

# DISTRICT BYLAWS COMMITTEE UPDATE

*By DGN Sean McAlister (Rotary Club of Capitol Hill)*

Each of Rotary's nearly 35,000 Clubs worldwide has its own Club constitution and bylaws. These documents, together with the Constitution of Rotary International, the Bylaws of Rotary International, and the most recent 2019 Rotary International Manual of Procedures, constitute the legislation governing the administration of each club. This also is the case for Rotary International's 535 Rotary Districts.

District and Club constitutions rarely change, but bylaws are periodically updated to align with evolving culture and demographics requirements. District bylaws are also updated every three years to incorporate Rotary International's Council of Legislation changes. The last Council of Legislation was held in 2019, and the next will be held in 2022.

But what are bylaws? Basically, they are the written rules that control the internal affairs of an organization. Bylaws generally define things like the group's official name, purpose, requirements for membership, officers' responsibilities, how committees are to be assigned, how meetings should be conducted, and how often meetings will be held. Bylaws govern the way the group must function as well as the roles and responsibilities of its officers. They are essential in helping an organization map out its purpose and the practical day-to-day details of how it will go about its business. Bylaws also serve as the legal guidelines of the organization.

Bylaws are also sometimes mistakenly

called standard operating procedures (SOPs) or policies and procedures, but those are different things, as they tend to govern day-to-day operations and do not have the force of law, which bylaws do.

In the spring of 2020, then District Governor Barton Goldenberg, suggested that District 7620 should review its current bylaws since they had not been updated since 2012. On July 1, 2020, current District Governor Jimmie Gorski formed an ad hoc District Bylaws Committee to review and make recommendations to bring them in line with the Rotary International's 2019 Council of Legislation and to reflect the current culture of the District.

DG Jimmie tapped DGN Sean McAlister to chair this committee, and she appointed DGE Geetha Jayaram, PDG Ray Streib, PDG Andy Baum, PDG Bob Parkinson and District Treasurer Sharon Taylor to the committee. Since July, this committee has diligently met nearly once a week in its pursuit. DGN Sean's goal is for the committee to present its proposed recommendations to DG Jimmie by mid-January 2021.

In accordance with the current 2012 District Bylaws, DG Jimmie will then present the Bylaws Committee's recommendations to the Clubs for review and comment in early spring. More details will be announced in January on how this will happen. The club presidents will then have an opportunity to vote on the adoption of the proposed 2021 District Bylaws during the 2021 District Conference this April in Annapolis. If approved by majority vote, the new 2021 District

Bylaws would come into effect on July 1, 2021 during DGE Geetha Jayaram's term as District Governor.

Please send any questions about the District Bylaws Committee to DGN Sean McAlister at [SDMRotary7620@outlook.com](mailto:SDMRotary7620@outlook.com).

## GAITHERSBURG ROTARY FEEDS PEOPLE

*By Kenneth D. Weiss, Gaithersburg Rotary Club*

Coronavirus. Unemployment. People hungry. Our Rotary Club is rising to the occasion.

Our member, Jack Bell, is a key employee of Nourish Now, one of the county's primary food providers. Also, Jack leads our project to staff the food bank for Gaithersburg HELP one evening a month.

On November 15th, members helped the Montgomery County Muslim Federation place bags of food in the open trunks of some 500 hungry cars. Then, on the 21st, members worked with the Federation to provide nearly a hundred people with Thanksgiving dinner in a box.

On November 23rd, 24th and 25th, some of us joined the Germantown Cares Hub in packing hundreds of boxes of food and delivering them to homes in the Montrose Mobile Home Park and the Cider Mill Apartments.

With all that, we are preventing some people from going to bed hungry. What better way to use our volunteer hours?