

Tarpon Springs Rotary News

Volume 96, Number 2

Service Above Self

August 2022



Triathlon date rapidly approaching, plans nearly finished

Race is nearly here. The annual event takes place in Howard Park Sept. 10.

Rtn. Celia Dubey is putting finishing touches on the 36th triathlon the club has sponsored. Her goal of 300 racers is lower than before the pandemic, but the program is coming back.

This is the club's premier fundraiser. Dubey and her committee set a goal of \$25,000, and that appears to be met.

At press time some 204 racers had signed on for the grueling Sept. xxx run, swim and bike race.

"We have enough supplies for about 400 racers" Dubey said.

"We are running ahead of last year," according to Dubey. "At the same time last year we had 58 registrants." Total participants last year numbered 190.

The program helps fund scholarships and other community activities. Last year with a depressed COVID turnout, the club earned \$13,382. With sev-



More than 300 contestants will take to the water, bikes and running trail for the Sept. 30 RCTS triathlon.

eral week to go, current revenue stands at \$17,317.

Each year, several hundred

Rotarians and volunteers make the RCTS the premier fundraising event in Tarpon Springs.

RCTS has donated hundreds of thousands of dollars to the community.

New website puts club out to world in high style

Come see Pres Sue celebrate

Aye, Matey.

President Sue's birthday be coming Sept. 29, and celebrate it with grog and goofy.

This is will be the first social of the new Rotary year, and all RCTS members should be on board for it.

The confab will be held at Blackbeard's Grub and Grog, 80 West Live Oak Street on the hard (that's land, for you landlubbers).

Starting time is 6 p.m. Ye can come early, but she'll not give extra drink tickets if yer do.

Best of all, President Sue is paying for the drinks, so don't miss the fun and FREE drink.

The club's new website went live August 25. The updated, modern look was programmed by Rtn. Abigail Holland.

The site celebrates and publicizes the club and its activities.

PE Donna has led the charge on the new site. She and Rtn. Abigail have it a home run.

You will find a load of club information waiting for you there.

Your colleagues can even

sign in for a visit on the "Reach Out To Us" page. Fill in the form and you are ready to go.

The new site makes donating easier than ever. Just click and pay up.

Are you in the photo gallery? Probably. Nearly every club activity is there. Go see for yourself.

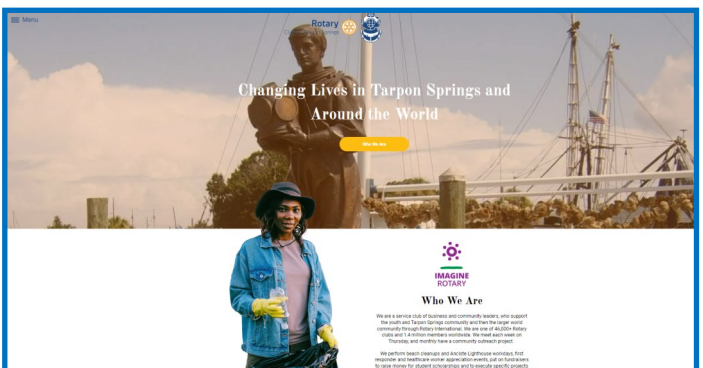
Just type in the address below and join the fun.

<https://www.tarponspringrotary.org>



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BOD Wrap Up, August 18

PRESIDENT'S
CORNER

Sue Carson, President

The month of September is Basic Education & Literacy month. Kids are back in school and our Interact clubs are starting back up at Tarpon Springs Middle School, Tarpon Springs High School and St. Pete Collegiate High School Tarpon.

Thank you to Jan Causey for her continued coordination of these clubs. Please reach out and say hi and thank you to the Interact students who will be helping with our Triathlon which is in full swing and will be held Sept. 10.

The Thursday before the Triathlon, at our club meeting, we will have our final organizational meeting and will stuff the bags for the runners.

If you have old Rotary magazines, please bring them to that meeting. The week after the Triathlon will be the wrap up. The Triathlon fits with our Basic Education & Literacy month as the money we raise from this event helps with scholarships and youth.



Officers

President	Sue Carson
President Elect	D. Pentrack
Vice President	Tekoa Bean
Pres Elect Nom	H. Malamatos
Sgt. At Arms	Celia Dubey
Past President	Robin Wikle
Secretary	Valerie Cullu
Treasurer	Julie Russell

Board

R. Lundal	Rea Sieber
W. Wikle	Ed Hoffman
M. Koulianos	Milton Smith
K. Gallagher	Tom Trask

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BOD considers variety of club action

The Board its monthly meeting Aug. 18, 2022 at IHOP in Tarpon Springs.

The membership committee will met before the club meeting and to discuss four possible new members.

The Rotary Foundation has an event on Aug. 21st to raise money at a Tampa Bay Rays game.

The Triathlon is Sept. 10, and the club is finalizing our sponsorships and need many volunteers.

The board learned the meals packed at Rise Against Hunger in February, 2022 were just sent to Vietnam.

Our Interact clubs are just starting up and will volunteer at the Triathlon. The Strategic Planning Committee will send out a survey soon to get ideas of the needs and wants of the club members.

The Scholarship Committee needs members. Oct. 15

Member Spotlight

Rtn. Milton active in community during retirement

Rtn. Milton Smith was not content just to retire. He spent 28 years in Palm Harbor as a first responder but could not just sit down in a rocking chair in retirement.

Rtn. M. Smith
So, he didn't.

He has been involved in a number of local activities, including Rotary, since he hung up his badge. A chaplain, Rtn. Milton has covered invocations for club meetings for the last two years. But that is not all that has occupied his time.

He is the founder of All First Responders Matter, a support group for first responders.

That group is now statewide and has chapters in Chicago and Alabama. The group of 17 chaplains help first responders suffering PTSD, a conditional only recognized for first responders recently in Florida.



is the next Boating Family event and boats and volunteers are needed.

Our District Grant with Sleep in Heavenly Peace will be Nov. 5 at the Boys & Girls Club. A Global Grant with Bali is being investigated. Herb Elliott attended to

remind the board about the Harold Haftel money for a project with since the comfort stations with Pinellas County did not work out. Suggestions are welcome.

The next Board meeting will be Sept. 15, 7:30 a.m. at IHOP.

The need is great. More first responders die from suicide than job injuries, according to Milton.

"They frequently go to a local watering hole and drink," he said. "The pressures of seeing bodies goes on for years." He noted that military people see death for a few years, but first responders can have similar experiences over a career lasting decades.

"We provide a safe space that is spiritually based," said Milton.

Rtn. Milton comes to his vocation from experience.

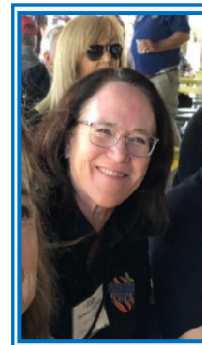
When he was nine years old, he was shot in the head with a 12-gauge shotgun. "They told my father they could not treat me," he remembered. He would die. But, his father had him rushed to Pasco County and surgeons there were able to save him. He carries nine shotgun pellets in his head today from that instance.

He and his wife of 10 years, Lineta, have three children and two grandchildren.

Rotary faces are happy faces



D. Pentrack



S. Carson



cutline

Boys and Girls Club director outlines his tenure



New Boys and Girls Club director Andrew Nikiforakis

New Rtn. Jacque Turner transferee from Tarpon Springs Sunset club

COVID hit membership hard, but membership chair Robin Wikle has worked hard to bring the club membership back.

The latest addition to the membership rolls is Jacque Turner.

Rtn. Jackie has called the Tampa Bay area home for more than 20 years. Her education, career and public service focus on celebrating the diversity of Florida's environment and residents.

Rtn. Jacqui is a graduate of the City of Tarpon Springs inaugural class of the Citizens Academy and currently serves as vice-chair of the Board of Adjustment. She is a member

of Morton Plant Hospitals Foundation Women in Philanthropy, and LAMPLighters ladies auxiliary

She is not new to Rotary. She is a member of the newly-formed Tarpon Springs Sunset club and will now join us in Tarpon.

She works for Baycare Memorial Health on the business side of the operation.

Her avocational interests include home improvement, boating and fishing.

She holds degrees in journalism and adult education from the University of Florida and University of South Florida respectively

Boys & Girls Clubs of the Suncoast is shaping leaders each day, and new Tarpon Springs club director, Andrew Nikiforakis is a prime example of this.

Nikiforakis is a Tarpon Springs native and club alum. He is using leadership and teamwork skills he developed during his time at the club to lead by example in his new role.

The club location has been a staple in the community since the 1960s. Formerly utilized by the Rotary Club, the building has been utilized as a Boys & Girls Club location since the mid 1970s. Boys & Girls Club of Tarpon Springs has undergone many changes over the last few years.

With the support of local businesses and officials, the club is nearly unrecognizable in its new form.

Murals by a local artist and donated external lighting brighten the area, making it appear even more warm, safe and inviting to all.

Nikiforakis recalls his time at the club as a child and how it shaped his future goals, eventually leading him into nonprofit work.

He has worked professionally in the nonprofit space for the last five years. "When I look back on my time at the club, I remember how safe and fun the environment felt," he says.

Traditionally, clubs provided a safe, friendly environment. Now they add a more structured learning environment, leading students to excel in multiple areas of their lives.

"The clubs focused heavily on being a safe, fun space for kids and was a place I looked forward to spending my days."

Tarpon Springs provides a special opportunity for students to connect with one another and develop long-lasting friendships.

"As a very shy kid, the club really helped me break out of my shell," says Nikiforakis. "So many words shared with me at the club influenced my life today."

As previous Tarpon Springs Club Director, Mark Sofia passes the torch, Nikiforakis acknowledges the next steps in contributing to the legacy of this long-standing Club location.

"The Boys & Girls clubs of the Suncoast have welcomed me with open arms. I like to view myself as a steward of an environment that will be here long after me," he says. "For as long as I can remember, this location has been a staple in our community, and I am working to keep it up to par for generations to come."

RCTS donated the land and building the club currently used many years ago. Several members are on the board.



Jackie Turner, the club's 86th member is introduced by membership chair Robin Wikle.

Wrap Up, August 11

Tracy Wiecking, VP, adult services, Hope Village

Tracy Wiecking from The Haven at Hope Villages of America spoke at our Rotary meeting on Aug. 11. He is the vice president of Abuse Services Division.

He has been in that role since December 2019. Tracy has spent his entire career (40 years) in the not-for-profit field.

He spoke to the club about what constitutes domestic abuse and what services are available to survivors.

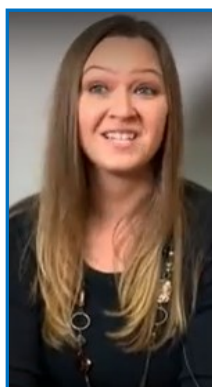
"Domestic violence is not about violence, it is about control," he said.

If you notice someone seems to be controlled or extremely manipulated in areas of their life, it could be a sign they are being abused. Usually, control begins with psychological or emotional abuse, then escalates to physical abuse.

The 24-hour crisis line is 727-442-4128. They have numerous services available to help. We collected suitcases for The Haven and needed items. These were collected throughout the month of August.

RIGHT: Rotarians collect suitcases for good cause. Pictured: Perry Bean, Joan Stolz, SSue Carson, Tracy Wiecking, Jean Coleman, Jerry Coleman

BELOW: Tracy Wiecking from The Haven at Hope Villages of America

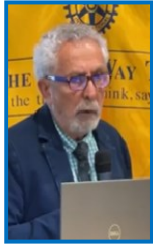


**ABOVE: Guest
RIGHT: People
helping people**



Mayor urges planning, clear lines of authority

Mayor Costa Vatikiotis' program highlighted his role as mayor. He noted the mayor is a commissioner, one of five, and he leads city commission meeting.



C. Vatikiotis

The board sets policy for the city, and the city manager implements those policies.

He said, "That has changed over the years," and the manager has been setting policy. He wants to return policy formation to the board of directors.

Two parts to the city's budget.

Operating budget, keep lights running. Day to day operation of the city is covered by the operating budget.

The second function of the city budget is projects. "These represent what the city's priorities are," said Vasilotis.

"The biggest problem with projects is communicating the with the public," the mayor said.

1. city's comprehensive growth plan. Longterm plan updated not in 15 years. Land development planning. "dealing with some large plan."
2. Strategic plan sets priorities within the city's vision. It's an aspirational vision. You never get there. It's a carrot

you keep following." Quality of life

"Important to me is economic development." Asset based EC "work on what we've got to bring visitors here." Not grow the city; it is nearly built out."

Growth of Chamber of Commerce is notable. Karen Lemmons works hand in hand with the Chamber.

"The hotel has not gone away yet," he said. Hear something next couple of weeks. More conducive to sponge docks.

Threats to city. Flooding and housing.

"Flood is street engineering and money." TS is one of the lowest cities in the state.

"Floodgate is being considered. \$17-30 million." FEMA considering.

Housing "People do not want TS to become crowded." Prevent overcrowding.

Influence housing by increasing density.

Projects: \$72 million identified. Delay getting them started because city has not plan.

Commissioners told staff what to do but without plan staff dropped current efforts to follow commission orders. Nothing got accomplished.

"City is detailed and complex," Vatikiotis said. "Rotary has always been a leader. 'Club get involved.'"

Budget is \$75 million a year.



Tarpon Springs Mayor Costa Vatikiotis outlined need for planning and coordination with the city manager to make clear line of communication within the city.

Boating Family ready to take to seas Oct. 15

Local kids will get their sea legs in October. The club's "Boating Family" project will load up and head for Caladesi Island for the day.

RCTS's Boating Family will be sponsor its Caladesi Island "Experience" Cruise Oct. 15.

Participants will be from the Boys and Girls Club, Citizen's Alliance for Progress and Cops and Kids. The young people will have a guided tour boat ride to Caladesi Island and a day full of tours of what the gulf island provides.

While on the island, they will explore an adventure tour with numerous stops where instructors will provide information on local Gulf water, island and historical subjects. After the tours, the children and volunteers will be treated to lunch provided by St. Mark's Village.

Following lunch, there will be games prior to departure to Tarpon Springs.

This is the second of three planned adventures in the water for local children.

Volunteers are needed including instructor assistants, guides for the island tour, helpers for check-in, check in helpers, boats, captains, first

mates and boat guides.

Boats depart Port Tarpon Marina at 8 a.m. Volunteers who choose not to ride with our armada can take a ferry from Honeymoon Island to Caladesi for a fee.

Those interested in helping should contact: Mike Johnson: if you can provide a boat to help transport children or adults to Caladesi: or if you can serve as a first mate or boat guide on one of the boats.

Ron Haddad: to help with food and drink set up

Donna Pentrack: to help with checking children in at Port Tarpon Marina logging children in, putting life jackets on and assigning them to boats

Rea Sieber: to help as on Island Instructor Assistant or as a tour guide

Terri Johnson: to help with organized games after lunch

Tekoa Tyner Bean is the island events coordinator for other needs

World specter of polio raises ugly head again



The recent detection of the vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 case in New York, USA, and isolates in several environmental samples collected in London are stark reminders that as long as polio exists anywhere, it is a threat everywhere.

It also highlights the importance of vaccination as the only form of protection against polio and other vaccine-preventable diseases and the work that needs to be done in our communities to encourage the uptake of vaccines. Also, as the world gets closer to zero wild poliovirus cases, it is increasingly important to track all forms of the virus wherever they may appear, including in polio-free regions.

The U.S. is still considered low risk for paralytic outbreaks of polio due to the high level of vaccine coverage across the population. If a child has received the entire course of vaccines, the risk of becoming paralyzed by polio is negligible.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 92.6 percent of

children aged 24 months are fully vaccinated against polio, slightly below the 95 percent World Health Organization target.

The best things countries can do to protect themselves from polio until the disease is eradicated from the world are to: maintain high vaccination coverage and robust disease surveillance and be ready to respond in the event of an outbreak to minimize the risk and consequences of polio re-introduction or re-emergence anywhere.

The world currently has a unique opportunity to stop virus transmission for good. Still, all parties, including donors and country governments, must re-commit to polio eradication by fully supporting the Global Polio Eradication Initiative strategy.

This focuses on adopting an emergency posture while generating greater accountability and ownership from country governments to eradicate wild polio and end variant poliovirus outbreaks.

Rotary, a global service organization with over 1.4 million members, has been at the

center of the worldwide effort to eradicate polio for over three decades.

Every year, through our funding partnership with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Rotary commits \$150 million to the global effort to eradicate polio. We have contributed more than \$2.6 billion and countless volunteer hours to end polio forever. Together with our partners, we engage communities everywhere to encourage high vaccination rates, immunizing over 400 million children annually. More than 20 million people are walking today who otherwise would have been paralyzed because of our efforts and those of our partners in the GPEI.

A new vaccine has been deployed – novel oral polio vaccine 2 (nOPV2) – which is more genetically stable to stop outbreaks of circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus effectively. With sustained political and financial commitments, the GPEI is confident that we can achieve a world in which no child is paralyzed by polio again.

What is polio

Polio, or poliomyelitis, is a paralyzing and potentially deadly infectious disease that most commonly affects children under the age of 5. The virus spreads from person to person, typically through contaminated water. It can then attack the nervous system.

