

Potomac-Bethesda Rotary Club News

Rotary Club Calendar

June 3 - 6:30pm - Meeting - Normandie Farm

Larry Chloupek: Special Love, Inc.

Larry is a cancer survivor and Chair of the Young Adults with Cancer program for Special Love, Inc., a regional non-profit working closely with NIH. He grew up in Potomac, attended Montgomery College and graduated with a B.S. in Business Administration in 1983 from American University. He worked for USDA and OPM and has been with NIH since 1991, currently serving as their Management Liaison Director. The website for Special Love, Inc., is www.speciallove.org.

June 8 - 7pm - Manna Food Center - Need volunteers

9311 Gaither Road, Gaithersburg

Over the past 27 years, Manna Food Center has

- Distributed 35,200,000 pounds of perishable and shelf-stable food to hungry families;
- Helped 2,800,000 Montgomery County residents obtain the emergency food they needed;
- Partnered with thousands of nonprofit agencies, corporations, community groups, faith-based organizations, youth groups, and individuals to fight hunger in our community.

June 10 - 6:30pm - Meeting - Normandie Farm

June 12 - 9am - Jewish Group Homes Project

Fix-up, Painting and Garden Work

13632 Northgate Drive, Silver Spring

June 17 - 6:30pm - Meeting - Normandie Farm

June 24 - 6:30pm - Meeting - Normandie Farm

Installation of 2010-2011 Rotary Club Officers

Spouses and Guests Welcome

June 28 - 6pm - District Governor Installation

July 1 - 6:30pm - Meeting - Normandie Farm

July 8 - 6:30pm - Meeting - Normandie Farm

July 13 - 7pm - Manna Food Center-Need volunteers

9311 Gaither Road, Gaithersburg

July 15 - 6:30pm - Meeting - Normandie Farm

July 22 - 6:30pm - Meeting - Normandie Farm

July 29 - 6:30pm - Meeting - Normandie Farm

May 27 Meeting Report

We welcomed back President Noel Howard who had just returned from a trip to New Orleans and Steve Naron from Florida. Our speaker was Neil Cohen, fellow Rotarian and also candidate for the U.S. Senate.



Several months ago Neil made the decision to run as a moderate Republican in a larger field of more conservative Republicans. In the primary election a majority of votes is not needed, only a plurality. He is counting on four counties for his victory and will focus on Montgomery,

Baltimore, Howard and Anne Arundel. Neil is a dentist and has a long-time practice in Chevy Chase and also has had an office in Deale. So he comes to the campaign as a small businessman with no former elected office experience. He is firming up his positions on issues and his fellow Rotarians served as a launching pad to give Neil a chance to discuss campaign issues. He plans to use the Four-Way Test as the guide



to his campaign. Dressed for success in a full suit, Neil's presentation and Q&A session was videotaped by Nabil Bedewi so that Neil could refine his talking points. Neil has a website, cohenforsenate.com, and is actively engaged in fundraising for the campaign. The Maryland primary election will be held on September 14. We wish Neil well and who knows, Dr. Cohen may be going to Washington!



President Noel Howard and Todd Nitkin present a check for \$8,000 for the Joshua Youth Academy in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to Pastor Emmanuel Haile of the Ethiopian Church. The funds will be used to support the orphanage for AIDS orphans.

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Rotary And The Chicago Cubs Team Up To Strike Out Polio

By Wayne Hearn RI News – 28 May 2010

Top: Joshua Kim (right) got to throw out the first pitch and meet film star Jackie Chan during Strike Out Polio: Rotary Day at Wrigley Field, 25 May.

Bottom: Kim throws out the first pitch. Rotary Images/Alyce Henson



When 14-year-old Joshua Kim decided last summer to donate all the allowance he'd saved up to Rotary's End Polio Now campaign, he never dreamed that almost a year later he would be taking the mound for a ceremonial first pitch at Wrigley Field, the historic baseball park of the Chicago Cubs.

Joshua, now 15 and a freshman at Glenbrook North High School in Northbrook, did the honors just before the 25 May game between the Chicago Cubs and the visiting Los Angeles Dodgers during Strike Out Polio: Rotary Day at Wrigley Field.

"I can't believe this is really happening. I've always wanted to do this," said Joshua, whose father, Tony, is

a member of the Rotary Club of Chicagoland Korean-Northbrook. His dad was in the stands with more than 600 Chicago-area Rotarians, relatives, friends, and Rotary International staff.

Tony's involvement in club polio eradication fundraising efforts inspired Joshua to contribute \$1,300 to Rotary's US\$200 Million Challenge. Rotary has committed to raising \$200 million in response to \$355 million in challenge grants from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Rotary Day at Wrigley Field brought in more than \$10,000 for polio eradication. The Chicago Cubs contributed \$20 to the campaign for each ticket sold by area Rotary clubs. An End Polio Now message appeared on Wrigley Field's famous marquee, with announcement made inside the ballpark before and during the game.

"Many Chicagoans don't even remember polio – let alone realize that it still paralyzes children in other parts of the world – and that's why public events like Rotary Day at Wrigley Field are so important," said Rotary Foundation Trustee Chair Glenn E. Estess Sr.

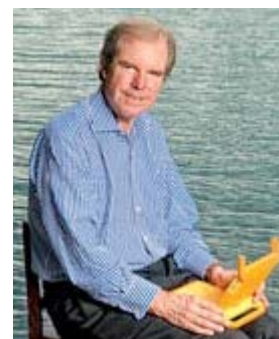
For Joshua, throwing out the first pitch was almost as exciting as meeting international movie star Jackie Chan, who also was part of the pregame ceremonies.

"It was a great moment for me. It was awesome to meet Jackie Chan. I have always wanted to meet him and shake his hand," he said. "I was given a very special opportunity by Rotary, and I am very thankful."

The Rotarian Conversation – Nicholas Negroponte

The Rotarian – March 2010

Nicholas Negroponte, founder and chair of One Laptop per Child (OLPC). Photo by Matthew Mahon



When it comes to technology, Nicholas Negroponte insists there's a difference between "children as a market and children as a mission." The founder and chair of One Laptop per Child (OLPC) recognizes that computer manufacturers may not see it his way, but Negroponte

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will not be distracted from his belief that children become involved in the learning process when they become involved with interactive digital technology.

One Laptop per Child aims to provide poor children around the world with inexpensive, Internet-connected computers. Its philosophy owes much to the ideas of Seymour Papert, a mathematician who theorized four decades ago that children would develop intellectually and creatively from an early introduction to computer programming. No businesslike black or gray hardware for this nonprofit, though. Its bright-green machines can be found in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

After high school in the United States and Europe, Negroponte – whose brother John is a well-known U.S. diplomat – pursued a degree in architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). “When you study architecture here, you’re under the influence of a very technological institution,” he says. He later joined the faculty and taught computer graphics courses. In 1980, with former MIT President Jerome Wiesner, he conceived the Media Lab, with the goal of examining the relationship between humans and advanced technology. While the I.M. Pei-designed lab building was under construction in Cambridge, Negroponte and Papert collaborated on projects in Europe.

Though he remains convinced of the eventual demise of the printed page, Negroponte did author a bestseller. *Being Digital*, published 15 years ago, predicted the predominance of “digits over atoms” (read “networks over paper”) as a means of information delivery. He recalls, “I was just reporting on things we were doing at that time at the Media Lab. And people thought that was being very futuristic.”

He may not have considered his own future while at the Media Lab, but others did. “When I started OLPC, some of my friends told me that everything I’d done in life pointed me in this direction,” he says.

Rotarians in Africa have taken notice of One Laptop per Child, and clubs in California, Florida, Tennessee, and Washington, USA, have made inquiries. Recently, an OLPCorps team made presentations to several Rotary clubs in Minnesota.

Interviewer Warren Kalbacker talked to Negroponte at OLPC’s Cambridge headquarters. He’d just returned from Washington, D.C., where he met with Defense

and State Department officials in an effort to get laptops authorized for children in Afghanistan and northwest Pakistan.

The Rotarian: You’re no fan of the printed page because you feel information should be delivered via “digits not atoms.” Are those of us who enjoy our coffee and newspaper going to have to adapt to a new morning routine?

Nicholas Negroponte: English, to the best of my knowledge, is the only language that uses paper in newspaper. We won’t have paper. The difference between magazines and newspapers is the shelf life of the information. Magazine pieces are more thoughtful, and you tend to read them in evenings and on weekends. Magazines are a very good display medium; when you look at a magazine, the reflected light and the color make it very high quality. But like newspapers, the bug is paper. It’s truly the worst way to deliver information. Books are going to go away, the same way CDs did.

TR: How did your nonprofit, One Laptop per Child, begin, and how does it speak to digits over atoms?

Negroponte: OLPC was officially created in 2005, but we didn’t wake up in 2005 and decide to build a \$100 laptop. Seymour Papert’s theories about children and learning were developed after he worked with Jean Piaget in Geneva. Papert came to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and started to work at what he called “teaching children how to think.” He realized that if children could write computer programs, the act of writing a program was the closest they could come to learning about learning itself. That’s true, because when you write a program, it never works the first time. You have to debug it. Papert’s position was that the act of debugging was learning about the learning process.

TR: Did you think you’d have quite a few more computers in the hands of children by now?

Negroponte: Seymour and I were throwing around numbers I knew would be hyperbolic. But you needed dramatic statements to get attention. We announced a \$100 machine and said that we’d make 20 million of them. We didn’t have a laptop at the time. Had we said we were going to do a \$250 laptop and make 200,000, it would have been just another yawn. We announced it at a huge conference with then UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, and the news went all

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over the world. I went to six countries: Brazil, Argentina, Nigeria, Pakistan, Thailand, and Libya. They're all over the map geopolitically. Every one of those heads of state had their arm around me and agreed to buy a million laptops. Suddenly companies said, "This may be real." That's when there was a stampede to build what I'll call a competing laptop. There are 35 million of them out there today. They mostly don't happen to be ours, but that's OK. There are a million OLPC XO's in the hands of kids, and another million coming. We're in over 40 countries, 19 languages.

TR: Seymour Papert was once asked why he advocated computers for students in developing countries when paper and pencils were so much cheaper. What's OLPC's rebuttal?

Negroponte: Whether teachers have paper and pencils or books is a secondary issue. By all means, train teachers and build schools, but it's going to take years. In the meantime, is there a way to leverage the children themselves? There are roughly a billion children in the world. You can go to the countries where we go and find half the kids not in school. In exceptional cases – girls in Afghanistan, for example – it is often too dangerous. Children are so good; they learn so much by interacting with the world. In 2003, my son, Dimitri, went to Cambodia and started a school. I sent him Panasonic Toughbooks. The kids were bringing the laptops home. That changed the whole fabric of the village. I asked, looking at a cute picture of the kids holding up their laptops, what in this picture is not going to happen by normal market forces? In the background of the picture was a satellite dish, but to me it was the laptop that was important. Normal market forces were not going to lower the cost, because every time the cost goes down, the industry adds more features.

TR: The cost has never quite managed to get down to \$100, has it?

Negroponte: People really focused on two things: first, the cost of the machine, which we've gotten down to \$182, and they asked about the 20 million computers when it's only 1 or 2 million out there. It doesn't matter. We're not trying to meet a market. When I say there are 35 million out there, to me that's more important than whether 20 million happen to be ours.

TR: We take it that OLPC's colorful XO computer is just a bit different from the machine we might see on an airliner's seatback tray table.

Negroponte: It's like a compact car versus an SUV. The kids need a machine that can do graphics and good music processing, capture video and photographs – things kids like to do. The XO had to be built according to military specifications. You can drop it and carry it in the rain. You had to be able to read the screen in sunlight because a lot of the kids are not indoors – they're out under a tree. The machine had to have that wireless connectivity so when you put 100 out there, they automatically connect with each other. The kids need connectivity, and you can't go around wiring up places.

TR: Just how far is digitally connected education from learning to read with Dick and Jane?

Negroponte: I'll give you an example: Learning English in the rest of the world is an issue because the people who teach English can't speak it. If you sit in the back of an English class at our school in Cambodia, you wouldn't even know they were teaching English. It's not intelligible. But now kids can do short text messaging or go to the Web site and download English and hear it. They can do things that just couldn't happen before. Books? We could put 100 books on a laptop and just fractionally touch the memory. Then you ship 100 laptops into a village. Each laptop can have 100 different books. Now, in a small village in the middle of Africa, you can have 10,000 books. Talk about the economics of books – this is the most economical way to get them to an entire village. You go to Ethiopia today, and there are kids who write computer programs in the Squeak language. You don't find kids in this country writing computer programs in first and second grade. When a country does not have an established telecom infrastructure, in a sense they can leapfrog with some of the pieces.

TR: Parents in developed countries often complain about their children spending so much time with their computers, yet you encourage it elsewhere?

Negroponte: The geek is a bit of a Western phenomenon. We make it a condition that kids can take their computers home. If a country won't let them, then OLPC will not go into that country. Seymour's position is that a more interested child is socially more

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mobile than a disinterested, less curious child. You see a lot of this now in places where we are. President Alan García of Peru decided to equip the rural areas on the force of that argument. What happens is that he's not only bringing computers to schools, but he's bringing social change, with the kids being the agents of change. They're suddenly leaders in the community. They're teaching their parents how to read and write. Do you know what teaching your parents how to read and write does for your self-esteem?

TR: So there's value for the money when children in developing countries spend so much time at their computers.

Negroponete: Very much so. Here we spend thousands of dollars per child per year on primary education. When you spend that amount and you add or subtract a laptop, it's economically insignificant. It's also sort of an accessory to a big educational machine, whether you think it's working well or not. When you go to a country that is only spending \$100 a year per child, to spend \$20 or \$30 of that on a connected laptop on a prorated, yearly basis is a huge difference. Rwanda this year alone is spending 20 percent of its education budget on laptops - OLPC computers, it turns out.

TR: You advocate abolishing a longtime educational convention: children progressing through school by age and grade. Would that be easier with digital technology?

Negroponete: The question is music to my ears. I think age segregation is a real problem in education. The one-room school, which is usually considered what poor people here use, is certainly in my mind a better form of education. We at OLPC see a lot of kids teaching each other, and it's not necessarily older kids teaching younger kids.

TR: In your 1995 book, *Being Digital*, you say that a child's interaction with computer technology has been termed hard fun. Can you define the term?

Negroponete: Hard fun is an expression that emerged 15 years ago when a child was being pestered by a television reporter. This kid was sweating under a spotlight, and the reporter was trying to get the kid to say the computer was all about playing and had nothing to do with learning. The reporter kept asking, "Is it fun?" The kid answered, "It's hard fun." What you want to do is have the kids be so passionate about

what they're involved in that something can be both hard and fun at the same time. Very often we have people who, even with our laptop, say this can't be learning because the kids are having too much fun.

TR: Have you encountered any resistance from groups opposed to Western-style education?

Negroponete: Our audience is somewhat self-selecting. People ask me how we choose countries, and my answer is that it's somewhat like dating: A person smiles at you. We need a certain pull because we're not selling anything. We're trying to help put primary education in the most remote and rural parts of a country. We have been part of the United Nations Development Programme. We've worked with UNESCO and the Global Alliance for Information and Communication Technologies and Development.

TR: Rotary clubs in Kenya and Senegal have become interested in supporting OLPC. Some U.S. clubs have hosted OLPC representatives. Do you see possibilities for partnerships between OLPC and Rotary?

Negroponete: Yes. What we want to do now is work from the bottom up. We have always done it from the top down. If a head of state doesn't want to do it, we don't. Until now, when an NGO [nongovernmental organization] approached us and said it wanted 200 computers for a school, we'd say we couldn't handle such a small number. We are a very tiny number of people with no sales or marketing force. We have a million laptops out there, so another 200 isn't going to do much good. Rotarians can help fill the need. If, for example, Rotarians in a location have a school with 500 kids, and if there are enough of those schools, that would be great. If you could get 10 groups to do 10,000 computers apiece, or if you got 1,000 groups to do 100 apiece, we'd change our top-down methodology. The Rotarians are perhaps the only example I can think of because there are so many of them. We want to get more people doing it.

TR: Will digitally linked children possibly grow up with a lessened sense of nationalism?

Negroponete: I think of nationalism as a disease. Unfortunately, aspects of nationalism in the past 10 years - including our own - have gotten worse. But kids are not innately nationalistic. It's a learned trait. What you will see - and it's not to be confused with globalism - is a growth in understanding, partly

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because kids can connect with computers. When Andrés Pastrana was president of Colombia, one of the things he wanted to do within the regions of the country controlled by FARC-EP [Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia - People's Army] was to get laptops to the kids, just so they had a window to the outside world. There was no propaganda. In Afghanistan, the expression they use for the value of laptops is the "end of isolation." The person in our group who does what we call "advocacy and adoption" recently went to Afghanistan because he wasn't convinced. But when he was there, the people said, "This is what we need." There was no equivocation.

TR: Is the digital divide between the developed countries and the developing world narrowing?

Negroponte: No question. What's helped a great deal is the cell phone infrastructure that has grown up. Very often, there's a satellite. And cell phone towers, as ugly as they are, are used to connect to the Internet. Kids in Africa are thirsty for this stuff because it's all they've got. In Cambodian villages, kids go to bed with their laptops. They use them as pillows. They're their lifeline. In some sense, they are more digital than their peer group in the developed world because that peer group has other things. In this country, there are so many options at school. But imagine a place in northwest Pakistan where school is by a tree and there's no teacher. All you've got is this connection to the Internet.

TR: In *Being Digital*, you described the looming obsolescence of the VCR, called the fax an outdated technology, and predicted the rise of voice recognition. Are you satisfied with how the future has turned out so far?

Negroponte: I thought voice recognition would happen sooner. An example of when I was right: the rise and fall of CDs. In 1983, CDs were just demolishing LPs. I told the chairman of Bertelsmann, one of the biggest music companies in the world, that CDs were a short-lived phenomenon. The CD was going to be the last physical embodiment of music. Music was going to disappear into the network. He thought it was a joke, but that's what happened. Film is another one. Kids have never even seen a little yellow box of film.

TR: Artificial intelligence was once a major MIT initiative. We don't hear much about it now.

Negroponte: You don't hear much in the press because it has dissipated into two separate areas. One is robotics, which includes vision systems and navigation systems with enough common sense not to bump into walls. And there's a more esoteric aspect: trying to design search engines that understand a body of knowledge and what you're looking for and try to put the two together. It won't be just looking for keywords or typing a sentence in. That's still quite a ways away.

TR: You deny that you're a futurist, but you've never hesitated to offer a prediction about technology. What advances are waiting in the wings?

Negroponte: I don't want to say the digital world is all invented, but it's so much a part of the fabric of life. When you look at the innovations in the past few years, they've been in the applications. Your display is bigger and brighter and has better resolution, and your connection has gotten faster. But the digital world is going to be displaced by what's happening in the biotech world. I'll go out on a limb: There's going to be an interface between biotech and semiconductors, particularly in human augmentation. The most extreme case will be where you cut open a person's head and drop a chip in to get rid of Alzheimer's. It's going to be that type of application that will let the blind see and the deaf hear and the weak get strong. Pretty amazing stuff.

TR: Looking forward with One Laptop per Child, what do you see?

Negroponte: The most important thing to know about OLPC is that part of our mission is accomplished. It's because of OLPC that you can buy a netbook today. When I look at netbooks, which may be 30 percent of the market by the end of the year, I'm astonished because five years ago, Dell told me it was impossible. Well, people want to travel with lighter machines. The downward pressure on costs has been very gratifying, but the problem is that the netbooks are not going to kids in Africa. So we still have a lot of work to do.

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Bob.Nelson@NASA.gov
for inclusion in the newsletter**