



## Meetings

January is Vocational Service Month

- 1/27 Milton Fire Chief Gabe Benmoussa and Chief Medical Officer Mark Haskins
- 2/10 Jay Litton, The Litton Group
- 2/24 TBD
- 3/10 Speaker: TBD
- 3/24 Speaker: TBD
- 4/14 Speaker: TBD
- 4/28 Speaker: TBD
- 5/12 Speaker: TBD

## Events

- 1/21 Board Meeting
- 2/3 Engaging with our Community Seniors
- 2/3 First Tuesday Social at Voodoo Brewing
- 2/7 Polar Bear Plunge
- 2/18 Board Meeting
- 2/19 Companion Club Meeting
- 3/18 Board Meeting
- 3/19 Companion Club Meeting

## LEADERSHIP

- President Erik Bykat
- Vice President Dan Jenkins
- Treasurer Mike Mudd
- Secretary Steve Siders
- Public Image Lisa Gelber

## January 13, 2026 Meeting Recap

Our members sure seemed happy to be back together after the holiday break! We had a special appearance by The Pink Flamingo a/k/a Richard Matherly, to raise awareness for our fundraiser at The Polar Plunge on February 7th (more on that in another newsletter article). Richard was joined by his daughter, Kelly, who has also jumped to show support for Richard. In case you have not witnessed this, Richard's dive, while spectacular, is no match for Kelly's. Kelly was a diver at UGA and executes the most beautiful dive at The Polar Plunge! Mark your calendar for Saturday, February 7th at 10 am at Wills Park Pool!

We were also visited by PDG Bob Hagan. When he learned that our very own James Marosek was going to be sharing about his recent trip to Vietnam with his wife Van, Bob didn't want to miss it. Bob was District Governor when James was our Club President and the bond and admiration is strong!

## HAPPY DOLLARS

Richard led us in Happy Dollars and a few of note are that Suzanne Swain shared that she will become a grandparent this summer. Even better, her daughter and son-in-law are moving back to the ATL area! Cliff shared that his travel plans over the holiday included heading north to Montreal and Quebec City. PDG Bob Hagan, who serves on the board of Wellstar North Fulton Hospital, shared that the new CEO highlighted our club's success with CPR and AED training at a recent board meeting. And Brad shared that he appreciated the support and friendship of our club members after his father died. Brad also shared that his retirement is imminent!

## Our Rotary Family BIRTHDAYS

1/11 Kathleen Peneguy  
1/19 William Bennett  
1/20 Stacy Georges

## YEARS OF SERVICE

1/1 Kathleen Peneguy (4)  
21 years in Rotary  
1/1 Brad Serff (4)  
30 years in Rotary  
1/1 Casey Baker (4)  
8 years in Rotary  
1/1 Thomas Nolfa (3)  
1/9 Steve Cory (2)  
1/9 Stacey Nyman (2)  
1/9 Garrett Vaughn (2)  
1/22 Michael Freeman, Sr. (7)  
1/22 Lisa Gelber (7)  
1/26 Tom Georges (1)

## ROTARY CLUB OF NORTH FULTON

Tuesdays, 12:00 pm  
Brimstone Restaurant & Tavern

## Rotary Online

<https://northfultonrotary.org>  
<https://rotary6900.org/>  
<https://rotary.org/>



## CLUB UPDATES

Foundation Chair Doug Higgins announced the final amount of our Score for Polio Plus fundraiser: \$7347. Wow! Thank you, Doug, for leading this effort! In addition, Doug presented some Paul Harris Fellow recognitions:

- William Bennett, Paul Harris plus one
- Lisa Gelber, Paul Harris plus three
- Rick Clark, Paul Harris plus six
- Brad Serff, Paul Harris plus eight

Please reach out to Doug if you want to know more about Paul Harris Fellow.



## PRAYER BREAKFAST

Jonathan Stelling will lead our Prayer Breakfast Committee this year. Please mark your calendars for Thursday, May 7th for this always-popular event and reach out to Jonathan if you'd like to serve on the committee. It's a big undertaking and as they say goes, "many hands makes light work".

## GUEST SPEAKERS

Past President James Marosek and his wife, Van, joined us on January 13th to share reflections from their meaningful trip to Vietnam. Van, who was born in Vietnam, left the country in 1975 on the second-to-last C-130 plane before the fall of Saigon. James has been studying Vietnamese for the past three years and eventually persuaded Van that it was time to return and visit her homeland.

Despite initial apprehension (worried she might be viewed as a traitor for having left Vietnam), Van agreed to the journey, and they planned a three-week trip in October 2025. Their itinerary included central Vietnam, Hanoi and Saigon; however, heavy rains prevented travel in the central region. Even so, the trip was rich with memorable experiences.

James and Van enjoyed exceptional Vietnamese cuisine, including a meal at a Michelin-starred restaurant, and visited numerous cultural and historical sites. Van selected beautiful fabrics and had traditional Vietnamese dresses custom made, one of which she wore to our meeting. They found the Vietnamese people to be warm and welcoming toward Americans, and James was especially popular for his willingness to practice his Vietnamese language skills wherever they went. One particularly touching moment came when Van was presented with a special dessert bearing the words "Welcome Home" written in chocolate. She shared that she truly felt like a sister returning home.

James and Van also noted some striking differences between Vietnam and life here - particularly, traffic. In Vietnam, a green light means go, a yellow light means go, and a red light....also means go. Crossing the street can be intimidating, but the key, they learned, was to keep moving forward steadily. Another notable difference: there are no lines, even at the airport. Somehow, though, everything still works.

They described the Vietnamese people as forward-thinking and future-focused, with little emphasis on past conflicts. Nationality and religious differences do not seem to create friction.

James and Van hope to return to Vietnam someday and who knows? Perhaps some fellow Rotarians might like to join them, as long as they bring a flexible attitude and a sense of adventure!



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## Polar Plunge Fundraiser

On Saturday, February 7th, both Richard and Rick will be taking the plunge - literally - into the icy waters of Wills Park Pool to help raise money for our club. While our quarterly dues primarily cover Rotary International and District dues, as well as our lunches, additional fundraising is essential to support the community service projects we proudly undertake.

The Polar Plunge, hosted by Alpharetta Rotary, is one of the simplest and most cost effective ways for us to raise these much-needed funds. It requires no extensive planning, countless volunteer hours, or uncertainty about whether an event will be profitable.

If each member reaches out to friends and family and invites them to support the good work we do in our community, we can not only meet our goal of \$10,000, but easily

surpass it. Please help us spread the word and make this fundraiser a success!

Support Rick Clark: [Rick's Polar Plunge](#)

Support Richard Matherly: [Richard's Polar Plunge](#)

Many thanks to Kathleen Peneguy for providing the graphic services for their fundraising flyers!

# PLUNGER SPOTLIGHT

## Rick Clark

**Help me raise my fundraising goal of \$5,000!**

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Rick and the North Fulton Rotary are raising money for various organizations and will participate in the Polar Bear Plunge on February 7th at Wills Park in Alpharetta.

All money raised will support a number of local non-profits we partner with to improve literacy, feed the hungry, enhance local art programs and provide housing.

**Supporting:**

NFCC  
Children's Development Academy  
The Drake House  
Alpharetta Greenway Mural Trail  
Habitat for Humanity  
ArtsAlpharetta

 For More Info And To Donate  
Scan QR Code or  
Text AlphaPlunge2026163  
to 71777

**Rotary**   
Club of North Fulton



# PLUNGER SPOTLIGHT

## Richard Matherly

**"My goal is to raise \$10,000 and I want to invite you to join with me to reach my goal!"**

Richard and the North Fulton Rotary are raising money for various organizations and will participate in the Polar Bear Plunge on February 7th at Wills Park in Alpharetta.

The money will be invested with non-profit partners to help locals with various essential needs.

### Supporting:

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Children's Development Academy  
The Drake House  
Alpharetta Greenway Mural Trail  
Habitat for Humanity  
ArtsAlpharetta



For More Info And To Donate  
Scan QR Code or  
Text AlphaPlunge2026155  
to 71777



## Engaging with Seniors, Part 2!

Volunteers Needed for a Fun Day with Local Seniors!

**Where: Alpharetta/Crabapple Senior Center, 12624 Broadwell Rd, Alpharetta (new location for us!)**

**When: Tuesday, February 3rd, 10:15 am to 12:45 pm**

Join us for another session of crafts (Valentine-themed), bingo and lunch!

If you have any questions, please contact Lisa: (770) 856-9509.

Sign up here: [Engaging with Seniors!](#)



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## District Conference at Lake Lanier

District Conference is coming up quickly (April 16-19) and will be just up the road from us at Lake Lanier. It's a wonderful time to connect with each other and other Rotarians in our District. The cost to register is \$350 until January 31st, when it increases to \$375. The Thursday evening dinner is for current Presidents, so most club members will plan to arrive on Friday and stay at the resort for the weekend as there are evening hospitality suites for continued fun. Please reach out to Doug, our District Conference Champion, with any questions!

Register Here: [District Conference](#)

# District Conference 2026

Rotary District 6900

APRIL 16 - 19, 2026:

Thursday, April 16:

3:45 - 5:45 pm - Welcome Lounge Open  
5:30 - 8:00 pm - Dinner - INVITATION ONLY (Presidents, AGs, District Leadership)  
8:00 - 10:30 pm - Hospitality Suites at the Legacy Villas\*  
- North Metro Dance Party (led by Alpharetta)  
- South Metro Karaoke (led by Peachtree City)  
- "Rest" of District (led by Columbus & Carrollton for chill vibes & conversation)

Friday, April 17:

8:30 - 9:30 am - Breakfast - INVITATION ONLY -(Past District Governors)  
8:00 - 12:00 - Various Activities (Registration Required)  
9:00 - 11:00 - Welcome Lounge Open  
9:00 - 11:00 - Collaboration Station Open  
12:00 - 3:00 - Game Changes Lunch & Team Competition  
2:15 - 4:15 - Welcome Lounge Open  
2:15 - 4:15 - Collaboration Station / House of Friendship Open  
3:15 - 4:15 - Service Project  
5:30 - 5:45 - Mix & Mingle  
5:45 - 7:15 - DINNER & FIRST SESSION  
7:15 - 8:00 - Coffee & Dessert Reception for DGE Cynthia Edwards  
8:00 - 11:30 - Hospitality Suites at the Legacy Villas\*

Saturday, April 18:

8:30 - 9:45 - Breakfast - Celebrating our Youth  
9:00 - 10:30 - Welcome Lounge Open  
9:30 - 11:30 - Collaboration Station Open  
10:00 - 10:45 - 1<sup>st</sup> Breakout Session  
11:00 - 11:45 - 2<sup>nd</sup> Breakout Session  
12:00 - 4:00 - Golf, Pickleball, Pool, Spa, - On Your Own Options  
5:15 - 6:00 - DG Steve Reception (Semi-Formal) - Peachtree Pavilion Amphitheater  
6:00 - 10:00 - DINNER & DANCE PARTY  
10:00 - 11:30 - Hospitality Suites at the Legacy Villas\*

Sunday, April 19:

7:30 - 8:15 - Non-denominational Service  
8:15 - 10:00 - Breakfast & Final Session



UNITE  
FOR  
GOOD



## MLK Day of Service at the CDA

On January 19, MLK Day of Service, members of Rotary Club of North Fulton cleaned and sanitized classrooms at Children's Development Academy. During this severe flu season, it is more important than ever to do what we can to keep children safe and healthy. When children become ill, their parents often must miss work, placing additional strain on already tight household budgets. We are grateful for the opportunity to make a small but meaningful impact in our community!







## Membership Minute

Submitted by Jeffrey Esterkes, Membership Chair

An elevator speech is a very brief, clear summary of something important, usually 30-60 seconds, or about the time it takes to ride an elevator. Its purpose is to explain who you are, what you do, or what you need quickly and memorably.

Here's one example to promote Rotary and our Club:

"Rotary is a service club where you meet great people, give back to the community, and have fun while doing meaningful work together. I belong to the Rotary Club of North Fulton. If you're interested in service and community involvement, Rotary is definitely worth checking out."

*Build one that you can use to engage people you meet and invite to a lunch meeting, service project or Tuesday social.*



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## First Tuesday Social: February 3rd

Please join us at our First Tuesday Social at Voodoo Brewing on February 3rd from 6:00 to 8:00 pm. If you have any questions, please reach out to Mark Hutchins at mhutchins75@gmail.com.

Voodoo Brewing, 1010 Mansell Road, Suite 180, Roswell



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## Member Satisfaction Survey

If you haven't already, please take a few minutes to complete the Member Satisfaction Survey before Friday, February 13th:

Link: [Member Survey](#)

This is a great opportunity to provide feedback related to our club so that action can be taken to make sure our club is even better in the future. Your responses are confidential and will only be used to enhance the club experience for both current and prospective members.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to President Elect Dan Jenkins.

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## Women in Rotary

The next quarterly Women in Rotary event will be sponsored by Rotary Club of Alpharetta on **March 5th from 5:00 to 7:00 pm** at:

**The Hamilton Hotel**, 35 Milton Avenue, Alpharetta. (Join us in the back of Carrie's Conservatory restaurant.)

Appetizers will be provided and guests will purchase their own beverages.

Please bring a \$5.00 or \$10 gift card for Publix/Kroger/Walmart to support Children's Development Academy.

Please RSVP at: [Women in Rotary](#)

Gentlemen - please let your significant others know about this!

Any questions, please call Joy at (770) 715-5422

Women in **Rotary**



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## Companion Club Update

Reminder that our companion club meeting is February 19th at Thrive, 44 Milton Avenue, Alpharetta (located above Minnie Olivia Pizza) at 6:30 pm.

If you have any questions, please reach out to Joseph Powell, (912) 662-2246.