

# Monthly Newsletter



## Message from Heidi:

As I write my final President's Message, I want to express my sincere gratitude for the privilege of serving as President of the Rotary Club of Bonita Naples this past year.

Thank you to our Board of Directors for your guidance, wisdom, and support. Your advice and dedication have been invaluable in helping our club achieve so much this year.

To all of our members, thank you for your commitment to Rotary and for supporting our club's mission through your service, generosity, and fellowship. Each of you has contributed to the success of our club and the positive impact we have made in our community and beyond.

As I pass the gavel, I ask that you continue to support our President-Elect, Mike Prioletti, as enthusiastically as you supported me. Mike is a dedicated Rotarian and capable leader, and I know he will guide our club successfully in the year ahead.

Thank you again for the honor of serving as your President. I look forward to continuing our Rotary journey together.

With gratitude,

*Heidi*

Heidi Varsames  
President, 2025-2026

### In this newsletter you can expect:

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Other  
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Achievements  
&  
Gratitude

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**UNITE FOR GOOD**



## Other Happenings:

On May 21, 2026, we had our annual Awards & Installation Ceremony that was well attended in a beautifully set up Stage. Janet DiBenedetto did a great job emceeing the event, and our District Governor-Elect Designate, Sue McConnell, performed the installation ceremony.

Awards were given to Anke Tracey for Rotarian of the Year, to Bob Bornstein for Beacon of Fellowship & Services, and to Heidi Varsames for Thank You for Your Year! Campbell finished the accolades with a special thank you for Jim and Dee Fabry for all they do for our club.



Wishing all the best to:

6/1 - Allen Hausman

6/2 - Bruce Hayes

6/13 - Paul Hanysz

6/26 - Sam Black

6/26 - Anne Brownstone

"The more you praise and celebrate your life, the more there is in life to celebrate" ~ Oprah Winfrey



Happy Anniversary

6/1 - Barb Meyer

6/1 - Al Rigoni

6/6 - Anne Brownstone

6/6 - Anke Tracey

6/30 - Don Ballo

"Rotary changes us and those we server. I believe we can change the world one life at a time."  
~ Paul Harris

# Speaker Highlights



**Wendy Stephan, PhD**

As Manager of Community Outreach at the **Florida Poison Information Center - Miami**, Wendy shared with us vital and very useful information about all kinds of poisonings they can help with. Their free **hotline is 800-222-1222**. For more information, go to: **FloridaPoisonControl.org**



**Dana Hollenzar**

Executive Director of **Special Equestrians** share with us how they enhance the physical, emotional and cognitive growth for individuals with disabilities through equine-assisted activities and therapies. It's truly amazing to see the special connection horses have with humans. Find out more at: **SpecialEquestrians.net**

# Upcoming Speakers & Events

- **6/4** - Bob Breville - Captains for Clean Water.
- **6/11** - Scott Chartier - Collier Children's Advocacy Center
- **6/18** - Assembly
- **6/25** - Alivia Crowl - WellFit Girls
- **Pints Summer Socials:**
  - o **6/10** - Kaleidoscope
  - o **6/30** - Bone Hook
  - o **7/22** - Riptide
  - o **8/12** - Palm City
  - o **9/2** - Brass Tap



**Cassy Kelly**

As Dir., Business Development for **Right at Home**, Cassy gave an informative presentation about options for aging in place, and the many services that they provide on an as-needed basis. For more information about this Bonita Springs business or it's national network, visit their website at **RightAtHome.net**.



**2026-2027 Bonita Naples Leadership**

- President - Mike Prioletti
- President Elect - Jim Fabry
- Past President - Heidi Varsames
- Secretary - Dee Fabry
- Treasurer - Cindy Hall
- Director - Anke Tracey
- Director - Paul Hanyasz
- Director - Sam Black
- Club Foundation President - Janet DiBenedetto



On 5/23, several club members enjoyed a fun evening at **The Stage**.





## Member Spotlight - Anne R. Brownstone

I was fortunate to be born to perfect parents, Clyde & Vera Wilson. My Dad was always referred to as a '1900 Model Clyde' since he was born in 1900. He and Mom survived the depression and worked hard to pay for my college education. After graduation from college and marriage (lasted 52 yrs.), I held several jobs supporting my husband's graduate education.

I worked at a neuro-psychology lab at the University of Oregon testing brain injured patients. Then returning to Iowa, I worked as a paralegal for several attorneys. Next, I worked at John Deere in Waterloo, Iowa for a 23 year career.

I had many opportunities at John Deere to advance to my final job before retirement as a Computer Systems team leader. I mentored several university interns which was very rewarding. I also did Project Management on many development projects.

While I was at John Deere, I joined the Toastmasters club. My first speech (where the subject was me) was in a large auditorium filled with folks learning about Toastmasters. I knew I had to hold their attention, so I started to unbutton my blouse as I spoke and finished by exposing my 'Superwoman' t-shirt. Later I served as the President and subsequently was instrumental in starting a new club at a different Deere location.

After I retired from John Deere, I was asked to join the Friends Board for the UNI Museums. I was elected President. The largest very successful project was to bring "T-Rex named Sue" from the Smithsonian to Cedar Falls for a 3-month run. Our many sponsors helped make this possible.

I joined Kiwanis and was the first female member, so I started out as the Programs Committee chair and then I was on the Community Service committee. We did a number of projects that had not been done before such as a yearly paintathon of homes in the area where the residents couldn't afford maintenance. Soon after, I was elected President. I was awarded the 'Kiwanian of the year'.

Years later after I retired, I was asked to be the District Governor supervising and aiding 6 clubs. At the same time as I was a Kiwanian, my husband, John, was in Rotary Club. He came home one day and said he'd signed up to host a student from Australia. So when our new student arrived, he left his home when temps were in the 90s and he arrived in Iowa where it was below zero. My husband gave him his coat for the duration of his stay. It was a pleasure living with a surfer guy.

So now I'm in Rotary in the best Club I could have possibly joined. I enjoy doing hands on food packing for Café of Life and being part of fundraising efforts for Pints with a purpose. And there is so much I've learned by attending the weekly meetings about people serving those in need in our community and around the world.

So..... what did Anne and John Brownstone do for fun? We had lots of big dogs and small cats.

We also had fun entertaining the women's basketball team at our lake home in Clear Lake.

We also flew many times to Florida to visit family and friends. John most liked flying, and I liked getting to our destination fast and being navigator. We had 3 different airplanes over the years. After one trip to Florida in our brand new 4 passenger Cessna, it was parked at our local airport and picked up by a storm and dropped into a farm field. The only thing left was a small piece of the wing. Oh well, the next plane was bigger and faster.

<p align="center"><b>ROTARY CLUB OF BONITA NAPLES</b></p>	<p align="center">MEETING THURSDAYS AT NOON</p>
<p align="center">BonitaNaplesRotary.com</p>	<p align="center">The Stage Restaurant 9144 Bonita Beach Rd Bonita Springs, FL 34135</p>



# Thank You!

## Rotary Club of Bonita Naples - 2025-2026

Thanks to our fundraisers and the Rotary Club of Bonita Naples Club Foundation, we were able to support: Parkinsons of SWFL, The Healthy Earth, Captains for Clean Water, Save the Manatee, Fun Time Early Childhood Academy, Wheelchair Foundation, Gift of Life, and hurricane relief. Current members of our Club Foundation (all-time giving of \$762,060) include Janet DiBenedetto, Mike Rusk, James Mullen, Phil Roach, Kim Anderson & Mike Prioletti.

### Oktoberfest

Thanks to Joerg Meyer and John Varsames diligently planning and executing our first annual event, we **netted \$8,000**. But we couldn't have done it without our other helpers including: Heidi Varsames, Janet DiBenedetto, Cindy Hall, Sam Black, Dee Fabry, Bob Bornstein, Lin Dworkin, Justine Braveman, Phil Roach, Kim Anderson, and Anke Tracey.

### Board of Directors

As we say farewell and special thanks to Heidi Varsames, Joanne Ziccarelli, & Joerg Meyer, we wish Mike Prioletti, Cindy Hall, Dee Fabry, Jim Fabry, Anke Tracey, Sam Black, and Paul Hanyasz all the best for the coming year.

### Youth Services

Thanks to Joerg Meyer, Wayne Hemstead, and Jerry Grandey for their work with Interact; to Joanne Ziccarelli for her monthly RotaKids program; & Joerg Meyer for training 225 kids on water safety with Josh the Baby Otter.

### Literacy

Thanks to Dee Fabry, Bob & Ingrid Bornstein, Joanne Ziccarelli and monthly stewards for ensuring that our YMCA Little Libraries were always clean, organized, and stocked. Thanks to Bob and Dee for creating the Books4Community Project.

### Tuesday's Food Packing

With the help of the following people, we spent over **130 hours packing 4,610** bags for the Cafe of Life Outreach Program. A special thank you to Bruce Hayes for providing the produce, and Oscar & The Stage for the venue:

Anke Tracey	Anne Brownstone
Bruce Hayes	Bob Bornstein
Kim Anderson	Jim Fabry
Justin Braveman	Celia Meyer
Kathy Picard	Joanne Ziccarelli
Brad Robinson	Dan & Karen Martens
Bill Morrison	Sam & Jon Black
John Bailey	Ed Ries
Dave Lockard	Mark Hebrank
	John & Heidi Varsames
	Donna & Steve Cannon

### Wheelchair Foundation

Since 2008, our district has raised **over \$1.4 million** and delivered **over 14,000** wheelchairs. Special thanks to Gary Dworkin and Jim Fabry for ensuring hundreds were delivered annually over the past five years.

### Gift of Life - GOLI

Special thanks to Gary Dworkin and Janet DiBenedetto for their ongoing support to this Rotary-affiliated organization that provides lifesaving cardiac care to children with congenital heart defects.

### Pints With a Purpose

With the help of the following people, we held 10 fundraising events plus 6 social events, resulting in a **net profit of \$4,100**: AnkeTracey, Joerg Meyer, Justin Braveman, Barbara Meyer, Al Rigoni, Giancarlo Tasso; our 6 participating breweries, and member supporters.