



Rotary Club of Durham

Connect. Collaborate. Serve.



February 13, 2017

Volume XXIV, Issue 26

Post Office Box 51572 – Durham, North Carolina 27717

www.DurhamRotaryClub.org

The Mission of Rotary International is to support its member clubs in fulfilling the Object of Rotary By:

- Fostering unity among member clubs
- Strengthening and expanding Rotary around the world
- Communicating worldwide the work of Rotary; and
- Providing a system of international administration

THE 4-WAY TEST

Of The Things We Think, Say Or Do:

1. Is it the **TRUTH**?
2. Is it **FAIR** to all concerned?
3. Will it build **GOODWILL** and **BETTER FRIENDSHIPS**?
4. Will it be **BENEFICIAL** to all concerned?

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

02/13	Adam Eigenrach – Emily K. Center Game Plan: College at Emily K. Center Introduction: Rory Gillis
02/20	No Meeting!! In Observance of Presidents' Day Holiday
02/27	Club Assembly
03/06	Adam Klein American Underground Update Introduction: Rory Gillis
03/13	TBD
03/20	TBD
03/27	Offsite Meeting At TROSA
04/03	Offsite Meeting At JB DUKE HOTEL Joyce McKinney, Durham Animal Protection Society: Care and Feeding of Our Stray, Abandoned & Abused Animals Introduction: Nancy Gordon
04/10	Offsite Meeting At TROSA
04/17	No Meeting!! In Observance of The Easter Holiday
04/24	Joe Colopy: Bronto Software Introduction: TBD

SERVICE SCHEDULE FOR FEBRUARY 13, 2017

Lead Vocal: **Kay Gresham**

Song Selection: TBD

Pianist: TBD

ROTARY MINUTE & INVOCATION:

HARVEY SELLNER

DRC RAFFLE: RI FOUNDATION PROGRAMS

Contribution: \$1 Ticket; \$5 – 6 Tickets

Proceeds: ½ RI Foundation; ½ Raffle Winner

Raffle Total On 2/5/2017: \$136

Rotary International: **\$68**; Raffle Winner: **\$68**

RAFFLE WINNER: GERI LAIL

CART FUND

(Coins For Alzheimer's Research Trust)

2/5/2017: TBA

DAVID BARON CEO – Nuggetcomfort.com



Don't just sit there ---- go to nuggetcomfort.com!

As a little boy with a lot of energy, David Baron too often heard “that’s not a toy.” Delicate things, dangerous things, and things his mother claimed were “just for looks” --- he converted them into tools and toys. He broke things, and sometimes broke himself. So he decided early on that when he grew up, he wanted to change that and be able to say, “that’s a toy.”

As a student at UNC-Chapel Hill, David discovered that sleeping on a futon --- particularly a cheap one --- was way less than desirable. He found they broke, they were cumbersome, and they ended up in the dumpster. He was offended that the big box stores could get away with that --- basically “tricking customers.” It hit him: that was the opportunity to make something better, and way more delightful. He was on track to become a successful manufacturing entrepreneur just a few years later.

Baron, CEO of Nuggetcomfort.com, and e-commerce business based in Downtown Durham that sells fun foam futons called Nuggets, is a native of Atlanta. Prior to Monday’s speaking engagement, his experience with Rotary was “a dedicated park bench on a corner in suburban Dunwoody, Georgia.” He appeared a bit taken aback at the size of his Rotary audience, but quickly warmed to his topic.

He came to UNC as a Morehead Scholar, a self-described “idealistic environmental science major.” There, he developed his idea for unbreakable, modular, portable foam futons that blurred the line between toy and furniture. His first prototype, in keeping with his environmental science ideology, was a mushroom-and-kapok (a deciduous tropical tree in the silk and cotton family) filled version that “smelled like a compost pile,” he said with a wry smile.

Upon graduation, Baron returned to his parents’ home in Atlanta, filling the garage and basement to the brim with bamboo to build frames. “My parents were nothing short of angels,” he confided. He created 150 prototypes to test his unconventional concept: lego-like furniture held together by friction alone. And he set a goal --- if he could sell them within 90 days, he would feel confident in moving forward.

Baron decided to move back to the Triangle, choosing Durham rather than Chapel Hill because of the Bull City’s emerging entrepreneurial climate. Baron chose to bring in Ryan Cocca, a “super creative and super caring” friend from UNC, as Nugget iteration of four full-foam cushions, weighing in at 27 pounds. No bamboo frames, just foam --- and the stage was set.

Baron was curious about minimalism as a concept that maximizes joy and comfort and function, citing sources such as Michael Porter (“The essence of strategy is choosing what not to do”) and Kanye West (“Everything I’m not made me everything I am”). He contends that it’s important to focus on doing something great instead of many things just sort of well. So he focused on making Nugget “as simple as possible, but not simpler” and avoided screws and glues and bolts and bars. He said Nugget’s less-is-more design is exactly what makes it so kid-safe, so cozy, so easy to move around, and so versatile: it’s a couch, but it’s also a bed, hammock, fort, and soccer goal.

The business partners chose to use Kickstarter – the world’s largest funding platform for creative products – to raise money for their concept. After reaching 484 per cent of their funding goal, Nuggetcomfort.com was born. Now headquartered in The American Underground, the Company manufactures its products in a warehouse in East Durham.

**CLUB STATISTICS AS OF
FEBRUARY 13, 2017:**

**Club Members: 247; Active: 215
Active-LOA: 3; Honorary: 29
Staff Positions: 1**



**FEBRUARY 2017
BIRTHDAYS**

MICHAEL KRISTON	FEBRUARY 01
MARK HIGGINS	FEBRUARY 05
ROBERT VIERA	FEBRUARY 06
MARTY MORRIS	FEBRUARY 10
KIM SHAW	FEBRUARY 12
JOE WEBSTER	FEBRUARY 12
LESLIE FISCHER	FEBRUARY 12
CHIP DENTON	FEBRUARY 14
DAX HILL	FEBRUARY 17
EMILEE COLLINS	FEBRUARY 17
ELLEN RECKHOW	FEBRUARY 19
MIKE WOODARD	FEBRUARY 20
ANDREW LAKIS	FEBRUARY 20
BOB STEVENS	FEBRUARY 27

**Durham Police Chief, C. J. Davis
(Sponsored By: B.C. Dash)**

**Candace Minjares
(Sponsored By: Diane Bonner)**

2016-2017 ROTARY LEADERSHIP

**RI President: John Germ
District Governor: Rusine Mitchell Sinclair
ADG-Area 7: Joyce McKinney
2016-2017 Club Officers
President: B. C. Dash
Immediate Past-President: Lois Deloatch
President-Elect: Seth Jernigan
Vice-President: Shelly Green
Secretary: Mimi O'Brien
Treasurer: Susan Miller
Sergeant-at-Arms: Stan Morris
Finance Advisor: Barry Curtis
Legal Advisor: Deana Labriola**

2016-2017 Board of Directors

**Andy Esser
Blake Strayhorn
Meg Solera
Marge Nordstrom
Danielle Kaspar
Desmond Miller
Dave Ross
Arles Taylor
John Cross**

**Club Website Master
Jay Zenner, Designer; Updates**

Baron and Cocca agreed that, to maintain control and quality, they would source their materials locally, and manage everything from the orders to the manufacturing to the distribution of the product. They allow customers on nuggetcomfort.com to mix-and-match colors from among 10 durable micro-suede options. And, most importantly, they built their own machinery to vacuum pack and compress the whole couch into a small box – so it ships directly to doorsteps. All told, they decided on a \$229.00 price point, which includes shipping. By avoiding retail markups and extra freight trips, Baron claims to “pack as much quality and value into the fairest price possible.” So they are vigilant about remaining totally focused on their business philosophy: receive an order; craft the products carefully, one at a time; and ship directly to the customer. The stores – outside of nuggetcomfort.com – that carry (or are about to carry) Nuggets fit into this model. They are online retailers that don’t actually touch the product: Wayfair.com, RoomsToGo.com, Staples.com, and Amazon.com.

Baron talks about scalability and growing the team with the same careful and deliberate strategies that have brought Nugget to where it is today. Throughout his talk, Baron unequivocally praised the Durham entrepreneurial ecosystem for its support. “Startup communities in New York, San Francisco, etcetera --- they have this ‘fail fast’ mentality. Durham has allowed, even encouraged us, to be innovative yet deliberate in the development of our concept,” he said. “The cost of living here let me take my time. The American Underground office space, the warehouse space, the community infrastructure, let me take my time,” he continued. “But most important, the Southern warmth and slower pace of life let me take my time.” “The notion of ‘overnight success’ is often a myth,” Baron stressed. “In reality, ‘overnight successes’ take years. By being allowed to take our time, ultimately the end quality of the product will be better, and our opportunities for success will be greater.”

Rotarians asked questions until President B.C. Dash adjourned the meeting, then dozens more crowded around Baron for the following half hour. When queried about his work schedule, Baron replied with a smile, “There is life lived during work.” Another plus for Durham’s startup culture.

Submitted By: Carver C. Weaver

Rotarian Rory Gillis & Our Guest Speaker, David Baron Welcome To Our Newest Member, Geri Lail!!



Rotarians John Staddon, Carolyn Aaronson & Guy Solie

ALZHEIMER’S CAREGIVERS LUNCHEON

February 19, 2017
Jewish Community Center
To Volunteer, Please Contact Nancy Gordon:
neg-gordonlaw@mindspring.com

**NANA’S FOUNDATION
FUNDRAISER WINE DINNER**

Thursday, March 30, 2017
2514 University Drive -- Durham
For Additional Information:
meg.solera@gmail.com



Club Facebook link: www.facebook.com/DurhamRotaryClub
Executive Secretary: Sharon Lassiter
slassiter38@nc.rr.com