March 2026

In This Issue

District News

Club News

Foundation News

District Leaders

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District Governor

SuAnne Hardee Bryant
District Governor Elect

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iPDG

Camile L. Peter
District Communications Officer/District Secretary

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Lieutenant Governor

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Assistant Governor

Nancy J. Carter
Assistant Governor

William J. Crowder Jr.
Assistant Governor

Jennifer L. Fraley

District News

Posts from Pat

Welcome to March!
March has always been one of my favorite months. Winter is beginning to wrap up, spring is right around the corner, and the change in temperatures means the sap in maple trees will start to run. That means sugar houses will be making that delicious thing called maple syrup!

It doesn't seem possible that we are four months away from a new Rotary year! This year is flying by. How is everyone doing with Finding Your Starfish? I have been hearing great stories from clubs that have found all kinds of starfish and continuing to take care of their existing starfish.

Rotary's Monthly Theme for March is Water, Sanitation and Hygiene. Everyone deserves clean, safe drinking water. Thank you to all the clubs that are already doing projects for clean water and sanitation. As you know, one of my starfish involves providing clean water to Haiti – the heart of my Rotary story. One of my "asks" of clubs has been to donate to HANWASH – Haiti National Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Initiative. What better time to donate than now? HANWASH continues to do strong work in Haiti and needs our support to make a difference in the lives of so many. You can find information, and how to donate at www.hanwash.org.

Let's continue to have a strong push with Foundation, Membership, and our service projects as we enter the home stretch of our Rotary Year. Let's continue to Unite for Good as we Find Our Starfish!!
Thank you!!
DG Pat

Clean the Bay Day!
Janice Henicheck

Join an organization in your area on May 2, 2026 to support this important annual event! Since the launch of Clean the Bay Day in 1989, more than

Assistant Governor
Penny Guiles
Assistant Governor
Richard W. Harman Jr.
Assistant Governor
Jeffry C. Hume
Assistant Governor
Carolyn B. Jacobs
Assistant Governor
Ross Loomis
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Rickey B Maddux
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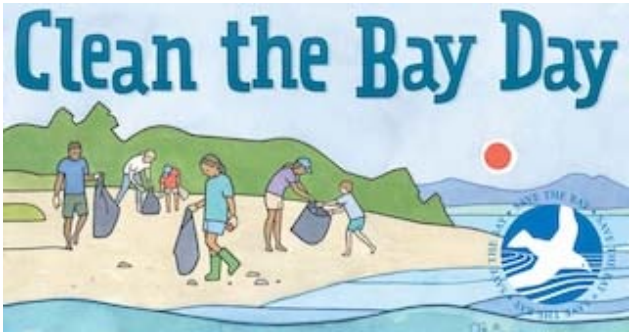
Margaretha A. Valderas
Assistant Governor
Arthur Lee Weisiger
Assistant Governor
Susan G. Zachensky-Walthall
Assistant Governor



177,000 volunteers have cleared over 7.1 million pounds of debris from waterways and landscapes throughout Virginia. For more information, click here.

Rotary Peace Fellow
Mike Little

Tibeb Abate, a Rotary Peace Center Fellow at Duke University, will present her master's thesis research at the University's 23rd Annual Spring Conference on April 11. Sponsored by Rotary District 7600 and endorsed by The Rotary Club of Richmond, Tibeb finishes her studies this spring at the Duke University and University of North Carolina University, Chapel Hill campuses. Tibeb was interviewed and endorsed by Rotary Club of Richmond committee members Paul Neumann, John White, Jim Bynum and Mike Little. Fellows are chosen for their ability to have a significant, positive impact on world peace throughout their careers.
Mike previously served as District 7600 Foundation Peace Fellow and Global Grant Scholarship Chair.
Pictured: Tibeb Abate, second from left, with Peace Fellow classmates at Duke University's 2024-25 orientation.

RYLA
Beth Jorgensen

On February 14–15, young leaders from across the district gathered at the Airfield 4?H Conference Center for the Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA), a two?day immersive program designed to build confidence, leadership skills, and purpose in high school students.
The Rotary Club of Innsbrook proudly sponsored seven outstanding delegates from the Deep Run, Glen Allen, and Freeman Douglas High School Interact Clubs—reinforcing our commitment to youth leadership and service. Seeing students already engaged in service take the next step through RYLA highlighted the strength of our local schools and Rotary's growing impact in the community.

RYLA offers more than a retreat. Students participate in leadership workshops, team?building challenges, communication exercises, and guided reflection—while forming lasting connections with peers who share a passion for service. At a time of academic pressure and uncertainty, RYLA helps students learn not only how to lead others but also how to lead themselves.

The event was supported at the district level by Raghavan Sadagopan, a member of the Rotary Club of Innsbrook and the District 7600 Youth Services Chair. Reflecting on the weekend, he noted the students' growth, courage, and willingness to step outside their comfort zones—reminding us why investing in our youth matters.
Rotary's commitment to youth development is intentional and impactful. Through programs like RYLA and Interact, students build resilience, ethical leadership, teamwork, and a service? first mindset. Sponsoring these seven delegates represents more than support—it reflects our belief in their potential.

As these students return to their schools and communities, the real impact of RYLA begins. With renewed confidence and skills, they are prepared to lead and serve. The future is bright —and it was clearly on display at RYLA 2026.

Enter Now for the District Awards!
Davetta Rinehart

Rotary District awards recognize outstanding achievements by clubs and individual Rotarians in service, membership, and Foundation giving. Nominations are open now through May 1. Information is attached or found here. Make sure your club and Rotarians are recognized for their service!

Club News

Church Hill
Emily Kirkpatrick

The Hill Topper 5K is the Rotary Club of Church Hill's biggest fundraising event each year, and it's coming up on March 22, 2026! The 5K takes participants through the beautiful neighborhood and parks of Church Hill, Richmond, and ends right in the middle of the Church Hill Irish Festival. The Hill Topper 5K is always a ton of fun, and is open to runners, walkers, and joggers. This is our 10th year, and we know it will be the best one yet!

Funds raised with this event allow our Club to support some wonderful local organizations. We've been so lucky to have our community's support in making the race bigger and more fun every year! Sign up using the QR code on the attached flyer!

Colonial Heights
David Merritt

Recognizing a need in the City of Colonial Heights, the Colonial Heights Rotary Club reached out to the Assistant City Manager and began work with their Parks and Recreation Director to enhance two aspects of the Violet Bank Museum that rests on the heights above the Appomattox River overlooking the City of Petersburg, Virginia. The first recorded settlement in Colonial Heights was by Thomas Shore. In 1775, he purchased 144 acres of land along the northern bank of the Appomattox River, across from Petersburg. He built his mansion and called it Violet Bank. While the original main building later burned, this remaining structure, built in 1815, is registered as a Historic Landmark. Today, Violet Bank is on the National Register of Historic Places and is a registered Virginia Historic Landmark.
The city intends to make Violet Bank a major attraction. They will acquire more real estate around the property, convert some of it into parking and make access easier for visitors. The city will also make improvements to the building itself and promote public awareness of the facility. Interestingly, the property also has the second-largest magnolia tree in the world.

The Rotary Club of Colonial Heights, in concert with the Colonial Heights High School and associated Interact Club submitted grant request to District 7600 and received approvals. This funding provided for the materials for park benches to be located on the grounds and for 393 feet of 3' high two-rail horizontal fence to be installed around the perimeter of the property and integrated with some of the natural hedge.

Key participants included Rotary Club President Tim Stafford, Past District Governor Debbie Wall, Past President Dave Merritt, Past President and current Club Treasurer Nick Stafford, and President Elect Tanner Fox. Three Interact Club members participated from the Colonial Heights High School. They were Miss Joy He, Miss Sophia Lin, and Miss Shaima Alaswi. From the City of Colonial Heights, key leaders included: Dr. Lenny Caballero, Assistant City Manager and the Director of Recreation and Parks, Mr. Matt Spruill. And of course, the curator of the Museum, Ms. Wendy Alvis, kindly offered all participants a guided tour of the museum at the end of the workday.

The benches were adorned with a Rotary emblem and a sign erected to recognize the Rotary contribution to this historic location within the City of Colonial Heights. This was a great project that was made possible by the District Grant Program and the labor of the Colonial Heights Rotary Club and our Sponsored High School Interact Club. Club President Tim Stafford noted that this was yet another notable example of how Rotary makes a difference in communities across the Commonwealth of Virginia and around the world.
Pictured: Interact Students Joy He, Sophia Lin, Shaima Alaswi; Rotarians Dave Merritt, Nick Stafford, Tim Stafford, Tanner Fox

Farmville
Andrew Payne

On Saturday, Jan 24, 2026, the Rotary Club of Farmville teamed up with several other local service organizations for a Rise Against Hunger Packing event. It was a great opportunity for our club to serve in our community along with other groups. Our service projects chair, Julie Flores, explained that Rise Against Hunger delivers meals to communities that score the highest on the Global Hunger Index. Our packed meals were sent to the Philippines. Many are used in schools to provide a healthy meal for children and give an incentive to attend school.
Pictured L-R: Bridget Flannagan, Le'Tina Giles and Janet Bunnell. These Rotary Club of Farmville volunteers also represented the Farmville Lions Club.

Goochland
Vassi Griffis

For more than two decades, the Goochland Rotary Club has quietly helped certain neighbors stay warm by providing one of winter's most basic necessities: firewood. Since 2003, the club's signature service project — known locally as the "Woodchuckers" — has provided free firewood to Goochland residents who heat their homes with wood and qualify for heating assistance. Working in partnership with the local nonprofit, GoochlandCares, which screens and approves applicants for heating assistance, Rotary members take over from there — cutting, splitting and delivering wood throughout the winter months. In recent years, the club has sponsored between 30 and 40 families annually, delivering over 100 free loads. While much of the firewood is provided free to qualified families, some is sold to help fund other Rotary service projects that benefit the community, resulting in another 100+ deliveries each year.
But this winter tested the Woodchuckers like never

before. To read more, click here.

Innsbrook
Beth Jorgensen

On December 24, 2025, the Rotary Club of Innsbrook participated in the launch of a Rotary Foundation Global Grant project at Sriman Nayakiyar Vidya Mandir School in Madurai, India. The initiative aims to support nearly 600 students from underserved communities by improving education through a new computer lab, upgraded classrooms, and library furniture, books, sports equipment, and sustainable power solutions such as solar energy. Training for teachers and students is included to maximize the use of these resources. The partnership with the Rotary Club of Madurai and contributions from Rotarian Sasidharan were essential to its success. As noted by Raghavan Sadagopan, this project showcases Rotary's international collaboration and commitment to creating lasting change.

On December 22, 2025, the Rotary Club of Innsbrook participated in the launch of Project Shakti, a Rotary Foundation Global Grant initiative benefiting 21,000 adolescent girls in rural and semi?urban West Bengal, India. The project focuses on menstrual hygiene management by breaking taboos, providing education, and distributing 63,000 reusable, eco? friendly sanitary napkins to improve health, dignity, and school attendance. Inaugurated by Past Rotary International President Shekhar Mehta and district leaders, Project Shakti reflects Rotary's commitment to empowering girls and advancing sustainable community development. We are proud to partner with the Rotary Club of Calcutta, Mahanagar and all supporters who made this impactful initiative possible.

On January 22, the Innsbrook Rotary Club held an insightful off-site meeting at Greenswell Growers. We were fortunate to hear from CEO Carl Gupton, who provided a fascinating look into the future of farming. Founded during the COVID-19 pandemic, Greenswell Growers has become a profitable venture that utilizes advanced European robotic technology. Their "Plants First" approach allows them to produce 723 pallets of lettuce daily with only fifteen highly trained employees. The entire process is fully automated; from seed to packaging, the lettuce is never touched by human hands. By

using de-chlorinated misting and strictly controlled greenhouse environments, they eliminate the need for insecticides. The result is high-quality Romaine lettuce with a significantly longer shelf life than traditional California or Arizona produce.
The Innsbrook Rotary is sincerely grateful for the tour of this impressive facility and the opportunity to see these agricultural innovations firsthand.

James City County
Terrie Nathan

Club president Nancy Geddes and Club Chair Terrie Nathan of the James City County Rotary had the absolute joy of visiting Suzi Q, the beautiful horse that our JCC Club proudly sponsors through Dream Catchers. Suzi Q works with youth, veterans, and active military personnel—helping build confidence, restore trust, ease anxiety, and create connection without ever saying a word. There is something extraordinary about the quiet strength of a horse. They don't judge. They don't rush. They simply stand steady… and in that steadiness, healing happens.

This is Rotary in action: Service above self, compassion with purpose, and impact—one life at a time. We are honored to support work that changes lives in such a gentle, powerful way. Sometimes impact doesn't come with a microphone… sometimes it comes with four hooves and a big, beautiful heart.

While it may feel more like *ice skating season* out there right now (sticks and pucks, anyone?), we promise that April brings much warmer days—and **actual golf**.
Please mark your calendars and plan to join us for the

Rotary District 7600 Golf Outing
The Club at Kingsmill Resort – River Course
Tuesday, April 21, 2026

This event is open to all Rotarians across District 7600. We encourage you to **register early** to secure your spot—or your team. It's always a fantastic day of fellowship, friendly competition, and Rotary spirit. A flyer with full details is attached.

Tournament questions:
Gary Chenault – Gary.Chenault@cox.net
Jack Clark – Jack.Clark201@cox.net
Registration questions:
Terrie Nathan – terrie@stronggirlspirit.com
We look forward to trading winter layers for golf polos and seeing you on the course this spring.

Midlothian
Andrew Landrum

We kicked off 2026 on January 6 with a joint meeting alongside the Brandermill Rotary Club and welcomed Katy Stokes, Coordinator of Work-Based Learning for Chesterfield County Public Schools. Her remarks on connecting students with hands-on career opportunities set a strong tone for the year. Two weeks later, on January 20, we hosted Skylar

Bowers, Community Relations Manager for Live! Casino & Hotel Virginia, who shared updates on the new Petersburg development and what it could mean for the broader Chesterfield community. We closed out the month with our January 27 social at Wood & Iron, a great evening of fellowship despite keeping one eye on the winter weather.

The early weeks of the year tested our flexibility. Snow and school closures required us to adjust plans more than once, including a last-minute speaker change that gave us the opportunity to hear a thoughtful classification talk from one of our own members. On February 10, we held our monthly board meeting at Donnie Etz's office, followed by our Club Assembly at Stonehenge, where we reviewed club business and officially launched our annual Sportsman's Raffle. It was a productive week that reflected the steady, behind-the-scenes work that keeps our service efforts moving forward.
On February 17, we welcomed Brittany Averette and her team from Sylvia Sisters, one of our valued charity partners. After hearing about the organization's impact both locally and abroad, many of us stayed after the meeting for a hands-on kit-packing project to support the women they serve. We rounded out the month with our February 24 social at Bangers and Dinks, where members and families gathered for pickleball and fellowship.

From meaningful speakers and engaged club assemblies to service projects and socials, the first weeks of 2026 have reflected what makes Midlothian Rotary strong: consistent leadership, active service, and genuine camaraderie. We're grateful for the momentum we've built and look forward to continuing that work throughout the year.

North Suffolk
Bob Thompson

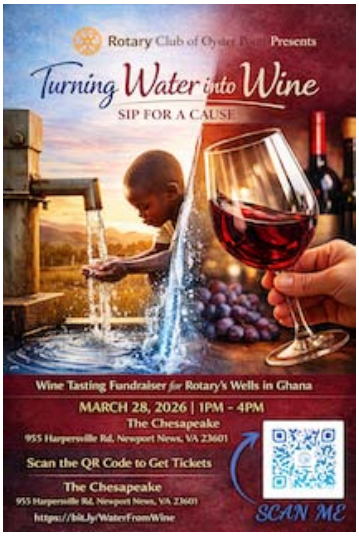
On February 21 the North Suffolk Rotary Club held its Annual Chili Cook-Off and Dessert Auction in support of the Tidewater Walk for Alzheimer's. This year we featured over 25 chilis for sampling, and presented over 25 donated desserts for auction. This event is one of our club's signature fundraisers and gets bigger and better every year!

Our new venue was generously provided by a club member, and accommodated our biggest crowd yet. We invited Suffolk firefighters to serve as our guest judges, and everyone enjoyed a hearty meal and fantastic comradery. Congratulations and many thanks to our sponsors, volunteers, and guests for supporting our cook-off!
Pictured from left to right, our top 3 Chili Prize Winners: Therese Kolongo, Bob Hosick, and Meredith Pearson.

Oyster Point
Lindsey Watson

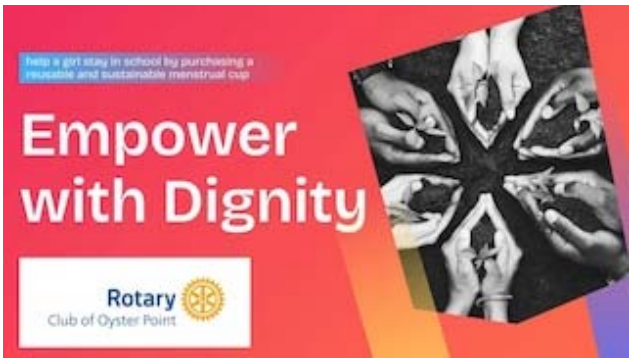
On March 28, 2026, the Rotary Club of Oyster Point will host *Water From Wine*, an intentional wine tasting designed to translate fellowship into measurable impact. From 1:00–4:00 PM at The Chesapeake, guests will gather to sample exceptional wines and support Rotary wells in Ghana, a project that provides sustainable access to clean water for families and communities.

Access to clean water is foundational. It reduces disease, strengthens education outcomes, and allows families to thrive. This event reflects Rotary at its best: leveraging connection and community to solve real problems.



Join us for an afternoon that pairs good wine with meaningful purpose. Visit this link or scan the QR code on the attached flyer to reserve your spot and help us turn a shared experience into lasting change.

On March 14, we will host our Beer Release Party at 1700 Brewing, celebrating the winning brew from our Oyster Bash first ever beer competition last fall and formally launching early momentum for the 2026 Oyster Bash season. This event is part of a deliberate effort to strengthen sponsor engagement, expand community partnerships, and build sustainable fundraising growth. Learn more here.



We are also honored that our leadership in the **Empower with Dignity** initiative has resulted in an invitation to a special workshop at the **United Nations Commission on the Status of Women on March 16.** This project addresses period poverty in Ghana through sustainable hygiene solutions and education, reinforcing Rotary's commitment to dignity, access, and long-term prevention strategies. Project information: https://bit.ly/EmpowerDignity.

We regret to let you know that fellow Rotarian Jack Anderson died unexpectedly on January 23 from postoperative cardiac complications. Jack joined Rotary Club of Oyster Point in 2004, sponsored by former member Stuart Goodman, with a classification of Sales, Automotive. He rose to sales manager at Auto Haus Yorktown before his retirement to play more golf. He is survived by his wife Judy, two daughters, and two sons. His funeral was held on Wednesday, February 4, 1:00 p.m., at R. Hayden Smith Funeral Home, 245 South Armistead Avenue in downtown Hampton. Here is his obituary.

Petersburg
Cheryl Brown

The Rotary Club of Petersburg VA - Lunch continues to enjoy

fellowship weekly as they meet Thursdays to engage with local businesses and others clubs to "Unite for Good" in Service Above Self.
Rotarian Dr. H. Alan Bigley, Jr. is a crown jewel in our collection of celebrations as we honor him for 47 years of Service Above Self as a valued member of the Rotary Club of Petersburg. We are so thankful for his wit, his wisdom and his commitment!

The Rotary Club of Petersburg is also happy to celebrate the Rotaract Club of Virginia State University Petersburg Award Recipients who are 98 members strong and still growing in membership and creative ideas in Service Above Self!
Pictured: Tayona Burgess, VSU Rotaract; Dr. Krista Moore Clemons, Rotary Club of Petersburg President; Taylor Edwards, VSU Rotaract President; Mr. Edwards

Rotarian Cheryl Brown, Public Image Chair and newly nominated Board member/Membership Chair for the 2026-2027 year is excited about the opportunity to grow membership, increase engagement, and coordinate with club leadership to further "Unite for Good" exponentially.

Portsmouth
Jonathan Murdoch, Liz Pasqualini

Club member Jonathan Murdoch just returned from a trip to Tokyo. While there he attended a Rotary meeting, exchanging club flags/banners. He brought back a number of other mementos, and will be speaking to our club in January about his experience. For Jonathan's story, click here.

Richmond
Michela Worthington

Many thanks to Trace Richburg and the Model Virginia General Assembly for sponsoring yet another fun networking opportunity with Rotary Means Business in January. We had attendees from several different Rotary groups including The Rotary Club of Richmond, Midlothian Rotary and guests despite the challenging weather. Jason Savedoff and Jennifer Cubit cordially invite fellow

Rotarians and guests for a fun happy hour of networking and collaboration at our next Rotary Means Business to be held on March 25th with information here.

Many thanks to Chris Beach of the Fatherhood Foundation and Jackie Ford for arranging an exciting night of basketball with the University of Richmond Spiders.

Chris Rufe, Robin Rowland, and Robin Wyatt

Short Pump
Eric Perkins
Short Pump Rotary welcomed Robin Rowland and Robin Wyatt from Henrico Education Foundation for an update on Dolly Parton's Imagination Library program in Henrico Country, a child literacy program that provides a free book each month to participating children from birth to age 5. The program is still in its first year in Henrico County, but participation has doubled in recent months to over 2,600 participating children! Short Pump Rotary is pleased to support this amazing program.
Pictured L-R: Rizwan Ali, Michelle Hanney, Harry Baron, Eric Perkins,

The Historic Triangle
Facebook
Registration is open for the 15th Annual Rotary Club of The Historic Triangle Charity Golf Tournament, to be held on Friday, March 27, at the Colonial Heritage Golf Club in Williamsburg. Sign up now to help benefit local charities!

Warwick at City Center
Baljit Gill, Jon Probsdorfer

Warwick at City Center Rotary Club's "Bikes for Success" service project delivered 11 bikes for kids at MacIntosh Elementary School in Newport News on Jan 23, 2026. We recognize that many young children in our community face economic challenges, family hardships, and other personal obstacles that can limit their ability to reach their full potential. These students benefit greatly from support and encouragement that motivates them to succeed. To help provide that support, we aim to partner with local organizations and the school to identify children who would benefit from this initiative.

As part of the Bikes for Success Project, our club will award new bicycles to first-grade students who demonstrate exceptional effort and a strong desire to do well during the school year. This is a small but meaningful gesture from the Rotarians of our club to inspire confidence, resilience, and sustained motivation. We plan to purchase at least five new bicycles for selected students and would appreciate feedback regarding each child's overall progress throughout the year. We also welcome brief statements from the students, written in advance, about how they believe the bike will help them stay motivated and focused on their goals. These reflections may be shared with club members and, if appropriate, with their classmates. Our club will deliver the bicycles to the school and present them to the students in the presence of their teachers, school leadership, and family members.

The Warwick at City Center Rotary Club has supported this project for many years in collaboration with Newport News Public Schools, the Salvation Army, and the Boys & Girls Club.

Williamsburg
Terry Lovvorn

Every Wednesday since August 6, 2025, two volunteers from the Williamsburg Rotary Club have provided support for packaging, loading and distribution at the House of Mercy. The Williamsburg House of Mercy is committed to providing food, comfort, and hope to our less fortunate neighbors in Greater Williamsburg. Rotary volunteers contribute assistance wherever needed to the House of Mercy.
Pictured: Frasier Hudgins and Mike Brennan

Foundation News

Take me out to the ball game!
Debbie Wall

You have three chances to support End Polio Now by supporting the Flying Squirrels, the Chili Peppers, and/or the Tides this spring! Take friends and family out for a fun evening and support Rotary's efforts to end polio! Links to order tickets will be available very soon and will be communicated to the club presidents. We ask each club to appoint one contact person to coordinate tickets. Any questions regarding the games should be

directed to Stan Wall at 804-835-1962.

Flying Squirrels (June 5) and Norfolk Tides (April 22) will be $19 per ticket. The Squirrels will donate $2.00 for each ticket sold to the game to the End Polio Now Fund. The Tides will donate $4.00 for each ticket sold to the game to the End Polio Now Fund.

The Tri-City Chili Peppers (June 10) will offer two ticket options $15 for a ticket to the game or $20 for a ticket to the game plus a meal voucher good for a hamburger or hotdog, a bag of chips and a soft drink or water.

The funds raised will be donated from all ticket sales to Rotary Foundation End Polio Now Funds and each club will get credit towards their polio giving for all tickets their club members purchase.