Monthly Newsletter

Rotary Bonita Naples



Message from Mike:

Hi Everyone,

October is a special month for our Rotary Club.

It's **"all hands on deck"** for our first major fundraiser of the year—Oktoberfest on October 10th. Beyond the fun and fellowship, this event helps make possible the life-changing work we are fortunate to support in our community and around the world.

As autumn brings our seasonal friends back to Bonita Springs and Naples, it also begins one of our busiest times of year.

It's a wonderful reminder of what makes our club special—the friendships we share, the way we show up for one another, and our shared commitment to making a difference.

Mike

In this newsletter you can expect:

Other Happenings

Member Birthdays

New Members

Speaker Highlights

Upcoming Events

Member Spotlight

CREATE LASTING IMPACT






Other Happenings:

- We had a great turn-out at The Brass Tap to say goodbye to our dear friends, Dee and Jim Fabry. We thank them for all that they have done for our club and wish them all the best in their new home in Ocala, Florida.
- Our Brass Tap event was the last of our Pints With a Purpose summer social events. Given the lack of interest and support, the decision was made not to continue this fundraiser next year. Having said that, it was a successful project that had three goals: support local businesses, give back to the community, and encourage socializing. For the two years of the program, we held 17 advertised events plus 11 summer socials to support the participating breweries. We netted almost $8,000, which supported 7 local organizations plus left almost $2,000 in our account for hurricane relief.
- Due to lack of interest and support, the decision was also made to end our Tuesday food packing for Cafe of Life's Outreach Program. Since 7/2024, we packed over 10,000 bags of produce that supported over 5,000 families in our area. We are currently looking for alternative options to fight food insecurity and welcome your suggestions.

New location for our club meetings:

- Starting 10/1/2026, we will be holding our club meetings at a new location ~ Connors Steak &. Seafood restaurant at 950 Immokalee Road (southwest corner of US41 and Immokalee Rd). Meetings will still be noon - 1:00pm as usual, and you are encouraged to arrive by 11:45 am. To help plan for a delicious lunch, we ask you to kindly RSVP via the following link: https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040F44AAAF2DAAFA7-66285090-club
- A special thank you to Campbell Gault who has done a fantastic job hosting our club meetings for the past several years. We've had delicious meals and wonderful memories, and we'll be forever grateful.



Wishing all the best to:

10/3 - James Mullen
10/17 - Tam Mustapha
10/17 - Phil Roach

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



Happy Anniversary

10/3 - Drew Ogden
10/15 - Heidi Varsames
10/23 - John Varsames
10/28 - Campbell Gault

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

Speaker Highlights



Eldon Bohrofen

Rotary Endowment Fund - Eldon, who is a member of the Sanibel-Captiva Rotary Club, is currently the Chair of the Rotary Endowment. He shared with us how we can support Rotary's goals through an endowment. It is set up so that only the interest is spent (on an area that the donor designates), thereby ensuring the long-term viability of the Foundation's grants and programs.

Upcoming Speakers & Events

- **10/1** - Tricia Montgomery - Humane Society
- **10/8** - Oktoberfest Prep
- **10/15** - Maria Dente - Court Magistrate Naples
- **10/22** - Assembly - Foundation Report
- **10/29** - John Nanni - End Polio Now

Oktoberfest 10/10

- save the date and ask how you can help

Oktoberfest Update

With less than 2 weeks to go to the 2nd Annual Oktoberfest 2026: Prost with a Purpose celebration, remember to **buy your tickets ahead of time** to avoid the lines. It's going to be bigger, better, and more festive than ever!

When and where is it? It's on Saturday, October 10, 2026, from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at Riptide Brewing Company, 28120 Hunters Ridge Blvd., Bonita Springs.

Feel like you are actually in Munich! Enjoy live entertainment from the 20-piece Hafenkapelle German band, along with traditional German food, craft beer, and plenty of dancing in a fun, family-friendly atmosphere.

Hosted by the Bonita Naples Rotary Club, every dollar raised supports charitable organizations serving the Bonita Springs and Naples area, helping us make a lasting difference while celebrating a beloved German tradition.

For tickets and additional information, go to Eventbrite @: **https://shorturl.at/s5zlj** or visit www.bonitanaplesrotary.org.



Raise a stein, celebrate with friends, and

Prost with a Purpose!

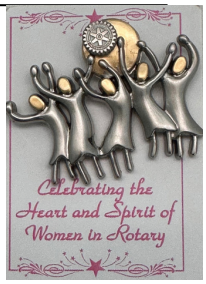


GET YOUR TICKETS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!









Member Spotlight - Heidi Varsames

Originally from New Jersey, Heidi met the love of her life, John, while attending college in Vermont. They married one year later, beginning a life together that would take them to several states as their careers evolved. Through every move, Vermont has always felt like home.

Ask Heidi about her greatest achievement and joy, and she will tell you it is raising her two daughters to become well-educated, independent, and kind women. Today, she treasures time with her three grandchildren, who live in Boston.

In 1999, as young empty nesters, Heidi and John decided to begin a new chapter in Naples, drawn by the promise of new adventures, opportunities, and warmer, sunnier days. In 2002, she continued her real estate career with John R. Wood Properties, where she still loves helping buyers find their place and begin new lives in Southwest Florida. She understands that finding the right home means much more than choosing a property. It means discovering a community and lifestyle that truly feels right. During the SW Florida recession years, Heidi was invited to join Merrill Lynch as a financial advisor and while she enjoyed the change and the challenge, she returned to John R Wood several years later.

Community service has always been an essential part of Heidi's life. Soon after settling in Naples, she was invited to participate in Greater Naples Leadership's Master Class VIII. During that year, she learned about the community's needs and explored meaningful ways to contribute her time and experience.

She went on to serve in leadership roles with The League Club, an organization of former Junior League members; Fun Time Early Childhood Academy; The Fresh Start for Abused Women Fund; the Grants Committee of the Collier County Community Foundation; and the Women's Council of REALTORS®. In 2011, her dedication to service was recognized with President Obama's Volunteer Service Award.

Heidi's Rotary journey began in 2021, when she joined the Rotary Club of North Naples to learn more about the organization and its mission. As her interest grew, she sought additional opportunities to serve and become involved.

Enter her cousin, Janet DiBenedetto, a Rotarian Extraordinaire! With Janet's encouragement, Heidi found her way to the Rotary Club of Bonita Naples and quickly became involved, completing all three Rotary Leadership Institute classes. With guidance from generous mentors and the support of a fun, welcoming, and nurturing membership, she accepted the invitation to serve as club president for 2025–2026.
Her love of serving others brought her to Rotary. The friendships, encouragement, and shared commitment to making a difference are what keep her there.

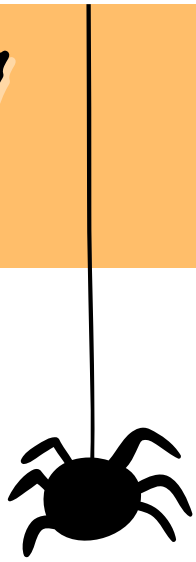
ROTARY CLUB OF BONITA NAPLES	MEETING THURSDAYS AT NOON
BonitaNaplesRotary.com **Past newsletters**: https://www.bonitanaplesrotary.com/newsletters-past	**The Stage Restaurant** 9144 Bonita Beach Rd Bonita Springs, FL 34135

LANGUAGE THERAPY

Fall Special



Our Sargeant of Arms, Kim Anderson, recently introduced our club to weekly "words". All the words are used infrequently and we are encouraged to use them while we share our Happy/Sad news. It's been fun to see how members use the words, especially if they use that day's word as well as one or more of our past words. Joerg Meyer came up with the idea to have ChatGPT use all the words from our last quarter and create a poem to share with our membership. Here is the first one:



CREATING LASTING IMPACT

When times are **Bleak**, we choose to bring the light,
With hands joined together, we turn wrongs toward right.
In **Brevity**, a simple idea can start
A ripple of service that reaches each heart.

No **Brouhaha** needed, no glory or fame,
Just neighbors united for one common aim.
A **Harbinger** of hope, each small deed we do
Can open a door for someone anew.

When **Unsavory** challenges stand in our way,
We meet them with courage and kindness each day.
We will not let obstacles **Stymie** our stride;
With Rotary fellowship walking beside.

For lasting impact is more than a deed—
It's planting the future by answering need.
The seeds that we scatter through service today
May blossom for others long after we're away.

So let us serve boldly, with hearts open wide,
Creating a legacy where hope will abide.

