

December 17, 2007

This Week's Program
Red Lake Tribal Council Archives – Kathryn Beaulieu
Next Week's Program
NO MEETING – Christmas Eve or New Year's Eve

Important Dates to Remember

Goodwill Conference 2008

February 15-16, 2008, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

District 5580 Conference

May 1-4, 2008, Dickinson, ND

Rotary International Convention

June 15-18, 2008, Los Angeles, CA

Dragon Boat Festival

August 1-2, 2008

Upcoming January Programs

Jan 7 Rotary Youth Leadership Awards

Jan 14 Rotary Public Relations –

Amy Saeland

Jan 21 Club Assembly – **Gary Johnson**

Jan 28 Classification Talk

Bell Ringers

Rotary's annual bell ringing for the Salvation Army is scheduled for December 17-24. The location is inside at the Mall in front of K-Mart. If you can volunteer for a two-hour shift, contact **Ryan Baer**. Volunteering for this activity serves as a make-up for one meeting.

Dragon Boat Festival - 2008

Planning for the third annual Dragon Boat Festival is underway. Dates for the big event are August 1 and 2, 2008 and entry registrations are now being accepted. If you would like to join the planning committees, see **President Gary**.

Congratulations

Best wishes go to Rotarian **John Ostrem** who recently retired as President of the Northwest Minnesota Foundation.

A Family Fight to Defeat Polio

During December, Rotary's Family Month, consider for a moment that sometimes the people closest to us are the ones we understand the least.

Take my Uncle Lou.

For most of my life, Uncle Lou was an enigma. I knew only that he had been ill and spent much of his adulthood hospitalized, with one condition spilling

out to create another, before he died many years ago. I learned not to ask much about him, as Uncle Lou was spoken of in hushed tones, away from the curious ears of children.

I did not know then what I know now. Uncle Lou had polio.

I learned the true ramifications of his illness just recently from my Uncle John, the last of the surviving brothers from my grandfather's large brood. My father was the youngest, separated from the others by many years.

These days, my Uncle John has taken to telling me the family stories, including the ones about his older brother Lou, who apparently was a brilliant jazz musician and singer. What's more, decades before I was born, he used to play regularly in the very same jazz club that I started to frequent as a young adult, back in the days when it wasn't considered cool by my psychedelic-rock contemporaries.

I can't help but believe that on some deep energetic level, I was drawn to that club because of my Uncle Lou. I had taken some comfort in knowing that for at least a while, despite all his infirmities, he hit some real high notes in his life. But today I mourn his passing all the more because it happened when I was too young to appreciate the loss. And now I understand how he struggled most of his life with the aftermath of this terrible disease.

It's terrible because of its devastating effects, and because it can separate us from each other – even within our own families.

I realize now how each new case of polio affects not just one person, but an entire family and community. And I'm convinced that families everywhere, in every community, in every country, have an Uncle Lou. That's what makes it so important to fight for polio eradication. And that's why the family of Rotary is so special. It's been working so hard for so long to give people in the world a chance to share their talents and joy with their families and each other.

*A VERY MERRY HOLIDAY AND A HAPPY
AND PEACE FILLED NEW YEAR TO ALL
ROTARIANS AND THEIR FAMILIES.*