

Healing Field of Honor Laishley Park, Nov 10-12



November 2023 Bulletin

Last Minute Push for the Healing Field of Honor

The Healing Field of Honor is just around the corner this November, and Project Director Alyson Burch and club volunteers have been working hard to bring it off. Alyson was joined by Peter Wilkins, Steve Goettler, and Alan Hitchcock for a last-minute inventory of materials for the HFOH at our Ann Street Storage unit. And Alyson appeared at the Charlotte County Commissioners Meeting in October to receive a proclamation for the HFOH from Commissioner Joseph Tiseo.



In connection with the HFOH, the club has decided to merge its two existing storage facilities into a new one at Extra Space Storage, adjacent to Pioneer Pizza just over the bridge in Port Charlotte. After we pick up everything from the Ann Street Storage space the week of the HFOH -- everything for the HFOH as well as for the Taste of Punta Gorda -- we will return it all to the new storage facility on Monday, November 13th. So, Peter is asking for volunteers to help with those two moving days. And, also, we need to tear out the shelving at the old Ann Street facility when we vacate it, which means more volunteers with sledge hammers, chainsaws or the like, crow bars, and strong backs. All in all, the move is going to save the club and Foundation a considerable amount in rent.

Just think. ANOTHER opportunity to volunteer!

New Member Spotlight - Betty Kedziora



Punta Gorda Rotary is happy to announce one of its newest members, Betty Kedziora, Branch Manager of our local Union Home Mortgage. Betty holds a B.S. in Finance from DePaul University and has been a loan officer for thirty successful years. She is very active in our community, a member of Think Tank Thursday, and a graduate of Charlotte Leadership 2023. In her spare time she practices Yoga and is currently learning to play pickle ball. Betty has two grown children, Drew and Anya.

We are looking forward to Betty's participation in Rotary activities. Every Rotary project begins with a single member who has an idea and or a passion for something. What's Betty's passion going to be?

New Member Profile - Aryn Francis



Club Meeting Place & Time

Punta Gorda
Meets at ISLES YACHT CLUB, 1780 W Marion Ave,
Punta Gorda, FL 33950
Time: Thursday at 12:00 PM

Club Officers



Laura C. Knutson
Treasurer - Assistant



Peter R. Wilkins
President



James C. Williams
President-Elect
Public Relations Chair
International Service Chair



Stephen J. Goettler
Secretary



Alyson Burch
Treasurer
Past President



Arnie Eastburn
Bulletin Editor



Breven Baima
Sergeant-at-Arms



Darcy Hanley
Membership Chair
Youth Services Chair



Charles F. Marlowe
Rotary Foundation Chair



Rosa Bengtitt
Club Programs Chair



Donna Calderon
Club Service Chair

Nancy A. Johnson
Community Service Chair

Rotary Rotarianship, the Rotarian Intern Program, is brand new in our District, 6960, and among the very first Rotarianships offered is the one that our club has offered to Aryn Francis. As a result, we extend a big welcome to Aryn as not just a Rotern but as a member of Punta Gorda Rotary!

Aryn has come to know our club over several years of involvement with us. Her introduction came through her father, Randy, who has been a long-time club member and served our Foundation ably as its financial advisor. At Charlotte High School, Aryn became an active member of our sponsored Interact Club, where she became a leader. She participated in S4TL (Seminar for Tomorrow's Leaders) and RYLA (Rotary Youth Leadership Awards), and then participated in the Rotary Youth Exchange program, where she spent a year in Italy, while her dad and mom took in Rotary Exchange students from Europe. She's pitched in on the Taste of Punta Gorda more than once, helped out with our club whenever the opportunity arose, and is well on her Rotary journey. On her own, she's traveled to Japan, and continues to love traveling, learning languages, and hiking, and sneaking off to "escape rooms." (She'll have to tell you about that.)

While doing all this, she earned her B.A. in Business Administration, which makes her ideally suited for the Rotarianship program. We are looking forward to your ideas and your energy, Aryn. Welcome to Punta Gorda Rotary!



The Annual Testimonial Dinner

By John S. Dzurak



In our September Bulletin, I wrote about our Club's major fundraiser, the Labor Day Fish Fry. It was a labor-intensive event, and frying fish got to be a bit taxing on all of us. So, in 1992, our Club Board decided to hold a different sort of major fundraising event in November: an annual Testimonial Dinner recognizing the years of service to our community of a local citizen.

The Testimonial Dinner turned out to be a big success (partly because we took pains to honor individuals who we well-known enough in the community to draw a large crowd to the event). We held the annual dinner variously at the Cultural Center in Port Charlotte and at the Memorial Auditorium in Punta Gorda ("pre-Charley years"), and eventually settled on holding the dinner each year at the Isles Yacht Club.

At each dinner, we gave our honoree for the year a "Service Above Self" award and a Paul Harris Fellowship. A City Councilperson and a County Commissioner each read a Proclamation from their respective governmental bodies, and the highlight of the evening was a video feature the honoree's family and friends regaling us with stories about the honoree.

The list of our honorees could literally fill a chapter of the History of Punta Gorda, with mayors, philanthropists, leaders in our nonprofit world, and leading community volunteers. We broke with tradition in 2005, when we honored three people from the County for their efforts during Hurricane Charley: Charlotte County Superintendent of Schools David Gayler, Charlotte County Emergency Management Supervisor Wayne Sallade, and Clear Channel Radio's station manager, Mike Moody. In honoring Moody, we also broke with tradition by honoring a fellow Rotarian; Mike was a member of the Charlotte Harbor Rotary Club. Our 27th and last Testimonial Dinner was held in 2019, and we again honored a fellow Rotarian, BoogieMan and Charlotte County Schools Community Relations Officer Mike Riley.



Marilyn Smith-Mooney with Rotarian Rex Koch The 2017 Testimonial Dinner honoring Marilyn Smith-Mooney

Covid-19 ended our Testimonial Dinner fundraisers. Holding an indoor event simply could not happen, and I suppose the team of club members who had for so long worked on the annual dinner were a bit weary. While we still had the Taste of Punta Gorda (in its 15th year), we still needed another fundraiser to carry out our mission of "service above self." So Robin Adair, who's brainchild was the Taste of Punta Gorda, came up with yet another idea that seemed to fit right in with our fundraising needs: the Healing Field of Honor, an outdoor event, initially done over Memorial Day Weekend in 2021 and now, in its third year, over this Veterans Day Weekend, 2023.

When you get a chance to volunteer to take part in putting on either of these excellent fundraising events, please step right up! We need every member's participation. And, moreover, what fundraising ideas have you got?



Ed Davis
Vocational Service Chair



Charles F. Marlowe
Area Governor Area 6



Punta Gorda Rotary Charity and Education Foundation



Paul F. Blaine
Member



Darcy Hanley
Chair



Nancy A. Johnson
Member



Paul V. Lioon
Member



Charles D. Marsee
Vice-Committee Chair



Douglas Morey
Secretary



Lachlan C. Smith
Assistant Treasurer



Peter R. Wilkins
Member



James C. Williams
Treasurer

Events

November 2nd
Punta Gorda Weekly Club Meeting

Speaker: Alfred Current
Subject: District Governor's Official Visit

November 9th
No Meeting this week - Prep for the Healing Field of Honor

November 10th -12th, 8-5 daily, Laishley Park.
Punta Gorda Rotary's Healing Field of Honor

November 16th
Punta Gorda Weekly Club Meeting

Speaker: Joshua Montgomery
Subject: Spam Prevention

November 30th
Punta Gorda Weekly Club Meeting
Speaker: Club Assembly
Subject: Taste of Punta Gorda and 2023-25 Officer and Director Nominations.

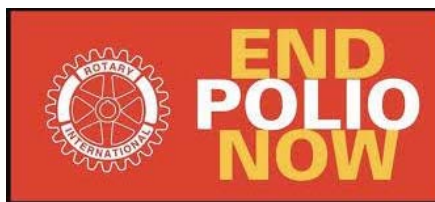
Rotary's Supports the Visual Art Center

On October 5th, President Peter Wilkins honored the Visual Arts Center, 210 Maud Street, Punta Gorda, with a grant of \$1,000 for the completion of the Childrens Corner at the center. Present at our club meeting was Laurie Widmark, a member of the Babcock Ranch Rotary Club and the major donor to the center's project, and Visual Art Center Executive Director Lisa Galluci. As Youth Committee representative Darcy Hanley said, we were very pleased to have Laurie join us. Between Babcock Ranch and Punta Gorda, Rotary did a really good thing!

President Elect James Williams visited the center the next day to hand over the check to Lisa.



October was Polio Plus Month



October was Polio Plus Month, and in our Rotary efforts to end polio in the world, everybody in the club was asked to kick in a few bucks toward eradicating polio on our Polio Plus Board. The winner (to be announced sometime this month of November) will receive a Paul Harris Award. Here's President Peter Wilkins and Area 6 Assistant Governor, our own Chuck Marlowe, with the Polio Plus Board.

Interact Club is Reactivated

By Darcy Hanley



Interact is back! A number of people made the impossible possible! Lots of thanks to Paul Blaine, Jennifer Bucurel, Michael Bednar, Aryn Francis, Charlotte High School Principal, Angie Tallion and CHS Counselor, Jaime Eyster. Jaime will be the Interact advisor at the high school and she will be working with Michael, Aryn and Jennifer for this school year.

A kick-off meeting was held on Oct 26 with 15 students enjoying pizza, cookies and drinks. Aryn did an amazing presentation of her year abroad, and Charles Marsee and Paul Blaine explained RYLA (Rotary Youth Leadership Awards), the student exchange program, and S4TL (Students for Tomorrow's Leaders). Also in attendance was Paul Lion and Kit Smith. If you are interested in joining the Youth Service committee, please contact the Chair, Darcy Hanley. The more the merrier!

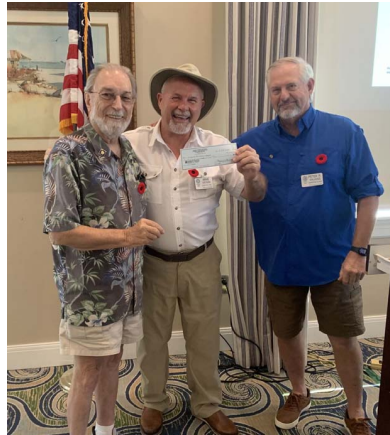


Punta Gorda Rotary's Busy Month of October



Rotary Club of Punta Gorda FL

October was a busy month for the Club. We were pleased to have Angie Matthiessen, Executive Director, United Way of Charlotte County, give a fine presentation on UW's activities in our community. Meanwhile, John Antona and Rosa Bengtts attending the Charlotte County Chamber's Wednesday Morning Coffee as club representatives (shown below with Chamber Executive Director Bob White); Rotary showed its continued support for the Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center (CHEC), which is headed up by Rotarian Michael Bednar; last but not never least, the International Committee was pleased to present Rotarian Arnie Eastburn with a donation of \$6,900 to drill a well in Mozambique!



Upcoming Dates to Remember

November 10-12. Healing Field of Honor, Laishley Park, everyday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Prep days on Wednesday and Thursday, November 8 and 9, and take down on Monday, November 13. Please come and help on any day(s) you can! And, check out the Electronic Billboard Southbound on Tamiami Trail just north of the bridge. **Look for the Healing Field of Honor!**

November 20. The Taste of Punta Gorda Leadership Committee meets on Monday at 5 p.m. via Zoom. James Williams will host the first official meeting of the Taste of Punta Gorda Committee. If you want to be one of the team leaders or even just listen in, please attend this meeting. Zoom invitations will be sent out immediately following the end of the HFOH event. ***This is a crucial meeting, as we have only three months to organize the Taste, get restaurants, vendors, volunteers, etc.*** The Taste is set for Sunday, March 3rd, and we'll need volunteers throughout the entire weekend, as well as team members well in advance to organize things! Mark your calendar!

November 30. Nominations to be announced for the 2024-25 Rotary Year. The nominating committee comprised of president Peter Wilkins; past presidents Darcy Hanley, Chuck Marlowe, and Alyson Burch; and chaired by president-elect James Williams will present a slate of officers and directors. Nominations will also be taken from the floor.

December 7. The Club's Annual Meeting. Elections to be held for the officers and directors for the Rotary Year 2024-25.

December 9. District 6960 Rotary Leadership Institute, Gulf Coast Division, will present Part 1 only of our District's really excellent leadership program on Saturday, December 9th. Locations are regionalized in the north and south of our district and will be announced soon. Watch for it and sign up on the DACdb Calendar. Ask President Peter about the club picking up the registration fee! If you've not participated in RLI, this is a great place to start for every Rotarian, particularly for **new** Rotarians!

December 12. 100th Anniversary Celebration Zoom Meeting, 5 p.m. Darcy Hanley will be sending an invite out to all members for the kick-off meeting for our club's 100th Anniversary year celebration. If you want to participate, get involved, or just listen, please pencil December 12th into your calendar. Snowbirds, you can get involved as well. All meetings will be held via Zoom! Any questions? Contact Darcy at darcyhanley@gmail.com. We are targeting April, 2025, for the celebration!

Taste of Punta Gorda Team Leaders Needed

The 16th annual Taste of Punta Gorda, March 3, 2024, is just around the corner. Team leaders and volunteers are needed to prepare far ahead of the actual event. *This is a major undertaking, and we just over three months!*



If you are not on the following list as a Team Chair (or as an assistant), please pick your poison and sign up with James! Now! If you already expressed your desire for one of these, let James know (he's pretty forgetful these days, and needs reminding). Also, as you can see, some of the same old names seem to appear more than once. If you can be an assistant or an understudy for any position, we need you! Punta Gorda Rotary needs you!

- Project Chair:** Williams
- Co-Project Chair:** Wilkins
- Vendor Chair:** Williams
- Volunteer Chair:** Penelope Mayer (Aryn Francis)
- Treasurer:**
- Entertainment & VIP Chair:** Hanley
- Publicity Chair:** Williams
- Admissions Chair:**
- Licensing & Permitting:** Hanley
- Beverage & Restaurant Supply Chair:** Morey & Wilkins
- Sponsor Chair:**
- Site Management & Operations Chair:**
- Kid's Zone Chair:**
- Security Chair:**
- Restaurant Chair:** Williams (Marlowe)
- Food Trucks:** Wilkins

Welcome to our new Foundation accounting firm

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CPA / ADVISORS

Justin A. Schaefer | CPA
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Punta Gorda, FL 33950

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We are very grateful to Parlade, Schaefer, and Schortz, CPA/Advisors, for providing us with pro-bono accounting services. It permits more of our Foundation dollars to go to charitable causes, which would not otherwise be possible.