

# CLUB NEWS

March 14, 2023



The Wilmington  
**Rotary**  
Club



*Founded April 1915 • A Century of Service Above Self*



**Capt. Terry Bragg,**  
Battleship North Carolina



**Dr. Thomas Dalton,** Eden  
Village



**Amy Wright,** Bitty &  
Beau's Coffee Shops

## Sponsorships, tickets on sale for 2023 fundraiser, 'Leaders in Service' named

Ticket sales have begun for the May 4 "Leaders in Service" award banquet, and our solicitation team is still pursuing sponsorships for the event.

The 2023 honorees were chosen in mid-February. Each will be recognized for leading their organization in harmony with Rotary's "Service above Self" motto and the Four-Way Test.

Honored will be **Capt. Terry Bragg** in the public-sector category, **Dr. Thomas Dalton** in the non-profit sector, and **Amy Wright** in the private sector. Bragg is director of the Battleship North Carolina; Dalton heads the Eden Village housing project for the homeless; and Wright founded Bitty & Beau's, a chain of coffee shops that employ people with

disabilities.

Sponsorships range from the \$10,000 "platinum" level to \$1,000 "friends of Rotary" recognitions. Rotarians who are not sponsors are encouraged to attend the banquet as well; individual tickets are \$150 each.

The sponsorships and ticket sales are the chief source of funds for club projects in the 2023-24 Rotary year. We are aiming for gross revenues of \$85,000, and hoping for a "stretch" goal of \$100,000. Subtracting expenses of roughly \$17,000, mostly for the banquet and publicity, last year's first-ever Leaders in Service awards netted more than \$61,600 for our club's non-profit foundation. We hope this year's net proceeds will be closer to \$70,000, but so far we are about \$14,000 short of our goal.

The reception, dinner, and award ceremony will be at UNC-Wilmington's Burney Center.

To buy tickets or sponsorships, go to: [wilmingtonrotaryclub.com/bizleaders.php](http://wilmingtonrotaryclub.com/bizleaders.php)

## Region's Rotarians join to pre-fabricate walls for Habitat

The walls have all been framed for the Wilmington-area Rotary Habitat for Humanity House, which will go up in the new Legacy Landing subdivision later this spring.

The first build day for this project, which this club and half a dozen others are sponsoring, was Jan. 28 in Habitat's warehouse. Volunteers, including the buyer who will make this house her family's home, pounded nails to assemble pre-fab wall sections. Those will be trucked to the site, erected, and nailed into place during the next build day, yet to be scheduled.

The project is still several thousand dollars shy of the \$60,000 budget the Rotary coalition has committed to. Much of the house's additional cost will come from a mortgage that Habitat provides to the home buyer.

If you want to give, use the following link and be sure to put "Rotary build" and this club's name in the comments section of the form.

[www.capefearhabitat.org/donatenow/](http://www.capefearhabitat.org/donatenow/)

On the first build day, Rotary volunteers—along with Habitat staff, the buyer, and members of her family, shared several hours of work, a catered lunch, and only a few banged thumbs.

Volunteers from our club were **Jack Clark, Donna Cameron, Paul Lawler, Ray Lazar, Peter Maloff, and John Meyer**. For more photos, SEE: page 3.



**Paul Lawler** with wall sections pre-assembled Jan. 28.

**Leaders in Service**  
Service Above Self







Joining the club on Feb. 28 were Albert Sementa, Rosemary Guendner, Ally Thornton, Tom Hoggard, Pamela Hagwood, Nicolette Fulton and Mark Ihnat.

## Large class of new members join the club, introduce themselves

A flurry of recent inductions is helping the club begin to grow again..

**J.C. Lyle**, who was inducted on Dec. 20, 2022, gave her new-member talk Feb. 7. Director of the Wilmington Area Rebuilding Ministry (WARM), J.C. was sponsored by Dale Smith.

A father-daughter combination joined Jan. 3. Chief District Court Judge **J.H. Corpening**, a former member of this club, gave his new-member talk Jan. 24. His daughter **Katie Corpening**, an attorney in the public defender's office,

introduced herself on Feb. 7. Ben David was sponsor for both.

**Elizabeth Redenbaugh**, inducted Jan. 10, spoke Jan. 31. A former school board member, she is development director for Coastal Horizons. Dale Smith sponsored her.

**Donna Cameron**, who joined on Nov. 1, 2022, introduced herself on Feb. 7. With First Carolina Bank, she was sponsored by Albert Corbett.

Joining Feb. 28 were **Albert Sementa**, a lawyer with Murchison Taylor, Joe

Owen, sponsor; **Rosemary Guender**, an administrator at Cape Fear Community College, Erica Talbot, sponsor; **Ally Thornton**, with Step Up Wilmington, Steve Coggins, sponsor; **Tom Hoggard**, a medical entrepreneur, John Hatcher, sponsor; **Pamela Hagwood**, a marketer for Lument Mortgage, Joe Owen, sponsor; **Nicolette Fulton**, director of Cape Fear Public Utility Authority, Joe Owen, sponsor; and **Mark Ihnat**, a partner in Atlantic Coast Law, Chris Hoenig, sponsor.

## Foundation giving recognized

Generous gifts to the Rotary Foundation were acknowledged recently as several members became Paul Harris Fellows—or earned “plus” status.

Each honor represents a gift of \$1,000 to the Foundation, Rotary International's charitable arm.

On Jan. 17, **Harley Sacks** became a “Plus 2” Fellow for gifts of \$3,000 or more.

Former Rotarian Robert High, himself a multiple Paul Harris Fellow, asked our board to designate three first-time Fellows in return for his \$3,000 donation. **Taft Martin**, **Lucy Holman** and

**Cat Marinich** were honored Jan. 24 for outstanding service to the club: Taft for building garden boxes at Virgo Academy; Lucy for support to the 2022 Leaders in Service banquet; and Cat for donating cakes for Williston's Student of the Month awards.

**Ken Morris** received his “Plus 2” pin on Jan. 31, and **Bob Elliott** became a Fellow Feb. 21.

**Tolis Vardakis** was honored Feb. 28 as a “Plus 6,” for \$7,000 or more in gifts. He is a member of the Paul Harris Society, pledging to give \$1,000 a year for ten years, and the Polio Plus Society.



Harley Sacks, ‘Plus 2.’



Ken Morris, ‘Plus 2.’



Bob Elliott, new Fellow.



Tolis Vardakis gets PHF ‘Plus 6’ pin from R.B. Richey Feb. 28.



Taft Martin, Lucy Holman & Cat Marinich honored for their service as Paul Harris Fellows on Jan. 24.



Above: J.C. Lyle, J.H. Corpening, Katie Corpening; left: Elizabeth Redenbaugh, Donna Cameron.

## Scenes from Habitat build day



Above: Volunteers including Paul Lawler collect their hammers and nails. Right: Jack Clark stabilizes the work while Dale Lazar hammers the nails home. Wall frames were built indoors and will be erected on site.



Rotarians at work Jan. 28 in Habitat's warehouse include Paul Lawler, John Meyer, Peter Maloff, Dale Lazar, Jack Clark, and Donna Cameron. Christina Ferris was on site in her role as Habitat's director of development.



Jack Clark and Donna Cameron at work, stacking one finished frame and nailing another one together on the warehouse floor.

## An overdue dues crackdown

The club's Board of Directors has issued an ultimatum about members whose dues are badly in arrears. As President **Dale Smith** announced Feb. 21, all members more than 90 days behind on dues payments will get certified letters asking for full payment within 15 days. Anyone who doesn't comply within that time will be expelled from the club.

As of Feb. 21, 26 members had unpaid balances more than 90 days old. Dale noted that the club is obliged to pay district and international dues for all members, whether they have paid up or not.

“This is obviously not fair,” Dale said, “and therefore a violation of the four-way test.”

## International scholar Lopez returns

When this club sponsored UNCW graduate **Adrian Lopez** as a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar in 2003, it launched her on a career in international development. On Feb. 21, Adrian returned to Wilmington and addressed the club.

After two years in Chile, with Rotary support, she remained there another eight. Since then, she has mostly lived and worked in Washington, with the Inter-American Development Bank, which aids Latin America. She is a member of a mostly “virtual” Rotary club focused on international development.



Adrian Lopez

## Honduras project leverages cash

Our project to buy medical equipment for clinics in rural Honduras has applied for a Rotary Global Grant for \$12,000. That will add to \$15,000 from District 7730, for a total of \$45,000, International Projects Committee chair Gabe Rich reported Feb. 21.

Those grants will supplement the \$18,000 raised by some ten Rotary clubs here (including \$6,000 from this club) and in Honduras, where a club in Tegucigalpa is the project's local sponsor.



Gabe Rich

## Plugging Rotarians on public radio

Two Rotarians have used donations to public radio station WHQR to call attention to the club and one of our former members.

As a WHQR “day sponsor” on Jan. 11, Terri Everett had the station broadcast a message “remembering the late Ann LaReau, whose joy in life was doing for others, especially for the elderly.”

Coming up on May 10, Christina Ferris' day sponsorship message will “salute fellow Rotarians for their dedication to Service Above Self.”





Williston Students of the Month, with family members and Rotarians, show off their certificates at award ceremony Jan. 18. Below: student musicians serenade Rotarians in thanks for the club's gift of \$5,000 to the chorus, band and orchestra, money raised at our Dec. 20, 2022 holiday party lunch.



## Rotarians reward Williston students

As we have been doing for more than a decade, even through the pandemic, the club presented Student of the Month awards at Williston Middle school as 2023 got under way.

Each month, the faculty nominates five students from each class who live their lives in harmony with Rotary's Four-way Test. Families are invited to the ceremony, where all hear what teachers wrote about each honored student. Each gets a certificate, a copy of their teachers' citation, a Four-Way Test coin, a gift card, and a yard sign to display at home.



Proud family: Rotarian Steve Yates recently spotted this 'Student of the Month' sign at a house on Castle Street, proof of the program's value in creating a sense of accomplishment for students and their families.



The latest honored middle-schoolers pose with Rotarians after Feb. 15 Student of the Month ceremony.

### Newsletter photos

by Robby Collins, Mike Beaudoin, Christina Ferris, John Meyer, Dan Parks, Donna Shiro, Dale Smith, Steve Yates, and Andrea Raines of NHC Schools

## Grants require Foundation giving

Unless all our members do their duty to The Rotary Foundation, our club will no longer qualify for District Grants. Our Rotary District 7730 has determined that only clubs that give \$125 per capita to the Foundation's Annual Fund are eligible for District Grants—which come from money the Foundation returns to the district.



Ukrainian refugees Sviatlana and Natasha with their children in Wilmington.

## Rotarians welcome Ukrainian refugees

Two Ukrainian mothers who fled the war with their children have settled in Wilmington and are seeking work, with help from area Rotarians.

Area Governor **Dan Parks** of Wilmington East Rotary Club is leading that effort, seeking \$25,000 to help them become contributing members of the community. In addition to money, needs include permanent housing, transportation and childcare support. The families are temporarily living in a pool house in a Rotarian's back yard.

The children are in school and the mothers are studying English. The fathers remain in Ukraine, which is not allowing men of military age to leave the country.

The initial relocation process for the first two families included plane fares totalling around \$4,000, plus \$12,000 to support them for the first three months.

Tax-exempt contributions can go to Wilmington East Rotary Charitable Trust, PO Box 373, Wrightsville Beach, NC 28480.



Wilmington Fire Dept. Assistant Chief Tom Robinson with award for Rodney Lehue (not present), and Master Firefighter Nicholas Shepard, Firefighter Johnathan Steward, and Capt. Christopher Cook.



Wilmington Police Dept. Cpl. Casey Morales Knipp, Sgt. David Short, District Attorney Ben David, WPD Cpl. Cardiella Barksdale, Chelsea Croom of Coastal Horizons, and Assistant District Attorney Ashton Herring.

## Public servants lauded for 'Service Above Self'

A favorite program for our members, the annual "Service Above Self" awards recognized exceptional performance by police, firefighters and others. Rotarian **Ben David**, acting as district attorney, presented the awards March 7.

Honored were:

- Four Wilmington firefighters for safely evacuating elderly residents of an apartment building from a serious fire: Capt. **Christphoer Cook**, Master Firefighters **Rodney Lehue** and **Nicholas Shepard**, and Firefighter **Johnathan Steward**.

- Four Wilmington police officers and two civilians for their roles in solving a 26-year-old "cold case" and sending a violent rapist to prison for life: Sgt. **David Short**, Cpl. **Casey Morales Knipp**,



Wrightsville Beach Police Dept. Detective Tonya Baker and N.C. Highway Patrol Trooper Joshua Soles.



New Hanover County Sheriff's Dept. Detective Joshua Cranford and Deputy Timothy Spell.

ing in Raleigh, in which he helped to rescue a wounded Raleigh Police officer and get him to medical treatment.

- New Hanover County Sheriff's Department Detective **Joshua Cranford** and Deputy **Timothy Spell** for shooting a registered sex offender who was holding a child hostage and threatening to kill her. The suspect was killed and the child rescued.

- Wilmington Police Dept. Assistant Chief **David Oyler** for career accomplishments including handling sensitive high-profile internal affairs cases and helping lead the department through years of pandemic, social unrest and national media attention. Oyler, who could not be present, was honored in absentia.

## Dental clinics serve poor children

With grant funding and volunteer help, our club has provided dental examinations and cleanings to low-income children at a series of free clinics.

In February and March, Rotarians **Coleman Burgess** and **Gabe Rich**, both dentists, coordinated the work of other volunteer dentists and the St. Mary Clinic to serve students from Mary C. Williams, Sunset Park, and Gregory schools.

Volunteers are still needed to help with registration and other unskilled tasks for the final clinic March 25. That will serve students from Williston Middle School.

Rotarians who can help should contact Coleman. St. Mary Clinic is at 320 South Fifth Avenue, in the basement of the Til-eston School building where we meet.



Rotarian Dr. Coleman Burgess, helped by a student hygienist, examines a patient at club-sponsored clinic.



### State honors Jones

Rotarian **Wilbur Jones** celebrates receiving the Order of the Long Leaf Pine, North Carolina's highest honor, for his work to document and preserve local history, specifically concerning Wilmington's role in World War II. Toasting Wilbur at a Feb. 7 City Club reception are **Bunny Donahue** and **Lynne Hershey**.



## Beginning teachers recognized with cash awards, big pencils

To help fight the serious problem of burnout and turn-over among public school teachers, the club honors five second-year teachers every year. Selected by a committee of educators, four of the five winners get \$500 gift cards.

The top “Rookie Teacher” gets \$1,000. Other gifts include a crystal trophy and outsized pencils. This year’s awards were presented Feb.

14. Rotarian Joe Owen and Superintendent Charles Foust made the presentations.

Top winner was **Kathryn Schoepf** of Roland-Grise Middle School. Others honored were **Jessica Smith** of Holly Shelter Middle School, **Erin Dancy** of Holly Tree Elementary, **Rebecca Lloyd** of College Park Elementary, and **Brooke Cunningham** of Murrayville Elementary.



Charles Foust presents trophy to top winner Kathryn Schoepf.



Teacher Erin Dancy shows off prize pencil in her Holly Tree Elementary School classroom.



Jessica Smith, Erin Dancy, Kathryn Schoepf, Rebecca Lloyd and Brook Cunningham, Rookie Teachers of the Year for 2022-23, honored on Feb. 14.

## Desserts, gifts raise \$5,000 for Williston

Proceeds from the “Dollars for Desserts” auction, plus cash contributions from members, raised an unprecedented \$5,000 for Williston Middle School’s music programs at our year-end holiday luncheon on Dec. 20. Donated goodies were sold in both voice and silent auctions. Several challenges from anonymous Rotarians were answered by additional gifts to make up the full five grand. President Dale Smith delivered the proceeds to Williston in January. SEE: *page 4*.



Mike Beaudoin is astonished at a dessert as gaudy as his sweater.



Auctioneer Chad Pearson sells desserts to help raise \$5,000 for student musicians.



Charlotte Davis, John Hatcher and Terri Everett admire the large array of donated desserts to be auctioned for Williston’s school music programs at Dec. 20 meeting.



Chris Hoenig, Paul Lawler and Mike Beaudoin dazzle Williston Middle School Principal Chris Madden with their fashion sense at holiday lunch Dec. 20.



Guettabi: area economy



Szaloky: Azalea Festival



Baltz: Fire Dept. dogs



Clark: Ports Authority



Bullock: Club assembly

## Programs cover ballot measure, business, gardens, veterans, spy tales, music, and Rotary business



Owen: Rookie teachers



Foust: Rookie teachers



Richey: nuclear accidents



David: ‘Service’ awards

Two of the club’s annual awards programs, and other club business, dominated the meeting schedule for 2023’s first quarter.

The previous year ended Dec. 20 with our **traditional holiday party**. The annual dessert auction benefited Williston Middle School’s music program. SEE: *page 6*.

**Mouhcine Guettabi**, professor of economics at UNC-Wilmington, spoke Jan. 3 about economic prospects for the coming year.

N.C. Azalea Festival President **Denise Szaloky** discussed plans for the 2023 festival on Jan. 10.

The Jan. 17 program concerned Wilmington Fire Department’s mental-health initiative that uses specially trained service dogs. Master Firefighter **Josh Baltz** spoke.

The Wilmington port was the topic for N.C. Port Authority Director **Brian Clark**’s presentation Jan. 24.

The Jan. 31 meeting was a club assembly, with reports from vari-

ous committees and the board. President-elect **Nancy Bullock** presided. Feb. 7 was devoted to new-member talks. For details, SEE: *page 2*.

Rotarian **Joe Owen** and New Hanover County Schools Superintendent **Charles Foust** presented the Rookie Teacher of the Year awards Feb. 14. For details, SEE: *page 6*.

Rotarian and nuclear expert **R.B. Richey** spoke Feb. 21 about the notorious Three Mile Island, Chernobyl and Fukushima nuclear accidents.

On Feb. 28, Rotarian **Terri Everett** and District Governor-elect **Allen Quigley** discussed the “Our Stories” project of moderated interracial conversations. This is supported by a special District Grant.

The March 7 meeting was devoted to the annual “Service Above Self” awards presentation to area first responders. Rotarian **Ben David**, district attorney for New Hanover and Pender Counties, presided. For details, SEE: *page 5*.

## Members want more time, info on programs, & more business topics

Replying to a survey about our weekly meeting programs, Rotarians ranked recent programs and made suggestions. In addition to recommending specific speakers, requests included giving guest speakers more time, giving Rotarians better advance information about program topics, and recruiting more speakers on business and economic topics.

Other suggestions included ad-

ressing homelessness, healthy aging and several specific medical issues.

Topping the list of favorite programs in recent months were:

Veterans’ Day (Nov 8, 2022)  
Remembering Todd Turner (Oct 4, 2022)

Vocational Day (Oct. 11, 2022)  
Firehouse dogs (Jan. 17, 2023)  
ILM Airport (Sept. 13, 2022)  
Holiday party (Dec. 20, 2022)



Everett, Quigley: ‘Our Stories’



## Upcoming programs & events

TUESDAY, MARCH 14

Fighting senior scams, with **Stephanie Bias & John Maron** of N.C. Senior Consumer Fraud Task Force.

MONDAY, MARCH 20

Board of Directors meeting, 5:15 p.m. LS3P Architects conference room, 101 N. Third Street, Fifth Floor.

TUESDAY, MARCH 21

Proposed new “Satellite” Rotary Club, with Rotarian **Chris Stevenson**, assistant governor for Area 5.

TUESDAY, MARCH 28

A nature park vision for Eagles Island, with **Lloyd Singleton**, New Hanover County Ag Extension agent.

TUESDAY, APRIL 4

The club’s 108th birthday party and “alumni reunion,” with President-nominee **Paul Lawler**.

TUESDAY, APRIL 11

Update on the City of Wilmington, with Mayor **Bill Saffo**.

MONDAY, APRIL 17

Board of Directors meeting, 5:15 p.m. LS3P Architects conference room, 101 N. Third Street, Fifth Floor.

TUESDAY, APRIL 18

Literacy Week focus on elementary schools, with Rotarian **Debby Gomulka**, literacy committee chair.

TUESDAY, APRIL 25

UNC-Wilmington’s drone mapping program, with **Dr. Narcisa Pricope**, assistant professor of geography.

TUESDAY, MAY 2

No regular lunch meeting. (See May 4).

THURSDAY, MAY 4

Leaders in Service Awards Banquet, 6 p.m., Burney Center, UNCW. Tickets \$150 each. SEE: *Page 1*.

TUESDAY, MAY 9

Under 40 Committee, with Rotarians **Tyler Wooden**, **Worth Merritt**, **Chris Utesch**, and **Taft Martin**.

MONDAY, MAY 15

Board of Directors meeting, 5:15 p.m. LS3P Architects conference room, 101 N. Third Street, Fifth Floor.

TUESDAY, MAY 16

Mental health first aid, with Rotarian **George Gates**, pastor and counselor, Gateway Psychological Services.

TUESDAY, MAY 23

The challenges of immigrating to the United States, with Rotarian **Ramin “Ray” Bahar**.

## Rotary news briefs

**Attendance rule dropped—for now.** On Jan. 16, the club’s Board of Directors rescinded the longstanding requirement that all members attend at least 50 percent of club meetings, or make up by project or committee work or visits to other clubs. That policy change is subject to revision depending on circumstances.

**Barlow returns to board.** Also effective Jan. 16, Past President Cathy Barlow was named to complete a Board of Directors term expiring in June 2024. She replaces Mollie Shiflet, who is on a medical leave of absence from the club. Cathy was on the board from 2016 to 2019 and was president for 2018-19.

**Rotary Day at Boys & Girls Home.** All Rotarians in Districts 7730 (southeastern North Carolina) and 7710 (the Triangle region) are invited to Rotary Day March 25 at the Boys & Girls Homes of North Carolina in Lake Waccamaw. The program begins at 10 a.m. and includes a campus tour, visit to the Rotary Cottage, and a cookout lunch. Want to go? Register on the DaCdb district calendar, accessible through a log-in prompt at the top of our club’s website.

**Bell-ringers raise ten grand.** During our Tuesday volunteer stints during December 2022 at the Salvation Army kettles at Sam’s Club, we raised a total of \$10,448.18 for holiday-season projects. That was the largest sum raised by any local civic club, Rotarian Marty Feurer reports.

**Tree plantings memorialize Todd Turner.** On Feb. 4, in honor of the late Rotarian Todd Turner, volunteers planted 4,000 trees and other native plants on degraded former farmland near Pink Hill. Todd, who died Sept. 27, 2022, grew up in that area and was an avid outdoorsman.



Todd Turner

**Baffle your friends: be a Secret Rotarian.** President Dale Smith has begun a weekly guessing game, offering clues about the identity of one of our members. If you want to participate, email fun facts about yourself to Dale.

**New grants approved:** In January, the Board of Directors authorized two previously unbudgeted grants: \$1,000 to Honor Flight of the Cape Fear Area, and \$500 to help support the Opera House Theatre Company.

**Blood drive resumes March 30.** The Red Cross blood drive sponsored by area clubs, led by Wilmington East Rotary, will be at Independence Mall this month.

### Board of Directors Meeting

5:15 pm, 3rd Monday of each Month  
LS3P Architects conference room  
101 N. Third Street, Fifth Floor  
Wilmington, NC 28401

### Get In Touch

President Dale Smith 617-0277  
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### Submit News Items

Send photos or other information for the newsletter to [jmeyer1@ec.rr.com](mailto:jmeyer1@ec.rr.com). Please include all pertinent details: names, dates, etc.

### Website

[www.WilmingtonRotaryClub.org](http://www.WilmingtonRotaryClub.org)