

# Rotary Club of Lakeland South



## Upcoming Events:

Friday, May 17 @ Scarpa's Italian Restaurant 12:00PM

Bill Braswell, Polk County Commissioner

Friday, May 24 @ Scarpa's Italian Restaurant 12:00PM

No Meeting – Memorial Day

Friday, May 31 @ Scarpa's Italian Restaurant 12:00PM

TBA

# GET INVOLVED

The Rotary Twilight 5k Committee and the Salute to Veterans Breakfast Committee have had their first meeting in preparation for the 2020 events. If you have a desire to be involved with either event, serve on either committee, or just have some ideas that you'd like to share, please reply to the newsletter and let us know!

# Weekly Minutarian Message

## **Know When to Fold Them by District Governor Nick Hall**

When I wrestled alligators as part of my summer job during the 1960's, I soon discovered it required more brain than brawn. These creatures do not possess a high capacity for reasoning, which allowed me run in front of the beast, then slap its jaw, provoking it to open wide its gaping mouth. The eyes, mounted on top of its head, were thus blocked by its raised upper jaw enabling me to continue unseen to secure its mouth. It worked every time, except on a fateful day during the summer of 1965.

A larger than usual audience had gathered, so I decided to add an extra element of excitement by taking on the same very large and aggressive gator that nearly ripped the hand off the wrestler I had replaced just the previous week. The animal was nearly 7 feet long, and in no mood to be tackled by a scrawny kid whose brain was probably as poorly developed as the reptile's. Each time I attempted to run in front of him, he used his powerful tail to keep me at bay as he darted back to the pool. After the third failed attempt, I was out of breath with just one last opportunity to gain the upper hand before running out of the strength needed to finish the show. I changed tactics and used a technique I'd heard described, but never observed. It required holding onto the alligator's tail, pouncing onto its back then grabbling its mouth from the side. By keeping my hand flat, the only damage would be losing some skin, not the entire hand. However, I forgot one small detail. My right thumb was slightly extended and when it moved past the alligator's eye, he clamped down and embedded his large, sharp teeth into the joint. I reflexively grabbed its closed jaw with my left hand.

Even in that moment of near panic, I recognized the irony of the situation. My right thumb, bleeding profusely, was trapped between the gator's powerful jaws, yet my left hand was preventing him from letting go, and for good reason. I wanted to keep his head pulled back so he couldn't go into a spin as well as prevent him from grabbing even more of my hand. Eventually, I took the first step to resolve the stalemate by easing my grip, which he thankfully did as well. Within seconds, he was on his way to the pool, and I was headed to the first-aid kit.

The permanent arthritis in my right thumb is a constant reminder of that incident, which happened to provide two important lessons. First, we all need to recognize our limitations before endeavoring to do something that could have serious consequence. In retrospect, I should have waited until I was more experienced to take-on the most aggressive animal in the enclosure. Another, and perhaps even more important lesson is realizing when it's time to just let go and move on. In the words immortalized in Kenny Roger's country song, The Gambler; You've got to know when to hold them, know when to fold them, know when to walk away, know when to run. I wish I had heeded that advice when I was 17.

**Footnote:** A book by a Pulitzer Prize winning author called, A Man With A Rattlesnake Under His Hat, is an account of the group of risk and adventure seeking young men and women who found themselves showing off and trying to out-do each other while entertaining tourists at the Reptile Gardens in South Dakota. We spent our summers a thousand miles or more from our homes and parents living amongst the reptiles with no adult supervision. We weren't free range teenagers, we were downright feral! I was the youngest when at 14 I first joined the motley group. We looked out for each other then and still do. Every couple of years, those still around gather at the attraction for a week-long reunion. Those who can still do shows for old time's sake. Yes, they let us on condition we not file a law-suit if anything bad happens. We wouldn't dream of it! Here are a couple of photos from the book showing the setting.



# Member Profiles

## New Member Profile: Paul Wilson



Paul Wilson is a Commercial Insurance Agent for Mulling Insurance. "I have been with Mulling for a little over two years, and I love it there! They are a great organization, still family owned and operated, and just celebrated 60 years in business."

Paul is married to his wife, Brooke, and they have two children. His daughter Savanna is 5, and his son Trey is 3. He has two older sisters and parents who also live in Lakeland. Paul went to Lakeland High School and then graduated from the University of Florida. He adds, "I did ok in school but boy was I happy to be done!!"

We asked Paul a few fun questions to get to know him better.

Tell us about the organizations you belong to.

"I am an active member of EMERGE, sitting on the volunteer and membership committees. My wife and I are also greatly involved in our Church, Grace City, where we serve as the Service Leaders for the 9:30 service, and I am on the worship team. Giving back to the community and those less fortunate has always been a core belief of mine that was instilled in me as a young child. My father, Mark Wilson, was a Rotary President in Lake Wales years ago, and I remember him talking about how much he enjoyed his time there. I just think it is amazing when people give their time and talents to something bigger than them for no other reason than to make the world a better place."

We see you play both music and golf. Which is harder to master and why?

"I don't know if you ever really master either of them. There's always something that you could get better at in both. I think that's why I like it - it's the challenge, always pushing yourself to be better. If I had to pick I would say golf is harder, and I am better musician than I am a golfer for sure. I didn't start either of them until after college, so I definitely feel like I am playing catch up. I have always loved music so it never really felt like work while I was learning."

Complete this sentence... My friends in High School remember me mostly for \_\_\_\_\_."

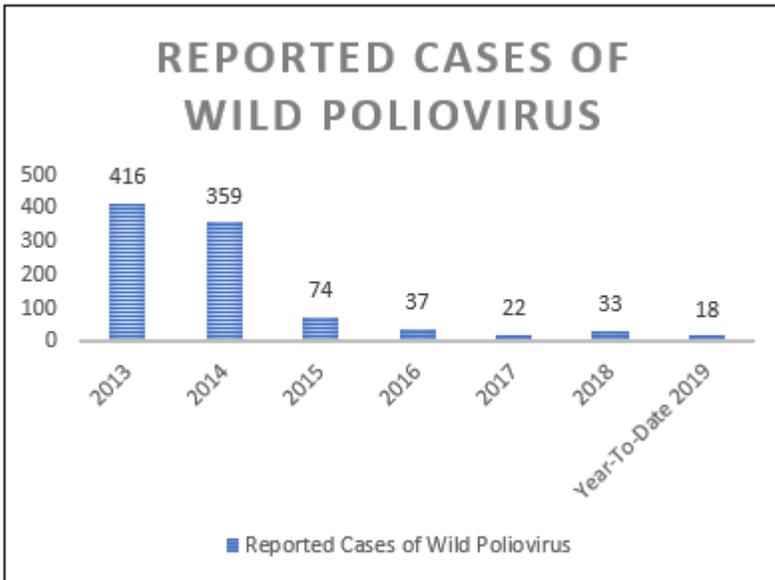
"I would say starting at Wide Receiver for 3 state championship teams at Lakeland. My nickname was Magic man because I would make these crazy catches."

After your children have grown, what are their ages you predict you would say you enjoyed the most?

"I love being a dad. Best job in the world. I'm having a lot of fun with them now. It's such a good age. I try to enjoy every phase because I know they will never be this small again. But who knows...I might enjoy the teenage years"

# Other News

## POLIO UPDATE



There were 9 new cases of Poliovirus the past couple weeks, 5 in Pakistan and 4 in Afghanistan. There have been 18 reported cases of wild Poliovirus year to date in 2019, 11 in Pakistan and 7 in Afghanistan. There were 10 cases reported this time last year (8 in Afghanistan and 2 in Pakistan).



On May 18 at the Spokane Convention Center, Bill Gates will be speaking about his work with Rotary International to eradicate polio worldwide. His talk will be followed by a moderated interview with Bill Gates and Barry Rassin, Rotary International President. Read more [here](#).

## Birthdays

- May 1 Tina Witty
- May 23 Darren Vogel
- May 26 Jason Holm
- May 30 Donna Pearce

## Rotary Anniversaries

- May 1 Zach Burek
- May 2 Jack Jeffares



## Let us know what you think!

Wish the newsletter would include information that it currently doesn't? Is there a club project or other club developments that you would like an update on? Is there any information in the newsletter that you don't think needs to be included anymore? Email Leighann at [leighanndavis7@hotmail.com](mailto:leighanndavis7@hotmail.com) with your feedback!