



Swarthmore Rotary Cog Notes

P.O. Box 4, Swarthmore, PA 19081



March 16, 2023

Jennifer Jones
RI President 2022-23
David Houtz
District 7450 Governor

Swarthmore Rotary
Leaders

Heather Saunders
President

Greg Brown
President-Elect

Brian Casey
Club Executive Secretary

Patrick Gunnin
Treasurer

George C. Whitfield Jr.
Secretary

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Youth Services Chair

Perri Ann Evanson
Public Relations Chair

Carr Everbach
Membership Chair

David Firn
Service Projects Chair

Betty Ann A. Flynn
Club Director

William Clinton Hale
Past President
Sergeant-at-Arms

Anne C. Hansen
International Service Chair

Kathryn Jones
iPast President

Jeannine Osayande
Youth Services Chair

Hillard Pouncy
Club Programs Chair

Joshua Twersky
Club Director

Barbara Whitaker-Shimko
Rotary Foundation Chair

Kenneth J. Wright
Club Director

Cathleen Darrell
Attendance Secretary

Lori Markusfeld
President-Nominee

Richard Shimko
Bulletin Editor

Karen Aleta Mazzarella
Assistant Governor

Happy Dollars

pledge \$3,052
2021-2022 \$4,476

Rotary Celebrations!

Birthdays

Joseph Patrick Lesniak

Meetings and Events

March 16th

Swarthmore Weekly Club Meeting (Inn)
Speaker: Professor Roberta Iversen, Social
Policy and Practice, Univ. of Pennsylvania
Subject: What Workers Say about Their Work

March 30th

Swarthmore Weekly Club Meeting (Inn)
Speaker: Club Assembly
Subject: Club Assembly

March 23rd

Swarthmore Weekly Club Meeting (Inn)
Speaker: Dr. Marseille, WSSD, Superintendent
Subject: District Update – Ten Year Strategic
Planning WSSD 2023-2033

April 6th

Swarthmore Weekly Club Meeting (Inn)
Speaker: Perri Evanson, Berkshire Hathaway Fox
and Roach, Past Rotary Club President
Subject: State of the Local Area Housing Market

Service Quotation

“He who wishes to secure the good of others, has already secured his own.”

Confucius

4 Way Test

Of the things we think, say or do

1. Is it the TRUTH?
2. Is it FAIR to all concerned?
3. Will it build GOODWILL and BETTER FRIENDSHIPS?
4. Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned?

Club News

Dave Firn told us that the next Loaves & Fishes food pantry volunteer day will be April 23. See Heather Saunder's email 3/8/23 to register.

Ken Wright reminded us about the next Rotary Arts Program event on March 17 featuring Andrea Packard, a local artist and head of the List Gallery at Swarthmore College. The moderator will be PAC's Executive Director Rosemary Fox.

Last Meeting Summary



Why doesn't TV news broadcast more good news stories? This was what several Rotarians asked our speaker, Dan Cuellar, recently retired from ABC's Action News team. They cited, as examples of good news stories, things that organizations such as Rotary do to make communities better. Dan's response was that a news show that focused on good news would not attract enough viewer to be viable. He said it has been tried and failed. See article below for

a further discussion of this topic.

Dan was at Action News for 34 years. He considered himself a journalist, and as such, he felt he had to maintain high standards of integrity. He knows that there is a lot of fake news which has led to eroding trust in the media. He advised us to use a variety of news sources to stay informed.

Because Dan believes honest sources of information such as TV news is important to keeping democracy healthy, he said we should support our local news sources.

Why so much negative news on TV news shows?

March 17th

Wedding Anniversaries

Mike Malone
March 17th

Years of Service

George C. Whitfield Jr.
03-19-1999
24 Years

Guests Last Meeting

Margie & David Saland
Gabi & Oliver Ohl
Jane Cooper
Temba Brown



Several Rotarians commented on the focus on negative stories on TV news shows. Dan Cuellar defended the practice by saying that is what viewers want. A couple of articles from the internet seem to support Dan's argument. As an alternative, there is a news website that reports only good news, goodnewsnetwork.org.

From a blog by Professor Stuart Soroka, blog.lse.ac.uk:

"The behaviour of newspapers and programmes offers one obvious clue – news agencies seek audiences, after all, and experience (and sales) points towards the value of negative information. For instance, newsstand magazine sales increase by roughly 30 per cent when the cover is negative rather than positive. It is no surprise, then, that a "good news day" resulted in a [66 per cent decrease](#) in readership in an online Russian newspaper. Indeed, other [research](#) suggests that even when participants say that they would like more positive news, they still select online news stories that are predominantly negative. Even as emails and Facebook feeds highlight good, our news consumption habits still prioritise information that is negative. But *why* do we pay more attention to negative news than to positive news? Answering this question (at least in part) is the focus of "[News, Politics, and Negativity](#)," a paper that [Stephen McAdams](#) and I recently published in *Political Communication*. The paper draws on work in psychology, economics, and political communications to suggest that humans may neurologically or physiologically predisposed towards focusing on negative information. The argument has its roots in an evolutionary-biological account of how humans decide what to pay attention to. It is evolutionarily advantageous to prioritise negative information, the argument goes, because the potential costs of negative information far outweigh the potential benefits of positive information. The human brain is as a consequence predisposed towards focusing on negative information."

From Center for Journalism Ethics website, ethics.journalism.wisc.edu:

"In an article by communications professors Gerald Stone and Elinor Grusin, it was found that the average amount of positive news on ABC, CBS and NBC was 25.1 per cent. This is not to say that the rest is negative. Almost half, 46.8 per cent, was found to be negative. The other 28.1 per cent they called "indeterminable." Les Staff, executive producer of CTV News in B.C., agrees with the percentage of positive and negative news. He contends that it is important to show the negatives to let people know where society can be improved. "It [all positive news] is like eating dessert every night for supper," said Staff. "People want to know what's going on and you can only take so much sugar." Journalists have an ethical responsibility expose the truth, even if it is negative, so society can learn from mistakes and take steps toward improvement. CTV assignment editor Ethan Faber refers to his role as being the person who shines the flashlight on the potholes. Some positive news broadcasts have been tried, and they were tremendously successful for a couple months, but then the ratings dropped. Staff attributes that to people wanting to be informed. In television news, whether a reporter is packaging a story or a producer is lining up a show, the most dramatic picture should lead. It makes sense that the picture that will catch the viewers' eyes and make them want to keep watching will be shown first. "The pictures [from the stories with most impact] tend to be dramatic and quite often negative in the sense of people dying," said Nixon. Nixon believes that if the news weren't so gruesome, fewer people would watch. "There is a fascination with nasty stuff that people want to watch or are conditioned to watch."