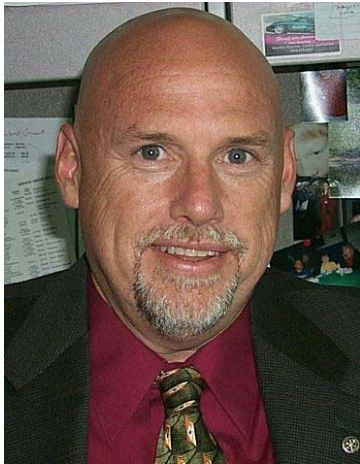


## Revved Up for Rotary: Rick Bassett Starts Term as President

By Nichole Penner

Published on 8/11/2005

Serving as president of the North Haven Rotary Club is like managing a start-up business—you begin with no money, you have to find a way to fundraise, and you must get your people involved and motivated to



make that money. That's how Rick Bassett, the new president of the organization, sees his new role. And after launching two companies of his own, perhaps he'll use his expertise to complement the duties that will ensue in his one-year term.

As president, Rick is responsible for running the weekly Rotary meetings and he becomes the “go-to” person for club issues. Augmenting any official and non-official duties that come with the office are Rick's personal goals.

He wants to try and raise interest within the club in order to inspire the members to be involved in the various fundraising activities.

Projects that the Rotary has done over the years include putting signs up at athletic fields as well as contributing to organizations such as D.A.R.E., Meals on Wheels, and the food bank. In the North Haven Library the Rotary has a career development corner comprised of books on colleges and resume writing.

Rick explains that when people are unemployed they can use the corner to locate resources to help them find a job. He adds that other clubs have actually copied the idea for a career resource center from North Haven.

“We found that to be pretty valuable,” says Rick. “If it helps one person get a job, great.”

This year the North Haven Rotary sponsored an auction with the Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA). It was a joint fundraiser in February that raised just under \$19,000; half of the money went to Rotary charities and service projects and half went to PTSA. The Rotary also held a Cowflop Fundraiser, which raised \$6000 for Project Graduation, a program for North Haven High School graduating seniors, and the club.

A separate entity of the club is the North Haven Rotary Foundation, a scholarship fund for students that started in the mid-1970s. After 40 years of fundraising, the organization has more than \$100,000 in the fund and gives out about more than \$5000 in scholarships each year.

“A lot of our money stays in the community,” says Rick.

Some of the money raised is donated outside of North Haven and is given to Rotary International—last year the North Haven club contributed almost \$6,000. The international organization supports causes like relief for the tsunami, earthquakes, and floods and its own campaign to eradicate polio.

“We're part of a big world,” says Rick. “There's always needs out there.”

Part of Rick's agenda for his year-long term is to contribute to the club's normal projects as well as launch a new one. He wants organize a dictionary endeavor where the North Haven club gives dictionaries to all of the third graders in town.

In order to build up inter-personal relationships, Rick plans on having picnics and fellowships that wives and husbands of members can attend in order to make connections. Rick says that there's a financial commitment to the Rotary as well as a time one and he believes that it's a good idea for the families of members to see what the club is all about.

Rick became involved with the North Haven Rotary in 1990 when he was sponsored by a local banker. Before becoming president last month, Rick has held other offices such as vice president and treasurer in addition to his five years managing the club's newsletter.

He joined the Rotary to become involved in community service—a reason that many brought many members to the club. He explained that the Rotary is neither a political nor a business networking organization.

Though his fellow Rotarians would use his old computer business, he says that supporting each others' businesses is not a requirement. Drumming up business for your company is not appropriate in the Rotary Club and is not purpose of the group—that's something he says that members understand.

“There's a certain level of trust,” says Rick. “[An] unspoken rule.”

Outside of the Rotary, Rick has two full-time jobs—one is as a college professor at Western Connecticut State University where he is in his fifth year teaching. Rick has a doctorate in Computer Science, which he earned in 2003.

He is also a technology consultant for his own company, BITS. He works with companies in order to help them put their IT departments in order. Rick will be called in to analyze a company's situation and offer advice.

Rick started BITS in 2001 after selling his other company, Bassett, a computer support company, in 2000. His BITS company is smaller and more personal with approximately a half-dozen clients whereas Bassett was a company with 300 clients. He remembers being so busy at his old company that when he sold it he had accrued approximately 16 weeks of unused vacation.

Running his company keeps Rick current with the technology market, which helps him as a professor.

“It relates really well to my teaching.”

This is because Rick is out in the real world and not simply talking out of a textbook. Instead, he's learning more, staying in touch with technology, and bringing that knowledge back to the classroom. This helps in the evolution of the courses that he

teaches—he changes his curriculum to reflect what's currently happening in technology and business. Right now he instructs approximately five types of computer courses.

Even with two full time jobs and a commitment to the Rotary, the self-proclaimed “NASCAR nut” has time to travel in the family camper with his three children—Katie, 21, Julie, 18, and Adam, 11—and his wife of 13 years, Jennifer.