudan.

Ukrainian agencies that have supported twenty orphanages since the Russian invasion began in 2022.

Rotifunk hospital and community in Sierra Leone, helping agriculture, maternal and child health, and

SAIL Central America, which

A school for women in Ghana, Each participating agency had where our support has helped equip a computer laboratory.

Salud Hondu, a clinic in Honduras, where our Global Grant established a diagnostic laboratory.





Global Grant project helped clinic in Honduras. Handicrafts from Rotifunk in Sierra Leo





Upcoming programs & events

TUESDAY, MARCH 4

What's new in Wilmington's restaurant scene, with **Jessica Maurer** of Feast Wilmington.

TUESDAY, MARCH 4

Special Board of Directors' meeting. 1:30 p.m., Tileston Building at St. Mary Catholic School.

TUESDAY, MARCH 11

Agriculture in Castle Hayne: Farm-City Week program, with **Mark Hommes** of Castle Hayne Farms.

MONDAY, MARCH 17

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

TUESDAY, MARCH 18

Qualities of leadership, with tentative speaker **Judge James Faison** of New Hanover and Pender Counties.

SATURDAY, MARCH 22

Rotary Day at the Boys & Girls Homes of N.C. Tentative start 10 a.m. at the Homes' Lake Waccamaw campus.

TUESDAY, MARCH 25

Service Above Self awards for police and other first responders, with Rotarian **Jason Smith**, district attorney.

SATURDAY, MARCH 29

Azalea Sweep work day. Members will pick up trash downtown before the Azalea Festival. Details to come.

TUESDAY, APRIL 1

Helping struggling public schools, with **Scott Whisnant** of New Hanover Schools' Turnaround Task Force.

TUESDAY, APRIL 8

A vision for public education, with **Dr. Chris Barnes**, superintendent of New Hanover County Schools.

MONDAY, APRIL 21

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

SATURDAY, APRIL 26

Work on Wilmington service project. We will join in this community-wide work day. Details to come soon.

TUESDAY, MAY 13

Leaders in Service banquet, 6 p.m., Burney Center at UNC-Wilmington. Tickets on sale spring 2025.

TUESDAY, JUNE 17

Presidential installation banquet, with President-elect **David Grandey** and club officers and directors. 4-7 p.m. in the Wardroom of the Battleship North Carolina. For updates, see www.WilmingtonRotaryClub.org

Rotary news briefs

Streamlined dues payments pondered. Our Board is considering whether to change to a new system for collecting dues. One proposal is for a system that allows for monthly or quarterly "auto pay" options by credit card, as well as for direct drafts from checking accounts, using bank routing numbers and account numbers—essentially, a paperless online equivalent of paying by check. Treasurer Larry Sackett said automating dues payments will simplify his job by reducing the volume of arrears.

Frozen plumbing cancels District RYLA event. The Rotary Youth Leadership Awards conference scheduled for Jan. 24-26 had to be canceled after extreme cold damaged pipes in the Trinity Center at Pine Knoll Shores. The thirteen New Hanover County students slated to attend have been invited to the 2026 district RYLA conference.

Club foundation can accept gifts of stock. At its Feb. 17 meeting, the club's Board enacted a new policy that will permit donations of publicly traded stock. This can have tax advantages for the donor.

Installation banquet on battleship. The club's officers and Board of Directors for 2025-26 will be installed at a dinner on June 17 in the Wardroom of the Battleship North Carolina. Catering will be by Middle of the Island. President-Elect David Grandey will take the gavel. Details about reservations and guests to be announced.

Sustainable plantings considered for Wheel garden. The speakers from our Jan. 11 meeting, Margee Herring and Patti Achee, have been invited to address the City of Wilmington's Parks & Recreation Advisory Board about recommended native plantings for the Rotary Wheel Garden. Their presentation will focus on trees, shrubs and other plants that will last better, with less maintenance, than the non-native plants growing there now. Terry Smith of the Garden Committee arranged the presentation.

Blood drive resumes after snowstorm. After the January Rotary blood drive was canceled because of winter weather, it resumed on Feb. 20. These monthly blood drives, sponsored by Wilmington Rotary Clubs, as well as Kiwanians and Masons, are held in the Dillard's wing at Independence Mall. Next is scheduled for March 20.

Member survey to be released soon. In early February, our membership was asked to complete a short survey that asked what we like about the club and what we would like to see happen to improve it. President-Elect David Grandey said the Board of Directors reviewed the results at its Feb. 17 meeting but to consider the survey further before announcing its results. That will take place at a club meeting in the near future, he said.

Board meetings back at LS3P. After meeting in January in a different location, our Board of Directors has returned to the LS3P architects conference room downtown.

Board of Directors Meeting Get In Touch

5:15 pm, 3rd Monday of each month LS3P Architects conference room, 101 N. Third St., Fifth Floor Wilmington, NC 28401 President Paul Lawler 910-409-2425 Pres.-Elect David Grandey . 910-352-2935 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