

# Rotary

APRIL 2026 MAGAZINE

# BUZZ KILL

As the science advances, Rotary members join the quest to find vaccines to stop malaria

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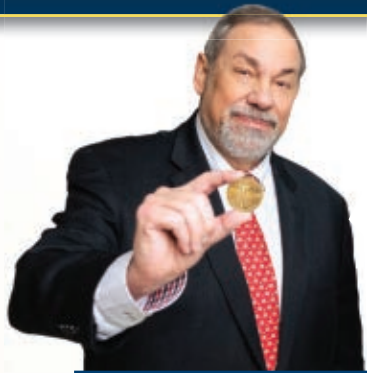
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*Source: UNICEF Malaria/Children under five, 2024*



## Count on preparation, not luck

**N**ot long ago, in a small health center in the village of Aaye in southwest Nigeria, a woman arrived in labor carrying twins. The facility was short-staffed. The nurse midwife in charge was not present.

A community health worker stepped forward. She had participated in Together for Healthy Families in Nigeria, a Rotary Foundation Programs of Scale initiative. And though she was not formally trained as a midwife, she was equipped with essential emergency obstetric skills.

Hours later, both babies had been delivered, one at the health center and the other at a general hospital, where the mother had been referred after complications were quickly identified. The newborns and their mother were alive and safe.

Women around the world face similar circumstances every day — moments when the difference between life and loss depends on well-trained medical staff and reliable systems and procedures.

Together for Healthy Families in Nigeria exists to increase the chances that those moments end in hope. By strengthening health systems and training frontline workers, this program helps communities protect mothers and children even when circumstances are difficult.

This work reflects the very heart of Rotary service. Service is not only what we do when conditions are ideal. It is what we do when systems are strained,

resources are limited, and the need is urgent. It is the commitment to prepare people before a crisis arrives and to stand with communities when it does.

Maternal and child health is not an abstract goal. It is deeply personal. It is a mother who survives childbirth. It is a newborn who takes a first breath. It is a family that remains whole because someone was trained, ready, and cared enough to act. Rotary understands that service means investing in people and systems long before they are tested.

Programs like Together for Healthy Families in Nigeria show what is possible when Rotary brings together local knowledge, global partnerships, and sustainable solutions. By working alongside health professionals and local leaders, Rotary helps ensure that lifesaving care does not depend on luck or location.

The story of the mother and her twins is at its core a story of service. It is a reminder that Rotary's impact is measured in human moments when people step forward to help others in their most vulnerable hours.

When we *Unite for Good*, service becomes more than an ideal. It becomes a lifeline for families, a source of strength for communities, and a promise that Rotary will continue to go wherever help is needed most.

**FRANCESCO AREZZO**

*President, Rotary International*





**YOU ARE HERE:** Kisoro, Uganda

**VOLCANIC FORCES:** Shaped by volcanic activity, the Kisoro region's lush, undulating hills unfold across southwestern Uganda. The area features prized national parks that are home to rare mountain gorillas, golden monkeys, and many species of birds, including kingfishers, kites, and ibis.

**STEP BY STEP:** For generations, farmers have carved terraces to grow crops on the slopes of dormant volcanos. Today, the region is home to a lively agritourism industry that draws visitors to learn about coffee and other crops. Some of that harvest ends up at cross-border markets where Rwandan and Congolese traders join locals selling crafts and traditional foods.

**ROTARY HOT SPOT:** Uganda is home to more than 13,000 Rotary members, the second-highest number in Africa after Nigeria. This month, a district conference in Entebbe is expected to draw 2,200 attendees. The speaker lineup includes Emmy-winning actor Mary-Louise Parker, who supports an organization helping former child soldiers and other victims of Uganda's civil war. ■

# Rotary

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April 2026

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**On the cover:** Spread by mosquitoes, malaria has afflicted generations. Now, vaccines offer hope.





## STAFF CORNER

# Hiroko Tsuchiya

*International office manager, Japan*

**I was born in Zama, Kanagawa prefecture**, about 25 miles southwest of Tokyo. My father's job as an executive with Honda Motor Corp. took our family around the world. We lived in Britain for three years and in Tehran, Iran, for two. My parents liked the British education system, and I attended a boarding school in London for three more years.

**Moving from London to Tehran brought a cultural shift.** We wore head coverings, attended gender-segregated classes, and studied Persian. From an early age, I learned to adapt to new environments, languages, and cultures. It shaped my professional desire to contribute beyond my own country.

**In Iran and across parts of Asia,** I saw many children working instead of attending school. It led me to major in education at university and to volunteer for a summer with a grassroots nongovernmental organization in Sri Lanka and Thailand.

**I joined Japan's Foreign Ministry** in September 2001 and was posted to Hungary. The day before my departure, I watched news reports as the Twin Towers were attacked in New York. The shock of that moment strengthened my conviction that peacebuilding mattered. In Budapest, as the youngest staff member, I learned basic Hungarian and supported administrative and diplomatic work.

**I was later assigned to the Japanese Embassy in Sri Lanka** as a researcher. For three years, I analyzed political developments during a period of civil war to support Japan's role — alongside Norway, the EU, the U.S., and others — in facilitating peace talks.

**My next posting was Islamabad.** On my second day, a massive bombing struck a hotel near an event I was attending. My commitment to peace and development deepened. I worked with United Nations agencies and international aid groups on



issues including Afghan refugees, global health, and education. Later, in Karachi, I promoted cultural and youth exchanges between Japan and Pakistan. In the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, I coordinated Japan's assistance with nation-building there.

**I returned to Tokyo in 2015** and served in several departments at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. One memorable assignment involved supporting the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, ultimately held in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I helped manage logistics and protocol for international delegations. I made the difficult decision to leave the Foreign Ministry during the pandemic and join the private sector. Midcareer, I felt a strong desire to challenge myself.

**I discovered Rotary through a LinkedIn** search after a 3½-year stint at Amway Japan. I had known of Rotary's initiatives from my time in Pakistan. During my interview process, my father became seriously ill and fell into a coma. The last time I spoke to him I told him about the opportunity at Rotary. His eyes moved slightly, as if encouraging me.

**As manager of RI's Japan office,** I lead a staff of 13 to support over 83,000 Rotarians in Japan. The role brings together my experience with communications, office management, and diplomacy. ■

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## Letters to the editor

### MEMBERS MAKE IT HAPPEN

Thank you for the photo essay on the inclusive sports project in Zenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina [“They got game,” January]. However, it is important to remember that this project came about not by an anonymous “Rotary Foundation” but rather through the efforts of individual Rotary clubs and their members.

The Rotary Club of West Bend Sunrise in Wisconsin was the international sponsor, and members of that club worked with the Rotary Club of Zenica to apply for the global grant and provide support. District Designated Funds from District 1910 in Bosnia and Herzegovina [and part of Austria] and Districts 6250, 6270, and 7170 in the U.S. helped provide funding. In addition, three members from the West Bend Sunrise club and one from the Rotary Club of Mequon-Thiensville Sunrise in Wisconsin traveled to Zenica to participate in the panel discussions and attend the tournament.

The Rotary Foundation works only because of the generous members behind the scenes who raise the money that funds the projects. It is members who build partnerships and relationships between clubs. Those members and their clubs and districts deserve to be recognized and thanked, so I would like to add my “thank you” to everyone involved who brought this project to fruition!

**Mary Beth Seiser**, West Bend, Wisconsin

### HOME COOKING

“Grandmother’s gold,” the essay by Wen Huang in the January issue, was beautifully written. As I read his piece, I reflected on my own childhood memories of learning to cook and bake our family’s traditional foods from central and eastern Europe. When queried about ingredient quantities and cooking times and methods, Baba (the Slavic term for grandmother) would simply say, “Use a little” or “Put this much in until it’s the right color.” “How long do you cook this, Baba?” I’d ask. “Until it’s done,” she would reply.

Wanting desperately to learn these treasured recipes, I eventually went to her kitchen armed with measuring cups and spoons, a timer, and a notebook. I



would stop her as she worked to measure ingredients and write everything down. In between, she would share stories from the farming villages where she lived in Poland and Canada. Today, I still make many of these traditional treats, but the best-tasting dishes are still the ones made by Baba.

**Stephanie Urchick**, Canonsburg, Pennsylvania

### IN FAVOR OF FAMILY PLANNING

I have never written a letter to the editor of *Rotary* magazine, but as an OB-GYN physician (retired), I just couldn't let this go. In response to Josh McClure's letter in the January issue [“Problematic projects”], I have some important clarifications to share.

The Rotary Foundation Code of Policies clearly states that “grants cannot be used ... to support activities that involve abortion.” “Family planning” in Rotary Foundation grants, then, refers to contraception, which is a vital component of public health.

The World Health Organization has a great deal to say about the importance of making contraception and family planning education available to all. Prevention of unintended pregnancies decreases the incidence of maternal illness, the demand for unsafe abortions,

### OVERHEARD ON SOCIAL MEDIA

In December, we explored the science behind happiness and shared a key finding: People are happier and live longer when they are more socially connected to family, friends, and community.

Rotary has given me some wonderful connections around the world. Thankful to all the members and the service they do 🙏  
**Sonia J.T. Saleh**  
► via LinkedIn

[In 2025] Finland was again named the happiest country in the world ... We in Finland find you do not have to be an extrovert to build and maintain relationships and to be happy.  
**Timo Lahtinen**  
► via Facebook

## CONNECT

and the transmission of HIV. According to WHO, “contraceptive information and services are fundamental to the health and human rights of all individuals.”

McClure asserts that Rotary’s efforts at family planning are intended to control population, as if grant-funded projects involved mandatory contraception or sterilization, which of course they do not. Contrary to his opinion, there are no racist, elitist, or religious implications in working toward the availability of contraceptive choice to all people worldwide.

**Dr. Rebecca Wilks**, Yarnell, Arizona

Regarding Rotary’s support of the training of midwives in Papua New Guinea, I would like to point out that teaching family planning by midwives is very appropriate. I’ve worked in women’s health for many years and family planning is not a euphemism for abortion.

Family planning is the ability of individuals or couples to decide if and when to have children and how many children to have, using methods like contraception, fertility awareness, or infertility treatment. Family planning reduces maternal mortality. It helps with spacing of children and prevents unplanned pregnancies and abortions.

Currently, about 25 percent of Rotarians are women. Rotary should support women by promoting access to a range of health care, including family planning, that improves the lives of women.

**Dr. Carol Nelson**, White Bear Lake, Minnesota

## TWAIN’S WORLD

I enjoy reading *Rotary* magazine every month, and most articles are very interesting and informative. But my absolute favorite was “The prize,” written by Geoffrey Johnson [December].

The essay is about a girl called Sasha who introduces a visitor, Mark Twain, to her father, Leo Tolstoy. Twain is impressed that Tolstoy speaks Russian,

English, and German. He says, “I can understand German as well as the maniac that invented it.”

This is so funny. I am originally from Germany and knew that Mark Twain did not like the German language.

**Helgard Suhr Hollis**, New Braunfels, Texas

## TO YOUR HEALTH

Happiness was covered from many perspectives in the December issue. Another useful perspective provides a timely global opportunity for Rotary.

When Thomas Jefferson penned the words “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” in the U.S. Declaration of Independence, happiness meant dignity and well-being, not emotional gratification or personal comfort as many people now think of it. Notably, Jefferson’s close friend and physician, Dr. Benjamin Rush, claimed there is “an indissoluble union between moral, political, and physical happiness.” Rush understood what modern science now confirms: Without health, our pursuit of happiness collapses into wishful thinking and communities fracture.

It is no coincidence that health appears repeatedly across Rotary’s best-known work. Most of Rotary’s areas of focus, action groups, and global grants target health. Even peacebuilding, education, and economic development depend on healthy people. Health is not a side issue. It is the most common denominator.

Health is universally understood. Every culture, every family, every human being recognizes its value. If Rotary were to reframe its mission around health as the pathway to sustainable happiness, it would gain something invaluable: clarity. Clarity attracts members, travels across borders, and unites generations.

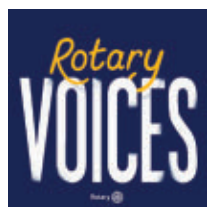
Happiness, fundamentally, is not a feeling. It is a by-product of meaningful contribution. Health makes that contribution possible.

**Chuck Woolery**, Rockville, Maryland

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### ON THE PODCAST

On a recent episode of *Rotary Voices*, journalist Linda Yu sat down with Rashmi Rustagi, an actress, producer, food blogger — and Rotarian. Rustagi discusses her career and her journey in Rotary, from India to California. Listen at [rotary.org/podcast](http://rotary.org/podcast).



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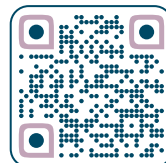


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THE SPECIALIST

## Good influence

*A Rotarian works with trusted voices to dispel myths about polio vaccines*

**I** was looking for volunteer opportunities in my home country of Romania when I saw a social media post about a Rotaract project. I made a donation, and the members invited me to come with them in the field. I joined Rotaract and got involved in many other projects that came after. You could even say my digital career started there. Back in those days social media was booming in Romania, and as a club we started organizing conferences for youth to learn about social media not only as users but as a job.

**When I joined Rotaract, I had no idea what Rotary was about.** I remember, even now, I was sitting at my computer and watching all these videos about

**Diana Maria Pirga**

Rotary Club of  
Türkiye Evrensel,  
District 2430

Digital  
community  
engagement  
specialist,  
UNICEF Pakistan

Rotary's work on the polio eradication initiative. I was impressed by the hard work being done. I said to myself back then that it would be so great one day to be working with Rotary on this program. And somehow, 10 years later, I got the chance.


**At UNICEF, part of my work** lies in managing disinformation and addressing hesitancy around polio vaccination. The majority of parents are not against vaccines, and they do vaccinate during every campaign. However, we have a small group that has worries. Some people fear side effects; others question why children need several doses of the same vaccine. When these concerns are not addressed, uncertainty can grow and negative narratives can lead to hesitancy or refusal.

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Celebrate World Immunization Week in April by making a gift to end polio. Visit [endpolio.org/donate](https://endpolio.org/donate).



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Like mother,  
like daughter

**22**  
Your Rotary  
passport

**24**  
When grief is  
a marathon

## ENDING HOMELESSNESS

# Downsizing

*Can tiny homes be a bridge to stability and permanent housing?*

**I**nside a chilly warehouse, Terry Lee bends down to examine a wayward nail protruding from the side of a 2-by-6 floor joist that will soon support a tiny house. “We’ll probably need to pull that one out,” Lee says, consoling me, a volunteer who didn’t quite nail her first attempt at using a large nail gun. Lee smiles, grabs his hammer, and adds: “But that’s OK.”

The longtime Rotarian spends at least one day a week here at the Hope Factory in Seattle, walking around stacks of precut lumber and insulation as he helps volunteers like me build tiny houses for homeless people.

Outside of this use, tiny homes are best known as a movement, popularized in TV shows, that espouses minimalist living and lighter environmental footprints through small — typically under 400 square feet — dwellings, often with surprising touches of luxury. More recently, cities around the country are experimenting with tiny houses too, albeit without the frills, to see if they can provide a bridge to help people who’ve been living in tents or in their cars to get back on their feet and achieve the stability they need to find permanent housing.

The houses that I and other volunteers are building today are simple: 8 feet by 12 feet, with electricity hookups, lights, a heater, and an air conditioner. They don’t have plumbing, though each house will be moved to a tiny-house village with communal laundry, bathroom, and kitchen facilities, along

with case managers to help residents access health care and other social services.

“We’ve found that tiny homes are one of the most appealing options for people coming out of homelessness. On the street, they don’t trust anyone. Their stuff is constantly stolen. With a tiny home, you have privacy, a lock on the door. It’s much more stable, with easier access to social workers,” Lee says. “The villages also help establish community and build trust, and that’s what I see as the main advantage.” The villages are part of a housing-first approach that prioritizes getting people into temporary housing and then addressing underlying issues such as financial instability, trauma, mental health needs, or substance use. Critics say the approach can leave those issues untreated for too long, but proponents say the model supports a critical first step: stability.

“Our case managers are on-site and work with residents to connect them with health care, help with employment. But the most important thing is housing navigation — to provide individuals with a home address so they can apply for IDs, social benefits, jobs, and permanent housing,” says Sharon Lee, a Seattle Rotarian (no relation to Terry) and executive director of the Low Income Housing Institute, a nonprofit that builds and operates many of the tiny-house villages in and around the city.

The number of tiny-house villages in the U.S. has grown from 34 in 2019 to over 100 in 2024, according to a study in the *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*.

To learn more and get involved, visit [lihihousing.org/tinyhouses](https://lihihousing.org/tinyhouses).



“These villages are not the answer on their own ... but they are a meaningful part of the solution.”

Terry Lee (right) guides a volunteer assembling a tiny home. Lee and the Rotary Club of Mercer Island have led local efforts to raise more than \$80,000 to build tiny houses.

They’re located across the West Coast and are popping up in cities like Denver; St. Louis; Nashville, Tennessee; and Austin, Texas.

“These villages are not the answer on their own, and they should not replace long-term investments in affordable housing,” says Yetimoni Kpeebe, a doctoral student at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte who co-authored the study. “But they are a meaningful part of the solution for meeting immediate housing needs.”

Those needs are increasing. The unsheltered homeless population in the U.S. increased by nearly 60 percent between 2015 and 2024, according to federal data. The issue is especially pressing in Seattle and surrounding King County, which despite not cracking the 10 largest metro areas in the U.S. has

the nation’s fourth-largest homeless population, behind New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago.

Experts say many factors such as poverty, mental illness, or drug use contribute, but the root cause is clear: a lack of affordable housing.

Rotary clubs are trying to help fill the gap. Terry Lee and fellow members in the Rotary Club of Mercer Island have led efforts by Seattle-area clubs to raise more than \$80,000 to help build tiny houses.

In upstate New York, Rotary clubs in Rochester and nearby Fairport have built tiny houses for homeless people. Fairport Rotarian Mark Fuerbacher says with nearly 100 percent of his club participating, members quickly built two tiny houses during the pandemic after getting approval to redirect \$3,000 in club and district funding. The

project’s construction manager, Ed Johnston, a Rotarian for 50-plus years who had worked as a carpenter, used his connections to get free or steeply discounted materials. “The whole community came together,” Fuerbacher says. Johnston adds: “I’ve only seen two or three projects like this that everyone worked on together. It was just great to see.”

In Seattle, each tiny house built at the Hope Factory costs about \$4,500 thanks to volunteer labor and a discount on materials from a home improvement store. The operation is overseen by the nonprofit Sound Foundations NW, which builds as many as four tiny houses each week. Once the paint is dry, the houses are loaded onto flatbed trucks and handed over to the Low Income Housing Institute, or LIHI

(pronounced “lee-high”), which partners with local governments and donors to build villages.

“Most people stay six months or less, and we tend to move the families out quicker,” says Sharon Lee, who has led LIHI for more than 30 years and is a member of the Rotary Club of Seattle-International District. She says LIHI has built more than 20 tiny-home villages over the last decade and secured 89 buildings for affordable rental housing since 1991.

She says it’s not cheap to operate the villages but that they’re less expensive than other shelter models, such as converting old hotels into temporary housing. LIHI staff members are on site 24/7, and case

managers help the more than 2,000 people who come through the villages each year, she says.

Andrew Constantino had been living in a tent on the streets while recovering from a heroin addiction when he was offered a tiny house about a decade ago in what was then a Seattle experiment. LIHI wanted to quickly provide shelter for people living in tents, and the 96-square-foot tiny house was a way to abide by various building and zoning codes.

“I got a tiny house, oh my God, having just spent a winter in a tent. I was trying to work. My phone was frozen in ice. I had to shave. You spend most of your time figuring out where to shower, where to do laundry,” he says. “Having a bed to

sleep in, a lock on the door to keep my things safe, having heat in my home — I was overjoyed. You had to drag me out of there.”

Constantino says he spent a couple of years in the village before moving into permanent housing. Sober for 18 years, he now works as an outreach specialist for an organization that helps people struggling on the street.

“In large shelters, there isn’t any kind of community. People see each other as an inconvenience,” he says. “In a village, they see each other as a community; you make dinner for each other. That doesn’t show up in the data, but those intangibles make the villages special.”

— ERIN GARTNER

Volunteers, including from the Mercer Island club, build a tiny-house village in Seattle in 2018. Most residents are able to move to more permanent housing within six months.



BY THE NUMBERS

<400 sq. ft.

Size of a typical tiny home

100+

Tiny home villages in the U.S.

58%

Increase in U.S. unsheltered homeless population (2015-24)

Short takes

The world saw 44 confirmed cases of wild poliovirus (31 in Pakistan and 13 in Afghanistan) in 2025, a 56 percent decrease from 2024.



On 31 December, Rotary and the Institute for Economics and Peace successfully concluded a seven-year partnership that advanced Rotary’s commitment to Positive Peace.



PROFILE

## Service with a smile

*A California dentist is following in her mother's footsteps*

**Natalie Bailey**  
 Rotary Club  
 of Coronado,  
 California

**C**oronado is a small California resort city on a peninsula in San Diego Bay. Natalie Bailey grew up here, often attending meetings of the Rotary Club of Coronado. Her mother, Suzanne Popp, joined the club when Popp was in her late 20s and was the first woman to serve as its president. “I was brought to my first Rotary meeting when I was about 2 weeks old,” Bailey says. “Looking back, so many of my childhood memories are Rotary events.”

Bailey got involved with Interact, participated in Rotary Youth Exchange in Germany and Turkey, and later followed her mom’s lead by joining the Coronado Rotary club in 2018. (She also emulated her mother professionally, and the two are now partners in a dental practice in their hometown.)

This year, which is the club’s centennial, it’s Bailey’s turn to serve as club president. She was cooking dinner at her mom’s house when she received a call from a fellow Rotarian offering her the role. “Oh no, I’m too young. I’m working. I think I need a couple more years,” she told him. Her mom’s advice: “Just do it. It’s going to be hard, but you’re going to have the best year ever.”

More than halfway through her term, Bailey has focused largely on service. She’s continued a hands-on project to build houses in Tijuana, Mexico, and doubled last year’s budget. Bailey believes active service will further grow the 260-member club and build the next generation. “So many young people say, ‘I don’t have time’ or ‘It’s just for older people,’” she says. “I tell them, ‘If more young people join, then it’s for young people.’”

— JP SWENSON

The Rotary Foundation raised over \$2.7 million in support of Giving Tuesday, which fell on 2 December.

At the International Assembly in January, Trustee Chair-elect Jennifer Jones declared that The Rotary Foundation’s 2026–27 fundraising goal is \$500 million.

Rotary will mark World Immunization Week, 24–30 April, to promote vaccines and disease prevention.



# People of action around the globe

By Brad Webber



## Mexico

Within hours of deadly floods and landslides that struck Mexico in October, Rotary members were responding. In hard-hit Poza Rica, Rotary and Rotaract members brought residents to safety, plowed mud-laden streets, and moved house to house to clean properties. The effort was supported by clubs throughout District 4185 and by neighboring districts and others abroad. The Rotary Club of Poza Rica joined the nonprofit Planet Water Foundation to install four water towers and a water block in the neediest area and deliver purified water elsewhere. The club also coordinated with World Central Kitchen to provide hot meals. Still, “we desperately need help to get back on our feet and return to our normal lives,” says club member Pepe Badillo. “The houses were a total loss. Everything was destroyed, from a single plate to the bedrooms on the second floor.”



## Canada

Members of the Rotary Club of Kelowna in British Columbia placed 220 crosses personalized with the details of fallen soldiers in a Remembrance Day tradition the club has co-lead with the Okanagan Military Museum Society since 2018. The Field of Crosses is accessible for 10 days beginning 2 November. Rotarians’ “dedication extends to coordinating lighting, ceremonies, and educational programs produced by the museum that connect the community, especially students, with the stories behind the names,” says Club President Robin Smith. The project strikes a personal chord: “We have a number of members who have served with our military,” Smith says, “and this allows us to honor them and the hundreds of others from the Kelowna community who have made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our country.”



# 75

Countries where Canadians killed in WWI and WWII are buried

# 100,000

Homes damaged by October floods in Mexico





### Latvia

The monthly soup kitchen at Saint Saviour’s Anglican Church has been a mainstay in Latvia’s capital since 2001. For the past several years, the Rotaract Club of Riga International and, more recently, its sponsor Rotary club have supported the initiative, which serves as many as 60 visitors per session. “One shift prepares large pots of soup, porridge, and warm tea while another welcomes and serves guests when they arrive,” says Kim Leandersson, a past president of the Rotary Club of Riga International. “Ingredients are planned and purchased by our members, with our club covering the modest costs and occasional donated products from bakeries adding something extra. It’s regular, hands-on service where you see the impact immediately. Cooking, serving, and sharing a meal may sound small, but for many of our guests it means warmth, dignity, and being seen.”



# 1 in 12

People worldwide who face chronic hunger



### India

The city of Thane, northeast of Mumbai, is recognized for its arts and culture scene. It’s home to drama troupes, an art expo, international film festivals, and comedy venues. What it was lacking, says Atul Bhide, of the Rotary Club of Thane Hills, was a large showcase for aficionados of the written word. To amend that, the club (which also sponsors a book-reading initiative for youth) launched the Thane Literature Festival. Over two days in November, bibliophiles toasted 22 authors and poets who read from their work and participated in panel discussions. The event honored journalist and writing coach Bachi Karkaria with the Thane Literature Festival lifetime achievement award, and judges critiqued entries in a short-story contest. “Encouraging reading habits and love for literature for Gen-Next is also our motive behind this literature festival,” says Bhide.

# \$9 billion

Value of India’s print book market in 2020





GOODWILL

# A ticket to flexibility

Passport clubs keep people in Rotary without weekly meetings over a meal

**M**arco Cecala and Rebecca Wilks had been Rotary members for years when the couple moved to Yarnell, Arizona, in 2019. Suddenly, they were more than 25 miles from the nearest Rotary club. “We were wondering what to do,” Cecala recalls.

Eventually, they stumbled upon the Rotary Club of Valley of the Sun Passport, a reinvention of a traditional club based in a Phoenix suburb. The club meets online only once per month, and its board meets monthly as well. Intrigued, Cecala and Wilks tried it out and found their new Rotary home.

Rotary’s Guide to Passport Clubs explains that this type of club gives members a more flexible experience by encouraging them to regularly visit other clubs, which is where the “passport” part of the name comes from. Passport clubs

can relax the attendance policy or offer a variety of meeting formats.

As Cecala and Wilks set out recruiting members, they discovered the passport format was ideal for people who were on the verge of leaving Rotary. “We talked to friends of ours who were former district governors and current presidents and said, ‘Look, if you’ve got somebody who’s teetering, send them to us,’” Cecala recalls. “We’ll talk to them and show them this is an alternative.”

Members of passport clubs often engage with people from other clubs whose interests match their own. “Many of us go to places and see projects we have supported for years,” Cecala says. “As a passport club, we are ambassadors for passion projects and creative ways to fund them.”

The Rotary Club of Ōtautahi Passport in New Zealand began intentionally as a passport club at

**BENEFITS OF A PASSPORT CLUB**

**FLEXIBILITY:** Varied options for getting involved accommodate members’ busy schedules, allowing them more choices for fitting Rotary into their lives.

**ENGAGING MEETINGS:** Gatherings can focus on service and socializing rather than speakers and meals. By visiting other clubs’ meetings, members can learn what other groups are doing and bring new ideas to their club.

**BROAD APPEAL:** Passport clubs often appeal to people who wouldn’t join a more traditional club and help keep people who might otherwise leave Rotary.

**MORE CONNECTIONS:** Members quickly build relationships across the district and beyond.

**AFFORDABILITY:** Costs are kept to a minimum because meetings don’t include meals.

a time when COVID-19 restrictions were in place, and the group held its first meetings virtually. Like the Valley of the Sun passport club, the group grew as members found other individuals who had either recently left Rotary or were unhappy in their clubs.

“Our model is very flexible. If something isn’t working, with club members’ input, we change it,” says Deb Gimblett, charter president of the New Zealand club. “Our meetings are less time-consuming. Members are encouraged to do what they can.”

The club meets every other week at varied locations throughout the Canterbury region. There are no meals to pay for, although when the club meets at a local McDonalds, members can grab a burger or fries if they want. “We don’t expect people to come to every meeting,” notes Club President Martin MacLean. “Sometimes we’ll have a meeting as part of an event, like a project. We might take half an hour at the beginning for a formal meeting and then go into our service.”

The Frederiksberg-Falconer Passport club near Copenhagen, Denmark, began as a traditional club but transitioned to the passport form in 2023, as the club and others in its district were experiencing a decline in membership. Club member Maiken Hallingskov, the district’s membership chair, says a workshop with members of clubs in the Copenhagen area determined most wanted to stay in Rotary but weekly meetings had become too much.

The passport club has grown from 14 to 22 members, largely from active promotion on the LinkedIn networking site. Hallingskov says the limited time commitment is the major selling point.

“People want to keep it easy, and they want to do a special thing for the local community or someone else,” says Hallingskov. “We are all very active, have our own companies, and don’t have much time. Two hours a month is enough for us to get it done.”

— ARNOLD R. GRAHL

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ESSAY

# Good grief

I planned to run a marathon, but after my dad's death, the finish line lay somewhere beyond those 26.2 miles

By JP Swenson



**O**n Christmas Eve 2024, I stood between my mother and my sister watching snow fall through the window of an ICU room in Milwaukee. Behind us, nurses were removing my father's breathing tube. "OK," one of them said. "All done."

We approached my father's bedside, and Mom took Dad's hand. "Is he gone?" she asked me. I moved in closer. "I think so," I replied. We motioned for the nurse to call the rest of our family into the room. They ran down the hall to join us. My mom held my dad as the beeping machines fell silent. The only thing we could hear was the sound of my grandpa's walker as it approached the room.

On Christmas morning, shocked by the new shape of our family, Mom unwrapped a present from Dad: *Easy Weeknight Dinners* by Emily Weinstein. He always was the cook of the family. I picked at the paper I had wrapped around a pair of slippers only a few days prior. The slippers, a gift from me to my father, were too big, but I decided to keep them.

On 26 December, a white Christmas gave way to rain. Grandpa and I were standing in the parking lot of Schmidt & Bartelt Funeral & Cremation Services. "I wish I was giving this to you under different circumstances," he said and handed me an envelope. "Happy birthday." I was turning 26: my golden birthday.

I spent my first months of being 26 running up and down Chicago's lakefront. On my runs, I would think of my dubious history with the sport. Dad held the freshman record for the mile at his high school; Mom ran marathons throughout my childhood. I was never cut out for it. I still hear my cross-country coach's words whenever I approach a formidable hill: "You run like an old man."

When I started running again a few years ago, Dad came to my first race, a 10K. Despite his telling me I could have run faster, I stuck with it. A few months before he died, I was training for the Milwaukee Lakefront Marathon, but I came down with COVID within days of the race and had to bow out. Dad texted me five fateful words: "There will be other marathons."

In February, I was back in Milwaukee sitting with my mother in her living room. Despite being acutely aware of the

empty space on the couch beside her, I was unable to confront this hole in my life. Suddenly, Mom looked up from her laptop. "You should apply for a New York City Marathon charity bib," she said. I stared at her blankly. Cards on the table, the last thing I wanted to do at that moment was run 26.2 miles. "I don't know, maybe." There was nowhere to hide.

"Have you ever heard of Gabe Grunewald?" Mom asked. She explained that Grunewald was a professional runner who, after years of living with a rare cancer, founded the organization Brave Like Gabe, or BLG. Grunewald died in 2019, two weeks before her 33rd birthday. I watched a documentary about her and was reminded of the scripture on my father's prayer card: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."

"Today is the last day to apply," Mom said on her way to bed.

There are countless things I've said no to in life because I couldn't package them quite right in my head. But at that moment, I stopped trying to make perfect sense of everything. Instead, I gave myself permission to move into the unknown. To say yes. Four days later, I was accepted to team BLG for the 2025 NYC Marathon. I was on a path now.

I had an impossible goal in my head of finishing the race in under four hours, but my real goal was to avoid embarrassing myself and simply cross the finish line. Training gave me structure and momentum. I found comfort in its simplicity: I either do the run or I don't. Or so I thought.

Eleven weeks into my training, I meant to run 18 miles. If I could stay on pace, I told myself, I could break four hours on race day. Three hours later, I stood on the train, sweat dripping onto

my sneakers as I tried to ignore dirty looks from fellow passengers. I had bailed after 16 terrible miles.

Marathon weekend arrived. The night before the race, I sat in my hotel room in Midtown with an envelope in my hand. It contained a semicolon bracelet and a note from my mom:

*I bought this bracelet for Dad shortly after he was diagnosed with cancer. The semicolon holds a lot of significance for people in recovery from substance abuse. While it wasn't the end of Dad's story, the complications of his cancer prevented me finding the right time to give this to him — so I'm giving it to you. Your marathon is another of his chapters, helping us live our lives without his presence but with so many great memories.*

Dad had been sober for four years at the time of his passing. He became a substance abuse counselor, helping others fight the battle he had won. At his funeral, one of his patients approached my mom and said, "I'm going to keep fighting for him."

I woke up on race day and began my first marathon: the journey to the starting line. I made my way by train, ferry, and bus to the foot of the Verrazzano Bridge. My thoughts raced. *Should I be farther up? Did I drink enough water? Too much? Is there still time to turn around?* The national anthem echoed as I counted my energy gummies with nervous fingers. Suddenly, silence. My mind cleared. BOOM! The cannon fired, the crowd surged, and the voice of Frank Sinatra — *I want to be a part of it, New York, New York* — blasted away any lingering doubts. I smiled as I made my way over the bridge. I had pictured this moment for months.

My smile was short-lived. I looked at my watch and realized I was already

I stopped trying to make perfect sense of everything. Instead, I gave myself permission to move into the unknown.



## OUR WORLD

far behind my desired pace. I had been warned countless times not to go out of the gate too fast, but had it really taken me more than 10 minutes to run my first mile? To complete the 26.2 miles in under four hours, I should have been running at about nine minutes per mile.

As the runners spread out, I entered Brooklyn, where the streets were lined with screaming spectators throwing parties and holding hilarious signs. I dropped my goal of a sub-four-hour marathon. I just wanted to soak this in.

When you're running through the streets of New York, you feel like you're being carried along by a wave. I looked at the bracelet on my wrist, remembering what brought me here. This caused a cycle of fighting tears, hyperventilating, and forcing myself to relax. I would not recommend this method for serious runners.

The Queensboro Bridge is a notorious moment in the race. There's a toll to be paid. After 15 miles of cacophonous crowds, you ascend a near-silent bridge, the only sounds the runners' heavy breathing and their shod feet peppering the cement. With no distractions, you crash back into your aching body. *What could possibly have made me sign up for this?*

As I came off the bridge, I had my answer. Up to this point, I had kept my eyes forward, conserving energy. But strangely, I felt compelled to look across the pack of runners to the crowds of on-lookers, which had returned, louder than ever. I saw my aunt and uncle waving and screaming with excitement.

I thought back to Christmas Eve. My father's eyes were fighting to stay open. I stood alone in the hospital room with him for the first time. I hopelessly tried to fit a lifetime of apologies, gratuities, and forgivenesses into five minutes. Through tears, I told him that he was a good father despite every reason he would think otherwise. At that moment, the hospital blinds briefly parted and I saw my aunt and uncle peeking through. It was one of many vulnerable moments my family witnessed that day. At every



**Above:** Baby JP with his father, John Swenson, and his sister, Maggie. **Below:** JP runs through the streets of New York, cheered on — and greeted after crossing the finish line — by Maggie and his mother, Cherie.



step until my father's passing, and in the days and weeks thereafter, they steadied me despite their own heartbreak. We keep moving forward.

As I approached mile 17 in Manhattan, the shouts of my mother and my sister somehow drowned out the music of the Velvet Underground blaring in my ears. But this race is full of peaks and valleys. Two miles later, I realized I'd miscounted my energy gummies. With only a 20-mile run under my belt in training, I was entering uncharted territory. But I also realized I had been keeping a solid pace since mile 1.

As I turned into Central Park, I saw runners collapsing. I watched as a man about my age wrestled with a paramedic to pull his oxygen mask off in the back of a medical cart. With two miles to go, my muscles felt as if they were ripping with every step. I passed my mother and my sister again in the crowd, but this time my brain was on Jupiter, trying to escape my body.

25 ... 26 ... 0.2 miles to go. I knew I was in the ballpark of four hours. If I wanted to make this a sure thing, I needed to sprint. My mind flashed back to that first 10K with my dad on the sidelines. I thought of his text: "There will be other marathons." I thought about the last picture he ever sent me: him on the couch sitting next to our dog, Leo, taking in the Christmas tree. It was all he wanted in his final weeks. He passed away five days later.

Dad loved taking Leo for walks in the woods near our house. Despite my protesting, he would let Leo off leash to run in the grass. Grief is akin to dropping a dog's leash. Some dogs will continue walking politely. Some will freeze in place, waiting to be put back on the leash. And some dogs, like Leo, run, eyes wild and their tongue flapping in the wind. I wanted to run.

I crossed the finish line at 03:54:48. ■

*An editor at Rotary magazine, JP Swenson produces and hosts the Rotary Voices podcast. Listen at [rotary.org/podcast](https://rotary.org/podcast).*



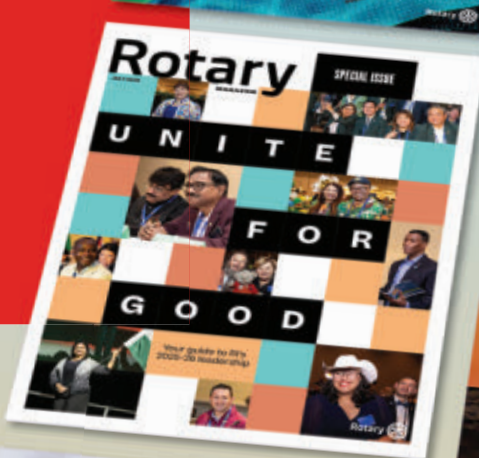
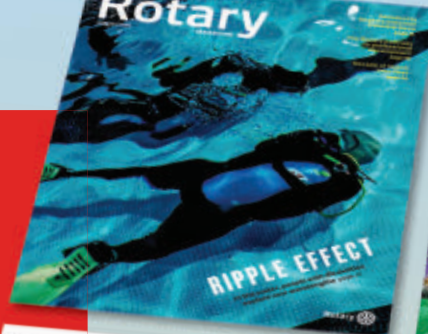
# Rotary magazine is now accepting advertising

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**TO**  
**CATCH**  
**A**  
**KILLER**





Rotary members join  
the race for vaccines  
to stop malaria

**By Ruby Prosser Scully**  
**Photography by Rhys Martin**



## At first it just seemed like a bad flu.

The illness struck Danielle Stanisc while she was in New York for a research gig, her first time living away from home in Australia. It was her lab mates, though, who grew alarmed and insisted she get tested. It turned out Stanisc, who had traveled to Papua New Guinea six months earlier, had malaria.

The next week in the hospital was a blur of suffering, but looking back 20 years later, Stanisc's overriding feeling about the ordeal is how lucky she was. "I had access to rapid and effective care in a hospital," she says. "I didn't have to worry about the drugs being counterfeit. I didn't have to worry about them not having enough IV fluids. I didn't have to worry about any of that. That's not the way it is in malaria endemic countries."

Today, Stanisc is a veteran immunologist specializing in defeating parasites. Atop her hit list is the biological invader that causes malaria, a killer of around 600,000 people each year, most of them in places offering little of the luck that she had accessing care.

**M**alaria has bedeviled humankind for millennia. Caused by a mosquito-borne parasite, the disease has afflicted generations stretching back to the likes of Alexander the Great, believed to have been killed by the illness on the banks of the Euphrates. Traces of malaria parasites have been found, too, in mummified remnants of Tutankhamen's blood.

Today, though the disease is preventable and treatable, malaria remains a deadly and destructive force in large swaths of the world, nowhere more so than in Africa, home to 95 percent of cases and deaths. In 2024, malaria is estimated to have sickened 282 million people and killed 610,000, about 75 percent of them under the age of 5.

The disease is spread to humans through the bite of some female Anopheles mosquitoes. The most common symptoms are fever, headache, and chills. If left untreated, the infection can lead to severe illness with fatigue, seizures, and difficulty breathing, and may cause coma or death in as little as 24 hours from the onset of symptoms. Though malaria is not contagious or spread directly from person to person, mosquitoes feeding on an infected person's blood can pick up the parasite and spread it to other people.

In the first two decades of this century, the risk of malaria gradually dropped in affected areas, with the biggest factor by far being the adoption of preventive measures like bed nets treated with insecticides that can last three years or more and spraying interior walls with similarly long-lasting insecticide. Aided by such measures, 47 countries have been certified malaria-free by the World Health Organization, including Egypt, China, and, most recently, the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste in 2025. Antimalarial drugs also saved lives.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, however, case counts have grown again. And global cuts to aid funding could trigger a further devastating reversal of the progress. "A perfect storm of climate change, rising drug and insecticide resistance, trade disruptions, and global insecurity further undermine the efficacy of malaria interventions and threaten to

reverse the hard-won progress that has been made since 2000," warns a 2025 report by the intergovernmental African Leaders Malaria Alliance and the non-profit Malaria No More UK. Last year's round of pledges to the Global Fund partnership, which raises money to fight malaria, AIDS, and tuberculosis, produced less than the previous round, in 2022. The report's authors predict that failing to match the earlier level of funding will result in an even greater increase in the number of malaria cases and deaths.

The WHO's approval starting in 2021 of two breakthrough vaccines for malaria — the first ever against parasites — is giving hope that this dire forecast can be averted and even that the disease could be eradicated. Dozens of other possible vaccines are in the pipeline. Among them is a promising candidate being developed by Stanisc and her team in Australia.

For decades, scientists have puzzled over how to train the body's immune system to fight malaria more effectively. The parasites that cause the disease have existed for millions of years, so we have evolved together, trapped in a relentless war of biological one-upmanship. In some malaria-prone areas, for instance, gene mutations in humans changed the shape and behavior of red blood cells. One example, the sickle-cell trait, can cause red blood cells infected with the malaria parasite to self-destruct along with the invaders.

At the same time, the cunning parasite developed sophisticated ways of dodging our bodies' defenses. Malaria parasites shape-shift during their life cycle, dramatically changing forms and surface features. This is a problem for our immune system's beat cops, or antibodies, which sketch mug shots of pathogens to quickly identify them and call for reinforcements if they're spotted again.

Modern vaccines, including the two malaria shots approved so far, train the immune system often with only part of a single surface protein from that pathogen. It's a safe way for antibodies to draw that wanted poster without risk of an actual infection. But malaria parasites are masters of disguise and can rapidly change themselves to evade the human immune response.



Danielle Stanistic and Michael Good, of Griffith University's Institute for Biomedicine and Glycomics, are developing a potential malaria vaccine candidate with the help of a fundraising partnership with Rotary clubs in Australia.

# G

um trees sway lazily in the hot breeze around Griffith University's Institute for Biomedicine and Glycomics, while tourists crowd the nearby beaches on Australia's Gold Coast. It's here that Stanistic and fellow immunologist Michael Good, the project's principal researcher, are developing their potential vaccine candidate, called PlasProtecT, with the help of a fundraising partnership with Rotary clubs in Australia.

Here, in a busy lab, fridges hum and researchers peer down microscopes as they tap to count parasites. Upstairs in Good's office, the desk is piled with research papers, biology magazines, and conference programs. Behind him is a framed picture of multiple malaria parasites, an image captured by pioneers of the field in the 1800s. An award plaque lies, seemingly forgotten, on the bottom of his bookshelf.

Good has dedicated 40 years to researching malaria parasites. During an early vaccine experiment about a decade ago, his team injected him with *Plasmodium falciparum*, the deadliest species of malaria parasite. Voluntary self-experimentation has been a common practice in medical research historically, if less so currently, and Good felt it was important. "I wanted to be able to say, 'Well, I'm prepared to take it. I'm not going to give you anything that I wouldn't be prepared to take myself,'" Good says.

The parasites were live but weakened in a process known as attenuation, which renders pathogens harmless while keeping them recognizable to the immune system. It's the same process used safely in vaccines for everything from chickenpox to the flu.

The parasites in this early test had not been weakened enough, and Good was soon shivering under a pile of blankets at home in bed. But like Stanistic, he was in close reach of world-class care and quickly recovered.

The episode sent the researchers back to the drawing board to tweak the formulation, while also providing backing for some of their broader approaches. Today, they freeze the parasites to kill — not just weaken — them, bundling the shattered components into a fatty sac with other

compounds to boost the immune response. There is no risk of malaria infection from this test version. "This sucker has been killed by freezing it," Good says. "It'd be like putting a person into a tank of liquid nitrogen and pulling them out and hoping that they're going to walk away. They will not."

When a malaria parasite-infected mosquito bites a person, tiny worm-shaped parasites escape the insect's salivary glands and sneak into the skin. These forms of the parasite, known as sporozoites, burrow down into the bloodstream where they make their way to the liver within minutes or hours.

## For decades, scientists have puzzled over how to train the body's immune system to fight malaria.

There, they grow and divide for about a week, transforming into egg-shaped forms known as merozoites. When these merozoites have fully matured, about 30,000 of them burst out of the liver, ready to invade red blood cells.

The merozoites latch onto a red blood cell, drill a hole, squeeze inside, and seal the door to hide from the immune system. Once inside, the parasite begins gobbling up hemoglobin protein, dividing again and again until around two dozen copies are pressed against each other like people on a packed dance floor.

The cell walls burst, flinging new merozoites into the bloodstream. And the cycle starts again.

This is when hosts start to show symptoms. As merozoites rupture the cell walls, waste products flood the bloodstream, triggering a massive immune response with fever and chills.

Malaria's destruction of red blood cells can lead to anemia, fatigue, aches, low blood oxygen, and even organ damage. It can happen so quickly that by the time children reach the hospital they are in urgent need of a blood transfusion.

If left untreated, people can die from malaria, sometimes within just 24 to 48 hours. The most at risk are children, pregnant women, immune-compromised people, and those who have never been infected before.

The two vaccines with WHO approval currently in use, Mosquirix and R21, have been shown to reduce malaria cases in children by more than 50 percent during the first year after the initial series of three doses. (After a year, a fourth dose is recommended to prolong protection, which wanes over time.) In areas with highly seasonal transmission for a few months of the year, they prevent around 75 percent of cases when given seasonally. They're being offered to children in 25 countries in Africa alongside routine childhood immunizations with the aim of reaching more than 10 million children a year — a target that is so far at risk from limited funding.

Based on modeling, these vaccines could save the lives of an estimated half a million children by 2035 if distribution were scaled up in areas of moderate and high transmission, WHO says.

Meanwhile, more tools and vaccines are on the horizon, including Griffith University's PlasProtecT, which is on the cusp of clinical trials thanks to more than AU\$3.1 million (about US\$2.2 million) raised by Rotary District 9640.

It differs from the other vaccines used in the field, including by targeting the malaria parasite after it has traveled out of the liver and entered the bloodstream. "By only having vaccines that target the liver stage of infection there's a danger that it just takes one parasite to escape from the liver to start the blood stage



The PlasProtect vaccine candidate being developed by Griffith University researchers can be frozen or freeze-dried into a powder without affecting its efficacy, making it easy and cost effective to transport.



of infection,” says Christian Engwerda, a cellular immunologist at the QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute in Brisbane. “In the ideal world, you’d have a vaccine that did all three things: prevented liver infection, prevented blood stage infection, and prevented transmission back to the mosquitoes.”

The PlasProtecT vaccine can also be frozen or freeze-dried into a powder without affecting its efficacy, making it easy and cost effective to transport. And it contains more than 5,000 malaria parasite proteins, offering protection against a wider range of parasite strains and species — an approach known as a whole-parasite vaccine.

Phase 1 clinical human trials for PlasProtecT are set to begin this year. Early tests of the immunization showed promising signs. “Our preclinical models show that this whole-parasite vaccine approach stimulates very good immune responses and against different strains,” says Stanisic.

Her bout with the disease points to another need for multiple tools against malaria, including vaccines. During

her trip to Papua New Guinea all those years ago, Stanisic, like many travelers, preventively took antimalarial medication, which kills malaria parasites in the bloodstream. But in her case, some of the invaders lay dormant in her liver, only emerging months later after any medication was gone — a hazard associated with two of the five malaria parasite species. “That’s why a highly effective vaccine is what we need,” she says, “something that will allow you to develop your own immunity and stop the parasite developing in the blood.”

**T**he philanthropic and government sectors are awash with debate over which public health campaigns and tools to back with limited resources and which hold the most promise. Some governments are reducing commitments across the board. Stanisic is blunt in her assessment that scientists face what they call “valley of death” funding gaps that cause promising technologies to die.

Early on, her team turned to Rotary for support. Stanisic regularly spoke to a group of Australian Rotary members focused on eliminating malaria, and in 2015 she joined a new Rotary satellite club based at Griffith University. After she appealed for funds to buy a piece of lab equipment, Rotary members enthusiastically raised the money in a week. One of them, Sandra Doumany, immediately saw the potential for Rotary clubs to get more involved. “What that showed was the power of Rotary,” says Doumany, a member of the nearby Rotary Club of Hope Island and a past district governor. “The fact that we could respond within the week, to me, that was the power of Rotary.”

In 2017, the Malaria Vaccine Project launched as a formal partnership between the Griffith researchers and Rotary District 9640. The project’s goal is to raise the funds needed to keep research going through the vital Phase 1 and 2 trials, typically the point when government funding ends and industry funding is yet to start.

Doumany chairs a leadership committee for the Malaria Vaccine Project and organizes an annual black-tie fundraiser; the most recent one raised about AU\$86,000 (US\$56,000). Project members also hold golf days, boat shows, barbecues, and meetings to promote the work and find donors.

Another Rotarian helping to lead efforts is Ross Smith, an upbeat retired school principal and member of the Rotary Club of Burleigh Heads. The past district governor travels the world tirelessly drumming up support for the campaign and hardly had time to shake off the jet lag from a recent international trip before attending the latest black-tie dinner. “Malaria is the cause of the most deaths on the planet, ever,” Smith says. Still, he adds, fundraising can be a challenge when malaria predominantly affects poorer regions of the world.

For Smith, it’s far from an abstract illness. His father caught the disease several times as a prisoner of war to the Japanese during World War II in Singapore. More than half a century later, Smith had his own experience with the parasite while spending time at a small school in Tan-

### Support for community action

World Malaria Day on 25 April is a chance for Rotary members to make a measurable impact in communities where the disease is endemic. To support those efforts, the Rotarians Against Malaria-Global Rotary Action Group invited applications for grants of \$2,500 each for projects ranging from distribution of insecticide-treated bed nets and rapid diagnostic test kits to educational programming in schools and social media campaigns.

The action group received 91 applications and awarded 33 grants. “The immense creative energy in these numerous proposals reflects an interest in malaria eradication that is game-changing,” says Dan Perlman, chair of the action group. “These grant opportunities change lives, but they also change us. Rotary grounds us in service, connects us across cultures, and reminds us that progress happens when people show up with purpose and dedication.”

Learn more and get involved at [ram-global.org](http://ram-global.org).





Rotarians  
Ross Smith  
and Sandra  
Doumany have  
led fundraising  
efforts to keep  
the research  
going at  
the Griffith  
University lab.

zania for a Rotary project. One night, an Australian woman working at the school had come down with what turned out to be malaria and needed to get to a hospital. Smith drove her. “She was sweating and bloated. She looked so unwell,” Smith remembers. On the tense drive, 5 miles in the dark over a heavily rutted road, Smith wasn’t sure she would make it. He felt helpless. After several days in the hospital, she pulled through.

Smith had always been inspired by Sir Clem Renouf, the former Rotary International president who helped start the organization’s fight against polio. And Smith’s trip to the Tanzanian hospital energized him to tackle malaria. He thinks Rotary’s progress toward polio eradication can be a good model for fighting malaria — if scientists can find the right vaccines.

Dan Perlman, chair of the Rotarians Against Malaria-Global Rotary Action Group, believes the advances in vaccines, alongside better control measures, make the eradication of malaria a real possibility. The action group supports projects that provide mosquito nets, drain stagnant water, deliver larvicides and indoor residual spray, and train community health workers to diagnose and treat uncomplicated malaria and refer more complicated cases. In countries where malaria vaccines have been introduced, community health workers are educating people about them to support vaccination campaigns.

“Vaccination is clearly the key to eradicating malaria,” says Perlman, a retired infectious disease physician who became one of the first American doctors to vaccinate an infant against malaria when he visited Uganda during its initial rollout of the vaccine last year. He highlights challenges with the first-generation vaccines, such as the need for four doses and their waning protection over time, but believes we are in the middle of a “vaccine revolution” that will see several next-generation vaccines rolled out in coming years. “I imagine that in less than a decade from now we’ll have at least three or four approved vaccines for malaria: We’ll have a travel vaccine, and we’ll have a vaccine for adults,” says Perlman, a member of the Rotary Club of Carbondale, Colorado.

Rotary members recently celebrated WHO’s certification of Timor-Leste as

**“In the next 30 to 40 years there’s a high likelihood that we will eliminate malaria on Earth.”**

malaria-free. They have been supporting the Southeast Asian island country and other countries in the region by distributing insecticidal nets, providing residual spraying machines and diagnostic tools, and running community education campaigns.

“In the next 30 to 40 years there’s a high likelihood that we will eliminate malaria on Earth,” says Perlman. “It really will depend on what resources, funding, and support are put into this.”

**D**espite progress, the road ahead is uncertain. Funding shortfalls remain a persistent challenge. WHO had estimated that \$9.3 billion per year would be needed by 2025 to control malaria globally and meet elimination targets. But only \$3.9 billion was spent in 2024. That makes it far more difficult to meet the global target, set in 2015, of reducing malaria cases and deaths by at least 90 percent by 2030.

“Insufficient funding has led to major gaps in coverage of insecticide-treated nets, medicines, and other lifesaving tools, particularly for those most vul-

nerable to the disease,” WHO says. We are already seeing a rise in drug and insecticide resistance, as well as strains of malaria that aren’t detected by standard diagnostic tests.

Mosquitoes are behaving differently too. Climate change is creating new hot and wet locations for mosquitoes to spread, including the Asian mosquito species *Anopheles stephensi* that is invading Africa and thrives in urban areas. Several species of mosquito are biting outdoors and during the day, when fewer people are under the protection of a bed net. “The overall situation is really concerning,” says Eliane Pellaux-Furrer, a technical officer for malaria vaccines at WHO. “We also know that malaria is a disease that bounces back very rapidly,” she says.

Disruptions in control measures during the COVID-19 pandemic led to a resurgence in malaria, providing some clue as to what’s in store with funding cuts. While there has been a “huge demand” and uptake of the current malaria vaccines, Pellaux-Furrer says, “unfortunately, they’re not able to go at the scale that they would like to with implementation because of funding constraints.”

New and better malaria vaccines will be easier to introduce now that the breakthrough Mosquirix and R21 vaccines have developed the infrastructure and vaccine schedules, she says.

Phase 1 trials for PlasProtect will cost around AU\$10 million, with around AU\$30 million sought for Phase 2 trials to test its efficacy in children in endemic areas. The Griffith researchers hope that data will be in by 2028 and the vaccine can be rolled out and monitored in several malaria endemic sites in the years that follow. But science is unpredictable. “You have to be headstrong,” says Stanisic. Turning to Good, she asks: “How many times have we thought we’d worked out what we have to do and then another hurdle presents itself?”

Whatever comes along, the work that they and other researchers are doing will lead to other yet unknown advancements. And Stanisic and her colleagues remain determined and dedicated. As long as the threat lingers, they have to be, she says. “Kids dying of malaria is what keeps me going.” ■



In 2017, Stanisc and her team formally partnered with Rotary District 9640 to launch the Malaria Vaccine Project with the help of Doumany and Smith, whose father caught the disease several times as a prisoner of war during World War II in Singapore.



# To scale up, go local

Rotary and partners deploy health workers to confront malaria and more

**W**hen the Partners for a Malaria-Free Zambia program began five years ago, Rotarian Bill Feldt offered a forecast of what success would look like in 2026:

“I would hope we’d see a dramatic reduction in malaria incidence,” he told *Rotary* magazine in 2021. “We’d want to see a self-sustaining health system that is fully utilizing community health workers, where they are diagnosing 60 to 70 percent of whatever small number of cases of malaria there are. ... We’ll see that turnover for community health workers is low ... They will represent the last kilometer of a health system that’s very successful.”

Rotary members launched the initiative in 2021 to reach more than 1.2 million people with malaria prevention information, testing, and treatment. The effort was supported by The Rotary Foundation’s first \$2 million Programs of Scale grant, which was matched by the Gates Foundation and World Vision to create a \$6 million project.

Implemented from 2021 to 2024, the program trained community health workers to test and treat malaria closer to people’s homes so they wouldn’t have to travel to clinics. Easier access means more frequent detection and early treatment, and therefore fewer severe cases and deaths.

The initiative grew out of a smaller partnership between Rotary members in Zambia and Feldt’s home state of Washington to distribute bed nets, and it continues to scale across Africa through an expanded initiative, the Rotary Healthy Communities Challenge.

A 2025 annual report details the successes, lessons learned, and what’s next — and finds that Feldt’s forecast was not off the mark.



## Community health workers

Most community health workers learned to provide services beyond malaria, including care for pneumonia and diarrhea. This freed up health facilities to deal with more urgent cases.

**2,500**  
Community health workers trained

**1.25 million**  
People with improved access to malaria testing and treatment

**94%**  
Retention rate for community health workers

## Malaria testing

One lesson learned is that the effort to eliminate malaria isn’t a straight line; better testing and more reliable data uncovered more cases.

**747,000**  
Malaria tests conducted by the program in 2024

**60%**  
Cases of malaria detected in the 10 target districts by community health workers — cases that would have been missed or else found at a more severe stage

## Severe cases

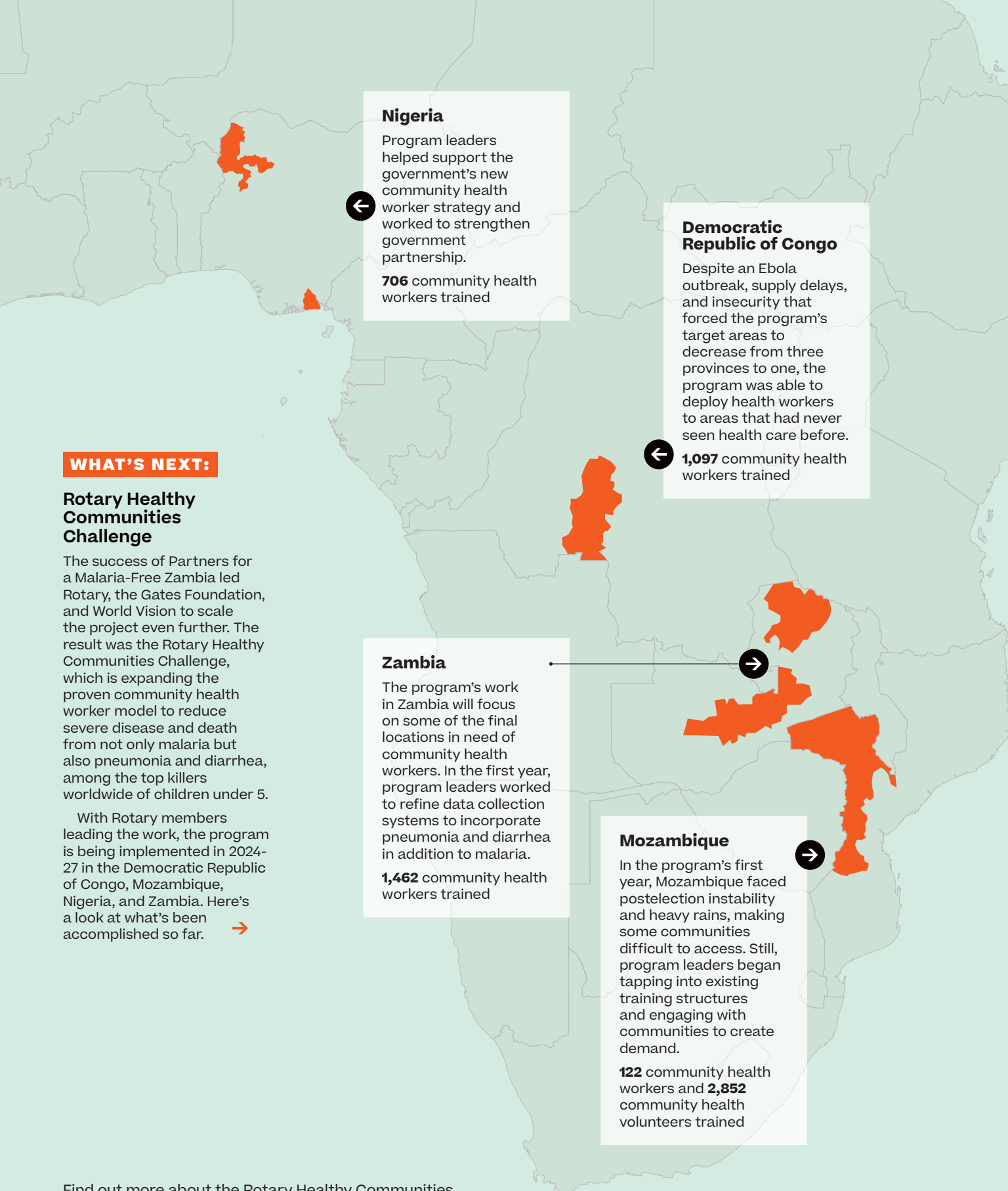
While community health workers can treat most malaria cases in the field, under national protocols they must refer children under 2 months old, pregnant women, and people with severe symptoms to health facilities.

**1%**  
Malaria cases detected by community health workers that they referred to health facilities

**6,498**  
People admitted to health facilities for severe malaria in the target districts

**75** Deaths from malaria in those districts in 2024, marking a drop in most districts

← Ruth, a community health worker with Partners for a Malaria-Free Zambia, demonstrates how she tests patients for the disease.



### Nigeria

Program leaders helped support the government's new community health worker strategy and worked to strengthen government partnership.

**706** community health workers trained

### Democratic Republic of Congo

Despite an Ebola outbreak, supply delays, and insecurity that forced the program's target areas to decrease from three provinces to one, the program was able to deploy health workers to areas that had never seen health care before.

**1,097** community health workers trained

### WHAT'S NEXT:

### Rotary Healthy Communities Challenge

The success of Partners for a Malaria-Free Zambia led Rotary, the Gates Foundation, and World Vision to scale the project even further. The result was the Rotary Healthy Communities Challenge, which is expanding the proven community health worker model to reduce severe disease and death from not only malaria but also pneumonia and diarrhea, among the top killers worldwide of children under 5.

With Rotary members leading the work, the program is being implemented in 2024-27 in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mozambique, Nigeria, and Zambia. Here's a look at what's been accomplished so far. →

### Zambia

The program's work in Zambia will focus on some of the final locations in need of community health workers. In the first year, program leaders worked to refine data collection systems to incorporate pneumonia and diarrhea in addition to malaria.

**1,462** community health workers trained

### Mozambique

In the program's first year, Mozambique faced postelection instability and heavy rains, making some communities difficult to access. Still, program leaders began tapping into existing training structures and engaging with communities to create demand.

**122** community health workers and **2,852** community health volunteers trained

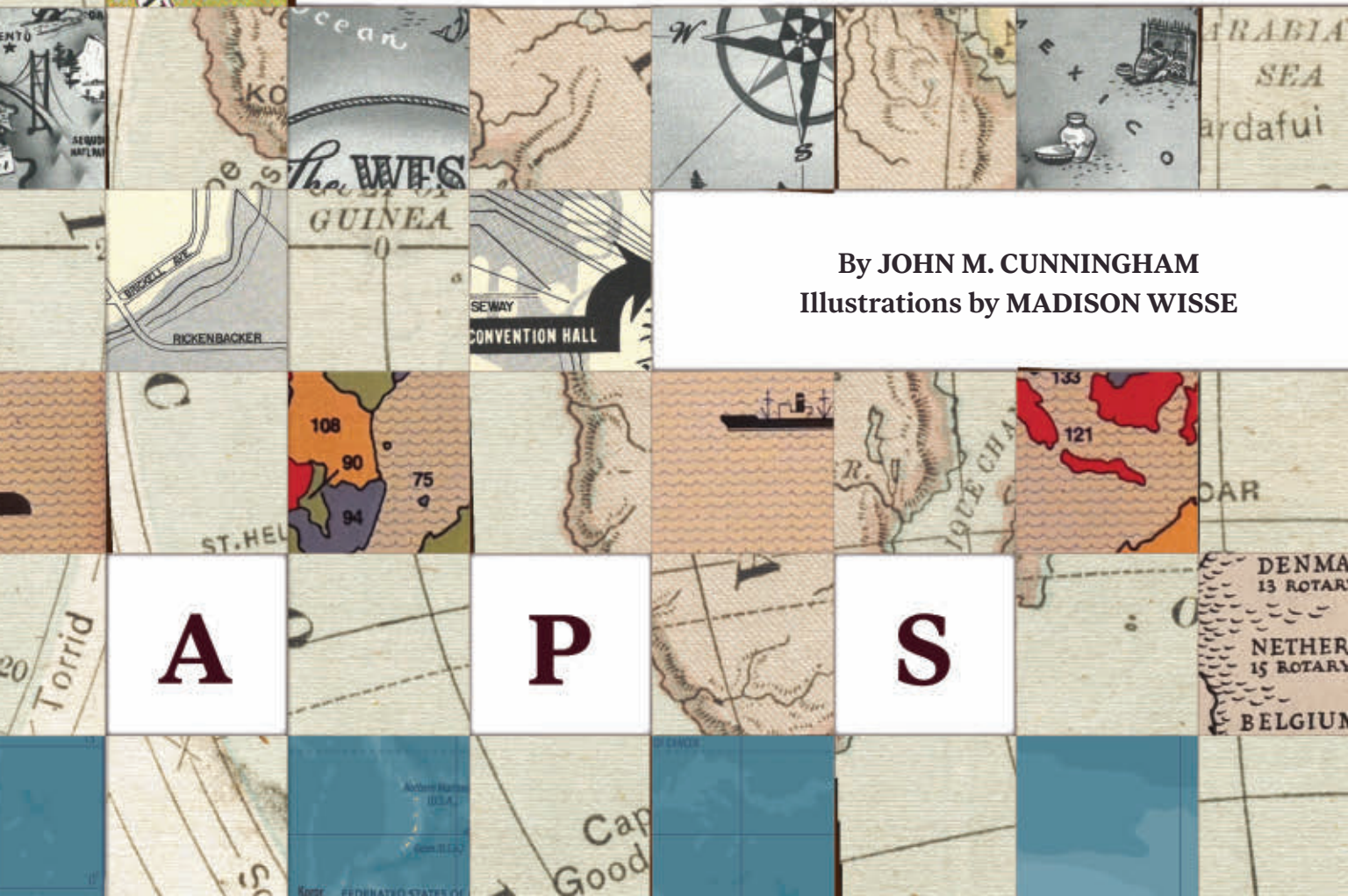
Find out more about the Rotary Healthy Communities Challenge and view its theory of change at [my.rotary.org/rotary-healthy-communities-challenge](https://my.rotary.org/rotary-healthy-communities-challenge).

\*all figures as of February 2026





As Rotary spread across the globe, maps helped members make sense of the organization's international scope. In that spirit, we've created a few new maps that illustrate Rotary's history, membership, and impact.



By JOHN M. CUNNINGHAM  
Illustrations by MADISON WISSE



# The world of Rotary



## → Convention host

Thirteen countries have hosted multiple Rotary Conventions, with the U.S. hosting the most (64).



## → RI president home

After the U.S., the countries that have produced the most RI presidents are Canada (6) and Australia (5).



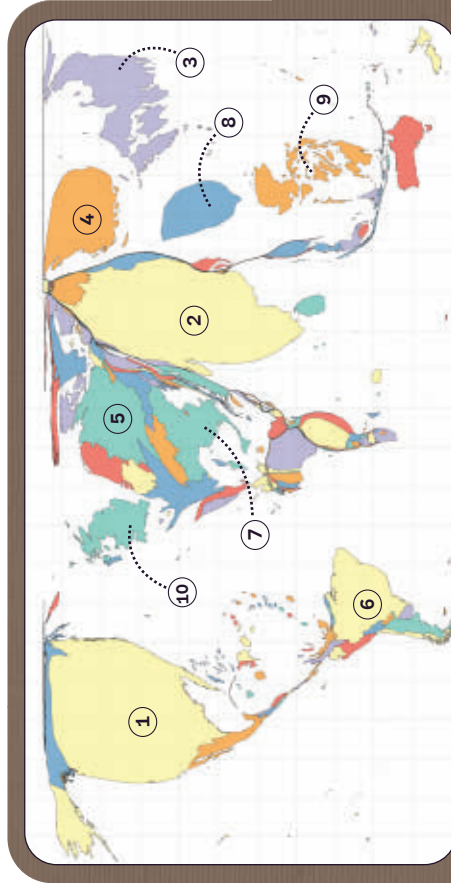
## → Rotary Peace Center

The newest of Rotary's eight peace centers opens next year at India's Symbiosis University.



## → RI office

In addition to its headquarters in Evanston, Illinois, Rotary has six international offices.



- This map shows what the world would look like if the size of each country was proportional to the number of Rotary members it has. Each grid square represents about 20,000 members.
1. United States, 266,675
  2. India, 226,562
  3. Japan, 86,334
  4. Korea, 69,015
  5. Germany, 61,696
  6. Brazil, 57,163
  7. Italy, 46,267
  8. Taiwan, 39,057
  9. Philippines, 35,597
  10. United Kingdom, 31,011

## Country or geographical area (number of Rotary clubs, Rotaract clubs)

Club/member data on this and following pages is as of 28 January.

- Afghanistan (3, 0)
- Åland Islands (2, 0)
- Albania (22, 4)
- Algeria (3, 4)
- American Samoa (1, 1)
- Andorra (1, 0)
- Angola (3, 0)
- Anguilla (1, 0)
- Antigua and Barbuda (2, 1)
- Argentina (549, 117)
- Armenia (9, 2)
- Aruba (1, 1)
- Australia (930, 40)
- Austria (171, 37)
- Azerbaijan (2, 0)
- Bahamas (15, 9)
- Bahrain (3, 2)
- Bangladesh (357, 286)
- Barbados (3, 4)
- Belarus (2, 1)
- Belgium (271, 39)
- Belize (11, 7)
- Benin (32, 29)
- Bermuda (3, 1)
- Bhutan (1, 0)
- Bolivia (72, 37)
- Bonaire (1, 0)
- Bosnia and Herzegovina (13, 6)
- Botswana (4, 1)
- Brazil (2,300, 556)
- Guernsey (3, 0)
- British Virgin Islands (4, 2)
- Brunei (2, 0)
- Bulgaria (85, 30)
- Burkina Faso (12, 7)
- Burundi (12, 7)
- Cabo Verde (4, 1)
- Cambodia (10, 3)
- Cameroon (17, 3)
- Canada (664, 80)
- Cayman Islands (5, 1)
- Chad (3, 3)
- Chile (220, 14)
- China (24, 1)
- Colombia (135, 58)
- Comoros (1, 2)
- Democratic Republic of Congo (26, 18)
- Republic of Congo (8, 3)
- Cook Islands (2, 1)
- Costa Rica (15, 7)
- Côte d'Ivoire (47, 27)
- Croatia (74, 21)
- Curaçao (2, 1)
- Cyprus (19, 7)
- Czech Republic (46, 7)
- Denmark (222, 8)
- Djibouti (1, 0)
- Dominica (2, 1)
- Dominican Republic (68, 26)
- Ecuador (72, 42)
- Egypt (137, 74)
- El Salvador (13, 9)
- England (1163, 25)
- Equatorial Guinea (2, 1)
- Eritrea (1, 0)
- Estonia (23, 1)
- Eswatini (6, 3)
- Ethiopia (18, 27)
- Faroe Islands (2, 0)
- Fiji (9, 2)
- Finland (206, 8)
- France (1,090, 100)
- French Guiana (5, 1)
- French Polynesia (4, 1)
- Gabon (11, 8)
- Gambia (5, 3)
- Georgia (3, 0)
- Germany (1,160, 188)
- Ghana (69, 62)
- Gibraltar (1, 0)
- Greece (80, 8)
- Greenland (1, 0)
- Grenada (2, 2)
- Guadeloupe (8, 1)
- Guam (5, 1)
- Guatemala (30, 19)
- Guernsey (3, 0)
- Guinea (6, 6)
- Guinea-Bissau (1, 1)
- Guyana (7, 6)
- Haiti (24, 18)
- Honduras (32, 21)
- Hong Kong (89, 50)
- Hungary (57, 11)
- Iceland (31, 1)
- India (4,750, 2,278)
- Indonesia (107, 33)
- Iraq (1, 0)
- Ireland (49, 1)
- Isle of Man (3, 0)
- Israel (57, 6)
- Italy (979, 447)
- Jamaica (27, 14)
- Japan (2,176, 292)
- Jersey (2, 0)
- Jordan (11, 2)
- Kazakhstan (3, 1)
- Kenya (123, 101)
- Korea (1,592, 210)
- Kosovo (24, 6)
- Kyrgyzstan (1, 0)
- Laos (2, 0)
- Latvia (21, 2)
- Lebanon (37, 26)
- Lesotho (3, 8)
- Liberia (6, 5)
- Liechtenstein (2, 1)
- Lithuania (65, 9)
- Luxembourg (16, 1)
- Macao (8, 4)
- Madagascar (18, 11)
- Malawi (9, 4)
- Malaysia (142, 43)
- Maldives (1, 0)
- Mali (19, 20)
- Martinique (8, 1)
- Mauritania (3, 0)
- Mauritius (35, 23)
- Mayotte (2, 1)
- Mexico (611, 238)
- Micronesia (2, 0)
- Moldova (8, 2)
- Monaco (1, 1)
- Mongolia (22, 13)
- Montenegro (8, 2)
- Montserrat (1, 1)
- Morocco (62, 95)
- Mozambique (9, 7)
- Myanmar (11, 10)
- Namibia (8, 1)
- Nauru (1, 0)
- Nepal (160, 183)
- Netherlands (459, 31)
- New Caledonia (3, 0)
- New Zealand (192, 6)
- Nicaragua (10, 6)
- Niger (8, 8)
- Nigeria (581, 409)
- Norfolk Island (1, 0)
- North Macedonia (29, 11)
- Northern Ireland (26, 0)
- Northern Mariana Islands (1, 1)
- Norway (255, 1)
- Pakistan (166, 121)
- Palau (1, 0)
- Palestine (West Bank) (2, 2)
- Panama (18, 15)
- Papua New Guinea (7, 1)
- Paraguay (25, 19)
- Peru (181, 80)
- Philippines (977, 599)
- Poland (79, 10)
- Portugal (162, 43)
- Puerto Rico (28, 5)
- Réunion (28, 2)
- Romania (146, 62)
- Russia (65, 16)
- Rwanda (13, 9)
- St. Barthélemy (1, 0)
- St. Kitts and Nevis (2, 2)
- St. Lucia (3, 3)
- St. Maarten (4, 0)
- St. Martin (1, 0)
- St. Pierre and Miquelon (1, 0)
- St. Vincent and the Grenadines (2, 1)
- Samoa (1, 1)
- San Marino (1, 1)
- Sao Tome and Principe (2, 0)
- Scotland (171, 1)
- Senegal (11, 7)
- Serbia (60, 22)
- Seychelles (2, 1)
- Sierra Leone (5, 4)
- Singapore (23, 13)
- Slovakia (26, 6)
- Slovenia (54, 17)
- Solomon Islands (1, 1)
- South Africa (171, 28)
- South Sudan (3, 0)
- Spain (249, 34)
- Sri Lanka (74, 86)
- Sudan (1, 0)
- Suriname (4, 4)
- Sweden (339, 6)
- Switzerland (221, 14)
- Taiwan (1,023, 156)
- Tanzania (48, 23)
- Thailand (339, 49)
- Timor-Leste (3, 7)
- Togo (19, 11)
- Tonga (1, 0)
- Trinidad and Tobago (23, 17)
- Tunisia (35, 28)
- Turkey (255, 123)
- Turks and Caicos Islands (2, 2)
- Uganda (230, 223)
- Ukraine (85, 28)
- United Arab Emirates (12, 6)
- United States (6,985, 494)
- U.S. Virgin Islands (11, 0)
- Uruguay (102, 24)
- Vanuatu (2, 0)
- Venezuela (32, 57)
- Vietnam (5, 3)
- Wales (82, 2)
- Zambia (35, 14)
- Zimbabwe (25, 22)



## Not your grandfather's Rotary

### Where most Rotarians are women

Women as percentage of all Rotarians:

- Nauru, 100.0%
- Lesotho, 70.1%
- Gibraltar, 67.6%
- Turks and Caicos Islands, 64.7%
- Cook Islands, 60.6%
- Mongolia, 60.1%
- Kazakhstan, 60.0%
- Zimbabwe, 59.3%
- Palau, 58.3%
- Samoa, 57.9%
- Tonga, 57.1%
- Liberia, 56.8%
- Dominica, 56.7%
- St. Martin, 56.5%
- Kyrgyzstan, 56.3%
- Indonesia, 54.9%
- Kenya, 54.7%
- Norfolk Island, 54.5%
- Botswana, 54.4%
- St. Maarten, 54.3%
- Egypt, 53.6%
- U.S. Virgin Islands, 53.4%
- Antigua and Barbuda, 52.9%
- Belize, 52.9%
- Bahamas, 52.4%
- St. Lucia, 51.8%
- Georgia, 51.7%
- Vietnam, 51.0%
- Nicaragua, 50.9%
- Bolivia, 50.6%

### Where most Rotary members are Rotaractors

Rotaractors as percentage of all members:

- Timor-Leste, 85.2%
- Lesotho, 70.2%
- Vietnam, 65.5%
- Sri Lanka, 64.5%
- Comoros, 61.1%
- Morocco, 56.1%
- Ethiopia, 54.7%
- Solomon Islands, 52.0%
- Chad, 51.8%
- Samoa, 51.3%

### Northernmost club

Rotary Club of Longyearbyen, Norway

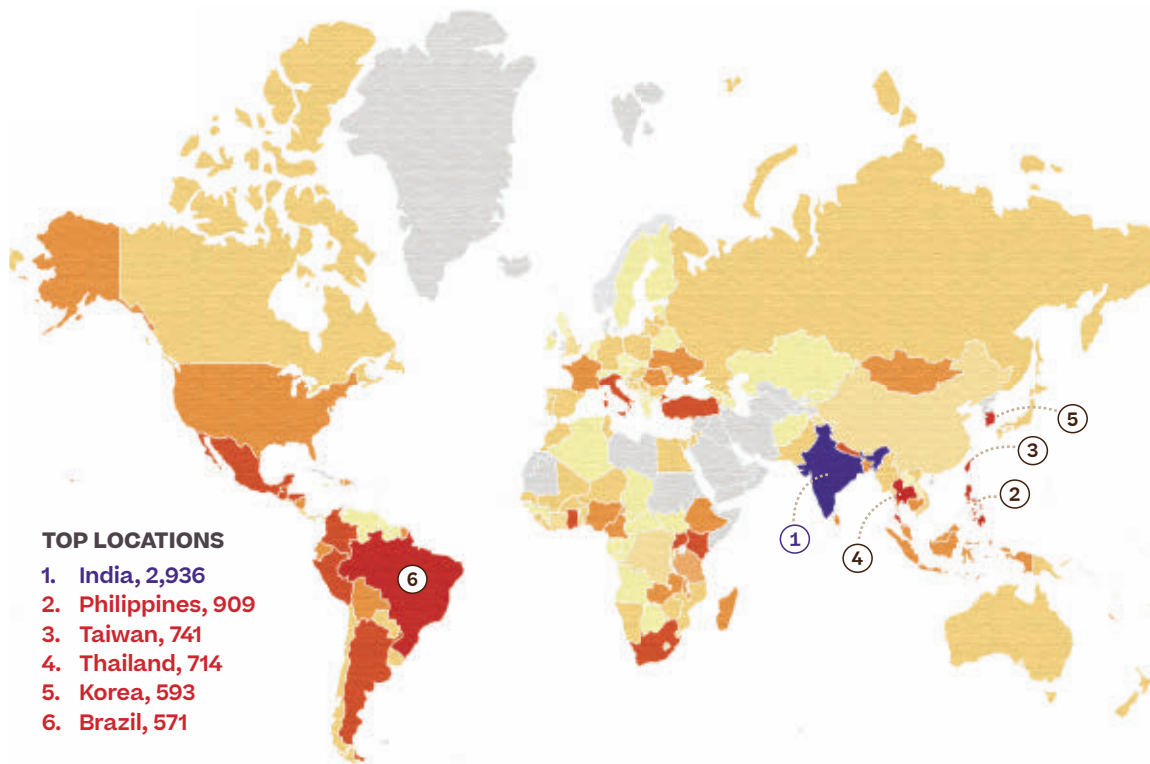
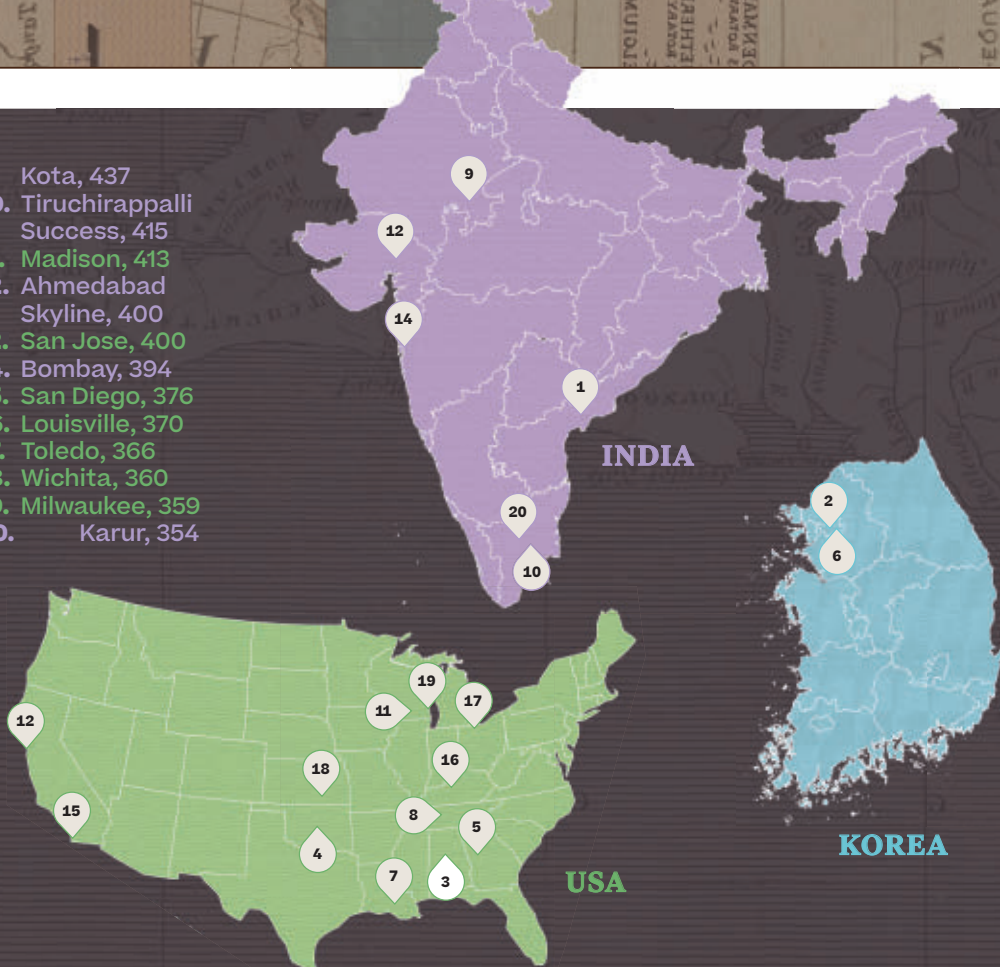


Rotary Club of Puerto Williams, Chile

### Southernmost club

1. Vijayawada Midtown, 737 members
2. Seoul Gangseo, 611
3. Birmingham, 573
4. Oklahoma City, 567
5. Atlanta, 515
6. Seoul-Hansoo, 505
7. Baton Rouge, 480
8. Nashville, 476
9. Kota, 437
10. Tiruchirappalli Success, 415
11. Madison, 413
12. Ahmedabad Skyline, 400
12. San Jose, 400
14. Bombay, 394
15. San Diego, 376
16. Louisville, 370
17. Toledo, 366
18. Wichita, 360
19. Milwaukee, 359
20. Karur, 354

## Largest Rotary clubs in the world



## Global grant project locations

Number of Rotary Foundation global grants that funded humanitarian projects and/or vocational training teams in each country or area (2013-25)

### TOP LOCATIONS

1. India, 2,936
2. Philippines, 909
3. Taiwan, 741
4. Thailand, 714
5. Korea, 593
6. Brazil, 571





*The*

“Let’s sing!” shouted Harry Ruggles, and Rotary – and the rest of us – haven’t let up since

*Music Never Ends*

By **Geoffrey Johnson**  
 Illustration by **Xinyue Chen**



Harry Ruggles

*CANTARE SU SEDIA*

Late May 1955 and some 20,000 visitors have descended on Chicago. They’ve come for Rotary’s annual convention — it’s the organization’s golden anniversary! — and in the days that follow they will bounce back and forth between the Hotel Sherman in the Loop and the Chicago Stadium on the Near West Side. Vice President Richard Nixon will address the convention, as will the Windy City’s new mayor, Richard J. Daley.

But for the moment, here at the Sherman on the eve of the convention, a reporter for the *Chicago Tribune* is focused on talking with an 83-year-old gentleman wearing glasses and a gun club check tweed jacket: Harry L. Ruggles, the man who originated what had become a venerable Rotary tradition. As Ruggles explains, “I jumped on a chair one night when the boys were kind of restless and said, ‘Let’s sing!’ It broke up the monotony. They’ve been singing ever since.”

Ruggles recalls for the *Trib* some of the songs those early Rotarians used to sing: “Take Me Out to the Ballgame,” “I Want a Girl,” “Let Me Call You Sweetheart.” “And then,” he continues, “we

sang ‘My Hero’ from [the operetta] *The Chocolate Soldier*. My gosh, we used to whoop it up on that one.”

Two days later, at the conclusion of the convention’s opening session, Rotary President Herbert J. Taylor invites “our own beloved Harry Ruggles” to lead the conventioners in song. A Chicago printer who retired to California in 1947, Ruggles begins by telling the crowd gathered inside the Stadium the same story he’d told the *Trib*, how he had jumped on a chair and encouraged the boys to sing.

“That started it, and it went pretty well,” he says. “I had this little songbook printed with the compliments of Harry Ruggles and Company, printers. Other Rotary clubs would send to me for a few books, and they got them. So, that is the way community singing began in Rotary.”

And with that, the Stadium — the fabled Madhouse on Madison — reverberates with an unaccustomed sound as thousands of voices join Ruggles in singing a beloved Rotary standard:

*Keep the love light glowing  
 In your eyes so true  
 Let me call you sweetheart  
 I’m in love with you.*

## PIÙ E PIÙ VOLTE

During the pandemic, with both our children quarantining at home, I lived in a house made of music. Downstairs, Paul, a recent college grad, unraveled Debussy on the piano, while Maggie, a music and voice undergrad, was singing Lana Del Rey songs to a sizable online audience from her bedroom.

But the chief architect of our house of music was my wife. Maryanne is a music teacher at an elementary school on Chicago's North Side, instructing children in pre-K, kindergarten, and first grade; she also teaches kids at the Old Town School of Folk Music, a 69-year-old Chicago institution that has its roots in the kind of communal music making that would have prompted Harry Ruggles to burst into song.

When the pandemic arrived, all those in-person music encounters came to a halt. Maryanne's responsibilities as a teacher did not. Like so much of our daily life during that plagued time, her duties moved online. Given the limitations of interacting with her pupils on a miniscule laptop screen, what Maryanne accomplished was astounding. Despite the real and virtual distances separating them, teacher and students continued to connect through music.

Over time, from my perspective, those daily miracles became maddening. "Kids love songs they know," said Maryanne. And, she added, "They learn through repetition." Which means that, seated at my desk, I would hear the same songs over and over as Maryanne segued from one online class to the next. Bees would buzz, frogs would hop, and the wheels on the bus would go round and round, ad infinitum.

One song in particular got to me, the one that instructs us to "Keep on the Sunny Side."

*It will help us every day,  
It will brighten all the way,  
If we keep on the sunny side of life.*

Maryanne concluded many of her classes with that song. Now, there are a limited number of times a person can look on the sunny side, even when encouraged by a pretty woman with a six-string guitar. After several weeks passed, I came to abhor that song, even writing — and singing privately in non-Rugglian fashion — new lyrics to replace its final stanza.

*Sing that song one more time  
It will be a capital crime  
So sing it at the peril of your life.*

## ROTARIO CON BRIO

The first time I met Mark Maloney he broke into song. Unleashing his booming baritone, RI's then-president-elect and future trustee chair belted out a Rotary anthem that would have pendulated Harry Ruggles' uvula.

*From north to south, from east to west,  
He profits most who serves the best.  
R-O-T-A-R-Y, that spells Rotary.*

Maloney comes from what he calls a "singing club," the Rotary Club of Decatur, Alabama. "Each week," he says, "the song leader selects a song based upon the speaker of the day, and at the first meeting of the month we sing 'Happy Birthday' for all the birthdays that month."

Yet even Maloney, who credits his mother with inspiring his love of music, acknowledges that singing is a vanishing vestige of Rotary's past. Gone are the days when a communal song opened each general session of a Rotary Convention, and there's no longer singing, and a pianist, at the International Assembly.

That movement away from what Maloney calls "the rituals of Rotary" and the debate about where singing belongs in Rotary are nothing new. As Harry Ruggles tells the story, even Paul Harris "had his doubts about singing in Rotary clubs. But he was soon converted" and went on to say "some pretty nice things about it" in his *This Rotarian Age*.

In the June 1957 issue of *The Rotarian* (as this magazine was then known), a "symposium" considered the question "To Sing or Not?" Members from 13 countries expressed a variety of opinions. Some called singing "juvenile" and "not in keeping with the dignity" of a worldwide body of business professionals. Others emphasized the "variety and zest," the sense of "togetherness" that singing added to meetings. A New Zealander even cited the example of the *Titanic*, where "hundreds of men and women calmly faced death — while singing — as the ship went down."

"I sometimes regret that we do not sing in Rotary here," said a man from

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, "for I personally like it, and believe singing would prove an effective way of promoting fellowship." That longing was in keeping with the sentiment expressed in *Songs for the Rotary Club*, a successor to the compilation introduced by Harry Ruggles. "Sing for the joy of singing!" instructed the songbook. "Club singing is definitely one place on the program where, week in and week out, all can take part." Just as at Chicago's Old Town School, there are few better ways — especially, as Maloney says, when it's the "right group" of people — to create a sense of community and enjoyment than lifting voices together in song.

Case in point: I recently met Rod McGillivray, a Wisconsin Rotarian who recalled his days as a member of the Rotary Club of Columbus-Sunrise in Indiana. "Owen Hungerford [a club charter member and a past governor of District 6580] was a singer, and we sang at every meeting. He brought out all the old Rotary songbooks, and everyone sang all the old Rotary songs. That could sometimes be tough to do on a Friday morning, but it got us going." Just as Harry Ruggles hoped it would.

As *The Rotarian* noted, Harry Ruggles suffered a fatal heart attack in October 1959 while traveling to a joint meeting of the Rotary clubs of Cathedral City and Palm Springs, California. "It is not at all improbable," reflected the magazine, "that he died with a Rotary song in his heart."

## TONI BENEDETTI

Somehow we all made it through the pandemic. Paul returned to school, where he's pursuing a PhD in mathematics; his first peer-reviewed publication — "A Cohomology Theory of Supercommutative Algebras and Grading-Restricted Vertex Superalgebras" — is not exactly songbook material. But as he has done since he was 4 years old, Paul amazes me every time he sits down and plays the piano.

Maggie graduated from college and launched her singing career, performing and recording her own songs under the name Mara Luna. In one heartbreaking ballad, "Let Me Down Easy," she laments:

*Now you're walking out like you always do.  
I'm stuck playing "High and Dry" and  
"A Case of You."*

In those lyrics she channels a couple of musicians — Radiohead and Joni Mitchell — that she likely first heard while sitting alongside the same person who used to play *Baby Bach* and *Baby Mozart* videos for her and for Paul: their mother.

As for me, a funny thing happened as we attempted to ease out of the pandemic. When the academic year began in fall 2020, Maryanne’s grade school tried returning to live, albeit masked, classroom learning. It didn’t work out, and soon Maryanne was back home connecting — and building community through song — with the kids, even if it had to be done through that damnable laptop screen.

That’s when, seated at my desk upstairs at the back of the house, I heard a familiar song drift up the stairs.

*Keep on the sunny side, always on the sunny side  
Keep on the sunny side of life.  
It will help us every day, it will brighten all the way,  
If we’ll keep on the sunny side of life.*

I had to smile. Turns out I missed hearing it.  
I should have known I was destined to live in a house made of music almost from the day I met the woman who became my wife. On one of our first dates, Maryanne and I went to hear some jazz at Chicago’s legendary Green Mill. Afterward, she asked me up to her place to — no kidding — listen to Tony Bennett records. Thirty-five years later, one in particular stands out: *The Art of Excellence*, with Tony on the album jacket wearing a gray sweater emblazoned with a big blue B while New York’s Twin Towers rise bright and white against the azure sky behind him.

And the song that presaged my melodious abode? It’s called “How Do You Keep the Music Playing?” and it concludes with Tony’s resonant voice ascending to a triumphant, reiterative crescendo:

*If we can be the best of lovers  
Yet be the best of friends  
If we can try with every day to make it better as it grows  
With any luck then I suppose  
The music, the music, the music  
Never, never, never ends.*

It’s no “Let Me Call You Sweetheart,” but it will do. ■



**From top:** It’s my party and I’ll sing if I want to: Harry Ruggles celebrates his 80th birthday; a 1957 “symposium” in *The Rotarian* weighed the pros and cons of club singing; as pictured in *The Rotarian*, Ruggles sings from his preferred perch: a chair.



# OUR CLUBS

**VIRTUAL VISIT**

## Follow the music

Rotary Club of Carrollton  
(New Orleans)

**Like a trumpet** in a second line parade through New Orleans, the Rotary Club of Carrollton sure is loud for its size, and, man, can it draw a crowd. Every year, well before Mardi Gras, club members' phones begin to ring off the hook, and that's because Carrollton provides something no other club offers.

That would be tickets to Jazz Fest. *Free.*

Not some standing perch by the fairgrounds fence either. When you volunteer to help the Carrollton club run a pair of beverage tents at Jazz Fest you're practically on top of the action. Of the dozens of food and drink booths, Carrollton runs two that sell beer, soft drinks, and water right next to the main stage. If you're thinking that's nice for jazz aficionados, you misunderstand Jazz Fest, which is actually the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, held every year in late April and early May at the Fair Grounds

Race Course. Over the years, the decades, it has hosted a who's who of music superstars ranging from Stevie Wonder and Aretha Franklin to Elton John and Bruce Springsteen. Two years ago, the Rolling Stones performed.

"I heard from friends I didn't know I had!" says Ariana Ganak, the Carrollton club's executive secretary.

It's a win-win arrangement. Volunteers at the booths turn over their tips to the club, which last year picked up \$45,000 to give to charity, making it the club's primary fundraiser. The volunteers make off pretty well, too.

"You get your own private bathroom," says longtime Carrollton member Dave Capo. "You get all the soft drinks and beer you want for nothing. There's free parking. That's about a \$250 package."

Back in 1983, a club member heard the festival was looking to expand its beer booths and got the club an application with the idea that serving — beverages at the beer booth and good works in the world of Rotary — might combine to everyone's advantage.

"Five guys put it all together," remembers Capo, whose dad was a member then. "We had no idea what we were doing. It was truly the Wild West."

Back then the club earned the sale price of a single beer per case of 24, not that much revenue. It wasn't until 1996 that the festival board and owners of the Fair Grounds agreed to let volunteers pocket tips.

"And that changed everything," says Capo. "I was one of the people who counted the money and carried it across the fairgrounds in a backpack. There

### FOR THE LOVE OF MUSIC AND COMMUNITY

The Rotary Club of Carrollton (New Orleans) raised \$45,000 at last year's Jazz Fest. The funds support the club's undergraduate scholarships for social work students, Rotary Youth Exchange, and close to a dozen local organizations including:

#### Ellis Marsalis Center for Music

Using music as a catalyst for social change, the center offers a broad range of services and arts education for children, adults, and professional musicians, and serves as a hub for community and cultural preservation.

#### Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra

The orchestra supports young people through its LPO Academy music mentorship program at schools and through Soul Strings, a music therapy program for students and adults with developmental disabilities.

#### Junior Achievement of Greater New Orleans

Junior Achievement serves school-age children and young adults with programming in work readiness, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy.

#### New Orleans Family Justice Center

The center provides a range of free services to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, human trafficking, and child abuse.



Through its connection to Jazz Fest, the Rotary Club of Carrollton (New Orleans) raises money to support local organizations. From left: Kevin Brown, Ariana Ganak, Kevin Phillips, Harold Buchler, and Howard Wilson.

were no police. It wasn't until I got to the grandstand office that I felt safe."

The Carrollton club has half as many members as it did 30 years ago, but they are fervent about the ties to Jazz Fest and its value as a fundraiser and more. Much of the money goes to groups like the Ellis Marsalis Center for Music, which offers education and runs community programs, but donations aren't limited to the world of performance.

Children's charities rank high, and thanks to Kevin Brown, a Carrollton member who runs the social work master's program at the Southern University at New Orleans, the historically Black university gets help with two scholarship programs.

Why Brown joined the club speaks volumes. He was looking to rehab a dilapidated house that had been occupied by drug users and was directed to the

Carrollton club for possible funding. "Next thing you know they asked me to join and I've been a Rotarian ever since," he says. "What resonated with me was the community work and Service Above Self. Service is a core value of social work."

Having the Rotary name visible near Jazz Fest's main stage at one of the city's biggest events after Mardi Gras — attendance was 460,000 last year — provides valuable exposure. Booth volunteers learn about Rotary and what it does, and some join. "Most if not all of our new members come from people who volunteer at the booth," says Ganak. "I was a volunteer for several years before I joined."

And booth staff members seize the opportunity to educate thirsty music fans about Rotary and the causes that their tips support. A tip on top of a beer that already costs more than \$8 is a big ask, Ganak notes, and yet nearly all customers oblige. "Festivalgoers are stepping up to support Rotary efforts," she says.

Even with the perks, recruiting enough volunteers can be a challenge, admits Ganak. There are 450 four-hour slots to fill, and everyone wants to work the morning and wander the rest of the day. After the devastation of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, it looked like the Carrollton booth would be canceled — there was talk of canceling Jazz Fest altogether. But both were up and running that year: "We wanted to show we were coming back," says Capo. It helped, too, that other Rotary clubs pitched in to help Carrollton, as they've done for decades with Jazz Fest. A larger club, Metairie, partners every year with Carrollton and the ties don't stop at the fairgrounds.

"Whenever we have a function, we invite Carrollton. They come to our Christmas party," says Metairie member Harold Buchler. "New members are really looking forward to this year's Jazz Fest. We're just waiting for Ariana to send the lists."

When she does send the sign-ups, expect the entire Rotary community to spring into action. Who'd miss an up-close brush with Stevie Nicks, David Byrne, the Isley Brothers, and Lorde — and that's just the first weekend.

— JONATHAN BLACK

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

## Road warrior

After helping to get Motor City running with Launch Detroit, Larry Wright is hitting the highway to assist veterans



So you want to hang with Larry Wright? OK, here's what you do. First, get your motor running. Second, head out on the highway. Finally, embrace the smoke, the lightning, the heavy metal thunder. If the ultimate destination is a Rotary Convention, so much the better.

That's because this 2016 People of Action honoree has put a new spin on that particular Rotary honorific. These days, Larry Wright is a biker, and if not exactly born to be wild (as the decades-old Steppenwolf song would have it), he's found a way to make his passion for the open road into yet another way to help others achieve their full potential.

"A few years ago, our HOG chapter happened to do a fundraiser ride," explains Wright, referencing Motown HOG — as in Harley Owners Group — the Detroit-area motorcycle club with which he rides. The \$10,000 raised by the club went to Wounded America, which benefits Michigan veterans and first responders. "We did the ride a couple of years, and then pretty soon [the ride's organizers] said, 'Well, why don't you run it?'"

Which, in collaboration with others, they did. In addition to the Motown Harley-Davidson dealership and the local HOG chapter, the ride's sponsors include the Rotary Club of Taylor (Wright's club), as well as the Rotary clubs of Dearborn Heights, Grosse Ile, Romulus, Southgate, Trenton, and Woodhaven and Brownstown. "There's definitely a strong Rotary connection with the ride," says Wright, "but we reach out to the community, the corporate community, and even challenge a couple of the mayors of the different cities to help us."

This year's event, scheduled for 18 July, will be the 10th annual Wounded America Charity Motorcycle Ride. The ride regularly attracts well over 100 bikes and annually raises between \$25,000 and \$30,000. "The money we raise we split between two very good veterans charities," says Wright, whose two older brothers are Vietnam vets.

According to its website, Downriver for Veterans, the first of those



Celebrating 10 years of People of Action Honors

charities, provides vets with “emergency funds to assist with items such as rent, utilities, car repairs, and other essential life expenses”; it also offers “food, household goods, and other life-essentials in times of need.” According to Wright, that can also include “helping vets through government snarls to get the proper care.”

As a biker, Wright understandably has a special fondness for the second charity, Foundation 14. “They are so unique,” Wright raves. “They’re a group of bikers, and what they do is find a disabled veteran who would like to get back on a motorcycle. Unannounced to the vet, they customize the bike as needed and then give them the motorcycle for free.” With money from last year’s ride, Foundation 14 plans to present a customized “trike” — a three-wheeled motorcycle — to a vet who lost a leg.

But that’s not the end of it, Wright explains. “They also say, ‘We want you to ride with us,’ because that’s part of the therapy for PTSD. We call it ‘wind therapy,’” which he defines as the exhilaration of being out on the open road.

These days, Wright heads out on a 2019 CVO Ultra Limited Harley-Davidson. “Harleys are the most popular bike on U.S. roads,” he says. “That generally means you have a friend — or rescuer — on nearly every mile of road you travel. They are your kindred spirits.”

Personally, Wright has a fond-

ness for cross-country biking. His first big trip came in 2008, and as a member of Rotary since 1983, the destination was a no-brainer: the Rotary International Convention in Los Angeles. “Two guys were supposed to go with me,” Wright recalls, “but one got in an accident and the other kind of changed his mind. So I rode Route 66 alone to LA and back.” He has since ridden to several other Rotary Conventions, and in May 2014 he was one of the 500,000-plus bikers participating in the Rolling Thunder motorcycle rally, an annual event that was held at the Pentagon and in Washington, D.C., between 1988 and 2019 to call attention to issues related to POWs and MIAs.

Though he occasionally travels with his wife, Sarah, Wright generally makes those long rides solo. Not that Sarah is entirely out of the picture. “We’re in contact by cellphone,” Wright admits. “Once she knows where I’m going to land [at the end of a day’s ride], she will book a room for me. She texts me the location, and GPS takes me right to the hotel.” Easy rider, indeed.

When he’s not road-tripping and helping vets, Wright maintains his ties with Launch Detroit, the organization he helped establish — which led to him being one of six people honored with the Rotary Responsible Business Award during Rotary Day at the United Nations in November 2016. Founded three years earlier, Launch Detroit helps fledgling

entrepreneurs — especially women and small business owners — in under-resourced communities in and around the Motor City, providing them with microloans and opportunities for training, education, networking, and mentoring.

A former governor of District 6400, whose clubs sponsor the ongoing enterprise, Wright has stepped back from running Launch Detroit, handing off leadership duties to Margaret Williamson, a member and past president of the Rotary Club of Detroit. But he maintains ties with Launch Detroit grads, including Willie Brake and Allen Love, members of the organization’s inaugural cohort. Brake’s company, All About Technology, has morphed into a thriving computer recycling business, and with a boost from Launch Taylor — one of several offshoots of Launch Detroit — Love’s custard pie business, based at a local market, hopes to go mobile this spring. Until then, his food trailer, the venue for this new enterprise, sits parked in Wright’s backyard.

Wright is proud of one other achievement: After a challenging regimen of classes and training, he’s been certified as a “road captain,” the person in a biking club who’s responsible for ensuring the safety and well-being of riders on a group ride. The position, he says, demands that “you be aware at all times” — a skill that road warrior Larry Wright seems to have acquired long ago.

— GEOFFREY JOHNSON

PHOTOGRAPHS: ALYCE HENSON



### Larry Wright

- Governor, District 6400, 1995-96
- Launch Detroit, established 2013
- Rotary Responsible Business Award, 2016

**From left:** In 2014, working with members of Launch Detroit’s first cohort, Larry Wright mentors aspiring tech entrepreneur Willie Brake and helps Irma Fuentes paint the facade of her hardware store.

DISPATCHES FROM  
OUR SISTER MAGAZINES  
ROTARY BRASIL

# Sweet honey

Protecting Brazil's native stingless bees is good for the environment and for business



↑ From left: The Rotary Club of Salto helped create a honey garden at a school; the 60 students of the Pró-Mel project participate in training coordinated by the Federal University of São Paulo.

**Honey has innumerable health and environmental benefits, from antimicrobial, antioxidant, and anti-inflammatory properties to unparalleled flavor. As two enterprising Rotary clubs in Brazil have recognized, honey is also a highly marketable product with economic benefits for communities.**

With more than 300 species, Brazil is home to the world's greatest diversity of native stingless bees. Also known as meliponine bees, they have reduced stingers and were the primary honey producers throughout the Americas before the introduction of western honeybees from Europe. Brazil is recognized for the quality and purity of its honey and is one of the largest global producers and exporters of organic honey.

With the support of a Rotary Foundation global grant, the Rotary Club of São Bernardo do Campo in

the state of São Paulo created an initiative called Pró-Mel, which trains residents in meliponiculture, the practice of farming stingless bees for honey and wax, and to support pollination. The pilot project was initiated with residents of the Santa Cruz neighborhood and supports Rotary's community economic development area of focus. The other project partners are the Federal University of São Paulo, the Imigrantes Ecological Park, and the Rotary Club of Pasadena, California.

After participants complete the course, honey production provides them with a source of income. The honey of the *Melipona* stingless bee has a considerable added value compared to other species such as the *Apis mellifera* bee (western honeybee), due to the honey's higher therapeutic properties, rare composition, and limited production volume.

In 2024, the course trained 60

students in how to benefit financially from meliponiculture and how to share their knowledge. Students received a certificate from the Federal University for completing the extension course.

Native bees are essential for environmental balance, and the course is also meant to be a tool to raise awareness about the importance of preserving the local biome and bee populations.

The scope of the initiative addresses at least 10 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations, including the eradication of poverty, quality education, decent employment and economic growth, reduction of inequalities, sustainable cities and communities, and combating climate change.

Another Rotary-led initiative to protect stingless bees and promote their many benefits is taking place in the community of Salto outside

of São Paulo. Last May, residents of Salto inaugurated the city's first honey garden in a joint initiative between the Rotary Club of Salto and the city hall. The garden, located in the Municipal Center for Specialized Educational Service, hosted the inaugural event that celebrated the importance of the stingless bees, especially the jataí variety, which is vital for the preservation of the environment.

The event included educational workshops, honey tastings, flower planting in the garden beds, and an exhibition of bee species. All activities shared the aim of promoting knowledge about bees and respect for the insects and their role in the preservation of biodiversity. The garden has a shelter box that hosts a hive of jataí bees and includes a sign with information about the variety.

The Salto event also marked the beginning of the Honey Gardens Project in local schools, with many young students from the municipal school system in attendance. The initiative intends to replicate the project with additional gardens.

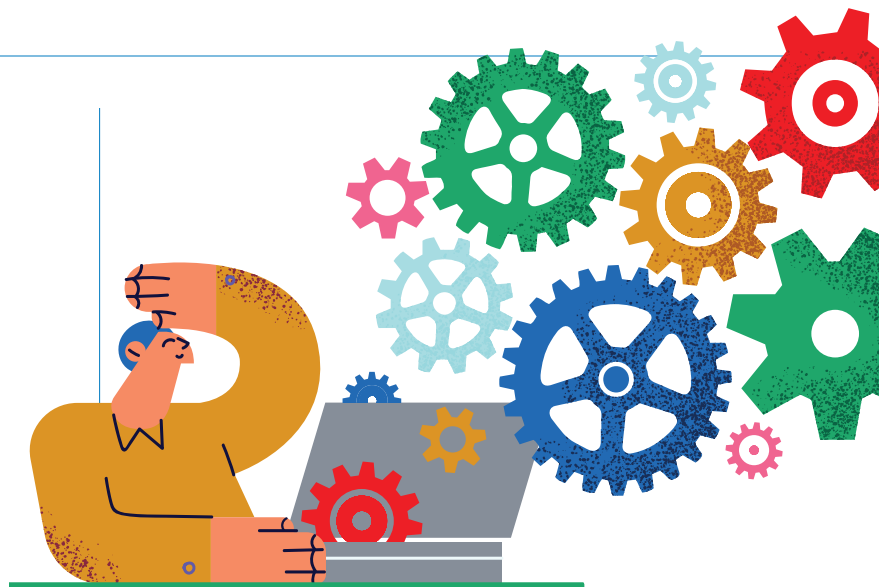
The effort demonstrates how clubs can combine Rotary's areas of focus, such as protecting the environment and growing local economies, in order to foster educational and training initiatives that inspire new generations to grow up engaged in environmental preservation.

—MANOEL MAGALHÃES

The International Bee Rotary Fellowship has members in more than 20 countries and supports the Operation Pollination initiative. For more information, visit [rotary.org/fellowships](http://rotary.org/fellowships).



Students of the Pró-Mel course in São Bernardo do Campo learn beekeeping techniques.



## Digital makeovers for regional magazines

**How do you engage** Rotary members spread across more than 15 countries in the Southwest Pacific, with a multitude of languages, cultures, and media habits? *Rotary Down Under* recently set out to better understand its readers and connect them to the larger Rotary world while also asking big questions like, “What does a magazine look like in our ever-evolving digital landscape?”

The result, launched in July 2025, was RDU.ONE, a single communications hub for the region. The approach shifts the 60-year-old publication from the idea of serving separate print and digital audiences to the concept of one subscription for all members delivered across whichever platforms they choose: print, digital, social, or all of the above.

The magazine introduced a new website rebuilt from the ground up to make it smartphone, tablet, and desktop friendly, with embedded video interviews and behind-the-scenes footage, audio clips and podcast segments, as well as animated infographics, image carousels, and interactive galleries. In print, it shifted from monthly to bimonthly editions, while increasing its size from 60 pages to 84 pages.

Other publications across the 35-member Rotary Global Media Network are introducing digital makeovers of their own. Over the past year, the magazine for Germany and Austria has developed a new content strategy assigning specific roles to its different channels, with the print magazine serving as the countries' premium flagship medium and the website presenting a curated showcase. Podcasts go deep into the details of select stories, the digital newsletter serves as a personalized guide, and social media platforms connect, engage, and inform. Since February, the magazine has been supported by a content creator and artificial intelligence engineer tasked with taking its digital channels to a new level.

In South America's largest country, *Rotary Brasil* is strengthening its social media output with content exclusive to those channels. Last year, it saw 4.6 million views and 358,000 engagements, growing its audience to nearly 48,000 followers. That's on top of its 49,000 print and 1,700 digital subscribers. Over the same period, it drew 31,000 readers to its digital e-reader platform, generating 200,000 views of the magazine's digital edition. ■

HANDBOOK

# Bird by bird

Origami as meditation and activism

By Marcelo Goberto de Azevedo

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the world slowed down. But inside my home, something unexpected began to take shape — one fold at a time.

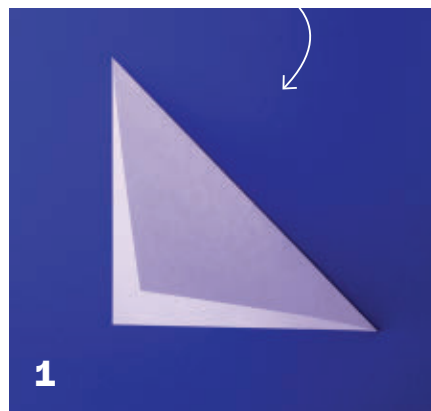
During the long months of lockdown, I found myself looking for a way to stay connected with people, with purpose, and with hope. That's when the idea of folding 1,000 origami cranes came to me.

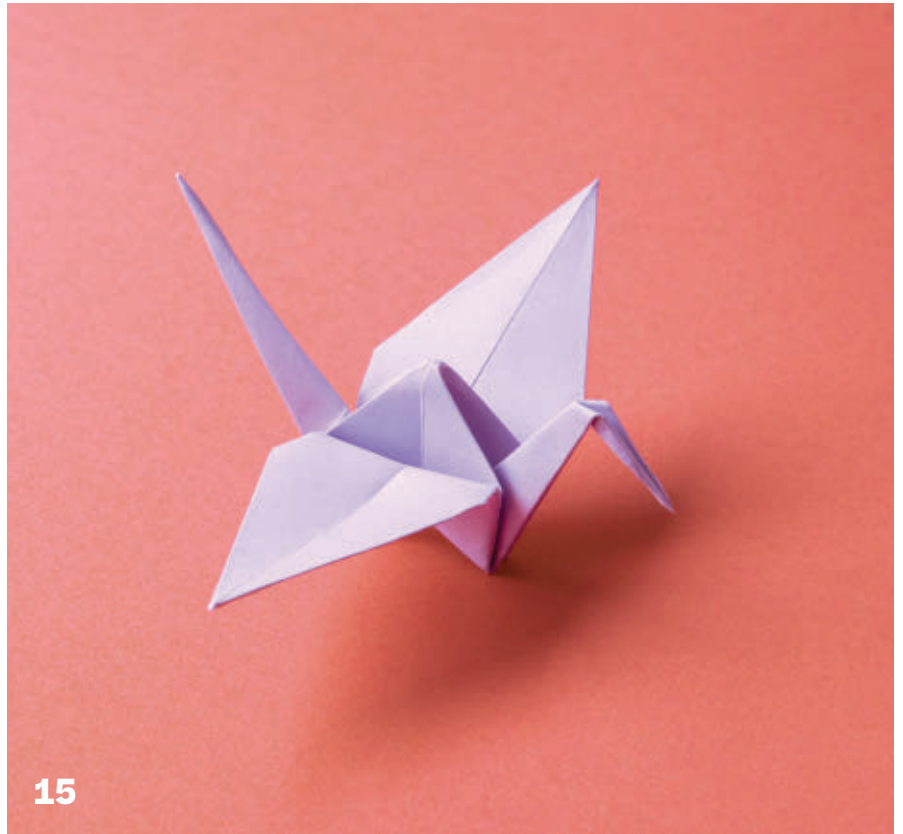
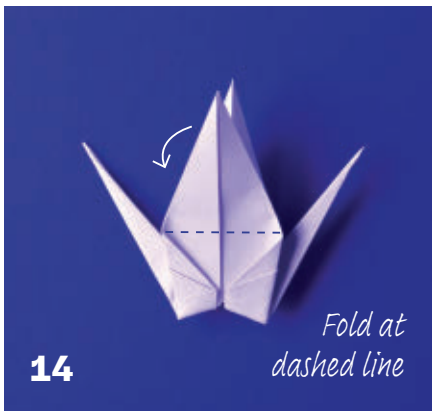
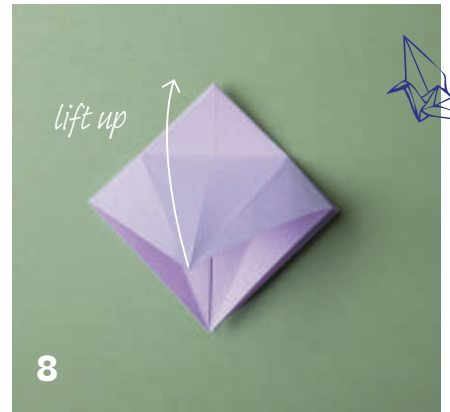
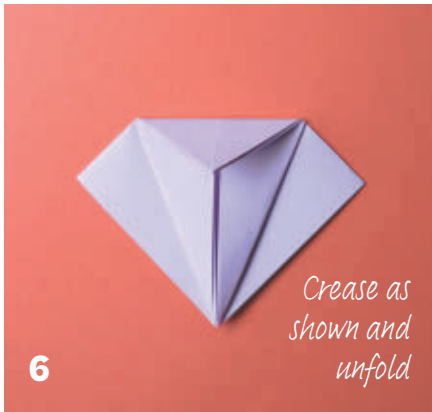
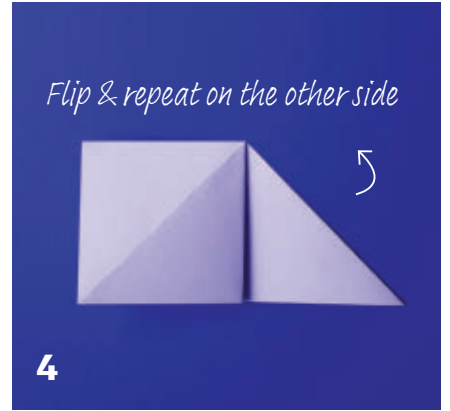
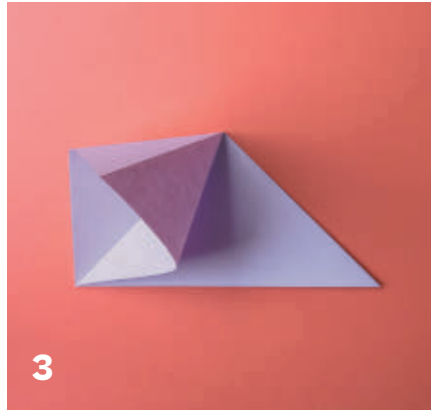
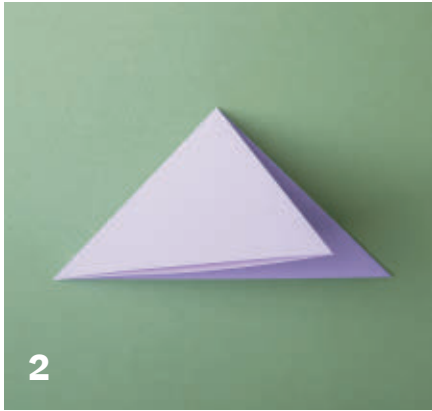
In Japanese tradition, a *senbazuru* — the folding of 1,000 paper cranes — is believed to grant a heart-felt wish. My wish? For healing, for peace, and for the world to recover from the pandemic. So, I picked up a square of paper and started folding.

I folded one crane each day and photographed it. No fancy equipment. No studio lighting. Just paper, purpose, and a quiet moment of reflection.

Each crane became a symbol not just of my hope but of Rotary's values: peace, health, service, and resilience. After nearly three years, I completed all 1,000 cranes. As the days turned into weeks, and the weeks into years, the project became a form of meditation and activism. A way to say: *We are still here, we still care, and we still serve.*

*Marcelo Goberto de Azevedo is a member of the Rotary Club of Marília-Leste, Brazil. The book 1000 Tsuru for Peace includes photographs of each of his 1,000 cranes. Profits from sales of the book, available online, go to The Rotary Foundation, specifically to support the End Polio Now campaign.*







TRUSTEE CHAIR'S MESSAGE

## Your impact partners

**Rotary's environment** area of focus offers clubs and districts the chance to make a truly lasting impact in their communities.

One possibility is through the Community Action for Fresh Water partnership between Rotary and the United Nations Environment Programme, which launched the initiative in 2024 to protect, restore, and better manage freshwater resources worldwide.

Through the program, Rotary and Rotaract clubs identify a local body of water — a river, a lake, wetlands, or groundwater — and commit to its long-term protection and restoration. Members can draw on UNEP's technical expertise.

**Salvador Rico**, a member of the Rotary Club of South Ukiah, California, and a technical adviser to the partnership, tells us more:

*The partnership is deeply personal to me. My passion for clean rivers comes from a painful family experience during my childhood in Mexico: We believe my older sister died of polio she contracted from swimming in a polluted river there. Unsafe water is not an abstract environmental issue; it is a matter of life, health, and dignity for families and communities.*

*This experience drives my work as a member of The Rotary Foundation Cadre of Technical Advisers, where I ensure Rotary members have access to proven technical knowledge so their global grant-*

*supported projects deliver lasting impact through permanent, scalable solutions.*

*Today, Community Action for Fresh Water supports Rotary clubs globally by providing a shared platform to upload projects, learn from other clubs, and access technical and financial support through global grants and club-to-club collaboration.*

*The impact became tangible in 2024, when the environmental chair of District 4170 in Mexico shared a critical challenge: Small, family-owned textile factories were polluting the upper Lerma River watershed. Rotarians lacked clear solutions. Through the freshwater partnership, I connected them with UNEP experts who provided guidance on bioremediation strategies. That collaboration led to a global grant application and, we hope, cleaner water for this community.*

*The partnership among Rotary clubs, family-owned textile companies, and government authorities ensures shared responsibility and long-term stewardship.*

*Every Rotary club can amplify this impact by registering freshwater projects at [communityactionforfreshwater.org](https://communityactionforfreshwater.org).*

Look around your community — I bet you'll find a body of water in need of protection. The Rotary Foundation can support your project through Community Action for Fresh Water and a global grant.

**HOLGER KNAACK**

Foundation trustee chair

## SERVICE ABOVE SELF

### THE OBJECT OF ROTARY

The Object of Rotary is to encourage and foster the ideal of service as a basis of worthy enterprise and, in particular, to encourage and foster:

- First** The development of acquaintance as an opportunity for service;
- Second** High ethical standards in business and professions, the recognition of the worthiness of all useful occupations, and the dignifying of each Rotarian's occupation as an opportunity to serve society;
- Third** The application of the ideal of service in each Rotarian's personal, business, and community life;
- Fourth** The advancement of international understanding, goodwill, and peace through a world fellowship of business and professional persons united in the ideal of service.

### THE FOUR-WAY TEST

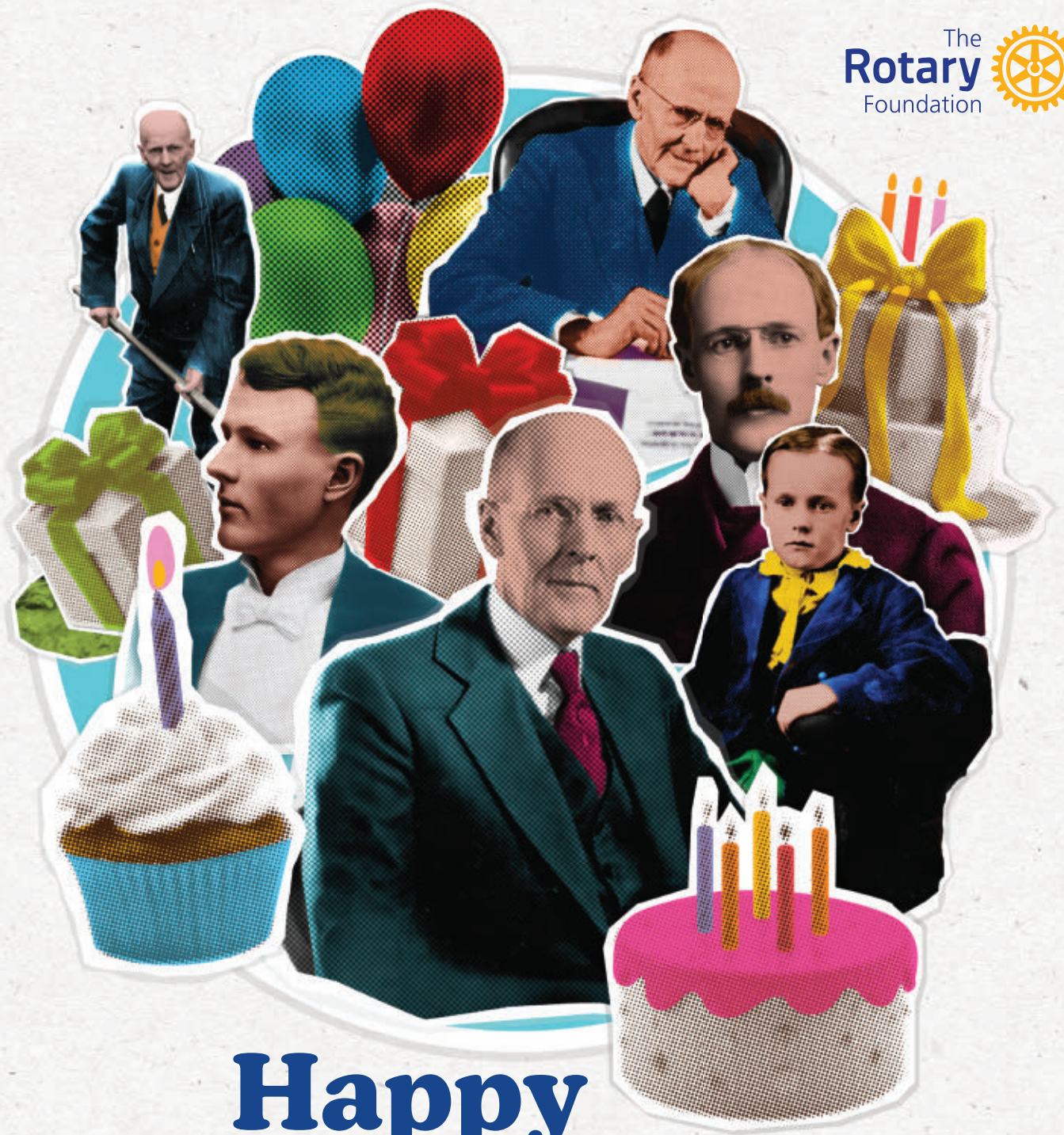
Of the things we think, say or do:

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?

### MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT

All members (Rotarians and Rotaractors) are expected to:

1. Act with integrity and high ethical standards in their personal and professional lives
2. Treat others fairly by using respectful language, being supportive, fostering a welcoming environment, and honoring all individual member characteristics
3. Use their professional skills through Rotary to improve people's quality of life in their own communities and elsewhere in the world
4. Avoid behavior that reflects adversely on Rotary or other Rotary members
5. Follow all codes of conduct for any Rotary-related event.



# Happy Birthday Paul Harris!

19 April marks the 158th anniversary of our founder's birth.  
Commemorate his legacy with a gift to The Rotary Foundation today.

**GIVE TODAY:** [rotary.org/donate](https://rotary.org/donate)

# BETTER TOGETHER

Cookies and milk. Rotary and a donor advised fund. Some things are just better together. Let Rotary do the work while you get the perfect pairing of year-end tax benefits and support for the causes closest to your heart.

Get a taste of the new Rotary donor advised fund online portal for an even sweeter experience. Explore it today at [rotary.org/daf](https://rotary.org/daf).

Contact us at [planned.giving@rotary.org](mailto:planned.giving@rotary.org)



## CALENDAR

# April events

### TAKE IT EASY

**Event:** 0.5K Fun Un-Run: A Race from the Recliner to the Couch

**Host:** Rotary Club of Marble Falls, Texas

**What it benefits:** Local and international projects

**Date:** 11 April

Organizers of this “gloriously lazy” race call it “the most epic 1,640 feet you’ll ever ‘run,’” stressing that running is “absolutely not allowed!” People of all ages are welcome to participate, with adults choosing among three levels of commitment: Sofa Sprinter (complete the full course); VIP, or Very Idle Participant (skip to the finish line), and Pajama Jogger (take part virtually). Those who gather in person will enjoy refreshments and live music.

### A COLORFUL TAPESTRY

**Event:** Multicultural Festival

**Host:** Rotary Club of Greater Chino Hills, California

**What it benefits:** Local and international projects

**Date:** 11 April

The club’s signature annual fundraiser, this festival celebrates the richness of the cultures in the Chino Hills area, including those originating from Bulgaria, China, India, Korea, Mexico, and the Philippines. The free event includes music and dance performances, martial arts demonstrations, displays of traditional and modern dress, and samples of international cuisines.

### FIX UP YOUR DIGS

**Event:** Chaffee Home & Outdoor Living Expo

**Host:** Rotary Club of Salida Sunrise, Colorado

**What it benefits:** Local projects, nonprofits, and scholarships

**Dates:** 11-12 April

Held at the Chaffee County Fairgrounds,



### THE WHEEL DEAL

**Event:** Easter Car Show

**Host:** Rotary Club of Hurricane Valley, Utah

**What it benefits:** Local projects and nonprofits

**Date:** 4 April

This car show has been an Easter weekend tradition in southwestern Utah since the 1980s. Each year more than 10,000 people flock to downtown Hurricane, a small city near Zion National Park, on Saturday to admire some 300 antique and modern vehicles and shop from dozens of local vendors. Most of the proceeds support the club’s signature cause, youth mental health.

this business expo has been a popular spring event in the Rocky Mountain county for more than a decade. More than 60 local and out-of-state companies will showcase home-related products and services, including window treatments, lighting, fireplaces, patio furniture, greenhouses, and landscaping. Attendees can connect with industry experts and get inspired to take on home repair and improvement projects.

### STEP BACK IN TIME

**Event:** Roaring Twenties Charity Event

**Host:** Rotary clubs of Ankeny and Ankeny Evening, Iowa

**What it benefits:** Local nonprofits

**Date:** 18 April

With a combined 100-plus members, Ankeny’s two Rotary clubs team up annually to host a community fundraising gala. This year, the event has a roaring twenties theme, with guests encouraged to dress in their spiffiest 1920s-style

duds. The night begins with socializing over drinks, followed by a catered dinner. There will also be live and silent auctions. Since the gala was first held, in 2011, more than 50 local organizations have benefited from the proceeds.

### ADVANTAGE ROTARY

**Event:** Tennis 4 Cancer

**Host:** Rotary Club of Orange Park Sunrise, Florida

**What it benefits:** American Cancer Society and local nonprofits

**Dates:** 24-26 April

The club partners with Eagle Harbor Tennis in nearby Fleming Island to put on this doubles tennis tournament, in which players compete across several skill divisions. The registration fee includes meals and a Friday night party on the court. Over the past 13 years, the event has raised more than \$500,000, most of which supported people with cancer and their caregivers.

**Tell us about your event.** Write to [magazine@rotary.org](mailto:magazine@rotary.org) and put “calendar” in the subject line. Submissions must be received at least five months before the event to be considered for inclusion.

2026 CONVENTION

# A few of my favorite things

All attendees have a favorite Rotary International Convention experience — or two or three. A sampling of what members are looking forward to most in Taipei:



- In-depth learning about Rotary, including directly from the RI president and RI general secretary
- The flag ceremony that represents Rotary nations and territories. Goosebumps!
- The House of Friendship — Rotary Fellowship booths and peace exhibits are two faves
- The chance to make friends, pursue your passion, and explore an exciting city
- Top-notch entertainment and inspiration — renowned speakers and a stage spectacular
- That feeling of what's possible with Rotary's global reach

For Pauline Leung, a member of the Rotary Club of Taipei Pei-An, one thing RI makes possible is the chance for international service. “Through Rotary, our helping hands can grow very long, and the world feels like a smaller village because Rotary unites us as one,” she says. Leung, a host committee member, hopes you come to Taiwan when the village of Rotary unites 13-17 June. ■

Learn more and register at [convention.rotary.org](http://convention.rotary.org).

CROSSWORD

## Fourth period

By Victor Fleming  
Rotary Club of Little Rock, Arkansas

ACROSS

- 1 Pirate word for a bud
- 6 Physique, slangily
- 9 Elephant of kids' literature
- 14 Classic poem
- 15 Commando weapon
- 16 Words before you or Lucy
- 17 Month that ushers in 30-Across
- 18 “No \_\_\_” (menu phrase)
- 19 Legal obligation associated in the U.S. with 17-Across
- 20 One who is napping
- 22 1960s NASA program
- 23 Buscaglia or Durocher
- 24 Embarrassing mistake
- 27 Big burden
- 28 House actor Omar
- 30 See 17-Across
- 32 “\_\_\_ a life!”
- 33 Old French title
- 35 Also called
- 37 With 64-Across, 17-Across in Rotary
- 42 \_\_\_ previews
- 43 Absolute
- 45 Unimpressed reaction

DOWN

- 1 Part of MMR
- 2 All-American dessert
- 3 Ripped into
- 4 Falco or Sedgwick
- 5 Animal cry
- 6 Mistaken accusation
- 7 Fractions of lbs.
- 8 Use a shovel
- 9 “\_\_\_ your tongue!”
- 10 Texas historical site

- 11 Olympic sport since 1904
- 12 Broad way
- 13 Don't go quietly
- 21 “For example” abbrs.
- 22 *Arabian Nights* character
- 25 “To be honest ...”
- 26 Camera contents
- 29 Explorer and Navigator
- 31 Classic shirt brand
- 34 “Give me a \_\_\_!”
- 36 Aircraft acronym
- 38 Brings in at harvesttime
- 39 Rows
- 40 Huntress of myth
- 41 One who's bemoaning
- 44 Restrained, as a pet
- 45 Fish out of water
- 46 The bull, in Mexico
- 47 “The Soul selects \_\_\_ Society” (Emily Dickinson)
- 49 1954 Patti Page hit
- 50 Amigo of Fidel
- 53 Former baseball big-shot Bud
- 57 Figs. with two hyphens
- 59 Iowa city
- 60 “Fancy that!”
- 62 Sault \_\_\_ Marie
- 63 Kesey or Follett

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Solution on [opposite page](#)

PHOTOGRAPHS: H-HWA CHENG, ALYCE HENSON, MONIKA LOZINSKA, SHANE REMPEL, CHRISTOPHE VISEUX





## Mildly sweet, extra strength

Florida's saw palmetto honey will “put iron in your boots”

**A short and shrubby plant** with fan-shaped leaves, the saw palmetto thrives in Florida's forest understories and coastal dunes, and beautifies home gardens across the state and throughout the Southeastern U.S. When she moved to Babcock Ranch in 2020, Laurie Widmark discovered another “bee-licious” benefit of the native palm: saw palmetto honey. “The taste is not very sweet,” she says. “It’s mild, earthy, and I think, smoky flavored.” The distinctive honey flies off store shelves, she says, “often with people buying six to 10 jars at a time.”

Those folks have honeybees to thank. The bees gather nectar from the plant's thousands of creamy white flowers, which bloom in spring from 3-foot stalks. The plants don't bloom consistently year to year, adding to the honey's relative rarity.

**THE NAME:** The saw palmetto's fronds are long and stiff, and the plant's petioles, or leaf stems, possess spikes akin to sawteeth. “Beekeepers crawling through them often come out scratched up,” Widmark says. “Joke goes: The bees didn't sting me — the plant did.”

**THE USES:** Aside from the typical uses — drizzling honey in tea or on yogurt, oatmeal, toast, or biscuits — people consume saw palmetto honey for its purported medicinal properties. “People with seasonal allergies, like me, will take a teaspoon a day to help repel those annoying allergy symptoms like coughing, sneezing, watery eyes,” Widmark says. And the plant is associated with men's health; Widmark says the Florida cowboys of yesteryear “used to say a spoonful of saw palmetto honey in the morning would ‘put iron in your boots.’” ■

**Laurie M. Widmark**  
Rotary Club of  
Babcock Ranch,  
Florida

What food is your region famous for? Tell us at [magazine@rotary.org](mailto:magazine@rotary.org) and you may see it in an upcoming issue.

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**ELEUTHERA, BAHAMAS**

## GETAWAY ON THE WATER IN THE BAHAMAS ISLAND LIVING, THE SIMPLE WAY

Imagine an island vacation rental located directly on a waterfront in The Bahamas. It's called Hightide.

A nearby settlement is home to a vibrant Rotary Club that meets weekly. The next town up hosts a popular Fish Fry every Friday, with local entertainment across nearby settlements throughout the weekend.

Right on Hightide Beach, enjoy your own kayaking, fishing, snorkeling, sailing, or paddle boarding. Long beach walks at low tide and long crystal-clear swims are best at Hightide — that's how it earned its name.

Swim in warm, clear, safe, protected ocean waters — or simply relax under the cabana with a good book.

This multi-family waterfront compound comfortably accommodates:

- Ages 0 - 100
- 3 couples, each in their own private suite
- 6 children or singles

Hightide is powered by solar energy and is completely off-grid, so while other remote island rentals may lose power, Hightide does not — a true island experience.

Built and managed by Rotarians since 1967, Hightide delivers exactly what you expect — and more.

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TAIPEI, TAIWAN | 13-17 JUNE 2026



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