

# Rotary



# Club of Wauwatosa

## Welcome to the Rotary Club of Wauwatosa

Rotary is an organization of business and professional leaders united worldwide who provide humanitarian service, encourage high ethical standards in all vocations, and help build goodwill and peace in the world.

Rotary club membership represents a cross-section of the community's business and professional men and women. The world's Rotary clubs meet weekly and are nonpolitical, nonreligious, and open to all cultures, races, and creeds.

Rotary membership provides the opportunity to: Become connected to your community. Work with others in addressing community needs. Interact with other professionals in your community; assist with RI's international humanitarian service efforts. Establish contacts with an international network of professionals. Develop leadership skills. Involve family in promoting service efforts.

## Club Picnic

### Wednesday, August 24 - Elm Grove Village Park

Please join us for the annual Rotary Club of Wauwatosa Picnic at Elm Grove Village Park! Enjoy an evening of fun, fellowship, and fantastic food from Bunzel's Catering. We hope to see you there!

**Rotary Club of Wauwatosa**  
**Club Picnic**  
Wednesday, August 24, 2022  
4:30 p.m.  
at  
Elm Grove Village Park  
**YOU'RE INVITED!**

## Menu

- Bratwurst
- BBQ Pulled Pork
- Baby Back Ribs
- German Potato Salad
- Italian Pasta Salad
- Dessert
- Beer, wine, and soda

[Click here](#) for more information and to register online.

**\*\*If you received an invitation email, please register using the personalized registration link in your email\*\***

**Please RSVP by Wednesday, August 17**

Registration questions? Contact [Jonathan Lorenzen](#)

Event-specific questions? Contact [Tom Kirchen](#)

## Club Meeting

Wauwatosa  
Meets at Radisson Hotel Milwaukee West  
2303 N. Mayfair Road  
Wauwatosa, WI 53226  
Time: Wednesday at 12:00 PM

## Events / Speakers

August 17th  
[Wauwatosa Weekly Club Meeting](#)  
**Speaker:** Robert Niedermann  
**Subject:** Rotary Foundation Update

August 24th  
**NO NOON MEETING - Wauwatosa Weekly Club Meeting**

August 24th  
[Club Picnic at Elm Grove Village Park](#)

August 31st  
[Wauwatosa Club Assembly](#)

September 7th  
[Wauwatosa Weekly Club Meeting](#)

## Club Leaders



[Robert Hugh Nelson](#)  
President



[William Carl Makal](#)  
President-Elect  
Rotary Foundation Chair  
Sergeant-at-Arms



[Jonathan Lorenzen](#)  
Secretary



[Aaron D. Sebald](#)  
Vice President  
Membership Chair



[Robert P. Niedermann CPA](#)  
Treasurer



[Richard Frenn](#)  
Sergeant-at-Arms

[Peter M. Skanavis](#)

# Serving Our Community



Sergeant-at-Arms



Paul Alan Vandeveld  
Club Programs Chair



Anne Ruttger Neafie  
iPast President

## Years of Service

No Years Of Service Found

## Club History

### The History of the Wauwatosa Rotary Club

Our club was chartered in 1952 and is one of the oldest in the area. We meet every Wednesday noon at the Radisson Hotel Milwaukee West. This is a very good time to join our club as we are striving to reinvent ourselves. You would be able to play an exciting and significant role in defining the club's objectives. We recently went through a very intense strategic planning process and are committed to serving the Wauwatosa community.

On a global level Rotary International is very proud to have virtually eradicated Polio through our Polio Plus program. Through its foundation and large international membership base, Rotary offers a great deal of help to the disadvantaged throughout the world.

Our social committee arranges a number of very nice events throughout the year. Each event presents an opportune time to get to know members and spouses, all of which can be invaluable networking opportunities!

Rotary membership does require a member's dedicated participation in club meetings and functions. You need to know that Rotary is a commitment and we are looking for dedicated members who can be away from work for approximately two hours each Wednesday. In other words, your boss needs to understand your devotion to community service.

Take a look at Rotary International's website at [www.rotary.org](http://www.rotary.org) for much more information.

## Newsletter - August 10, 2022

By Jonathan Lorenzen

### Properly Placing a Price on Your Property An Assessment of a Meeting of the Rotary Club of Wauwatosa Wednesday, August 10, 2022

After a one week absence while we stocked boxes at Hunger Task Force, Rotarians were back at our home base in the Radisson ballroom. President Nelson called our meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance and the Four Way Test, after which Rotarian Rich Mannisto intoned an impeccable invocation.

Upon taking our seats, the president informed us that there were no member or spouse birthdays to recognize, however the docket of wedding anniversaries was quite lengthy:

- Anne and Terry Neafie celebrated 23 years on August 6
- Rich and Michelle Mannisto celebrated 14 years on August 9
- Richard and Cathy Frenn celebrated 37 years on August 10
- Craig and Lynn Schmutzer will celebrate 33 years on August 12

Best wishes to all of the happy couples, and congratulations on behalf of the whole club!

Among sad and happy news items to inspect, compare, value, and rate, the following informational parcels were submitted:

- President Nelson reported that he would be dropping off his daughter for her freshman year at Colorado Rocky Mountain College next week. He's hoping she will get a job at a ski resort there! Safe travels all!
- Your secretary reported that our club was contacted by Friedens Food Pantry inquiring if we might be interested in volunteering at one of their five Milwaukee area pantries. Service opportunities are flexible, and the organization will accept the assistance of as many members as we can send. We would be helping to sort and stock donations as well as assisting pantry customers.
- Richard Frenn announced that he is in charge of procuring the beer, wine, and liquor for our club picnic on August 24. Special requests should be made to Richard. Cheers!
- Anne Neafie reported on our ongoing club food drive with Tosa Cares:
  - Baskets arrived today for members to deposit food and personal care items during club meetings
  - Members should see the email from Anne for a list of needed items
  - Upon filling a basket, Anne will bring it to the Tosa Cares pantry at Mt. Zion Lutheran Church
- Roger Walsh delivered a report on the club's Hunger Task Force service activity last week:
  - Twelve members and friends of the club participated
  - Ron and Ronnie Pruhs showed up to help all the way from Cleveland (WI)!
  - We joined with volunteers from St. Mary's University of Minnesota and another group to stock food boxes
  - We filled just under 400 boxes in three hours
  - Roger thanked all who participated, and wanted to know if we would be interested in going back yet this year
    - Bill Bode was in favor, so long as the activity took place in lieu of the meeting that day. Anne Neafie agreed, as did the consensus of other members present.
    - Roger will work with Hunger Task Force to get another volunteer day on the calendar
  - Thank you for organizing this wonderful opportunity, Roger!!
- Rich Mannisto read a touching thank you note from Jacob Bonow, the student our club sponsored to attend Badger Boys State. Jacob is a senior at Wisconsin Lutheran High School. Rich is working with John Sebald to have Jacob attend an upcoming club meeting.
- Mr. Mannisto also reported that Wisconsin Lutheran College is blessed with its largest ever incoming freshman class of 325 students!
- Additionally, he invited club members to attend WLC's 50th Anniversary Celebration on September 10 (at the college). There is no cost to attend, thanks to a generous donor.
- Finally, President Nelson noted that Treasurer Niedermann would be giving a



With no further noteworthy items to bandy about, Roger Walsh arose to introduce our program speaker, Shannon Krause. Krause is the (very) recently retired assessor for the City of Wauwatosa, a position which she held for the last eight years. Roger became acquainted with Shannon through his position on the Assessor's Board of Review.

Ms. Krause has served as an assessor for over 35 years with stints in West Bend, Kenosha, and Germantown before finishing her career in Wauwatosa. During her tenure, she testified in front of the state legislature in order to defend the assessed values of Wauwatosa community properties.

Krause is an avid golfer, outdoorswoman, and motorcyclist. Now retired, she will soon move to Eagle River where she can enjoy these activities to the fullest.

Shannon began her speech by dispelling a common misconception about the assessor's office: "We don't set the taxes. We just set the value of the property." Looking

back, she feels Wauwatosa was the most rewarding and challenging part of her career; while in her role, she handled a number of high-end cases and appeals for the city. She is confident Wauwatosa property owners are in good hands with her successor, as she personally trained and prepared her to take over.

According to Krause, the field has changed a great deal over the course of her career. "There are a lot of legal considerations now." She touched on a shifty tactic used by commercial property owners known as the "dark store loophole" whereby businesses seek to devalue their (successful) property by comparing it to shuttered properties in an effort to have a smaller tax bill. She has supported the attempt to draft legislation to combat this unfair practice. While a bill hasn't yet been passed, no BAD legislation has passed either.

Wauwatosa's last full revaluation occurred in 2019. Put simply, the job of the assessor is to place value on properties, and explain it to the public. When a valuation is contested by a property owner, the assessor defends their assessment before the Board of Review. Krause took her assessments seriously, and was usually confident going into an appeal hearing: "I don't want to say that I'm never wrong, but we do our homework. We're very analytical. Nobody is paying more than their fair share."

Wauwatosa recently added \$680 million to the tax base when Krause's review led to several Medical Complex properties being reclassified as taxable. Previously, they were exempt through their designation as doctors' offices. The adjustment lowered property taxes by an average of \$350 for Wauwatosa homeowners.

Sharing how she got into her field, Shannon quipped, "Nobody grows up wanting to do this [be an assessor]. At first, she thought she would be a radiologist. But an interest in real estate is how she ultimately wended her way to being a city assessor.

Assessing is not a mysterious process; whatever a property would sell for is the value at which it should be assessed. While the office doesn't chase after every home sale, it does utilize data from real estate listings to adjust values when available. The assessor still must factor in the base assessment data, however, whenever making an adjustment to a valuation.

Krause suggested that fall is the best time in which to contact the assessor's office with questions. During this time, the staff is preparing data for reporting in January. If a homeowner believes something in their assessment is inaccurate, they are encouraged to contact the assessor's office to make it right. "If you think something is wrong, we are more than happy to explain the assessment, and you don't have to let us in to do an inspection." If the assessor isn't able to do a walkthrough, however, they are forced to rely on assumptions which may not be entirely accurate. Shannon emphasized that the staff is flexible, and willing to make accommodations like doing a walkthrough via Face Time.

Across Wisconsin's 1,851 municipalities, fewer than 30 have in-house assessor's offices. Only three Milwaukee County municipalities have staff assessors. "That's not good." Krause feels that contracted assessors don't always put in the time to do the job right, nor are they

available to help the public.

Shannon concluded her speech with a plea: "Not a lot of people are coming into the assessment field. If you know anyone who might be a good fit, let them know about becoming an assessor!"

Our honored speaker graciously opened the floor to questions:

- One Rotarian (forgive me, I didn't jot down who it was) asked which Milwaukee County municipalities have an in-house assessor
  - Shannon knew Milwaukee and Wauwatosa, but couldn't recall the third. Greenfield recently switched to a contracted assessor. Other Wisconsin cities with in-house assessors she knew of: Brookfield, Pleasant Prairie, Oshkosh (a recent convert), Sun Prairie, Wausau, Green Bay
- Bill Bode asked how assessors have kept up with volatile real estate market
  - It all comes back to the revaluation (as was done in 2019). When this happens, everything gets "thrown out" and reset. Assessors look back to the past 2-3 years of market data to help set values. "It's not perfect. We try to get to that midpoint."
  - She also explained that new build homes don't quite get the "bang for the buck" equity increase that older homes do when making updates.
  - Bill shared about the assessment on the duplex he and his son own in San Diego. There, the assessor's office revalues the property every time an owner changes. After a lengthy battle, Bode & Son succeeded in getting a \$4,000 refund to remedy the increased tax burden caused by the overvaluation on the duplex.
    - Shannon wasn't surprised by the story – and noted the vast patchwork of policies across the land.
- Robert Niedermann was curious if the assessor's office looks at pulled permits to reassess properties.
  - Short answer, they do.
- Yours truly shared an anecdote about the increased valuation and property taxes on his home in Milwaukee. He wanted to know what likely caused the increase.
  - Shannon explained that Milwaukee revalues properties every year, thus the market could have caused the increase.
- Lorenzen also asked how land value is determined on a postage stamp-sized city lot.
  - Essentially, it's formulaic, but not entirely. If a piece of land is considerably more or less valuable, it will be reflected in the assessment, even on a small lot.
- Roger Walsh asked how many employees work in the Wauwatosa Assessor's Office
  - There are 5 ½ positions. Shannon's deputy was officially appointed as the new assessor last Tuesday.

A double peal of the bell officially closed this week's meeting of the Rotary Club of Wauwatosa. Many thanks to Shannon Krause for informing us on the office of the city assessor!

Respectfully Assessed and Submitted,

Your Taxing Typist and Bulletin Buddy  
Jonathan Lorenzen

### **Upcoming Commitments**

#### **Program**

**August 17:** Robert Niedermann will give a financial update on the Wauwatosa Rotary Foundation

**August 24:** No Noon Meeting – Club Picnic

**August 31:** Club Assembly – Whiskey Wednesday (get your orders to Rich Mannisto)

**September 7:** Bill Bode

#### **Invocator/Greeter**

**August 17:** Pat Meylor

**August 24:** No Noon Meeting – Club Picnic (Anne Neafie)

**August 31:** Rick Steinberg

**September 7:** John Sebald