CALENDAR

April 27, 2011
Program: “Medical Relief Efforts in Haiti,” Dr. Richard Cook.

April 28, 2011
Event: Get-together at Healy’s, 5:15 p.m.

May 3, 2011
Event: Breakfast with the president, George’s Restaurant, 145 S. Oak Park Ave., 6:15 a.m.

May 4, 2011
Program: “GSE Team from Japan.”

May 5, 2011
Event: First Thursday at Cucina Lobos, 5-7 p.m.

May 10, 2011
Event: Breakfast with the president, George’s Restaurant, 145 S. Oak Park Ave., 6:15 a.m.

New lunch fee is $12
* NOTIFY TINA LEVY OF ANY MAKE-UP

Club to join with Maywood to help clean up Des Plaines River

On Saturday, April 30 the River Forest Park District will conduct its 15th Annual Des Plaines River Clean-Up.

As we have mentioned earlier in the year, the Oak Park-River Forest Rotary Club and the Maywood Rotary Club will be partners in this endeavor. Both clubs are asking their members to help with the project from 9 a.m. to noon.

There will be a barbecue lunch at the River Forest Park District Depot, 401 Thatcher Avenue. During the lunch the two Rotary Clubs will compete in a game of bean bag toss. (This is a cousin to horseshoes.) The winning club will be presented with the Percy Julian Trophy to display at their meetings for a year.

The River Forest Park District will provide all the necessary equipment. Volunteers will stay on land. Participants will need to sign a group registration form. Please contact Jerry Lordan for more information at either (708) 386-0127, Ext. 114 or glordan@fenwickfriars.com.

April 27 Program
“Medical Relief Efforts in Haiti”

Dr. Richard Cook will be the guest speak at the April 27 meeting. He will talk about medical relief efforts in Haiti.

Dr. Cook is a physician, educator, and researcher at the University of Chicago. His current research interests include the study of human error, the role of technology in human expert performance, and patient safety.
APRIL 20 MEETING NOTES
Shirley Newton opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance. Jerry Sjostrom led the Four-Way Test. The invocation was given by Clarmarie Keenan. Lesley Gottlinger read the long list of guests: Mike Sperling and Dick Blaurock, who were visiting Rotarians; Andy Butler, Alice Kopan, Amy Brinkman, Paula Beck, Ted Kucia and Jo Ann Corwin, all guests of Selma Belajec; Pau Curatolo, guest of Frank Schwerin; Todd Shields form the Oak Leaves, guest of the club; Lauren Abrahamson, guest of Deb Abrahamson; and Shirley, Pauline Cohen, Margot Hamberger, Irene Goren, Marion Greenman, Rose Meyer, Faye Kutz, Doris Bluementhal, Gordon Goldman and Hanni Laitson, all guests of Lesley Gottlinger.

April 20 Program:
Selma Belajec tells her story of surviving the Holocaust
Club member Selma Belajec lived in Holland, during World War II. She was 6 years old when the Germans occupied Holland. For the first time, Selma told her story of how her family was able to hide from the Germans until U.S. forces arrived.

“This isn’t easy. I’d better stick to the facts. I want to start the story from the beginning. How did it all happen in Holland?

“As you know, The Germans occupied Holland in 1940 in May. At that time my father was in the Dutch Army in the Cavalry. And everything remained the same in the beginning. My father was a cattle dealer, my grandfather was a cattle dealer, my great-grandfather was a cattle dealer and butcher.

“And he could just apply his trade as always. He could drive his car. Then the next stage of them was he could not drive his car anymore, but he was allowed to go by bus. Of course he was not allowed to sit down in the bus. Then the next thing was he could go by bike. Then they took the bike away.

“This went in stages. What happened to my father’s car in town there was a butcher who my father was friendly with. He was German. When the Nazis came to pick up his car, they said this is not the Jew’s car. That’s mine.

“Then my father was friendly with a farmer, so he took so to speak, a job on a farm so that we did not have to go with the first transport. Because then the word came out that all Jews had to be gone. They were taken to Poland where the Germans would start a city for all Jews and nothing would happen to the people. That was the story.

“One day this butcher in town called my father over and said his nephew, who was German, was a member of the SS and he had told him what was really happening to the Jews. He said please don’t tell anybody. I will get killed. So we knew about it. So then the next stage was. Then we got letters. All the Jews got a letter of what you were allowed to take
with you to camp. And I remember the day like it was yesterday. My mother, my grandmother, had to mark everything in indelible ink. Put your name and number.

“Then a friend of my father, who was also a cattle dealer came and said ‘I’m not going.’ And my father said, ‘what do you mean you’re not going.’ He said ‘I’m not going anywhere where you’re not allowed to take a knife and a fork. It can’t be good where you don’t get meat to cut.’ He said ‘I just visited a farm and a woman was against the Germans and I will go over there and see if we can go and hide over there,’ which is what happened.

“The woman would arrange it, but my parents were not allowed to know where we were going in case were picked up. First a truck came to our house, picked up stuff and took it away. The story was the older people could stay in their houses.

“So one evening my father, my mother and me went down a road and a truck came by and opened up in the back it had canvas over it. We jumped in the truck and the truck took off. We did not know where we were going. The first place he took us was an old dilapidated farm house, which was arranged by this woman.

“(Living there ) were a father and son and his girlfriend. And another son was in jail for killing a game warden. I want to emphasize this story that everybody knows that nobody, but nobody wanted to help anybody until the Normandy invasion. It was divided in two parts, after Normandy and before. I’m talking about before.

“So they took us upstairs to a room and this girlfriend said, don’t worry if you hear a noise at night, if you hear something against the windows, this is our friends, they come and wake us up and then we go to the farms and steal whatever we can. So this was the people we were trusting our lives to.

“One day, (the woman) was cleaning the floor in the kitchen and an old friend came in and she got very upset. The old man said, ‘OK I’m going to the police to say that they were hiding Jews.’ So we had to take whatever we had and run.

“We went to where my mom was, but we couldn’t stay because by that time (there wasn’t enough room). But (the owner of the house) said he talked to somebody who was against Germans to see if we could go there.

“My father, myself and my grandmother went there because we were still hoping some stuff would come.

“When we went in there my father knew right away, my father saw a newspaper there (a Nazi newspaper) so they took us into a room. A couple of hours later the woman came into the room and said ‘go, run away, because my husband just went in to report you,’ so we got up and through the woods we went to the place my mom was and the other people but we couldn’t stay there.

“We got up — I still remember I had to go to the bathroom, my dad said just let it go. We went to the farm. In the cellar, on the right side she had built up a big hole in the wall where six people could crawl in there. We went in.”

“Selma’s family then moved into a house, that was owned by a woman, “who was the typical bag lady — no teeth, no underwear. She had never taken a bath. This house had two little rooms. One room was like 12-by-12 feet. So we were in there us four and also this friend with his finance and his mother all in this little space. She was told that if she told anybody she would not get the money anymore.

“That little house did not have any bathroom facilities, no running water, it had electricity. What we used for bathroom facilities we had a wooden chair we cut out a circle (in the seat) and we put another board underneath that held a pail. At night this woman would empty that pail.

“We were not hungry. She always was sure we had some flour (to make bread). She had an oven and we had sometimes like sugar beets.All these years we were hiding there, which was over two years, I never had any fruit vegetables, eggs, cheese, meat. I did not grow at all. I stayed exactly the same. All your bodily functions stop.

“There were too many people there, so one family found another place.

“My mom had a bad tooth once and my dad and a friend pulled her tooth with some regular pliers.

“This is one of the places, we stayed the longest there.

“There was only one bed,” so some people slept on the bed and some on the floor.
A park in Selma’s home town of Vaals was named for her family, Wijnhausen, which was the only Jewish family to return to the area after the war. Of the 80 Jewish families in the town, only Selma’s survived.

“One day the boy was playing and he heard some voices. There was only one window. We had it covered. Also my mom wanted me to have some sunshine. So there was a little attic so they took some panes away and at noon the sun would shine through. My mom put me on the chair so I could get fresh air and some sun.

“The farm woman had to tell the story that the Nazis found out about us and the underground would come and take us away. So somebody from that family stayed with us and we went to the next-door neighbor. That was the best place we had.

“It wasn’t only that we were hiding there. There were some other Jewish families. There was also an American pilot, an English pilot, also there were some students. No student could stay at the University unless they worked for the Germans. So there were some of those in the area. In that small area there were not even 1,000 people. Thirty-one were Germans, of these 31, 16 were German sympathizers. That we survived is unbelievable.

“After the war, we were freed by the American soldiers before the Battle of the Bulge. We were freed in October. We were the only area freed by Patton.

“When we came out I never had seen a car and I was run over by an American Army truck. I was 13 days in a coma, in which time I was kept in an American hospital. I had several operations. I was in and out of hospitals for a year and a half.

“Also, how, you might ask, how was Holland toward Jewry. Eighty-five percent of the Jews in the Netherlands were killed. There were 120,000 Jews in Amsterdam alone. 10,000 survived. People did not hide Jews to be good Samaritans or good citizens. You had to find people who were very primitive, who did it for money.

“After the Normandy invasion, everyone became a good citizen suddenly. But before that it was impossible. You needed people who did it for money.”

Selma said that family members couldn’t be trusted.

“A nephew of my mom he was named after my grandfather on my mom’s side. He even converted to Catholicism and married a Catholic woman so he didn’t have to go to camp. Then they (the Nazis) found out about it and he was hiding with us. She was not the best friend either. Because when the whole
thing started with the Battle of the Bulge she said the whole area would have to be evacuated. That would be impossible for us because we didn’t have any papers to show who we were. So she came to us — and she visited her husband once in a while — she said she could get us false papers. But my father said he couldn’t afford it.

“After the war, my father visited the butcher in my town and he asked ‘why didn’t you have any false papers?’ My father explained when the woman told him,

“I will never forget the whole story. I can still see my mom and my grandmother marking the linens. It never leaves you completely. It’s not a nice story. It can happen in every country.

“My hometown, Vaals there were 80 Jewish families before the war. We were the only family to come back and from another family only one son survived. The rest were all killed. So that is why it’s difficult.”

Y rescheduled for May 2
After two straight weeks of bad weather, which canceled two car washes, the youth will try again May 2.

The West Cook YMCA will hold a “Car Wash for a Cause” from 4-6 p.m. Monday, May 2 at the YMCA’s North Parking Lot on Marian Street.

Get your car clean for a worthy cause, during the Y’s car wash to support our friends in Japan and the earthquake victims.

The Y teens will wash and dry your car on site, while you wait. All funds raised will go to help our Japanese friends through the Y World Service Japan Earthquake Relief Fund.

Cost is $5 for small vehicles and $7 for large vehicles.

POTENTIAL NEW MEMBER
The following person has submitted an application for membership to the Rotary Club of Oak Park-River Forest.

According to club rules the name must be published in three consecutive issues of the RAZZ before the Rotary Board may vote on the membership request. This is the first of three notices. The Board will take action at its May 25 meeting.

Dr. Al Roberts
Business Name: School District 97
Title: Superintendent
Sponsor: Ade Onayemi

Other clubs in the area:
Missed a meeting or want to see what neighboring clubs are up to? Here is a list of neighboring clubs
- Addison, meets 12:15 Wednesdays, Alta Villa Banquets, 430 N. Addison Road, Addison.
• **Bensenville**, meets 12:15 p.m. Tuesdays, Two Chefs Restaurant, 3 S. Center St., Bensenville.

• **Broadview**, meets 12:15 Thursdays, Sawa’s Old Warsaw, 9200 W. Cermak Road, Broadview.

• **Brookfield-Riverside**, meets 12:15 p.m. Tuesdays, Paisan’s Restaurant, 3720 Grand Blvd., Brookfield.

• **Chicago O’Hare**, meets 12:15 p.m. Thursdays, Great Escape, 9540 Irving Park Road, Schiller Park.

• **Cicero**, meets 12:15 p.m. Thursdays, Alessandro’s Restaurant, 6050 W. Cermak Road, Cicero.

• **Elmhurst**, meets 12:15 Thursdays, Wilder Mansion, 211 S. Prospect Ave., Elmhurst.

• **Elmhurst Morning**, meets 6:45 a.m. 1st and 3rd Thursdays, Elmhurst Restaurant, 441 W. Lake St., Elmhurst.

• **Elmhurst Morning**, meets 6:45 a.m. 2nd Thursday, Bob Bretl’s Office – Business Meeting, 444 York Road, Elmhurst.

• **Elmhurst Morning**, meets 4th Thursday, Fitz’s Pub, 172 N. Addison Ave., Elmhurst.

• **Maywood**, meets 12:15 p.m. Thursdays, First Congregational Church, 400 N. Fifth Ave., Maywood.

• **Norridge-Harwood Heights**, meets 12:15 p.m. Tuesdays, Vince’s Italian Restaurant, 4747 N. Harlem Ave., Harwood Heights.