

THE STAFFORD ROTARY HIGHLIGHTER

January 24, 2024



January 24 Program - Yvette Blake, Civil War Living Historian

Yvette S. Blake is the Asset Manager for the Department of Defense Education Activity responsible for the development and oversight of policy and program initiatives governing the procedures for management and control of all personal property throughout the life cycle within the DoDEA school system. She is responsible for establishing, maintaining, and acquiring property

valuing over 27 million in government assets annually.

A 27-year Army Veteran retiring as Chief Warrant Officer 4. Her last position was that of the Property Book Officer for the National Guard Bureau Headquarters responsible for over 8 million in assets. Her career path as a logistician has included various logistical assignments throughout to include Property Accounting Technician, Automated Logistics Specialist, Supply Systems Technician, and Unit Supply Specialist. She served these positions in various commands the states and abroad in Europe. Over the course of her military career, she was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal • Army Achievement Medal (2) • Army Good Conduct Medal (2) • Global War on Terrorism Service Medal • Army Reserve Component Achievement Medal • National Defense Service Medal • Armed Forces Reserve Medal and Honorable Order of Saint Martin Medal.

Mrs. Blake holds an Associate Degree in Graphic Design, a Bachelor's in Business Administration and Management and a Master's in Organizational Management.

Club Calendar January Is Vocational Service Month

- ❖ January 24 – Yvette Blake
- ❖ January 31 – Club Social
- ❖ February 7 - Mark Cook, Shelter Box
- ❖ February 14 - TBD
- ❖ February 21 - PDG Leigh Hudson, D7710 - Roots of Rotary
- ❖ February 23- Rotary is 118 years old.
- ❖ February 28 – Club Social
- ❖ March 6 - TBD
- ❖ March 13 - TBD
- ❖ March 20 - Dr. Thomas Taylor - STAFFORD COUNTY School Superintendent
- ❖ March 2024 -District Grant Seminar
- ❖ District Training Assembly - April 2024
- ❖ April 27 – Casino Night
- ❖ May 25-29, 2024 -Rotary International Convention in Singapore
- ❖ Fall, 2024 – District Conference

Her passion for history began while serving in the military but blossomed once she retired as she expanded her roles as a Living Historian from a Soldier with the 23rd United States Colored Troops, to roles of involving women that supported the war effort such as the slaves that were spies, but privy to all manner of conversation then into roles encompassing the suffrage that women endured to vote. She is presently the Vice President of the 23rd United States Colored Troops and a founding member of the Scandalous Women of the Civil War. Furthermore, she is a member of the Civil War Civilians of Spotsylvania and the owner, collector, curator and exhibitor of the Mini Me Gallery, a miniature doll collection that displays historical events.

Espionage, Intrigue and Adventure:

The Civil War was fraught with controversy and Dabney Walker, a runaway slave and his wife Lucy Ann were mired in the thick of it. Picture it, Fredericksburg, Virginia 1863, after escaping from oppression this clever man and his equally clever wife decide to aid the Union Army. After signing on as contraband in the Union Camp, Dabney, as a scout and Lucy Ann as a laundress, the couple began learning Union Flag signaling and how the telegraph system worked. Lucy Ann then went to work as a laundress for a local woman in Fredericksburg in a Confederate Camp and Dabney, remained in the Union Camp across the Rappahannock River in Falmouth. The two camps were just a stone's throw away from each other across the Rappahannock River. The couple had devised a system that provided information on the movement of confederate troops based on how Lucy Ann hung the laundry on the clothesline, and Dabney interpreted it, then passed it on to the Union leadership.

This gave a new meaning to airing dirty laundry. The Intel was accurate, and as the two armies lay looking at each other across the river, the Dabney's and their clothes-line telegraph was one of the most swift and reliable sources of intel for General Hooker and his Union troops.

January 17 Meeting

President Jamie presided and welcomed visiting Rotarian Andrea Hornung and our guest speakers: Sheriff David Decatur and Chaplain Steven Curtis.

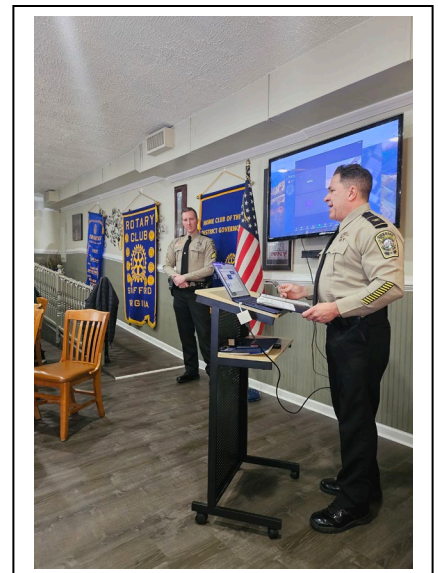
Holly gave the thought of the day: "Once, when asked what makes and keeps a man clean, the spiritual leader responded by asking, "Who can dirty you?" I like the one from Eleanor Roosevelt much better, "No one can make you feel inferior without your consent."

Jamie shared photos of the trip to RI Headquarters in Evanston. Thirteen District 7610 Rotarians braved the Chicago weather to visit what President Jamie calls "the Mother Ship". They spent some real quality time with RI President-Elect Stephanie A. Urchick.

Announcements:

- ❖ President Jamie announced that the installation banquet will not be on the last Wednesday of June as originally announced, but on a later date.
- ❖ PDG Sandy talked about some of our upcoming programs. Putting on her Rotary Foundation hat she announced that we continue to be one of the top giving clubs in our district.
- ❖ Jake announced that Donna and Lena had flown to El Salvador on Saturday. The work on the library is going well. This district grant is a partnership between Stafford and North Stafford Rotary clubs.
- ❖ Casino Night is scheduled for April 27.

Program: Sheriff David Decatur





Our guest speakers were Stafford County Sheriff David Decatur and Deputy/Chaplain Steven Curtis. Sheriff Decatur said that although the crime rate in Stafford County is flat, crime in counties north of us has increased. This creates fear in Stafford residents.

After giving some current statistics on crime in Stafford County Sheriff Decatur took questions about human trafficking, fentanyl pills, and the problem of inadequate mental health facilities in Virginia. Sheriff Decatur also addressed the challenge of hiring when competing with neighboring counties that pay more.

Deputy Curtis discussed traffic accidents and traffic fatalities. He stated that the three main reasons for fatalities are: speed, distracted driving, impaired driving, and not using seat bills.

The sheriff's office has an excellent website, with annual reports on all types of crime in Stafford County. <https://www.staffordsheriff.com/>

At the conclusion of the presentation, PDG Sandy presented Sheriff Decatur with a Paul Harris Fellow pin and certificate.

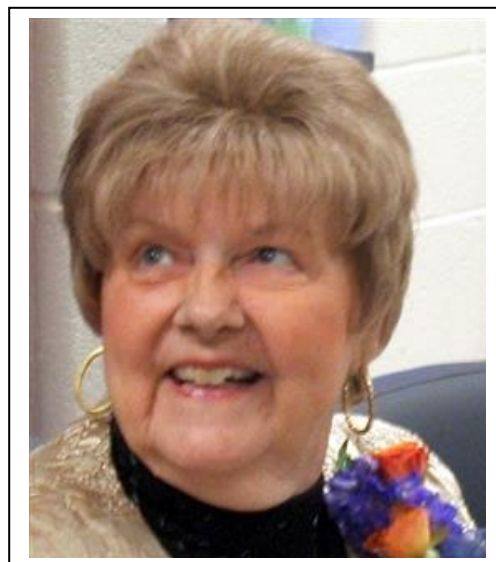
A Bit of Club History

Over the years our club has given many different gifts to our guest speakers. For several years we donated books to the library at Shirley C. Heim Middle School in honor of our guest speakers. Newer club members may not recognize this name. Shirley was a driving force behind our club's commitment to youth services. When our club's charter president G. Graham Greene was District Governor, Shirley served as Youth Services Chair for the district, a position she continued to fill for several years. Many Interact clubs and two Rotaract clubs were chartered under her watch. After her retirement, Stafford County Public Schools broke their own rule about not naming a school after a living person and named the new middle school after Shirley. Below is the tribute to Shirley on the school's website.

Who Was Shirley C. Heim?

Shirley was born in rural Lancaster County as one of nine children. After serving as valedictorian of her 1954 high school class she attended Mary Washington college, then later received her Master's degree from the University of Virginia. She became the director of the Stafford Head Start Program in 1967 and received an award for her excellent program after just ten months. Shirley also began the first kindergarten classes in Stafford for students who did not qualify for Head Start.

After working with Head Start for several years Shirley became the Coordinator of all Federal and State Programs for the schools. In this role she was instrumental in bringing federal dollars to the county for programs including strings classes, library books, vocational training, school nurses, and the largest Adult Education Program in our area.



In 1985 she was promoted to the Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Technology where she continued to make changes that affected the students and teachers in the county. She retired from Stafford County Public Schools in 2003.

And yet Shirley's jobs within the school district only show a portion of her impact on our community. Throughout her career, and into retirement, she was involved in numerous community projects working actively with the Stafford Rotary Club, the Lloyd Moss Free Clinic, the Riverside Foundation for the Performing Arts and the Stafford Historical Society, among many others. She continued to help all members of our community through outreach to nursing home residents, helping with the Duck Race each year and working to give each third grade student in Stafford a dictionary. These are just a few examples of her tireless work.

Our District Grant

Donna and Lena are in El Salvador working hard on the e3Kids International Library Project to get all the books in their proper places in the school library at Fundación Exodo near the country's capital San Salvador.

