# ROTARY

April 2023


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# POLIO'S FRONT LINE

Rotary

# *Happy birthday, Paul Harris!*

19 April marks the 155th anniversary of our founder's birth. Commemorate his legacy with a gift to The Rotary Foundation today.

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The Rotary Foundation

## Introducing the Rotary Youth Network

**How do you take the best from the worst?**

None of us will forget how the pandemic altered our world and our lives. Each of us had to traverse this period of uncertainty, and no one had a free pass from the effects.

I personally believe this has created space for a different kind of global leadership — one that is courageous, empathetic, and vulnerable. I met my good friend Anniela Carracedo online in early 2020. She is one such leader, and I'm thrilled to turn this month's column over to her.

— JENNIFER JONES

Anniela Carracedo addresses the International Assembly in January in Orlando, Florida.

PHOTOGRAPH: MONIKA LOZINSKA

In March 2020, I had a panic attack. I couldn't breathe, and I felt a terrible pain in my chest.

It had been a few days since the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic, and I was in the middle of my year as a Rotary Youth Exchange student in the United States. Think about it: an 18-year-old girl stuck in a different country, with a foreign language, with people she had only met six months before. It was scary.

But I am familiar with uncertainty. I was born and raised in Venezuela, which is going through one of the worst humanitarian and political crises in the Western Hemisphere. But my mom always said, "Challenges are nothing more than needs that require a solution."

I called up my Interact and Youth Exchange friends. Together, we organized an online meeting to share projects and get inspired by what everyone else was doing during the quarantine. In that first meeting, we had 70 people, mainly students, from 17 countries.

From that beginning, we built an online platform for Rotary youths worldwide to share their experiences and inspire others with project ideas during isolation. We looked for mentors and supporters who would help our group connect young people, share cultures, and open new collaborative opportunities for international service projects. We called it Rotary Interactive Quarantine, or RIQ.

After only a year, we engaged with more than 5,000 students from 80 countries. Several of our team members became district Interact representatives and district committee members, and some of us even serve on Rotary International councils.

Eventually, quarantine restrictions were being lifted, and the needs of our participants were changing. At our last official meeting as RIQ, Past RI President Barry Rassin inspired us to create even bigger change, so we transformed RIQ into the Rotary Youth Network, or RYN.

A few of our members, including me, were selected to serve on the inaugural Interact Advisory Council, where we presented our vision for youth in Rotary to the RI Board of Directors.

Our presentation to the Board inspired President Jennifer and her team to create a Youth Advisory Council in Rotary International, which I am honored to serve on as a co-chair.

The Rotary Youth Network officially launched during a breakout session at the 2022 Rotary International Convention in Houston. Five of us, who had participated in Interact, Youth Exchange, and Rotary Youth Leadership Awards, traveled across continents to launch an organization we had kicked off online two years before. The convention was the first time we had met in person.

When my friends and I finished our talk, we realized more than 500 people were giving us a standing ovation. Tears filled our eyes, and the feeling of excitement and accomplishment took over.

Who would have thought that a panic attack would lead to this?

**ANNIELA CARRACEDO**
*Rotary Club of Bay St. Louis, Mississippi*
*District 6840 Rotaract chair-elect*

# WELCOME

**YOU ARE HERE:** Tucson, Arizona

**GREETING:** Hi/hola

**RIDE TO END POLIO:** Each November, nearly 8,000 cyclists take part in El Tour de Tucson, a ride to raise money for nonprofit causes. Rotary members' participation began with Michael Harris, who belonged to the Rotary Club of Tucson (Casas Adobes). He was not a cyclist himself but was passionate about fielding a Rotarian team, seeing it as a way for smaller clubs to raise money for polio eradication. In 2009, he and his club assembled a small cycling group and raised $25,000. Harris died in 2011, but what he started continues to grow.

**THE RESULTS:** Over the past 14 years, more than 1,000 Rotarian cyclists at El Tour have helped raise $61.1 million, says Kirk Reed, an eight-time rider who chairs the Rotary-supported Ride to End Polio. This includes 2-to-1 matching funds from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The involvement of District 5500, RI General Secretary John Hewko, RI President Jennifer Jones, the Rotary Fellowship Cycling to Serve, and other supporters supercharged the fundraising. Find out how to register to ride at **polioride.org**.

— WEN HUANG

*Photograph by James S. Wood*

# ROTARY

April 2023

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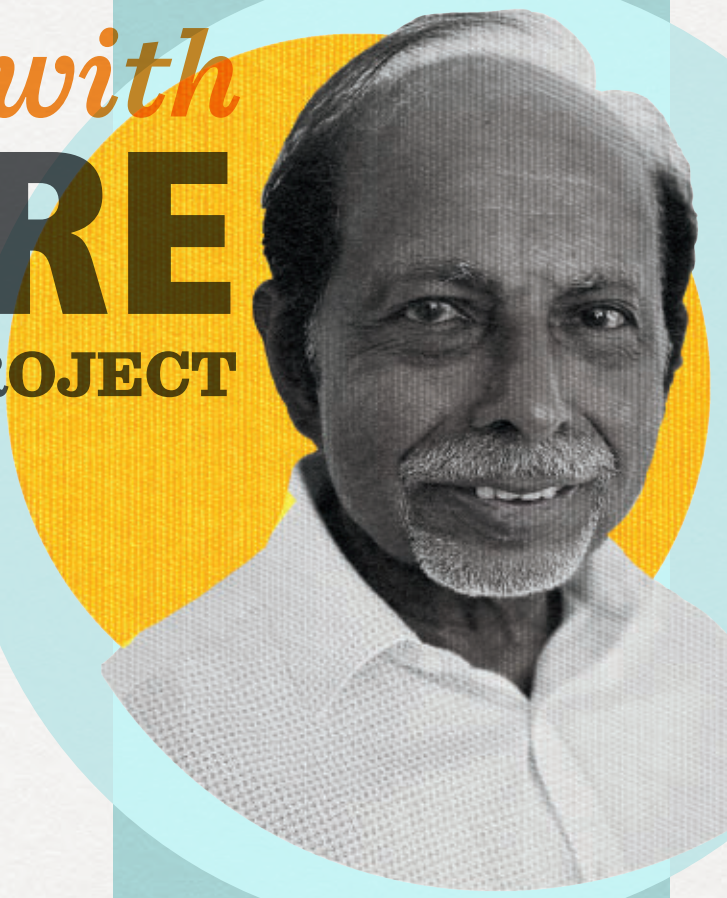

**Dr. John Philip**
England, District 1090

**Cadre title:**
Cadre Adviser for Disease Prevention and Treatment

**Occupation:**
Surgeon and cancer specialist

**What are Rotary members saying about John?**
"Dr. Philip went through our Global Grant Cancer Care project application in detail, seeking clarifications and providing suggestions. He had one-to-one meetings with our finance and screening committee members. Technical experts like Dr. Philip can be accessed any time for expert advice, even after their visit to the project is over."

— *Rotarian Tharun Shah, India, District 3201*

**There are hundreds of experts standing by to help you plan or enhance your Rotary project!**

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PHOTOGRAPH: (OPPOSITE) FAID ELGZIRY

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The editors welcome comments on items published in the magazine but reserve the right to edit for style and length. Published letters do not necessarily reflect the views of the editors or Rotary International leadership, nor do the editors take responsibility for errors of fact that may be expressed by the writers.


STAFF CORNER

## Edina Mehovic

*Senior annual giving officer, Zone 28, The Rotary Foundation*

**I was born in Chicago.** My parents had immigrated to the U.S. from Montenegro in the 1960s, when it was still part of Yugoslavia. My grandparents chose to stay in Montenegro, so when I was 3, my parents moved us back to help take care of them.

**Montenegro is a beautiful country** that became independent in 2006. When we arrived, it was poor after decades under communism. We moved in with my grandparents in a village near the beach. There was one bedroom for my grandparents and another for me, Mom, Dad, and my brother. Below the house we kept cows, chickens, and sheep. There was no indoor plumbing. All the villagers relied on outhouses and electricity was spotty, so there were a lot of candlelit evenings.

**We moved back to Chicago** four years later. I missed the freedom of running around in the village and a nearby forest, and felt confined in our unfamiliar city apartment. I had to learn English. My parents were overprotective and encouraged me to hang out with children in the Montenegrin community, but my good friend then was a girl from China. We bonded over our shared experiences as children of new immigrants.

**My family went back to Montenegro again** when I turned 12. This time, I felt like an American kid experiencing life in a foreign land. In 1991, the Balkan wars broke out, as ethnic groups fought each other — so senseless and brutal. The situation became dangerous and food became scarce. So, we all returned to Chicago. But relatives and friends who stayed and witnessed the wars are still suffering from the trauma. The current war in Ukraine triggers sad memories of what happened in the Balkans. Back in Chicago, I quickly adapted. To my parents' delight, I met my husband, a Montenegrin, while I was on vacation in Montenegro. We have a 23-year-old son and an 11-year-old daughter.

Edina Mehovic visits Lovćen National Park in Montenegro

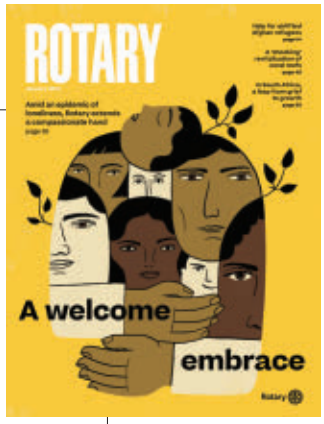
- Bachelor's degree in technical management from DeVry University, MBA from DeVry's Keller Graduate School of Management
- Languages: English, Montenegrin, Serbian, Bosnian, and Croatian

**I started working** for the Rotary Support Center in 2014. To become an annual giving officer, I needed to go back to school to earn a bachelor's degree. I attended a college online and moved to the position four years later. Now, as a senior annual giving officer, I work with district and regional leaders to engage our donors and help with fundraising events. Rotary has given me the opportunity to meet and interact with many wonderful people and do things that matter.

**At a training seminar in 2018,** I heard a story about a 7-year-old girl in India who was sold by her parents because they didn't have money to feed the entire family. My daughter was 6 at the time, and it hit me how important our work is. Another time, a presentation by Rotary clubs building sanitation facilities for schools in Belize triggered memories of my life in Montenegro. So it's truly special to me that Rotarians care enough to do these projects.

PHOTOGRAPH: COURTESY OF EDINA MEHOVIC

# Letters to the editor




## REASONS TO REACH OUT

I read with interest the articles by Dave King ["Connection is a cure"] and Wen Huang ["Lessons from Dr. Loneliness"] in the January issue. King's article on the commitment by the UK government and Rotary clubs across Britain to address the loneliness and isolation of seniors reminded me why my own club, the Rotary Club of Chicago-Near South, has for over 10 years partnered with St. James Catholic Church and the Illinois Institute of Technology to serve a Thanksgiving dinner to over 100 people from surrounding nursing homes. Huang's article provided a touching and personal look at the science behind the impact of loneliness and isolation on human health. These articles offer good reasons to create communities of intergenerational support for older adults.
**David Baker,** Chicago

I am a member of the Rotary Club of Brentwood, California, and enjoy reading *Rotary* magazine. Frequently I run across names of people I know, which adds to my pleasure.

*Rotary* did a masterful job remembering the late John Cacioppo, an expert on loneliness at the University of Chicago ["Lessons from Dr. Loneliness"]. He became a close friend of mine at the university where I worked in the news office. I have fond memories of talking with him and promoting his book *Loneliness*. That promotional campaign took on a life of its own, and his findings about loneliness keep coming up in popular literature.

COVID-19 heightened the importance of understanding the impact of loneliness in our communities. Our clubs went virtual, and despite the availability of Zoom and Rotarians' ability to adapt, we all missed the casual, friendly exchanges we had in person. We became aware of the longing that people had for personal contact. Cacioppo's findings have helped us all understand better how important it is to reach out.

My club has paid special attention to seniors, particularly those living alone. We mobilize teams to help them with home repairs, for instance, realizing that lonely seniors need personal contact and concern as much, and maybe more so, than they need help with fixing a leaky faucet.

Seeing the magazine story reminded me that the work to promote Cacioppo's findings had value. I am happy to see his insights so well reported.
**William Harms,** Brentwood, California

## CORAL CONCERN

I was unsatisfied with "To grow coral reefs, get them buzzed" [January]. I did not feel that the article fulfilled the key objective of helping Rotary members understand the scale of the climate emergency and the importance of national and international efforts to reduce carbon emissions.

We are in the early stages of a global die-off of corals, driven by rising ocean temperatures and rising ocean acidity, which are in turn driven by the burning of fossil fuels. This information was not fully conveyed in the article.

The article also seemed to perpetuate the false notion that philanthropists can save nature with technological fixes. In reality, the use of electrical currents in small experimental plots might permit a tiny number of coral colonies to survive, while the rest go extinct. Please be more willing to discuss the millions of tons of carbon dioxide and methane we are pumping into the sky annually. That is the root problem, and we need to work on that problem.
**Chris Wiegard,** Chester, Virginia

## A MOVING REMEMBRANCE

The article "Remembering Jewish Salonica" [January] is one of the most powerful ones I have read during the dozen years that I have been a Rotarian. Thank you so much for publishing it.
**Steve Auerbach,** Sisters, Oregon

***Correction:*** *The January article "Remembering Jewish Salonica" misidentified those shielding Jews from persecution as Catholic sympathizers. They were acting on a call by a Greek Orthodox archbishop to help Jews. A corrected version of the article can be found at* ***rotary.org/remembering-jewish-salonica.*** *We regret the error.*

## OVERHEARD ON SOCIAL MEDIA

In December, Sarah Laughton wrote about how her experience as a Rotary Youth Exchange student and Ambassadorial Scholar led to a 25-year career with the United Nations World Food Programme.

Beautiful! I truly believe that these exchange programs have so much power to create peacebuilders.
**Martina Lastikova**
**▶ via LinkedIn**

My Rotary Youth Exchange year was so important for my growth and development. My language and communication skills have been pivotal in my career. And I still have a strong bond with my American siblings. Thank you, Rotary!
**Annika Svensson Dalgren**
**▶ via LinkedIn**

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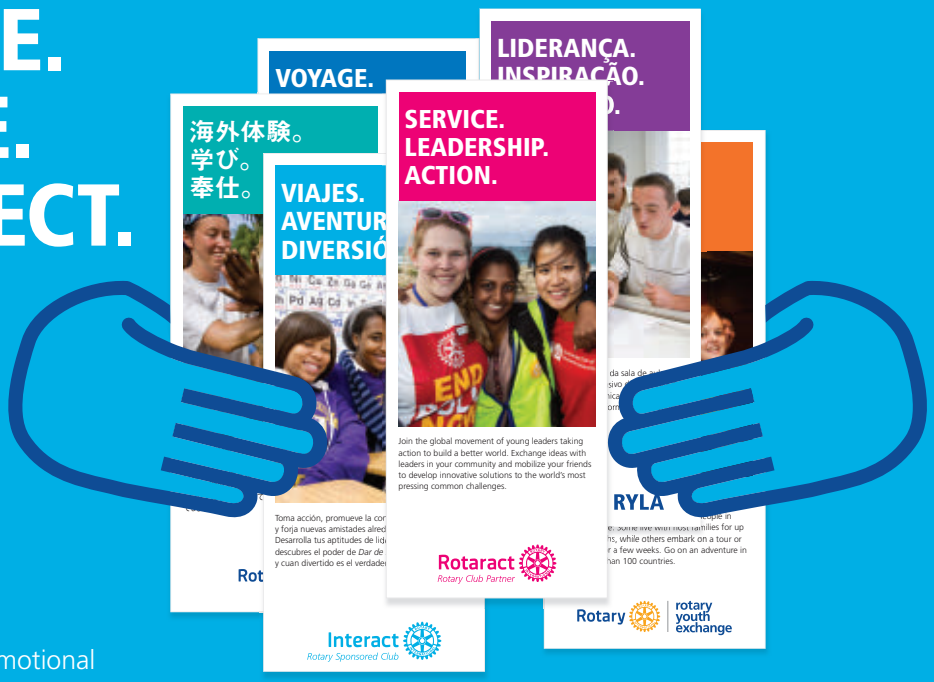


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Rotary

THE SPECIALIST

# Growth opportunity

*An arborist sees the world from the ground up*

**The tree industry actually found me — it was almost accidental.** When I was in college, my roommate applied for a job as a tree climber. I went along because he needed a ride. They said, "Here's a rope, here's a chainsaw, there's the knot. Go climb that tree and prune it." So I did. My roommate wasn't as comfortable with heights, so he wasn't hired. He was mad at me.

**Arborists used to look up into the trees to find problems.** We realized about 25 years ago that a lot of problems happen underground, in the root system. Now we do a lot of soil and root samples. If the tree is happy in its environment, it will generally do well and fend for itself. But when you have construction or changes in the soil or water tables, trees go through stresses. They react like people.

**Doug Williams**
Rotary Club of Fairfield, Connecticut
Licensed arborist

**Trees share, too.** Resources transfer from one tree to the next. That's a whole new concept that has developed in the past 10 years or so. A study showed that if a tree is on the way out, it will pass sugars and starches on to neighboring trees through the root zones. It gives us a whole new way of looking at trees.

**When a tree is weakened, it puts out chemicals.** Insects are genetically wired to be attracted to the smell, so they know where to find diseased and dying trees they can easily attack. They'll attack the distressed tree and leave the healthy tree next to it alone. The elm bark beetle will fly up to a quarter mile to find another elm tree.

**After major storms, I try to talk people out of removing all the trees** around their houses. I'll say, "Wait, we like our trees. Let's identify the ones that could be hazardous and leave the healthy ones, the good ones." You don't want big trees that are weak-wooded. Tulip trees have a high percentage of water in their makeup, so they're just not that strong. Willows and red maples are also not strong. The strong trees are oak and beech. They have a lot of density to their limbs. — AS TOLD TO ETELKA LEHOCZKY

*Photograph by Jarod Lew*

OUR WORLD

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MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

# Spreading the word about clubfoot

*There's a simpler nonsurgical treatment, and Rotary members are making sure doctors know it*

Jennifer Trevillian knew nothing about clubfoot when her daughter was born in 2000 with the condition that left one of her feet twisted. A doctor recommended surgery, but she couldn't help wondering if there was another way.

Seeking advice from online support groups, Trevillian learned about a nonsurgical treatment using a series of plaster casts and braces to gently guide the foot into the right position. Just weeks before her 4-month-old was scheduled for surgery, she decided to give the casts a try, driving eight hours each week with her daughter Kelly from their home in Chatham, Michigan, to appointments at the Iowa City clinic of Ignacio Ponseti, the doctor who pioneered the method.

"He completely fixed her foot in the amount of time when we were just waiting for her to be big enough to handle the reconstructive surgery," Trevillian says. "I had been carrying this weight for four months since my daughter was born, and when I got to Iowa, that whole weight was lifted off my shoulders and I just finally felt like she was going to be OK."

About 1 child in 750 worldwide is born with clubfoot. That's more than 175,000 children a year with the condition in which one or both feet are twisted inward at birth. Today, the Ponseti method is routine in the U.S. and many other developed countries. It has proven 95 percent effective in restoring mobility and the outward appearance of the feet. Children treated for clubfoot using plaster casts have gone on to become star athletes, including Troy Aikman, Mia Hamm, and Kristi Yamaguchi.

Yet in many parts of the world, doctors and parents are unfamiliar with the Ponseti method. The condition is often left untreated, and children grow up having to hobble on the sides of their feet, scorned in some cultures as outcasts and forced into a life of poverty. Or children are treated with surgery, which can lead to weakened muscles and pain in adulthood.

The primary barriers are a lack of public awareness and the need to train doctors. Rotary members across the globe are overcoming those hurdles with the support of Rotary Foundation global grants. Teams of experts have taught doctors from Colombia and Brazil to India and Bangladesh to perform the Ponseti method, which is deceptively simple but requires attentive instruction in person. Rotary clubs are also supporting families with transportation to clinics, information about treatment, housing, and other needs.

"There's a lack of awareness in many countries that clubfoot is treatable, especially when you get into low-resource countries," says Tomeka Petersen, co-chair of the Rotary Action Group for Clubfoot, which launched in 2015.

Although Ponseti developed his method in the 1940s, it has become significantly more prevalent in the 21st century, according to a study

Learn more at **rag4clubfoot.org.**

published in the *World Journal of Orthopedics* in 2014. By then, the method was used in 113 United Nations member countries, but that still represented only 59 percent of countries in the world, the study noted.

Besides lacking proper training, doctors sometimes have a financial incentive to perform surgery, which can cost tens of thousands of dollars in the U.S., compared with a few thousand dollars for the Ponseti method, according to Jose Morcuende, a member of the Rotary Club of Iowa City and a doctor who is a leading authority on clubfoot treatment.

Surgeries often result in complications and long-term pain that require additional operations, says Morcuende, who trained under Ponseti and took over his practice when Ponseti died in 2009. Morcuende is director of the Iowa-based Ponseti International Association, a key partner of the Rotary Action Group.

Since Rotary members started the group, global grants have supported projects to teach the Ponseti method to orthopedic doctors in Latin America, expanding the use of the method in Brazil, Mexico, Bolivia, Argentina, Ecuador, Colombia, and Honduras.

The money has gone a long way. To illustrate the impact, the action group uses an example from Brazil. A 2016 project there fully trained 50 orthopedists, supported by $193,591 from The Rotary Foundation and Rotary districts in Brazil and the U.S. That works out to $3,872 per doctor. If the doctors each treat an average of 50 new patients annually for 20 years, they will have collectively helped 50,000 people with clubfoot, meaning the training investment per patient would be just $3.87.

The efforts are succeeding in other ways. In Colombia, for instance, the government has embraced the treatment and is in the process of integrating the Ponseti method into its health care system, says Astrid Medina Cañon, president of the Colombian Pediatric Orthopedic Society and member of the Rotary Club of Bogotá Centenario.

**Left:** Kelly Trevillian, who was treated for clubfoot, with Dr. Ignacio Ponseti, who pioneered the nonsurgical method to correct the condition common at birth. **Below:** Dr. Jose Morcuende (left), a leading authority on clubfoot treatment, participates in a panel discussion at the World Health Organization in Geneva in October. Morcuende trained under Ponseti and took over his practice in 2009 after Ponseti's death.

"There's a lack of awareness in many countries that clubfoot is treatable, especially when you get into low-resource countries."

PHOTOGRAPHS: (TOP) JENNIFER TREVILLIAN; (BOTTOM) MONIKA LOZINSKA

**From left:** Kelly Trevillian, as a child, with Dr. Ignacio Ponseti; today, Trevillian is studying for a master's degree after graduating from the University of Illinois.

Having the government's support will help ensure that the estimated 800 children born each year with clubfoot in Colombia are treated with the Ponseti method and are provided the specialty braces that must be worn at night for up to five years after the final cast is removed to prevent a relapse, she says. "It's going to function like vaccines," Medina Cañon says. "Because children born in Colombia have a right to vaccines paid for by the government."

Medina Cañon says it's gratifying to see children with perfectly straight feet a couple of months after arriving at her clinic with a deformity that would otherwise make them outcasts. Children with clubfoot are sometimes put up for adoption.

Colombian parents and their children who once faced a lifetime of uncertainty say they have a brighter future than they imagined thanks to the Ponseti treatment.

"I had never heard of the Ponseti method before," says Alejandra Orjuela, who found out from her first ultrasound that her son would be born with clubfoot. "It was the doctor who explained it all, how the method really works, how the plaster castings correct the foot," she says in a video produced as part of a global grant-supported project.

Another parent recalls crying every time she changed her son's clothes those first weeks after his birth. "Our biggest fear was to imagine him as an adult, still living with that problem," Victoria Beltrán says in the video. "When we started his treatment I had the feeling my soul came back to me."

Trevillian, who now lives in Mahomet, Illinois, experienced a similar relief when she began taking her daughter to Iowa every week to replace the cast on her left leg. Her experience inspired her to spread the word through the online parent support groups that first guided her. "We provided tips, encouragement, and support to get through the casting stages and bracing stages," Trevillian says. "There is a lot of social stigma and uneasiness when a parent takes their child out in public in casts and braces."

Trevillian was part of a movement that Morcuende credits with increasing awareness about the Ponseti method and persuading doctors in the U.S. to learn it by showing them the results children achieved without the surgery orthopedists had recommended.

Kelly Trevillian is now a 23-year-old graduate student in speech pathology at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. She sometimes wonders how different — and possibly more challenging — life would be if she had the surgery as a baby. Many who know her are unaware she once had a clubfoot.

"Any time I bring it up, no one's even really heard of clubfoot to begin with, but if they have they're always surprised," she says. "Just today I told someone and they were like, 'Oh, I had no idea.' It's a surprise and I'm assuming that's because my mobility is completely normal." — IVAN MORENO

**BY THE NUMBERS**

**1 in 750**
Children born with clubfoot each year

**1 million+**
Untreated cases

**95%**
Effectiveness of the Ponseti method

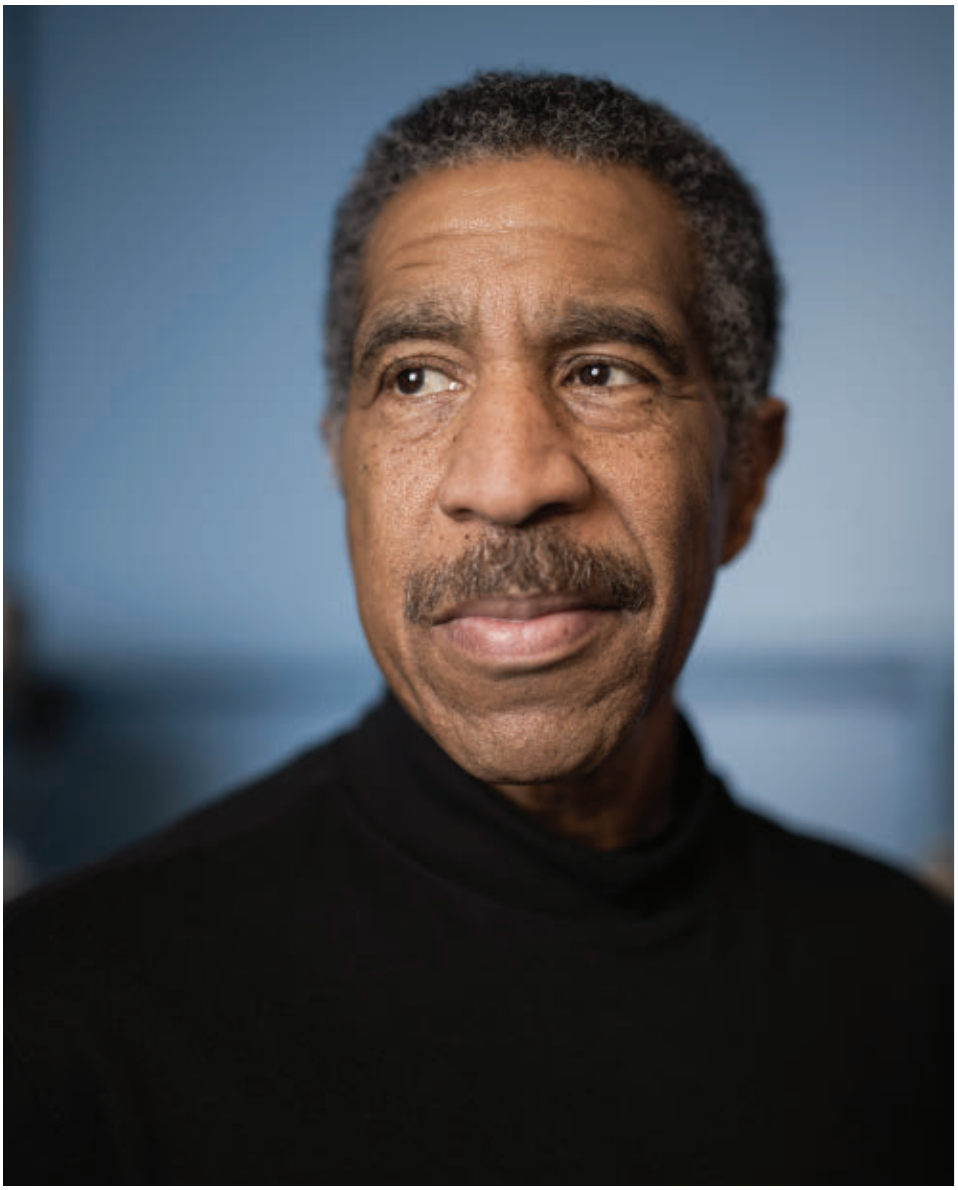
PHOTOGRAPHS: JENNIFER TREVILLIAN

**Short takes**

In 2021-22, Rotary Action Groups supported 670 club and district projects, including 79 that received a global grant. Learn more: **rotary.org/actiongroups.**

More than a dozen Rotarians, including RI President Jennifer Jones, waved from an award-winning Rotary float at the annual Rose Parade in Pasadena, California, in January.

*Illustrations by Miguel Porlan*



PROFILE

# Technological change

*A mentor in STEM challenges his students to do good*

**JonDarr Bradshaw**
Rotary E-Club of World Peace, District 5330

JonDarr Bradshaw grew up fascinated by science and technology. He had role models close at hand: his father, an air traffic controller, and his mother, a biology teacher. Bradshaw became a military aviator and a NASA contractor, and like his father, he was one of the few people of color at his jobs early in his career. "But NASA has worked very hard to change that," he says.

Bradshaw has a similar mission. As the community engagement coordinator at the Great Lakes Science Center in Cleveland, he is mentoring the next generation of scientists and engineers — and doing his part to diversify tech. Collaborating with two retired engineers, Bradshaw directs a program that pairs the center with the school district to help high school students build robots for competitions. Last year, he issued his students a challenge: Find a way to use what you've learned to make the world a better place.

Answering the call, the students researched how to use 3D printers and computer-aided design to create affordable prosthetics. Coincidentally, Bradshaw then learned in a Rotary club presentation about a girl in Ecuador who needed a prosthetic arm and hand after a bus accident. The story struck a chord with one student whose family came from Guayaquil, Ecuador. "She convinced all the kids this is something they needed to do," Bradshaw says.

In October, a medical mission delivered the prosthetic to the girl, Samantha. Now the students are back to making prosthetics for other young people. Bradshaw couldn't be prouder: "Everything about working with these kids — watching them grow and look for ways to improve their communities — brings tears to my eyes."

— ARNOLD R. GRAHL

At the International Assembly in January, Trustee Chair-elect Barry Rassin declared that The Rotary Foundation's 2023-24 fundraising goal is $500 million.

Through a collaboration with Welcome.US, Rotary members can sponsor Ukrainians seeking refuge in the U.S. Learn more at **on.rotary.org/welcomeus.**

Rotary will join the World Health Organization in celebrating World Immunization Week, 24-30 April, to promote vaccines and action on disease prevention.

*Photograph by Dustin Franz*

# People of action around the globe

By Brad Webber

**United States**
Members of the Rotary Club of Kakaʻako Eco, Hawaii, tossed 5,000 mud balls filled with beneficial organisms into the Ala Wai Canal in Waikiki as part of a rehabilitation effort to make the waterway fishable and swimmable. The healthy bacteria in the genki balls — made with soil, molasses, rice bran, and water — digest and oxygenate sludge at the bottom of the canal (genki means healthy in Japanese). In March 2022, more than 200 volunteers, including club members and friends, made the balls, advised by the Genki Ala Wai Project. Three weeks later, they threw the fermented genki balls into the waterway. Donors paid $5 per ball to defray some of the cost. "A lot of kids came out and we had canoes come through the canal to help throw the balls," says Club President Jenny Do. "We blew the air horn and then hundreds of balls just went into the Ala Wai Canal."

**15-20 tons**
Trash washing up every year on a stretch of shoreline on Hawaii's Big Island

Rotary
Club of Kakaʻako Eco

**Canada**
Guelph, Ontario, is one of 25 Canadian municipalities to sign a pledge with the United Nations refugee agency, UNHCR, to welcome people who have fled countries such as Afghanistan, Syria, and Ukraine. In December, the Rotary Club of Guelph Trillium launched a drive to collect winter clothing donations for refugees. "People were so generous," says Club President Anne Day. The club placed a bin at a mall, and donors loaded it up with more than 70 coats, 109 hats, and 52 scarves — many of them with the price tags still attached. The club also teamed up with appliance company Danby to collect furniture and household equipment for the newcomers.

Rotary
Club of Guelph Trillium

**Over 1 million**
Refugees welcomed by Canada since 1980

PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF ROTARY AND ROTARACT CLUBS

**55,700**

Italians diagnosed with breast cancer in 2022

**Italy**

The Rotaract Club of Milano Nord Est Brera collaborated with an art publisher to produce a book of photography featuring women who have had breast cancer surgery to put a face to the fight against the disease. "With body painting they show that the scars have been overcome while remaining part of their history," says club member Stefano Mercuri. "The project was aimed at them rediscovering the beauty that comes from art, even starting from a scar." The club worked with the artist Stefano Pelloni, whose style is based on tribal body painting, and Il Randagio Edizioni, a book company that uses environmentally friendly materials. The club printed a limited-edition run of 500 books and is selling them to raise funds for the Italian branch of the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation.

Rotaract Club of Milano Nord Est Brera

**United Kingdom**

One coin at a time, a whimsical contraption celebrates a legendary Scottish locomotive while raising thousands of dollars for charity. Ken Wilson, a past president of the Rotary Club of Inverness Loch Ness, led the effort to commission and install the Flying Scotsman Automata in a local shopping center in 2016. A contribution of about $1 activates the complex mechanism, which depicts a kilted train conductor in an engine on a track trailed by bobbing carriages. Inside are characters that include a couple knitting and drinking tea, a pilot flying a plane, and Nessie, of course, whose tail spins to the musical accompaniment. The club has maintained the device and collected about $27,000, allowing it to disburse more than $350 in grants each month. "It has enabled Rotary Loch Ness to help nearly 60 local charities," says the mall's former manager, Jackie Cuddy, "which is amazing."

**565 AD**

First recorded sighting of a purported monster in Loch Ness

Rotary Club of Inverness Loch Ness

**Uganda**

When the Rotary Club of Malta constructed its second primary school in Uganda, it made sure to consider the needs of menstruating girls in the design of washroom facilities. "Very often, girls are embarrassed to attend school due to the lack of these facilities, and their attendance, and therefore education, suffers," says John de Giorgio, club member and past governor of District 2110. The construction of the school in Luwero District was carried out in partnership with the Rotary Club of Bwebajja, which "played an active part in the supervision of the project during construction, carrying out many on-site visits," de Giorgio says. The Malta club spent about $60,000 on the project, and the Maltese government covered more than half the cost of the $140,000 school. In 2014, the club built another school on the Lake Victoria island of Nkose.

**64%**

Share of girls enrolled in primary school in Uganda who drop out before the last grade

Rotary Club of Malta

# Cyclorama

Whether it was pedaling around a Midwestern quarry or racing up Chicago's North Shore, my biking adventures led to one inevitable destination: Tucson

By John Hewko

PHOTOGRAPH: ALYCE HENSON

I first heard about El Tour de Tucson in the unlikeliest of places, on a water taxi in Thailand. In May 2012, during the Rotary International Convention in Bangkok, I was sharing a river boat with a group of Rotary members from Arizona. Among them were Ernie Montagne, a past district governor, and his wife, Sally, who would become a district governor herself in a couple of years. They knew I was an avid cyclist and told me enthusiastically about Rotary clubs in southern Arizona that had begun using the annual Tucson ride to raise money for polio eradication.

By the time our ferry ride was over, I had eagerly agreed to join them, and in November that year I participated in my first El Tour de Tucson, a rigorous 102-mile ride staged against a backdrop of mountains, desert, and cacti. Since then, I've made the ride nine more times, missing only 2020 when it was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During those years, my Rotary teammates and I, including my colleagues at Rotary International, have raised about $61.1 million to end polio. El Tour, as I'll explain, was also the site of my two most memorable rides, albeit for very different reasons.

I wasn't always the passionate cyclist that Ernie and Sally Montagne encountered that day on the Bangkok ferry. Of course, riding a bike was a part of my childhood, as it was for most of my friends. My generation, we all grew up on bicycles. We'd grab our bikes and zoom around the neighborhood. These days, that can seem like a lost art from a long-gone era.

A couple of photos from my childhood spring to mind. I remember one of me and my sister learning how to ride a bike on a sidewalk in Detroit, where my father worked for General Motors. I distinctly recall the circumstances behind another photograph from when we lived in Ohio: I was 12 or 13 then, and my family had taken our bikes out one summer afternoon on the ferry to Kelleys Island in Lake Erie. The island's quarries made it fun to bike around. And there I am, a suntanned kid wearing glasses, a white T-shirt, and jeans — hardly the slick cycling outfit I don today — straddling a bike with fenders and, if those weren't enough extra weight, what appears to be a 10-pound tire pump strapped to the back rack. I've got a big, happy smile. Given the chance, I'd pedal back to those days in an instant.

PHOTOGRAPH: COURTESY OF JOHN HEWKO

**EVEN THOUGH I WAS** an athlete growing up, I drifted away from cycling. My big sport was lacrosse; in high school and college, I was co-captain of the lacrosse team. I also played hockey and squash, but after graduation, I became a runner to stay fit. But since my 20s, I've been plagued with arthritis, particularly in my right hip, and the pain finally reached the point where I couldn't run anymore.

My wife, Marga, wasn't into running. She preferred cycling, and one day she suggested that I join her and see if I enjoyed it. And though my biking sprang from a necessity to find another way to stay in shape, it turned out I really loved the sport, which is a great cardiovascular workout. While strengthening muscles and tendons, the activity is easier on the joints. And more importantly, it gave me something I was able to do with Marga. We spend a lot of time biking when we travel to our place in Park City, Utah, or, like last summer, when we visited Washington Island in Door County, Wisconsin. It's fun just to tool around. As you unwind and focus on the breathtaking scenery around you, you kind of lose yourself. That's one of the things I love about cycling.

Here in Evanston, Illinois, where I live and where Rotary International has its headquarters, there is a series of largely uninterrupted roads that run north along Lake Michigan toward the Wisconsin border.

That's my standard route when I can squeeze in a ride after work: 21 miles from home to the North Shore suburb of Lake Bluff and 21 miles back again.

When I really want to push myself, I join my weekend riding crew, an intense, but not overly aggressive, group of lawyers and executives riding fancy bikes. When I first showed up 12 years ago with my mid- to low-end Giant bike, they teased me, "Nah, you can't ride with us on that thing." I did upgrade my bike, settling on a good, *high-end* Giant. We usually ride in pace lines, one cyclist riding behind the wheel of another, concentrating on that person in front of you to make sure you don't crash. My right hip has been replaced *and* my left shoulder, so I have no safe side to fall on.

The benefits of these rides go beyond the physical; like meditation, cycling relaxes the brain and delivers a sense of calm and well-being.

During the winter, I move indoors for stationary rides. With an online training app connected to my laptop, I put the back wheel of my bike into a docking hub. I can choose on the computer all types of rides that emulate real ones.

**ALL THIS IS IN PREPARATION** for my big annual ride: El Tour de Tucson in November. While living in Washington, D.C., I had done a couple of great century (100-mile) rides: the Civil War Century in Maryland and Pennsylvania, and the Sea Gull Century along Maryland's Eastern Shore. But El Tour has been my focus for the last 10 years, and from an endurance and athletic point of view, it was the scene of two unforgettable rides.

One never really knows how the fall weather will turn out for the tour. Regardless, I always bring a plethora of warm- and medium-weather gear. I wear layers so I can pull down my arm sleeves as the day gets warmer, and carry two water bottles and a bag full of snacks, which I munch on every half-hour to reach energy targets and stay hydrated.

The 102-mile ride starts at 7 in the morning, and some years it can be 45 degrees, and other years it can be 65, getting hotter as the day goes on. But the ride in 2013 was nothing like that. Tucson is known as the city of sunshine, but that year it was windy, freezing cold, and pouring rain, just as it had been the day before. Water streamed down from the mountains, and there were times you had to get off your bike and wade through water up to your knees. The organizers rerouted slower riders because the path became treacherous. My teammate, Bob McKenzie, who has cycled across America multiple times, pulled me through. It was the hardest 100 miles, but camaraderie among like-minded Rotary riders endured.

While we use El Tour to raise money for polio eradication, my personal goal for each tour was to break the five-hour mark, which earns a rider the platinum classification: For the next three years you're entitled to start up front with the professional riders. Those personal and anti-polio goals overlapped when many enthusiastic Rotary members pledged to double or triple their donations if I reached the elite level. And in 2015 I finally achieved that, crossing the finish line at four hours and 55 minutes. Crawling off my bike, I just sat for an hour. Exhausted as I was, I felt a surging sense of elation.

In 2017, I had hip replacement surgery, and keeping under the five-hour mark became too difficult, but I wasn't short on motivation. Rotarians who have put their weight behind our cause have completed events far more arduous. Minda Dentler, one of our Rotary polio ambassadors and herself a polio survivor, was the first female wheelchair athlete to successfully complete the Ironman World Championship triathlon (which involves swimming 2.4 miles, hand cycling 112 miles, and pushing a racing wheelchair for 26.2 miles). Such stories of perseverance inspired me throughout the tough post-surgery rehab sessions and long training rides.

I will always keep in mind that finishing the ride with my teammates symbolizes Rotary's determination to finish what we started over 35 years ago and eradicate a human disease for only the second time in history.

Last year I finished at 5:48 or so, and soon I'll be fighting just to crack six hours. Regardless, I will always keep in mind that finishing the ride with my teammates symbolizes Rotary's determination to finish what we started over 35 years ago and eradicate a human disease for only the second time in history. That should carry me over the finish line.

With the arrival of spring, a season of rejuvenated hopes, it's time to head outdoors, get back on my bike, and make those hard, joyous rides up and down the North Shore, solo and in line with my hard-riding pals. It may not seem like it now, but 18 November lies just over the next hill. See you in Tucson. ■

*John Hewko is general secretary and CEO of Rotary International and The Rotary Foundation.*

This year's El Tour de Tucson is Saturday, 18 November. Find out how to register at **polioride.org.**

PHOTOGRAPH: JAMES S. WOOD

ROTARY

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Rotary

GOODWILL

# Once upon a time in a conference room

*The value of storytelling in professional communication*

It's 8:30 p.m. You're staring at your laptop, struggling with the third bullet point on the sixth slide for your presentation the next morning, when you feel a tug on your T-shirt.

"Mommy, can you tell me a story?"

You look down at your daughter, and smile. You close your computer and follow her to her room, where you read her favorite story about dragons, pirates, princesses, and triumph. After "the end," you turn out the light, and halfway down the hall, you hear her retelling the tale to her teddy bear.

*She really loves that story*, you think, opening your laptop back up. Then you sigh and turn back to your bullet points.

Stories aren't just for kids. For thousands of years, stories were the primary means of conveying information, and our brains have evolved to respond to them. Humans of any age seem hardwired to understand stories, which makes them ideal vehicles for professional communication too. Whether you're making a presentation about your club's most recent project, giving a speech, or trying to land new donors and supporters, here are some ways you can optimize your stories.

## START WITH YOUR OBJECTIVE

When you tell a story in a professional setting, you're not there just to entertain — you're trying to reach a particular result. Neil Bearden, who runs the communications consulting company Plot Wolf, calls these instrumental stories because they are told to achieve an objective. Being clear on your objective — what you want the audience to do — will help you decide how best to design your message.

Storytelling works because it involves detail. There are characters and action and conflict and emotion. But it's easy to overdo it. Without an objective, Bearden says, "You don't know how to triage. What do I put in? What do I leave out? How do I decide?" Starting with the objective makes those decisions easier.

The goal of most business stories is to get the audience to act. You want the audience to remember the story, and usually, to tell someone else. By beginning with your end in mind, you can craft a crisp, concise story that's easy to retell.

## ADD DISTINCTIVE DETAILS

Once your story is concise and objective-driven, how can you make sure people remember it? By giving them something that stands out. "One of the easiest things people can do is to put something in the story that's distinct," Bearden says. He mentions the Von Restorff effect, which says that distinctive items — things that stand out — are more likely to be remembered. Bearden gives an example: "Bed, rest, awake, hippopotamus, dream, doze, slumber, snore, nap, peace, yawn, drowsy."

Now cover the list and try to remember what was on it. Bearden knows at least one item that you'll have remembered: "Anyone who is paying at least 10 percent attention is going to have 'hippopotamus' because it's a distinctive item."

One way to take advantage of this effect is to add colorful, visual details. Imagine you're telling a story about a professor you once had. You can describe him as eccentric, maybe even goofy, and that might resonate with a few people in the audience, "but as soon as you say the professor always wore yellow socks, everyone is going to remember it," says Bearden.

Yellow socks are like the hippopotamus. "They're distinct. They stand out. You don't see a lot of men walking around with bright yellow socks."

When sitting down to write your next speech, pitch, or presentation, Bearden recommends that you ask yourself this question: What in my story is going to stand out and be distinct? Sprinkling in a few vivid details "provides an opportunity for people to remember [your story], which is a necessary condition for them to be able to retell it."

## CREATE A LOGICAL STRUCTURE

Once you've collected some distinctive details to illustrate your message, it's time to get organized. A story is more memorable than a collection of arguments because it follows a logical structure: a series of events with clear cause-and-effect relationships.

Start with your objective, add a pop of color so that your message stands out, and then tie your details together with a clear organizing structure.

Back at your laptop, you rethink the bullet points for your presentation. There may not be dragons or pirates in your slideshow, but you can still tell a story. A few minutes later, satisfied that you've crafted a message that your audience will remember and retell, you shut down your computer.

From your daughter's bedroom, you hear a whisper: "the end."

— MEGAN PRESTON MEYER

This column is adapted from an article in the September 2021 issue of *Toastmaster* magazine. Rotary and Toastmasters International are working together to provide members of both organizations with more opportunities for personal and professional growth. Find out more at **rotary.org/toastmasters.**

# WWS15

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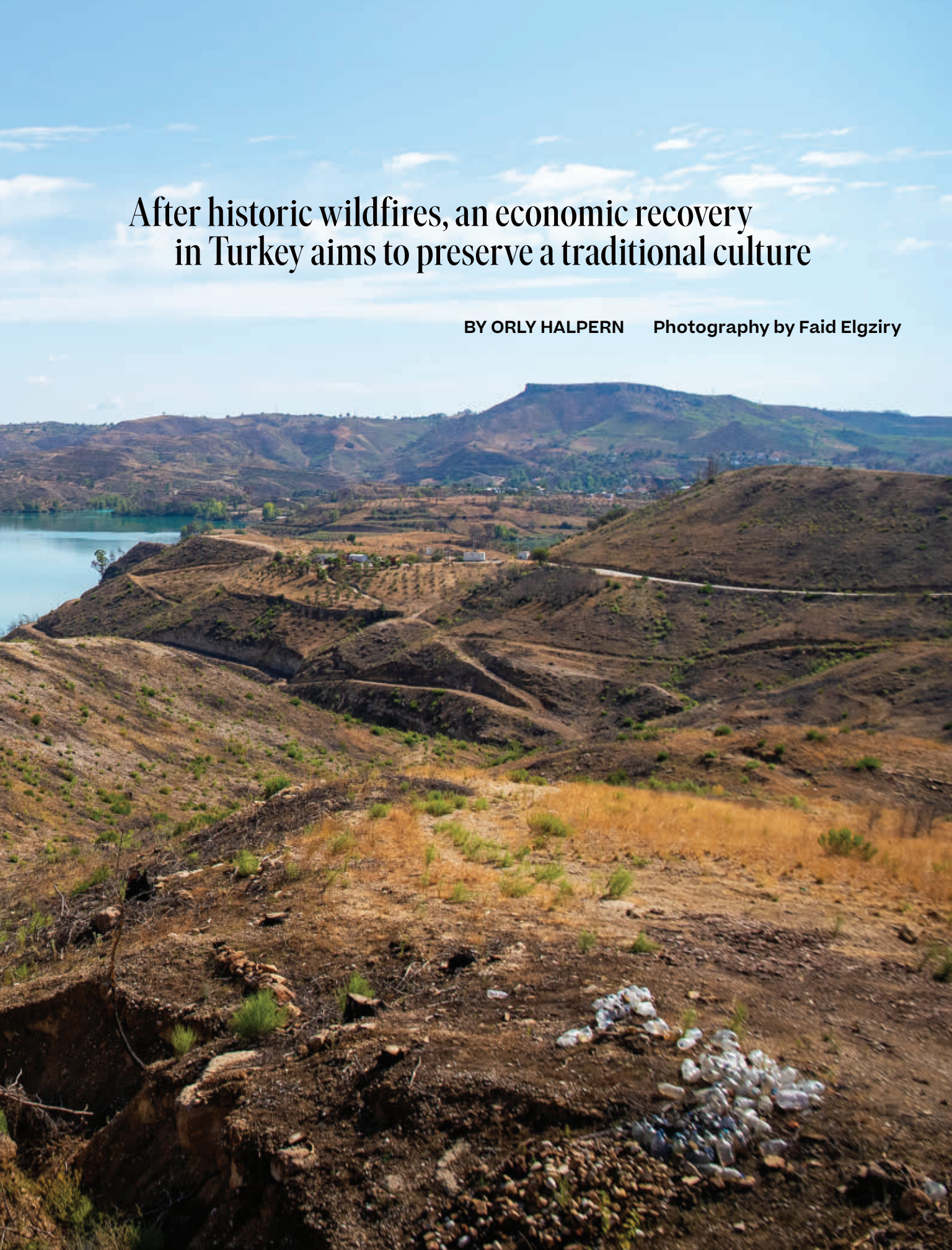
For more information go to WASH-RAG.org or scan the QR code to register.

# A warming world adds peril for a way of life

For an update on the earthquake that struck Turkey and Syria in February, see “Another cataclysm” on page 33.

# After historic wildfires, an economic recovery in Turkey aims to preserve a traditional culture

BY ORLY HALPERN  Photography by Faid Elgziry



**For centuries, the Yörük people of southern Turkey have trekked up and down the rugged Taurus Mountains. When the hot Mediterranean summer begins to dry out the vegetation that feeds their sheep and goats, Yörük families migrate with their animals to the grassy highlands. Then, just before the first snows, they return to spend the cooler season farming in the coastal plains. They eat what they grow, and at outdoor markets, they sell honey, goat milk and cheeses, livestock, and the bright wool kilim rugs they make.**

Today, many Yörüks have settled in coastal cities, where five-star hotels and the turquoise waters of the "Turkish Riviera" draw the tourists who help support the regional economy. Mehmet Bodur was one of them. He had worked about 25 years as a mechanic in the popular coastal city of Manavgat. But in 2004, he and his wife, Gulsen, moved with their two sons into the foothills of the Taurus Mountains to the small village of Bucakşeyhler, nestled among fragrant forests of pine and cedar, a half-hour drive from the coast but a world away.

There, they built a wooden house with a small auto repair garage on land Mehmet inherited from his father. They planted avocados and, like their elders, raised goats. They sold the milk and avocados at a twice weekly bazaar to supplement their modest pension. By the summer of 2021, they had invested their savings in hundreds of chickens, expanding their small business enterprise. And their younger son, Can, was about to get married at a pretty riverside restaurant just below the village. They had already bought the bride's dress and the groom's suit.

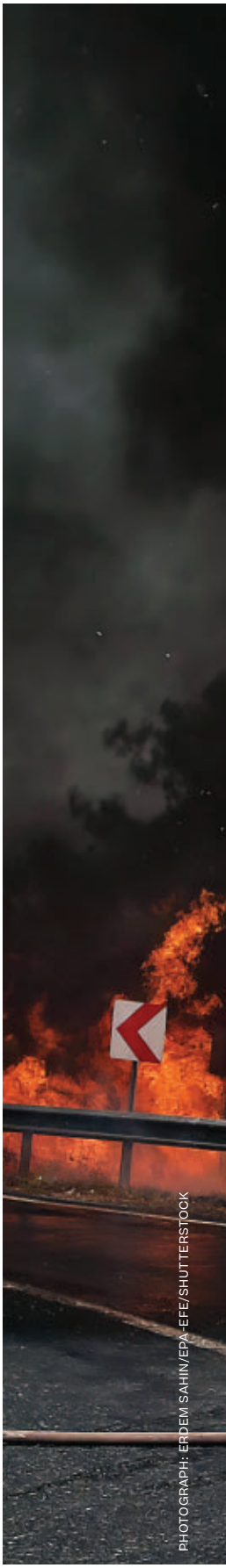
"Life was really good," Gulsen Bodur says wistfully one day last fall, standing where her home once stood. "But the fire ruined everything."

**THE SUMMER OF 2021 WAS, AT THE TIME,** the warmest on record in Europe, with a potential all-time high of 119 degrees Fahrenheit recorded in Sicily. Along the Mediterranean, drought desiccated vegetation and turned it into fuel for fires — conditions that researchers have found are generally growing more extreme and more common because of a changing climate. Wildfires swept through Spain, Italy, Greece, Algeria, and Turkey. On 28 July, a fire started near Manavgat and, fed by strong winds, quickly spread through villages and into the mountains. It became the worst wildfire season on record in Turkey.

For days, firefighters and residents battled more than 200 blazes that turned forests to ash, darkened the skies, destroyed homes, and killed livestock. With temperatures around 100 degrees, water from hoses seemed to almost instantly evaporate. Thousands of residents and tourists were evacuated, many by sea. While on beaches not under immediate threat, there were surreal scenes of sunbathers reclining before a horizon glowing an eerie orange. By the time the smoke cleared, at least nine people had died, hundreds of homes and other structures were destroyed, and thousands of farm animals were killed. More than 470 square miles (1,200 square kilometers) of pine forest turned into a blackened wasteland. Manavgat district was the worst hit.

Out in the villages, the fire swept in before most were awake. It was about 5 a.m. and Gulsen Bodur, who is in her 60s, slept fitfully in the suffocating heat. Her older son slept on the balcony, unable to bear it inside. Suddenly, he woke his family, shouting, "There's a fire, there's a fire! Let's go or we will burn!"

"We were in our pajamas," Bodur recalls, her voice breaking. "We just changed our clothes and rushed out. We didn't think we would lose everything." Outside, they watched towering flames engulf trees. The fire burned so intensely among the trees it sent pine cones flying at them "like bullets," she says. Not knowing what to take, she grabbed three chickens and stuffed them into a bag. (They suffocated.) They rushed to their cars and sped out of the village through the smoke and flames to Manavgat. Across their village, some 60 other families were facing the same horror, the same fateful decisions, and the prospect that this disaster would take more than their livelihoods.



PHOTOGRAPH: ERDEM SAHIN/EPA-EFE/SHUTTERSTOCK

A firefighter battles a blaze outside the city of Marmaris in southwestern Turkey in August 2021. It was the worst wildfire season on record in Turkey.

**AROUND THE WORLD, A CHANGING CLIMATE** is not just wreaking economic and physical damage; it's adding to factors imperiling centuries-old ways of life and identities. That's especially true for Indigenous populations that depend on the natural environment, from Sami reindeer herders in Finland, Norway, and Sweden grappling with the loss of food sources for their animals to groups of people living in the Himalayas where the shrinking of glaciers has disrupted the seasonal flow of water they depend on. In Turkey, Rotary clubs helping with fire recovery came to realize that a meaningful response was about more than satisfying immediate needs and even restoring livelihoods; it was about helping preserve culture and social identity. To assist villagers with what they said they needed most, the Rotary members mounted an extraordinary campaign involving dozens of Turkish clubs, districts, and The Rotary Foundation.

In those frantic first days, Kemal Ketrez, then governor of District 2430, which includes areas along Turkey's Mediterranean coast, remembers sending a short urgent message to a WhatsApp group of club presidents: "There is a disaster in Manavgat. We must help." They coordinated the purchase of items published on a government disaster committee list, things like burn cream, shirts, boots, bottled water, socks, and tents for the people fighting the fires. Ketrez opened a bank account to receive donations from clubs in the district. They provided fire brigades with chainsaws and a generator. They collected school supplies for children, along with appliances, clothing, and household goods for those who would need to rebuild.

Several weeks after the fires, it was clear to the clubs that they needed to do more to support long-term recovery, especially for villagers outside the coastal cities. Altan Arslan, a member of the Rotary Club of Ankara-Kizilay and a past governor of the district, proposed mounting a larger campaign with the support of The Rotary Foundation. Ketrez appointed Murat Sidar and Ayhan Gedikoğlu, members of the Rotary Club of Alanya, to the disaster committee and charged them with finding out what the villagers needed. They learned that people were desperate to replace lost livestock: goats, bees, and chickens.

With a Rotary Foundation global grant funded in part by donations from 23 clubs and nine districts, the effort raised nearly $100,000 to supply about 100 families across the Taurus Mountains with goats and honeybees. The Rotary Club of Lidingö Milles, Sweden, signed on as the international partner. Clubs and districts as far away as Denmark, Germany, and Korea also donated money. But first, the club members had to locate the goats, going to seven farms. "It's so hard to find 324 goats at the same time," Arslan says. "We are businesspeople. We had no experience dealing with goats."

**BY 12 AUGUST, THE FIRES WERE OUT.** That day, Mehmet Bodur and his sons went back to see the village. "They wouldn't let me come with them," Gulsen Bodur says, her hair pulled back and partially covered by a brown and white headscarf tied loosely at her shoulders. "They said it would make me feel bad." Indeed, nothing remained. The family lost its

**Above:** Gulsen Bodur feeds the goats she received as part of the Rotary project. "I hope the goats will have many babies soon and they will bring me extra income," she says. **Right:** The government is building Bodur and her family a new home. Until it is finished, they are living in a trailer.

home and everything in it, as well as a livelihood. The equipment in the garage, the goats and chickens that burned, the avocado orchard — everything was charred. "We were left with only the clothes on our backs," she says, her voice trembling with emotion.

Bodur, who wears a blue T-shirt and loose polka dot pants, looks weary, although she has little to do. Initially, she and her family stayed with her in-laws in Manavgat city. But she and her husband moved back to the land and have lived in a government-supplied trailer for more than a year, while the government builds them a new home.

The government began constructing homes for those who could pay back one-third of the cost, but it takes over a year, and the family had no means of making a living — until the Rotary clubs stepped in.

Bodur walks past the skeleton of a burned tractor wagon lying lamely to one side, toward a pen next to the unfinished concrete house the government is building. She picks up a bunch of long green grasses along the way. The land is regenerating, but it will take 20 years for pine trees to grow back. As she approaches the fence, five young long-haired, long-eared Damascus goats scamper over to her. She drops the grass over the fence, and they begin to chomp happily. She smiles. She received the goats last spring through the global grant-funded project.

Damascus goats lactate for longer periods and yield more milk than the more common local breed. Each goat can bring in about 3,600 liras (close to $200) a month in milk. And within a few years, six animals can become 30 and provide for a family. "I hope the goats will have many babies soon and they will bring me extra income," she says on that warm October day.

**TO IDENTIFY THE NEEDIEST FAMILIES,** Rotary members had to delve into government livestock license and veterinary records and solicit help from agricultural agencies. When reaching out, they discovered some potential aid recipients were hesitant, wary of fraudsters who prey on disaster victims, says Ayfer Öz, president of the Rotary Club of Manavgat. Some had already started working in tourism because it made more money. Some didn't want to see animals anymore after the fires; it would make them too sad. Others felt too old to begin again and take care of animals.

For some of the Rotarians contacting people, the effort was personal.

Ersin Körhasanoğulları is past president of the Rotary Club of Anamur, where numerous Yörük beekeepers lost their hives when the fires reached the highlands. He is an electrical engineer who also runs a family agricultural company. His family is originally Yörük too. "My great grandfather was a Yörük. He traveled with donkeys from the lowlands to the highlands and back," says Körhasanoğulları. "We want the Yörük to stay here, to keep their traditional lifestyles. But some, including the youth, go to Antalya city and work in tourism. Some grow strawberries or work in the packing industry. Year after year the Yörük tradition is ending."

Ali Ozturk is among the beekeepers struggling to carry on. When he got the call from Rotary members that they could replace his lost bees, he was in his tent in the Eynif valley in the highlands, where he lives with his wife during the warm season. "I was so happy I almost cried," he says.

His other home, a permanent house, and his orchard in Salur, deep in the mountains, burned down in the fire. Like many semi-nomadic Yörüks, he had no deed to the land, so the government would not build him a house or give him a trailer. In the meantime, his children are living with his mother in the village of Yeniköy, close to Manavgat, and going to a school nearby.

Ozturk is a quiet, stocky man in his late 30s with a ruddy complexion and graying hair. He's standing in a wide plateau up in the highlands flanked by bushy pine trees that still stand green and alive. There, raised off the ground by a wooden plank set on stones, sit long rows of beehive boxes. Nine have covers with the Rotary logo.

"We really needed more bees for selling honey and for fertilizing the almonds," he says. He has started buying and planting new almond trees. His income from the honey goes toward daily living costs. Raising his goats has gotten more expensive because of the fires, he notes, and he was forced to sell some of them. "There are no more branches and bushes left to feed the goats," he says, "so I need to take them by truck to a shepherd who cares for them." Adding to his challenges, bears looking for food in the scarred landscape sometimes steal the honey his bees produce, he says. Still, he's optimistic. "Someday, I will return to my hometown in Salur," he says with conviction.

The road leading down the mountain from Ozturk's highlands encampment passes a cliff overlooking a valley. The vantage point reveals the startling destruction. Blackened trees stand forlorn, their burned trunks exposed with bare branches. "Before, it was only green forest all the way to the horizon," says Ekrem Uyanık of the Manavgat Rotary club, pointing to a house in the distance. "You couldn't even see that house because of the height of the trees. You couldn't see anything but green. This was one of the greenest places in Turkey." Yet there are signs of hope and beauty. New green growth dots the scorched land. And one occasionally glimpses the wild horses that gallop over the plateaus, as if in a mirage.

**Above:** Seyma Ozturk at the highlands encampment where she lives with her husband, Ali. Their other home and their orchard were destroyed in the fire. **Right:** Ali Ozturk (second from left) displays the bees he received through the recovery project to visiting Rotarians (from left) Ismail Toy, Kemal Ketrez, Ekrem Uyanık, and Altan Arslan.

**THE SUMMER OF 2022 WAS ANOTHER SEASON** of deadly wildfires in Europe and around the Mediterranean. The UK declared a drought in parts of the country, and some water companies banned the use of hoses for things like watering gardens. Both France and Italy reported their second-hottest summer since records began more than a century ago. Europe's great rivers, including the Danube and the Loire, ran low.

Besides increasing the risk of fires, climate change is affecting life in other ways. As temperatures rise, snow melts sooner, resulting in less water available during the summer months. In Turkey, the heat arrives sooner each year, so the Yörük people need to migrate to the high plateaus earlier, which can interrupt children's schooling. The slow recovery of the hillsides is leaving less land for grazing, as government officials seek to prevent herders from bringing livestock into areas of young, regenerating forest, which can take decades to mature. That also stresses the Yörüks' bees, which rely on pine trees for food.

Tourism quickly recovered and has been largely unaffected by the fires, even in the scarred mountain foothills in places like Green Canyon reservoir, where tourists continue to take boat rides and enjoy fish lunches. But the tourism economy does little for the Yörüks and other rural villagers.

In a building with a clay oven built into a wall, 59-year-old Yeter Tasbas sits on the floor in front of a low wooden table, stretching balls of dough with a long, thin rolling pin. With one graceful move, she transfers a paper-thin circle into the oven. She works with three other women, her neighbors in the village of Belenköy.

Her family's wooden home on the edge of the village burned in the fires. The family had a barn for its four goats and 30 chickens. Today, where the home once stood is a flattened piece of land covered with dry weeds. The family has been unable to rebuild because of a dispute with her husband's siblings, who share ownership of the land. "We built our house with our own hands," she says through tears. "We put so much effort into it. After we lost it and didn't get support from my husband's siblings — all of this is too much for me."

Through the Rotary project, they received six goats. She keeps them in her neighbors' barn in exchange for caring for their goats as well. The goats provide comfort and hope. "It relaxes me to take care of them," she says. "I love hugging the baby goats." She hopes the income from selling the milk will help her to eat better. Her family only eats meat during holidays, when generous neighbors provide it. And, of course, she hopes to earn enough to one day rebuild her home. For now, that hope is enough to keep the family going. ■

**Below:** Yeter Tasbas making bread in the village of Belenköy. The six goats her family received through the Rotary project provide comfort and hope. "I love hugging the baby goats," she says.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

- **Donate to the Disaster Response Fund:** Gifts to this fund help clubs and districts provide disaster recovery and support rebuilding efforts. Visit **rotary.org/donate.**
- **Support local initiatives:** Learn how you can directly support local response efforts led by Rotary clubs and districts by visiting **rotary.org/disaster-response.**

**Left:** People search for survivors amid the rubble in Hatay, Turkey, hours after the earthquake that devastated large parts of Turkey and Syria.

PHOTOGRAPH: BERKAY ATASEVEN/SHUTTERSTOCK

# Another cataclysm

On 6 February, as this issue was about to go to print, a 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck Turkey and Syria, killing tens of thousands of people and reducing huge sections of cities to rubble. Within hours, RI President Jennifer Jones activated Rotary's disaster response, and The Rotary Foundation Trustees directed donations to the Disaster Response Fund to earthquake relief. *Rotary* magazine contributor **Orly Halpern** reached out to Rotary members in Turkey days after the disaster. While mourning their losses, they rushed to help others. This update offers a glimpse of the devastation and Rotary members' extraordinary efforts in those first couple of weeks.

**Onur Karabay and his family** were asleep when, shortly after 4 a.m. on 6 February, the deadliest earthquake to hit his country in more than a century convulsed the ground under their six-story apartment building. "For a full minute and a half, the building shook violently," recalls Karabay, a member of the Rotary Club of Gaziantep Ipekyolu.

His city, Gaziantep, in the south of Turkey, was near the epicenter. He and his wife shouted and ran for their two children, then grabbed whatever essentials they could carry — shoes, jackets, phones, keys — and made for the door, as the first of the aftershocks hit.

They made it out and took refuge at a one-story home in a rural area outside the city. There, Karabay and his family are sleeping in one room with about 25 other people to try to stay warm. There is no electricity, and the late-winter nighttime temperatures dip below freezing.

Like tens of thousands of Turks and Syrians who lost their homes and belongings but managed to escape with their lives, Ahmet İlker Suat, president of the Rotary Club of Gaziantep-Alleben, has no place to go. He sleeps in his car with his daughter and wife. "A lot of people sleep outside," he says. "There are no toilets, there is no water. The weather is very cold. People light fires to keep warm."

Despite these hardships, Karabay and Suat quickly connected with other Rotary members in their city and around the country to provide help to people like themselves who have lost everything.

In Gaziantep, Rotarians have set up an aid distribution center at a school owned by the brother of a Rotarian. They provide meals for 500 people a day, turn the classrooms and hallways into dormitories, and make the bathroom available to the public.

In addition, Rotarians from other parts of the country truck food, water, clothing, blankets, and other necessities to cities and towns across the disaster zone.

In Adana, another hard-hit city, semitrailers of supplies arrive at the construction yard of Kazim Apa, a member of the Rotary Club of Adana. "People are sending supplies from all over," he says. He and other volunteers transfer the items to smaller cars for distribution because the larger trucks can't navigate through the destruction.

At night, with no power, cities are plunged into darkness in the weeks after the quake. "You have to use the light on your mobile phone to find your way," Apa says, describing the scene in Hatay, where his mother lives. "People there wait in lines to use car batteries to charge phones and call relatives to ask for help."

On the national level, Rotary clubs in Turkey have donated tents, clothes, and heaters, and are trying to buy shipping containers that can be turned into makeshift shelters. Rotary leaders there are in regular communication with ShelterBox and Habitat for Humanity International, providing them support and invaluable situational awareness.

Jones communicated with the affected districts and encouraged governors there to apply for disaster response grants and share information about their relief efforts, so Rotary can amplify the calls for support.

While more help is desperately needed, Rotarians like Apa take comfort in the determination and resilience shared by fellow members to see a full recovery. "Our roots will grow from this land," he says.

# Bigger than polio

Pakistan's female vaccinators are doing more than helping end a disease

Photography by KHAULA JAMIL and SANA ULLAH

A health worker marks a wall during door-to-door polio vaccinations in Pakistan. Employing women is one key strategy of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative.

Women make up two-thirds of Pakistan's polio workforce. It's a startling statistic for a nation that ranks 145th out of 146 countries for gender parity in economic participation and opportunity, according to a World Economic Forum gender inequality index.

The role of female vaccinators is born of necessity. Because of cultural norms, men are not allowed into many people's homes in Pakistan. Women who provide the health care are the key link. They can build mom-to-mom relationships and provide trusted advice on not only polio but other health issues.

"Women working with women on the front line is going to be what gets us across the finish line," says Rotary President Jennifer Jones, who met last year with polio workers in Pakistan. The country and Afghanistan are the only two where wild poliovirus is still transmitted persistently.

The female vaccinators' work is neither safe nor easy. The women in Pakistan are sworn at, shoved, beaten, and some even killed. They're fighting misinformation. But their work is crucial — and not just for the cause of polio eradication.

"They are supporting their education, they're supporting their household, they're supporting their men and giving a change in Pakistan," says Sadia Shakeel, coordinator for a Rotary-supported polio resource center in Karachi. "This is bigger than polio."

Shakeel calls them "little entrepreneurs." Most of the women range in age from 21-38 and have their own children, she says. Yet they wake to say prayers before dawn, feed their children breakfast, and leave to start their work to end a disease.

Employing women is one key strategy of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative. And that's not just to deliver the vaccines at the front line; it's also to hire women as supervisors, doctors, and decision-makers. "We cannot succeed without the women we have in the program at all levels," says Hamid Jafari, a pediatric infectious disease doctor and director of polio eradication for the World Health Organization's Eastern Mediterranean region.

Meet five of the women working to end polio in Pakistan.

Female health workers can enter homes where male health workers would not be allowed.

## Tayyaba Gul

***Rotary Club of Islamabad (Metropolitan)***

Tayyaba Gul joined Rotary in 2000 and has worked in public health for over two decades. She represents Rotary at Pakistan's National Emergency Operations Centre, working with partners and the national government to help address gaps. She also runs a Rotary-supported polio resource center in Nowshera. "I work with Pashtun communities and have faced a lot of hurdles," she says. "I feel like after spending such a long period of time here, they respect me a lot, and they listen to me. I feel proud that in such a community, my voice — a woman's voice — is being heard."

## Azra Fazal Pechuho

***Minister of Health and Population Welfare, Sindh province***

There are about 1,500 vaccinators in Karachi, the capital of Sindh province. Many are women who did not leave their houses previously. Because they start earning money, "their voice within the household increases, their decision-making powers increase," Azra Fazal Pechuho says. "Gender equity comes in because of the fact we have employed female workers." But polio can't be eradicated without these women and their ability to enter houses where men are not allowed. "They've been a great asset," she says. "They are a tremendous force, and I think their work is to be acknowledged."

## Effat Naz

***Polio supervisor, Torkham border crossing***

Vaccination teams approach people at the busiest border crossing between Pakistan and Afghanistan. It's crucial to catch mobile populations to stop the spread of poliovirus. As a supervisor, Effat Naz is responsible for planning cold chain logistics to preserve vaccines and working with families who refuse vaccination. "Women workers find it difficult to work here," she says. "Yet we do it because we love our country, Pakistan. We have joined the frontline force to save our country from this virus."

Effat Naz (right) and health workers prepare to provide polio vaccinations.

Mehr (left) meets with community health workers. "I want this disease to end," she says.

## Soofia Yunus

***Former director general of the Federal Directorate of Immunization***

Soofia Yunus is the first woman to have led Pakistan's national immunization program since it began in 1976. "In every strategy we make and in every activity that we conduct, we ensure that females are a part of it," she says. To help with security, the program is recruiting couples such as husbands and wives or brothers and sisters to be vaccinators together.

## Mehr

***Vaccinator and water plant manager***

Mehr, who gave only one name, has worked as a vaccinator since 2012. "I am working to support my children so they can get educated," she says. "This is what I spend my salary on. I also want to help my community." She notes that the work has become more data-driven, and vaccinators visit homes more frequently. "People used to push us out of their homes and curse us, but now that we go regularly, our presence is normalized," she says. "The awareness level has increased that we are doing this to help them and their children." ■

PIZZA
TAXI
BUY SELL
RIDE SHARE 37

Modern technologies have made a vast array of conveniences available at the press of a button. But musician **David Byrne** wonders:

# Where's the human touch?

Last Thanksgiving I went to Whole Foods to get some last-minute odds and ends. Some months prior to that, a self-checkout line had appeared as an option at the store. On that November day, there were maybe three human checkout people, and since each one had a little line of people queued up, I tried the self-checkout. I had trouble scanning the Brussels sprouts, and a man came over and showed me how to do it. At the CVS close to me there is only one checkout person and four self-checkout devices. There is also a person there to help train customers to use the self-checkout machines. When I first saw that person in the store I thought, "These folks are training us to adapt to the ways of the machines, and in so doing are eliminating their own jobs." At Whole Foods there used to be maybe a dozen checkout people. Now, as I said, there were maybe three.

Now, scanning groceries may not be the most fulfilling job in the world, and it's true that retail's narrow profit margins incentivize businesses to cut costs. But the disappearance of these jobs is not just about a trend of vanishing employment opportunities; it's also about one more little human interaction going away.

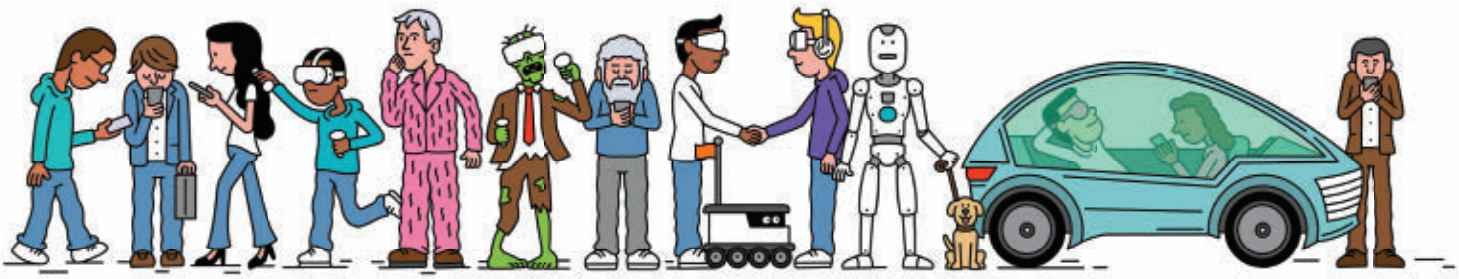
Many of us enjoy our ability to shop, watch movies, and work remotely. I have a Zoom meeting in about half an hour, with people in different parts of the country. Things like that would be difficult to do in person. But I do start to ask myself, what is the trade-off here? We're getting some amazing convenience, but are we losing something else, something that might be at least as valuable as convenience?

This separation from our fellows is not new. Cars granted individuals the choice to go where they wanted, when they wanted — and many of them chose to do it alone. Television and radio allowed us to be entertained at home; we didn't have to go out and mix with other people. The telephone allowed us to communicate (orally, at least) with folks without meeting them face to face. I am on the board of a nonprofit, and we did our meetings via Zoom during the pandemic. It worked, we stayed in touch, but the meetings were often enervating and drained one of energy. We communicate via a variety of signals — voice, body language, facial expressions — not all of which translate to picture-phone technology. When we started meeting in person again, the reverse happened: The meetings energized me, and I was excited by the ideas and proposals.

I am reminded of a famous quote by Margaret Thatcher, frequently (though incompletely) rendered as: "There is no such thing as society. There are only individuals." I disagree with her: We are social animals, and that has not changed. But I can see that the rise of the concept of the autonomous "free" individual has become a commonly accepted idea, more or less, at least in the West. This assumption implies that the individual has primacy, and that the rights of the individual in many cases should trump those of the group. In extreme cases this means folks will run red lights and decide that the truth is up to them.

This world of individuals is not a new idea, but it's not that old either. In her recent book, *Magnificent Rebels: The First Romantics and the Invention of the Self,* Andrea Wulf proposes that the idea of the primacy of the individual gained favor and was first promoted in the 1790s by a handful of intellectuals in Jena, a university town in Germany. So, maybe not coincidentally this emphasis on the individual emerged around the same time as the Industrial Revolution, when people were being herded into cities to perform repetitive, tedious jobs in concert with new machines. I wonder if something similar is happening today. Are new technologies atomizing us under the guise of convenience and choice? Are we becoming nations of individuals, as Thatcher viewed us, rather than a society?

Does all this technology have an agenda? Is it truly neutral, or could that espoused neutrality be hiding a bias



Illustrations by Serge Seidlitz

toward a particular way of looking at the world, at people, and a way of being? Could this bias be unconscious, as most of our biases and assumptions are? Could the programmers and designers be leading us somewhere that they themselves are unaware of? Technology shapes us. It is not neutral. When you're a hammer everything looks like a nail. But what if everything is not a nail? Could what is paraded as inevitable actually be just one of many ways things could be?

As someone who uses a bicycle as my main means of transportation, I'm all too aware of the assumption in previous decades that we must accommodate and prioritize private cars. But that outcome was one possible path among many. In New York, the urban planner Robert Moses decided that the middle class and its cars should be prioritized over neighborhoods and public transportation. This enabled folks to isolate themselves in the suburbs, where, too often, everyone is alone in their own bubble.

I look around and it seems that much tech development and innovation over the last couple of decades has had an unspoken overarching agenda. This agenda has been about creating the possibility of a world with less human interaction. This tendency is, I suspect, not a bug. It's not an unintended side effect; it's a desired feature. We might think Amazon was about making books available to us that we couldn't find locally — and it was, and what a brilliant idea — but maybe it was also just as much about eliminating human contact in finding and purchasing books.

The consumer technologies I am talking about don't claim or acknowledge that eliminating the need to deal directly with humans is their primary goal, but it seems to be the outcome in a surprising number of cases. Maybe, given how often that is the outcome, it might actually be the primary goal, even if it was not aimed at consciously. Judging by the evidence, that conclusion seems inescapable.

This, then, is the new norm. I am not saying that these tools, apps, and other technologies are not efficient and convenient; this is not a judgment. I am simply noticing a pattern and wondering if, in recognizing that pattern, we might realize that the technology we adopt and that gets developed is only one possible trajectory of many. There are other roads we could be going down, and the one we're on is not inevitable or the only one; it has been (possibly unconsciously) chosen.

I realize I'm making some wild assumptions and generalizations with this proposal, but I can empathize with the programmers and creators. I grew up happy but also found many social interactions extremely uncomfortable. I often wondered if there were secret rules that would explain human expressions and interactions to me. I still sometimes have social niceties "explained" to me. So I believe I can claim some insight into where this unspoken urge to avoid social interaction might come from.

From an engineer's mindset, human interaction can sometimes be perceived as complicated, inefficient, noisy, and slow. Part of making something "frictionless" is getting the human part out of the way. The point is not that making a world to accommodate this engineer mindset is bad, but that when one has as much power over the rest of the world, as the tech sector does over folks who might not share that worldview, there is the risk of a strange imbalance. The tech world is predominantly male. Testosterone combines with a drive to eliminate as much interaction with real humans as possible for the sake of "simplicity and efficiency." Do the math, and there's the future.

## The evidence

Here are some examples of fairly ubiquitous consumer technologies that allow for less human interaction.

*Online ordering and home delivery:* Online ordering is hugely convenient. But Amazon, Instacart, and Deliveroo have not just cut out interactions at bookstores and checkout lines; they have eliminated all human interaction from these transactions, other than the (sometimes paid) online recommendations.

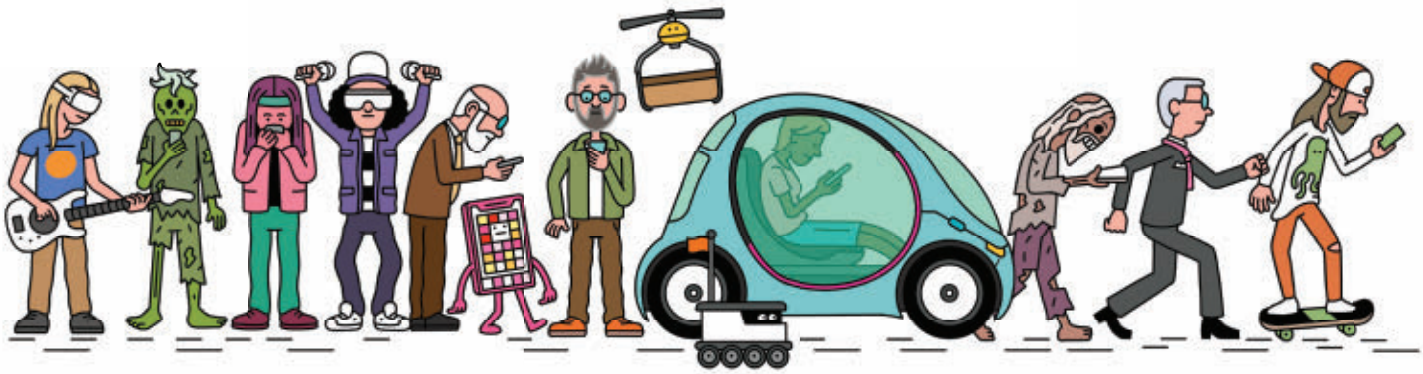
*Digital music:* With downloads and streaming, there is no physical store, so there are no snobby, know-it-all clerks to deal with. *Whew,* you might say. Some services offer algorithmic recommendations, so you don't even have to discuss music with your friends to know what they like or might recommend to you. The service knows what they like, and you can know, too, without actually talking to them. Is the function of music as a kind of social lubricant also being eliminated?

*Ride-hailing apps:* There is minimal interaction — people don't even have to tell the driver the address, or interact at all, if they don't want to.

*Friction-free in-person shopping:* Amazon has stores — even grocery stores! — with automated shopping. They're called Amazon Go and Amazon Fresh. The idea is that sensors will know what you've picked up. You can simply walk out with purchases that will be charged to your account, without any human contact.

*Artificial intelligence:* AI is often, though not always, better at decision making than humans. In some areas, we might expect this. For example, AI will suggest the fastest route on a map, accounting for traffic and distance, while we as humans would be prone to taking our tried-and-true route. Computer programs will soon complete much routine legal work, and financial assessments are now being done by machines. But some less-expected areas where AI is better than humans are also opening up. For example, it is getting better at spotting melanomas than many doctors.

*Robot workforce:* Factories increasingly have fewer human workers, which means no personalities to deal with, no agitating for overtime, and no illnesses.



Using robots avoids an employer's need to think about workers' comp, health care, Social Security, Medicare taxes, and unemployment benefits.

*Personal assistants:* With improved speech recognition, people can increasingly talk to a machine, such as Siri, Google Assistant, or Alexa, rather than a person. Amusing stories abound as the bugs get worked out. A child says, "Alexa, I want a dollhouse" ... and lo and behold, the parents find one on their doorstep.

*Video games (and virtual reality):* Yes, some online games are interactive, but they are typically played in a room by one person jacked into the game. The interaction is virtual.

*Automated high-speed stock buying and selling:* A machine crunching huge amounts of data can spot trends quickly and act on them faster than a person can.

*MOOCs:* Massive open online courses offer opportunities for education with limited direct teacher interaction.

*Social media:* This is social interaction that isn't really social. While Facebook and others frequently claim to offer connection, and do offer the appearance of it, the fact is that a lot of social media is a *simulation* of real connection.

*The metaverse:* It's a digital world with no in-person human interaction.

## What are the effects of less interaction?

Minimizing interaction has some knock-on effects — some of them good, some not. These are the externalities of efficiency, one might say.

For us as a society, less contact and fewer *real* interactions would seem to lead to less tolerance and understanding of difference, as well as more envy and antagonism. As we've seen recently, social media can increase divisions by amplifying echo effects and allowing us to live in cognitive bubbles. We are fed what we already like or what our friends like — or what someone has paid for us to see in an ad that mimics content. The algorithms exploit human nature and direct us toward more extreme content in an effort to keep us engaged. Needless to say, the social result is devastating. In this way, we actually become less connected, except to those in our in-group. While these technologies claim to connect us, the surely unintended effect is that they also drive us apart and make us sad and envious. That's the price of growth and engagement.

We have evolved as social creatures; that's what we are, and our ability to cooperate is one of the largest factors in our success. I would argue that social interaction and cooperation are things our tools can augment, if so designed, but will never replace.

When interaction becomes a strange, uncomfortable, and unfamiliar thing, then our environment will have changed, but we will not have changed who and what we are as a species. We will have simply *disconnected from* who and what we are. Often our rational thinking convinces us that much of our interaction can be reduced to a series of logical decisions, but we are not even aware of many of the layers and subtleties of those interactions. As behavioral economists will tell us, we don't behave rationally, even though we think we do. And followers of the 18th-century English statistician Thomas Bayes will tell us that interaction is how we revise our picture of what is going on and what will happen next.

I'd argue that in this world of less interaction there is a danger to democracy as well. Less interaction, even casual interaction, means one inevitably lives in a tribal bubble — and we know where that leads.

## Is it possible that less human interaction might save us?

Humans are capricious, erratic, emotional, irrational, and biased in what sometimes seem like counterproductive ways. It often seems that our quick thinking and selfish nature will be our downfall. There are, it would seem, lots of reasons why getting humans out of the equation in many aspects of life might be a good thing.

But I'd argue that while our various irrational tendencies might seem like liabilities, many of those attributes actually work in our favor. Many of our emotional responses have evolved over millennia, and they are based on the probability that they will, more likely than not, offer the best way to deal with a situation.

Our irrational and malleable selves also mean that we are not fixed. We don't have to remain the racist homophobe we might have been at 12 years old. We change, we evolve — often due to having come in contact with other people.

## What are we?

Antonio Damasio, a neuroscientist at the University of Southern California, wrote about a patient he called Elliot who had damage to his frontal lobe that made him unemotional. In all other respects he was fine — intelligent, healthy — but emotionally he was Spock. Elliot couldn't make decisions. He'd waffle endlessly over details. Damasio concluded that although we think decision making is rational and machinelike, it's our emotions that enable us to actually make decisions.

**Could the programmers and designers be leading us somewhere that they themselves are unaware of?**

With humans being somewhat unpredictable (well, until an algorithm completely removes that illusion), we get the benefit of surprises, happy accidents, and unexpected connections and intuitions. Interaction, cooperation, and collaboration with others multiplies those opportunities.

We're a social species; we benefit from passing discoveries on, and we benefit from our tendency to cooperate to achieve what we cannot do alone. In his book *Sapiens,* Yuval Noah Harari suggests this is what allowed us to be so successful. He also claims that this cooperation was often facilitated by an ability to believe in "fictions," such as nations, money, religions, and legal institutions. Machines don't believe in fictions — or not yet, anyway. That's not to say they won't surpass us. If less human interaction enables us to forget how to cooperate, then we lose our advantage.

Our random accidents and odd behaviors are fun — they make life enjoyable. I'm wondering what we're left with when there are fewer and fewer human interactions. Remove humans from the equation, and we are less complete as individuals and as a society.

"We" do not exist as isolated individuals. Sorry, Margaret. We, as individuals, are inhabitants of networks; we are relationships. That is how we prosper and thrive. ■

*David Byrne is a musician and artist who lives in New York City. He is the author of several books, including* How Music Works. *Versions of this piece originally appeared on his website, davidbyrne.com, and in* MIT Technology Review.

# BREAKING DOWN WALLS

Nobel Peace Prize laureate Leymah Gbowee led Liberian women in a nonviolent movement that helped end their country's civil war.

Now, she's working to help other girls and women realize their own power. Hear her speak at the **2023 Rotary International Convention** in Melbourne.

In 2011, Liberian peace activist Leymah Gbowee was in Oslo, Norway, waiting in a room with a few friends before she delivered her Nobel lecture.

Gbowee had lived in a refugee camp, worked as a counselor for child soldiers, and led a nonviolent peace movement that played a pivotal role in ending a bloody 14-year period of civil war in Liberia. But still, they asked her, "What's next?"

"My answer was simple," she recalls. "Duh, I just won the Nobel Peace Prize. I'm going to retire at 39. They said, 'No, you're still young. Think.' The only thing I could think about in that moment was girls and education."

She went on to found Gbowee Peace Foundation Africa, which focuses on just that. Since its inception in 2012, the organization has awarded more than 500 full scholarships to African young people, most of them women, to study across Africa, Europe, and North America. It has also provided support to schools in Ghana and Liberia that benefited almost 2,000 students. The foundation has held campaigns to inspire and train women and young people to help maintain Liberia's peace. It has moved beyond the classroom to do work in sexual health and reproductive rights, and produced radio programs that encourage discussion about gender-based violence.

"Research has shown that if you educate a girl, you educate a nation," Gbowee said during an event in October celebrating her foundation's 10th anniversary. "I wanted to educate Liberia. I wanted to educate West Africa. And I wanted to educate Africa as a whole."

All those impulses sprang directly from Gbowee's life experiences. She had just graduated from high school and was planning to study medicine when Liberia's civil war started in 1989. Her family fled Monrovia, Liberia's capital, and eventually ended up at a refugee camp in Ghana. In 1991, she returned to Liberia. After her first two children were born, she trained as a trauma counselor through a UNICEF program. She went on to work with former child soldiers, women who had been raped, and children who had witnessed their parents' murders.

And that was just her day job. After getting involved with the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding, she helped found the organization's Women in Peacebuilding Network and spent her evenings working as its Liberia coordinator. In 2003 she organized Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace, which brought together Christian and Muslim women to demonstrate against the war. Dressed in white T-shirts and headscarves, the women fasted, prayed, picketed, and even held a sex strike. For weeks, thousands of women amassed along the daily route of Charles Taylor, then the Liberian president, until he finally agreed to meet with them. Gbowee represented the women at that meeting, and she later led women to Ghana to demonstrate at peace talks between Taylor and opposition forces. When talks stalled, the women blocked the hotel conference room where they were meeting so that delegates could not leave until they reached an agreement. Facing authorities who wanted to kick them out, they threatened to undress, which, according to traditional beliefs, would have brought a curse upon the men. Gbowee's Nobel biography calls the move "tactical brilliance" that "proved to be a decisive turning point for the peace process." Taylor resigned within weeks.

In 2011, Gbowee won the Nobel Peace Prize along with Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Africa's first elected female head of state (whom Gbowee had helped elect), and Yemeni peace activist Tawakkol Karman. The three were honored "for their non-violent struggle for the safety of women and for women's rights to full participation in peace-building work."

— DIANA SCHOBERG

Gbowee will be a keynote speaker at the 2023 Rotary International Convention. Register at **rotary.org/convention.**

In October, as part of her foundation's 10th anniversary celebration, Gbowee hosted an online event for Gbowee Peace Foundation Africa-USA, an organization that supports her efforts in Liberia. The event featured appearances by several Nobel Peace laureates as well as celebrities such as Sheryl Sandberg, Chelsea Clinton, and Angelique Kidjo. During a virtual "fireside chat," Gbowee and Rotary International President Jennifer Jones exchanged ideas about the importance of educating and empowering girls and women. This is an edited version of their conversation.

**Leymah Gbowee:** Often when we're growing up, we hear that education is the key. My dad often said to us, "I'm not going to leave you anything. I don't have an inheritance to leave you. What I do have to leave you is to ensure that you are educated."

**Jennifer Jones:** Just a couple of weeks ago, I was in Uganda, in the Nakivale refugee settlement, sitting with women from varying countries, visiting some of the schools that they've built. Talking with the headmaster and the girls, if they're lucky enough to get through primary school, that's one thing. If they get into secondary school, the statistics go down for child pregnancy and the elimination of child marriage. That's not just in that area, that's in so many different areas.

We understand what education means to young boys as well, and this isn't about one or the other. It's about how do we bring them both forward, so that young boys understand how to deal with young girls, and how we raise each other up.

If you have an educated girl, if you empower that girl, you empower her to become an empowered woman, and for her to be able to then take care and nurture those around her.

**Gbowee:** I'm just sitting and smiling because as part of the work that we are doing in Liberia, we're deciding to make a sustainable space for girls. The idea is to educate them, but also create an environment where they can thrive. They can go to school, but also learn the other skills to become productive citizens.

Coming back to the statistics of girls in primary school, and then high school, and then college — I think this is the

PHOTOGRAPH: (PREVIOUS PAGE) NURPHOTO SRL/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

vision for what we do at GPFA [Gbowee Peace Foundation Africa]. Our mantra is "empower to inspire." We are empowering young girls and helping them so that the next time they can inspire others to say they don't just want to be a sixth grader; they want to be a ninth grader, they want to be a 12th grader.

These are the things that will break down walls. It's no longer about shattering the glass ceiling. I think it's about shooting straight for the moon. And if you miss, you land amongst the stars. In several years, we will look at more Jennifer Joneses, more Leymah Gbowees — not just in Africa, but in other parts of the world.

You mentioned going to the refugee camp, and it's always very close to my heart when people talk about going to refugee camps. When the war started, my family went to the Buduburam refugee settlement in Ghana. I had graduated from high school, but my nieces and nephews were in primary school in the refugee camp. So I understand all of these things: living in a congested space, having no hope, being arrested. The time is now to call for peace and justice in a new world order.

**Jones:** At the same camp that I was at, I had a chance to sit and talk under a shredded up old tent with 20 women. The majority of them had arrived there within the past year, fleeing their country — husbands having been murdered, losing children as they were walking, and sleeping in the bush to get there. It's a story that is happening to far too many people. I just asked them a question. I said, "What do you need?" Not one of them asked for money. Every single one of them asked for opportunity. I think that's huge. When I said, "What kind of opportunity are you looking for?" they said, "I want to be able to create products so that I can sell something, so that I can have money so that I can feed my family, and so that I have a way to make it better to help educate my children." There was a direct line.

A big part of what we're working on, certainly as an organization, is how do we identify those needs, and instead of imposing on people what we think they need, asking them. A big part of peace is listening and understanding what the need is, and then collaborating, figuring out the way forward together.

**Gbowee:** With someone like yourself in such a huge leadership position, with that mindset, we are definitely going to do great things together. Really and truly, this is the advocacy that I have been making as an activist, as a human rights champion. Regardless of where people are, whether it is a refugee camp in Uganda or Poland, or it is a shelter in Ukraine, don't come and tell anyone this is exactly what we think you need.

I think that kind of respect for engagement is the first step to peace. I believe that ending wars is one thing, but peace is not just ending wars. It's that we're creating an environment where everyone feels like, I'm a human, I belong, that this world exists because of people like myself.

What is key in everything that you talked about was the whole idea of respect, the whole idea of freedom to choose. In most instances, when people are refugees, especially women and girls, it's very difficult for them to choose whether they want to go to school, how many children they want to have, what economic empowerment program they want to be in. We can give women the freedom also to contribute to peace and to justice and development in their community at different levels.

**Jones:** I think we need to learn from what we've been through for the past couple of years, and during the pandemic in particular. It's been a level-setting global event that has taken a lot of hierarchy out of how we exist. Every man, woman, and child on the planet had to go through the same thing. No one had a "get out of jail free" card with the pandemic. I think it's created a different kind of leadership that we need right now — empathetic leadership, compassionate leadership, strong leadership, leading from a place of empathy.

Some of the brightest people that I've met are those that have had the hardest struggles yet, somehow or other, understood that there was something better. Hope is something that we can give to each other. I think that's a big gift for a little girl who's sitting there right now trying to dream her wildest dreams. I grew up in a place of privilege, having food on the table and parents who loved me. They gave me the biggest gift by instilling in me the sense of dreaming and never putting a bushel on my light. And so for that little girl, I want her to know not to let someone dictate her path. Create opportunity as you are able. For that little girl, I want her to know that there's a world out there, and I think then it's incumbent upon all of us to help her get there.

**I tell people I'm not a stereotypical African girl.**

**Gbowee:** Jennifer, one of the joys that I have meeting you and partnering with you is that together we can join forces, join resources, and create that kind of atmosphere for many young girls. Ten years ago, when I got on this journey, that was my thing: How can I find as many young women to begin to see themselves outside of their current situation? When you hear me talk about shooting for the moon, landing amongst the stars, that is the dream. I grew up in a space where we're five sisters. My grandmother always told us no one would do it for you. My mother always told us no one would do it for you. We had to do it for ourselves. I tell people I'm not a stereotypical African girl. They told me, if you want to fly, you could fly. I'm very grateful that we're going to help many young women to fly. ■

# OUR CLUBS

VIRTUAL VISIT

## Called by a cause

Rotary Club of Mental Health & Wellness
District 5280, California

**Over the years,** whenever Maribel Khoury-Shaar's Rotarian husband suggested she join Rotary, the busy doctor declined. But when she learned that a Rotary club dedicated to mental health and wellness was forming, she jumped on board.

It came at just the right time for the primary care physician. After the pandemic started, most of her patients were anxious and depressed, and she was getting burnt out as a health care provider. "This club reinvigorated my life because I was around like-minded people who wanted to do the right thing," says Khoury-Shaar, president of the Rotary Club of Mental Health & Wellness in District 5280, which covers parts of Los Angeles County in California. The club meets online and welcomes members to join from anywhere in the world. Its current members include professionals in the mental health field and others who hold the issue close to their hearts.

The club, chartered last May during Mental Health Awareness Month in the U.S., is one of the first cause-based Rotary clubs to focus on mental health and wellness and was the idea of Guity Javid, the 2021-22 governor of District 5280. It's one of a growing number of cause-based clubs around the world.

The year before Javid's term, the district had already chartered one cause-based club, District 5280 Rotarians Fighting Human Trafficking. Javid identified three other causes that were personal priorities and helped launch these clubs: Mental Health & Wellness, Rotarians for Environmental Action, and Rotarians in Service for Equality (R.I.S.E.), which focuses on LGBTQ+ concerns.

"I was pleasantly surprised at the number of Rotary spouses who might never have joined Rotary, but for these causes," Javid says. "We also attracted younger members. Mental health has been a huge crisis during the pandemic. People were isolated, and many turned to alcohol and drugs to cope." Eliminating the stigma associated with mental health is a priority, she adds.

Mental health and especially the issues of depression, anxiety, and suicide have caught the attention of Rotarians worldwide. In addition to the new club, there is a Rotary Action Group on Mental Health Initiatives as well as a partnership between Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland and the nonprofit Bipolar UK.

While the Mental Health & Wellness club is relatively new, members have launched notable initiatives, including an effort to award $5,000 in scholarships annually to students pursuing graduate-level work on mental health. Members assembled and distributed coping kits containing stuffed animals, supportive cards, and other items to children with burn injuries. And they promoted mental health and wellness among school-age children through the Inspiring Kindness initiative, a collaboration with other clubs, schools, and the Alex Montoya Foundation.

Another priority is serving military veterans, including by helping refurbish an American Legion post in Glendale, California.

Club member Marisol Chianello, an attorney in Glendale, became the point person for that project. She joined the club because she's dealt with mental health issues herself and wanted to create resources for others, she says. Her husband is a Gulf War veteran, and when one of his friends told her about the American Legion post's challenges, she immediately wanted to help.

"Half of the space had to be rented out for income to survive," Chianello says. "The other half was used for storage and was filled with uniforms, medals, and military memorabilia. With support from other district clubs, we cleaned it up and reopened the space." The location now has a space where veterans can seek calm and, eventually, referrals to resources to improve their mental health. Chianello says the American Legion is working with the club to determine how Rotary can help maintain the site.

Club President-elect Judith Verduzco, a therapist in Glendale, was also drawn to join because of the club's focus. Like Khoury-Shaar, Verduzco has a Rotarian

The Rotary Club of Mental Health & Wellness is one of a growing number of cause-based clubs around the world. Its members include (top row, from left): Judith Verduzco and Maribel Khoury-Shaar; and (bottom row, from left): Guity Javid and Marisol Chianello. Also pictured is Kaiya, Chianello's dog.

husband who encouraged her to become a member.

In addition to building on projects underway, Verduzco says her focus will be on suicide prevention and partnering with organizations that provide mental health services and promote awareness of the issue. "As a clinician, I encourage my clients to call 988 in the event of a crisis," she says, referring to the national Suicide and Crisis Lifeline modeled on the 911 system and launched last year.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the number of suicides in the United States increased 4 percent from 2020 to 2021, after declines in 2019 and 2020. "My vision is to call attention to the magnitude of the problem," Verduzco says.

She is interested in research on community gardening's mental health benefits. She plans to collaborate with other cause-based clubs and cities in Los Angeles County to create what are known as tranquility gardens, to try to provide peace and hope to underserved communities.

"We've done a lot in a short period of time," Verduzco says. "We meet virtually twice a month, but outside of that, I want to create opportunities for fellowship and service. Mental health affects everyone, and this club is a great way to get friends involved so that we can stay connected while doing good." — DINAH ENG

## A CLUB FOR EVERYONE

Rotary members have been experimenting with new club models in recent years to attract members with diverse interests, experiences, and perspectives:

**Traditional:** Members gather, often over a meal, to listen to guest speakers, practice traditions they value, and learn about service opportunities.

**Passport:** Members are allowed to attend other Rotary club meetings and service projects, so long as they attend a specified number of meetings in their own club.

**Cause-based:** Members share a passion for a particular cause and focus service efforts in that area.

**Corporate:** A club's members (or most of them) work for the same employer.

**Alumni-based:** Most members (or charter members) are former Rotary program participants or past Rotaractors or Rotarians.

**Interest-based:** These clubs focus on a particular interest or hobby.

**International:** Members are expatriates or speak a common language other than the primary language of their district, or come from different countries and meet online.

*Photograph by Frank Ishman*

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

# Ready, willing, and able

A Rotary Peace Fellow dedicates himself to providing others with the opportunities that were denied to him

"I view peace in terms of development," says Ronald Kasule, pictured here at the Rotary Peace Center in Kampala in 2021.

**Ronald Kasule caught polio** when he was 3 years old. The disease left him paralyzed. Seeing that the boy could neither walk nor feed himself, his father intended to end his son's life before he became a burden to the family. "My parents had fierce arguments over me," he recalls. "In the end, my mother prevailed. She made the tough decision of divorcing my father to save my life."

The family lived in Kisubi, a village about 60 miles southwest of Uganda's capital, Kampala. His mother sold practically everything the family owned to search for a cure. When treatment failed, she came up with many creative ways to train her son at home so he could live independently. But when Kasule reached school age, he had no means of attending the distant school. One day, he pleaded with his mother until she relented and allowed him to go.

"With a book in my hand, I went with my siblings," Kasule says. "But they ran very fast, and I could only crawl slowly on a gravel road. Before long, a rain came down. I had to turn around and go home. The rain had damaged my book. From then on, I voluntarily gave up the idea of schooling."

In 1986, when Kasule was 7, rebel groups waged a civil war against the new Ugandan government. His village was under frequent attacks by rebel soldiers. "One night, before soldiers raided our village, my mother had to escape with my siblings without me because I was a big boy, and she wouldn't be able to carry me. So, I was left alone in the house, with the door wide open." Fortunately, the soldiers never entered the house.

When soldiers terrorized the community during the day, his mother would carry him to the nearby woods and hide him behind a bush. "She would say, 'Ronald, if I survive, I will come back to get you, but if I don't, God will keep you,'" says Kasule. "I would lie quietly, in fear until my mother came at night."

These traumatic experiences motivated him in later years to apply for a Rotary Peace Fellowship. "A person with a disability cannot survive without peace," he says.



*Photograph by Tobin Jones*

As the civil war continued, Kasule and his family deserted their home and slept in the woods. They later moved to another region and stayed with an uncle, a schoolteacher who lived on campus. The relocation enabled Kasule to fulfill his childhood dream of attending school.

Kasule studied hard and excelled in his class. The charity organization ActionAid gave him his first wheelchair and sent him to study at Kampala School for the Physically Handicapped.

For Kasule, the path to education after the war was paved with frustration. Even though he achieved the best scores in the district, he was denied access to his secondary school of choice after the school found out that he was disabled. "The school insisted that I could not manage without support, yet there was no support available for me," he says.

Having dropped out of school, he tried to learn shoemaking. At Nkokonjeru Providence Cheshire Home, which provides vocational training to people with disabilities, staff members learned about his academic prowess and encouraged him to resume his studies, later sponsoring his college education.

"After college, I went back and tried to help people like me in my community to fight for equal access to education and jobs so we can fully participate in social, economic, and political life," he explains.

Since people with disabilities in Uganda often lack access to reproductive health education, Kasule says that many of them are sterilized without their knowledge because some people believe that people with disabilities should not have children. So after graduation, Kasule co-founded Access for Action Uganda, an organization advocating for inclusive policies to aid people with disabilities and other marginalized groups. He later served as the honorary council representative in a district government to advocate for the rights of constituents with disabilities.

Making up for his lost educational opportunities, Kasule earned a master's degree and completed several certificate programs, including one in sustainable development and global justice from the University of Antwerp in Belgium and another in social protection and inclusion of people with disabilities from Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Sciences in Germany.

In 2018, Kasule was selected for a U.S. State Department-sponsored fellowship in inclusive disability employment. He traveled to Washington, D.C., to visit private and public initiatives that promote employment for people with disabilities.

"When I came back, I was supposed to implement what I had learned," he says. "I had many ideas but did not know how to start." While figuring out solutions, he came across news about the new Rotary Peace Center in Kampala.

In February 2021, Kasule joined the inaugural class of 15 peace fellows from 11 countries at the Rotary Peace Center at Makerere University to study peacebuilding and conflict resolution. The program strengthened his peacemaking skills, allowing him to traverse Uganda, where he met with social service providers and other peacemakers.

"During my research, I noticed that more people are now attending universities to gain various skills for supporting persons with disabilities, but after graduation there is no work for them," he says. "Meanwhile, I have talked to many local companies, but most of them told me that they are not against employing people with disabilities. The challenge is that they do not have the resources."

In the summer of 2021, Kasule launched an online platform, Diversity Ability Support Network System, that provides information about disability resources, connecting Ugandans with disabilities with social agencies and service providers, such as home care workers, personal aides, and sign language interpreters. At present, he and his colleagues are redesigning the Dasuns platform, incorporating additional web and mobile-based applications and features to make it accessible to more users. Kasule's goal is to scale Dasuns across Africa.

"We often talk about peace in terms of conflicts," he says. "But for me, I view peace in terms of development — you cannot be at peace with yourself if you are hungry, you cannot be peaceful when you have no access to the support and resources available within your community. You'll feel sidelined." — WEN HUANG

Kasule (left) in the office of the online disability support platform he co-founded and (right) with his mother.

PHOTOGRAPHS: (LEFT) EMMANUEL MUSERUKA/MALAIKA MEDIA; (RIGHT) COURTESY OF RONALD KASULE

**Ronald Kasule**

- **Diploma in community-based rehabilitation,** Kyambogo University, Kampala, 2003
- **Bachelor's in adult and community education,** Makerere University, Kampala, 2008
- **Master's in educational planning, economics, and international development,** Institute of Education, University of London, 2013
- **Rotary Peace Fellowship,** Makerere University, Kampala, 2021-22

DISPATCHES FROM OUR SISTER MAGAZINES
*TAIWAN ROTARY*

# The Cambodia I know

While villagers rely on lake water for cooking and drinking, they also have to discharge kitchen and bathroom waste into the lake, turning the water turbid and unclean.

**When I first came to Cambodia** from Taiwan 11 years ago, many of my fellow Rotarians at home were unfamiliar with this land of plains and great rivers on the Indochinese Peninsula in Southeast Asia. But in recent months, Cambodia dominates the news headlines not only in Taiwan but also in many other parts of Asia due to the exposure of massive criminal scam operations there. Such negative news coverage does not reflect the country I came to know, so I felt it necessary to write about my experience there to show a different side of Cambodia from the perspective of a Rotarian. More importantly, I want to shed light on the role Rotary is playing in improving local communities.

As illustrated by the grandeur of the famed Angkor Wat, an ancient Buddhist temple complex designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Cambodia was home to a flourishing civilization that can be traced back more than 4,000 years. It has a wealth of natural beauty, from sunny beaches and pristine forests to expansive lakes and scenic islands. The capital city of Phnom Penh used to be known as Le Petit Paris de L'est (The Little Paris of the East). The country has a complex history marked by periods of peace and prosperity, colonialism, civil wars, and destructive political turbulence.

The first Rotary club was chartered in Phnom Penh as early as 1957, four years after Cambodia gained independence from France. The club dissolved during a series of civil wars in the 1970s. A Communist insurgent group, the Khmer Rouge, seized power in 1975 and established a national government headed by Pol Pot, whose brutal rule led to the deaths of an estimated 2 million people. By the time the Khmer Rouge was overthrown in 1979, most of the population lived in dire poverty. Cambodia is now among the least developed countries in Asia.

Rotary returned to Cambodia in 1995 after the country had entered an era of relative political stability under a constitutional monarchy. A new Rotary Club of Phnom Penh was chartered that year. As Cambodia experiences rapid growth, Rotary has expanded, and the country now has nine clubs with about 200 members. In the early days, most Rotary members were European and North American expats. At the end of 2016, under Rotary District 3350, which covers Cambodia, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam, a group of Taiwanese and other Chinese-speaking professionals who worked and lived in Cambodia formed the Chinese-speaking Rotary Club of Phnom Penh Capital. The club has served as a bridge between Rotary clubs in Cambodia and Taiwan, and collaboration has flourished. Joint service projects are being implemented every year.

Rotarian Chenyi Chiu helps a girl in Cambodia fill up a bottle of fresh, clean water from a water filtration system.

PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF *TAIWAN ROTARY*

Thanks to Rotary clubs in Cambodia and Taiwan, children who live near Tonle Sap Lake have access to safe, clean water.

← Rotary members travel to villages scattered on Tonle Sap Lake to train residents how to use water purification equipment.

↑ Chenyi Chiu, past president of the Rotary Club of Phnom Penh Capital, tastes the clean water filtered by a Rotary-donated purification system in Cambodia.

I became the president of the Rotary Club of Phnom Penh Capital in 2018. During my year, the club initiated a water and sanitation program with the Rotary Club of Taipei Everpeace in District 3481. It was one of the most memorable events during my journey in Rotary.

The project took place on Tonle Sap Lake, the largest freshwater lake in Southeast Asia. Near the Angkor Wat temple, it is one of the most biodiverse ecosystems in the world. Villagers live in houses resting on long stilts in the water or on tied-up bamboo rafts floating on the lake. While they rely on the lake water for cooking and drinking, they also discharge kitchen and bathroom waste into the lake. Oftentimes, I would see a woman washing vegetables and rice with water from the lake while her neighbor was cleaning a chamber pot nearby. As a result, the lake turns turbid and unclean. Microbial pollution causes severe disease infections. For villagers, having a glass of clean drinking water was a luxury, a dream.

We partnered with fellow Rotarians in Taiwan to provide water purification equipment for villagers. I worked closely with Wang Lee-Yuan, past president of the Taipei Everpeace club, and applied for a global grant from The Rotary Foundation. The grant allowed us to purchase the purification equipment and install it in five floating villages. The systems, developed by a Taiwanese company, can be reused for more than five years, and they work without electricity, which is not available in the floating villages.

The project was designed to benefit at least 10,000 villagers. Before installation, we made plans to provide training on how to use and maintain the equipment.

Traveling to the scattered villages was challenging. A few times, we were stranded on Tonle Sap Lake at night and had to wait for locals to rescue us. Such risks and challenges were worth it when we saw clear water gushing out of the purification equipment and shimmering under the bright sun. Children crowded around the machine and happily drank the water.

A girl handed me an empty bottle, asking me to fill it up for her. As we drank the water together, I felt the humanity of Rotary. Thanks to Rotary, having a glass of clean water is no longer a dream for thousands of people around Tonle Sap Lake. It's a reality. — CHENYI CHIU

HANDBOOK

# The Paul Harris scrolls

Preserving tributes to Rotary's founder

**Rotary's archives include** letters and gifts to founder Paul Harris that reflect the high regard members had for his vision of fostering friendship and international understanding.

As part of Rotary's commitment to honoring key figures in our history, archivists at world headquarters worked with a professional paper conservator to treat four handcrafted gifts.

All four documents were spot cleaned with a dry process that reduces superficial dirt. Before the items were placed in custom storage mats for preservation, three made of vellum underwent additional conservation work to stretch and flatten them after being rolled for an unknown number of years.

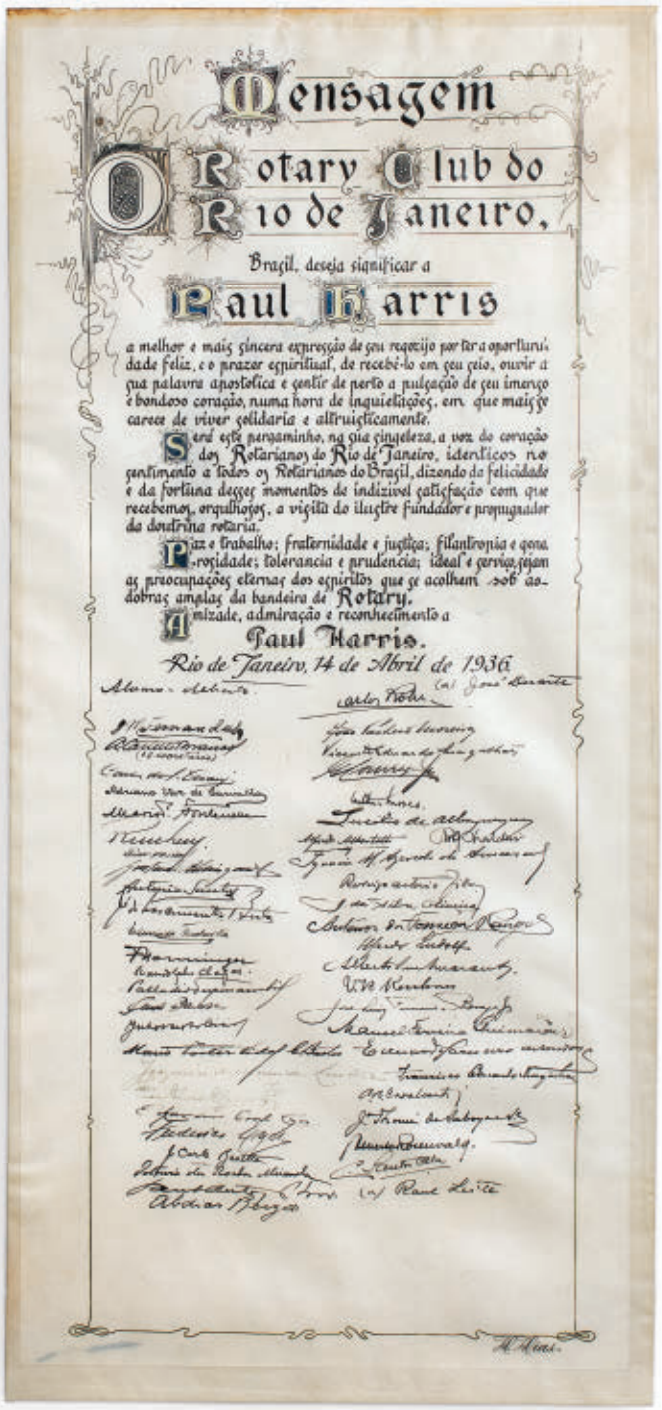
Below are the three vellum documents before conservation; at right are the results. — SUSAN HANF

Members in Guadalajara, Mexico, created a 75th birthday message in calligraphy with a painted Rotary emblem.

In January 1936, Harris and his wife, Jean, embarked on a three-month journey to Panama and several South American countries, where they met with numerous clubs. Harris' visit to Ecuador that February was commemorated by the Rotary Club of Riobamba with a beautifully illustrated message featuring hand-painted national symbols.

The Rotary Club of Cuenca memorialized Harris' visit to the Ecuadorian port city of Guayaquil with a scroll featuring an illuminated initial. Conservation included mending tears with Japanese tissue paper and wheat starch paste.

Brazil was Harris' last South American destination before a two-week ocean voyage to New York, and then home to Chicago. Members of the Rotary Club of Rio de Janeiro, which had been chartered 13 years earlier, signed an elegant message.



TRUSTEE CHAIR'S MESSAGE

# Think big, act big

**In a letter to his brother Theo in 1874,** Vincent Van Gogh wrote: "If you truly love nature, you will find beauty everywhere."

You can see Van Gogh's love of the natural world in his paintings: luminous sunflowers, gnarled olive trees, and the starry night sky over a Provençal village. When you see nature through Van Gogh's eyes or through your own, such as during a trip to the park or a beach, you can't help but stop to appreciate it. And when you love nature, you also want to take care of it.

April is Environmental Month for Rotary, and Earth Day is the 22nd. Marking the occasion with local projects such as roadside cleanups is fantastic and makes a difference. Consider also thinking big about protecting the environment — one of Rotary's seven areas of focus — by partnering with other clubs and districts on a larger-scale project funded through The Rotary Foundation.

The more our clubs work together on larger projects, the more we accomplish. Supported by a Foundation global grant, Rotary clubs in Pennsylvania and Brazil teamed up to provide plastic-processing equipment for a waste pickers cooperative in the city of Rio Claro. The workers, who recover recyclables from trash, increased their income by 50 percent and expanded the cooperative, while contributing to a cleaner environment.

Acting big is also one of the main ideas behind the Foundation's Programs of Scale. With each $2 million grant distributed over a program's three- to five-year duration, the work done on the ground scales up to fulfill the potential for long-term sustainable change. The 2021-22 Programs of Scale recipient, Together for Healthy Families in Nigeria, is hard at work right now on solutions aimed at reducing the country's maternal and neonatal mortality rates.

Programs of Scale grants are among the most exciting developments of Rotary and its Foundation in recent years. They will have a big impact on the world. Remember that Programs of Scale grants take nothing away from your Foundation grant projects; the money invested is a relatively small portion of the Foundation's total. In addition, The Rotary Foundation designed Programs of Scale to foster greater partnerships, which can include co-funding the initiative.

So, think big this month — about the environment and about global grants and Programs of Scale — and you will see that, when it comes to the good we can do through our Foundation, the "starry night" sky's the limit.

**IAN H.S. RISELEY**
*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?

### ROTARIAN CODE OF CONDUCT

The following code of conduct has been adopted for the use of Rotarians:

As a Rotarian, I will
1. Act with integrity and high ethical standards in my personal and professional life
2. Deal fairly with others and treat them and their occupations with respect
3. Use my professional skills through Rotary to: mentor young people, help those with special needs, and improve people's quality of life in my community and in the world
4. Avoid behavior that reflects adversely on Rotary or other Rotarians
5. Help maintain a harassment-free environment in Rotary meetings, events, and activities, report any suspected harassment, and help ensure non-retaliation to those individuals that report harassment.



*Illustration by Viktor Miller Gausa*

CALENDAR

# April events

## THE SHOE MUST GO ON

**Event:** Austin's Shoes Run
**Host:** Rotary Club of Corinth, Mississippi
**What it benefits:** Local scholarships and charities
**Date:** 1 April

This annual 5K run/walk is no April Fools' Day joke: Since 2009, it has raised nearly $300,000 for the club's many charitable causes. A 1-mile fun run immediately follows the race. The prize for each age-group winner is a medallion attached to a running shoe provided by sponsor Austin's Shoes, a regional business with a store in Corinth.

## BIG RUN ON CAMPUS

**Event:** Corvallis Half-Marathon and 5K
**Host:** Rotary Club of Corvallis After 5, Oregon
**What it benefits:** Local charities and The Rotary Foundation
**Date:** 15 April

In its 12th year, this event offers three routes: a half-marathon, a 5K run/walk, and a family-friendly 1K. Each starts and ends on the Oregon State University campus, with the longest course winding through residential areas, city parks, and rural areas west of town. The event has raised more than $350,000 over the years, much of which has gone toward a regional food bank.

## HOP TO IT

**Event:** Bunny Run
**Host:** Rotary Club of Bridge City-Orangefield, Texas
**What it benefits:** Local scholarships
**Date:** 15 April

For this eighth annual event, an Easter-time tradition in Bridge City, more than a hundred participants are expected to don bunny ears as they complete a 5K run or 1K walk. Additional seasonal attire is encouraged. In past years, the event has included egg decorating, an egg hunt, sidewalk chalk art, and a bounce house for kids.

## LIKE TO BIKE?

**Event:** Limestone Cycling Tour
**Host:** Rotary Club of Maysville, Kentucky
**What it benefits:** Relief for 2022 flooding in eastern Kentucky
**Date:** 29 April

This springtime bike ride, which the club organizes with the Limestone Cycling League, takes place on 100-mile (century), 62-mile (metric century), 40-mile, and 25-mile routes through northern Kentucky's rolling hills. Each route includes volunteer-staffed support-and-gear stops, and riders can look forward to live music and special offers at local eateries after they cross the finish line.

## DON'T BE SHELLFISH

**Event:** Crawfish & Craft Beer Festival
**Host:** Rotary Club of FishHawk-Riverview, Florida
**What it benefits:** Scholarships and local and international charities
**Date:** 22 April

Attendees at this 13th annual festival in Riverview can dig into a traditional crawfish dinner with corn and potatoes. For those not into shellfish, there will be hamburgers, hot dogs, and other food items available, along with plenty of craft beer. The Soul Circus Cowboys, a local Southern rock band, will provide entertainment. Admission is free, with dinner tickets sold in advance and at the event.

## KICK UP YOUR HEELS

**Event:** Frontier Day
**Host:** Rotary Club of Alvin, Texas
**What it benefits:** Local scholarships and charities
**Dates:** 26-29 April

The 49th annual Frontier Day festival kicks off Wednesday evening with the opening of a four-day carnival. An old-fashioned barn dance on Friday features live country music. Saturday's extravaganza includes a parade, an arts and crafts show, and a car and bike show. Kids will enjoy train rides, bounce houses, and mini golf throughout the day, while a beer garden will be open for adults.

**Tell us about your event.** Write to **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.

PHOTOGRAPH: GETTY IMAGES

PEOPLE OF ACTION

# Equity's honor guard

## İclal Kardıçalı

- Rotary E-Club of District 2440, Turkey
- Do You Like Music?

A community volunteer for 50 years, İclal Kardıçalı focuses on helping women and children through music. She conducts music training and therapy for displaced children, especially those from Kurdish, Syrian, and Roma communities. She helps children express themselves through music and understand its role in showing how diversity enriches the human experience. Kardıçalı trains teachers and students in music education, especially at state schools in the Izmir area that have fewer resources. She also supports the Children's Peace Orchestra, whose members lack housing. Her book, *Do You Like Music?*, is being translated into Braille, and she's working with Izmir community leaders to adapt the book for children with learning disabilities. She also donates copies of the book to students, teachers, organizations, and schools to make the project more sustainable. Her project is supported by Rotary clubs from Districts 2420 and 2440, along with Inner Wheel clubs in Turkey and northern Cyprus, state schools, Lions clubs, and the National Education Board of Çeşme for Teacher Training.

## Rosemary Nambooze

- Rotary Club of Wakiso, Uganda
- Angel's Center for Children with Special Needs

An advocate for children with disabilities and for inclusive education, Rosemary Nambooze founded the Angel's Center for Children with Special Needs in Wakiso, Uganda. Her advocacy comes from her experience as a parent of a child with Down syndrome and encountering a lack of services for children and their caregivers. Angel's Center hosts more than 120 children and provides early learning intervention, integrated therapy, outpatient services, and nutrition-focused sensory gardens. It supports caregivers with counseling and respite care, and helps teachers learn how to meet the needs of children with disabilities. Nambooze also helps young adults with disabilities find employment. Since 2012, her work has helped more than 150 children and 200 families. As president-elect of her Rotary club, Nambooze mobilizes members to advocate for all children to have equal access to education, health care, and community activities. The club's signature project supports inclusive education measures in schools, such as building libraries, implementing adaptive infrastructure, training teachers, developing a needs-based curriculum, and enrolling and retaining students with disabilities.

## Sarita Shukla

- Rotary Club of Global Action District 5150, California
- Astitva

Sarita Shukla, who belongs to a club with a global membership, is dedicated to supporting transgender people in New Delhi. She leads the transgender empowerment project, known as Astitva, at the mentorship organization Pahal-Nurturing Lives, which works to empower young people of all genders. Shukla says that, as the least understood and the most abused segment of India's society, the transgender population there is very vulnerable. People who are transgender often have no options to earn a livelihood other than sex work or begging. After the COVID-19 pandemic made earning an income more difficult, Shukla supplied transgender people with groceries and other necessities and worked with local authorities to get them vaccinated. She also helps educate people about HIV/AIDS prevention. Through Astitva she provides counseling, training, and mentoring to help transgender people pursue government and corporate jobs. She has reached more than 2,000 people through these initiatives and hopes to help many more.

On 16 January — Martin Luther King Jr. Day in the United States — Rotary International introduced its People of Action: Champions of Inclusion. On 4 April, the six honorees will be recognized for their commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion at an event in Cape Town, South Africa, hosted by Rotary and the Desmond & Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation. — ETELKA LEHOCZKY

## Anderson Zerwes

- Rotary Club of Encruzilhada do Sul, Brazil
- CDEI Brasil

A leader in diversity, equity, and inclusion in South America, Anderson Zerwes is an advocate for disability rights, and LGBTQ+, racial, and gender equality. He led the formation and is the current president of CDEI Brasil (the DEI committee in Brazil), which has more than 60 Rotary and Rotaract members from across the country and supports and guides local districts. His work has encouraged 27 of 31 district governors to make DEI chairs part of their leadership teams and ensure that DEI activities are part of the districts' focus. The committee has prepared educational materials, trained leaders, produced monthly webinars and social media content, and raised awareness about DEI events. It has also built partnerships with nongovernmental organizations and advised communities about DEI issues. Zerwes has worked closely with clubs, districts, and leaders in Brazil to ensure that Rotary offers a welcoming environment for people from diverse backgrounds. The committee regularly shares news about its activities with the Rotary Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force. Because of Zerwes' initiatives, CDEI has served as a model for other Rotary clubs and districts and has been replicated in other countries.

## Cam Stewart (Mikostahpinukum)

- Rotary Club of Calgary East, Alberta
- Indigenous Community Action Project

Cam Stewart has been active in diversity, inclusion, and human rights for more than two decades, with a particular focus on Indigenous inclusion. He founded and chairs District 5360's Indigenous relations committee, which is unique within Rotary because its members include Indigenous, non-Rotarian leaders. The committee, which reports to the district governor, ensures that Indigenous issues and people are a priority. It received a district grant for the Indigenous Community Action Project to address some calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. This project creates opportunities for Rotary clubs and Indigenous organizations to identify community issues, brainstorm solutions, develop initiatives, and take action together. Stewart provides resources for clubs to learn about diversity, equity, and inclusion issues related to Indigenous people and organizes events where people can meet, learn, celebrate, and build relationships. He also arranges for elders or other keepers of knowledge to participate in Rotary events. Stewart has been honored with an eagle feather and a pipe from Elder Doreen Spence and was given the Blackfoot name Mikostahpinukum (Red Morning) by Elder Herman Yellow Old Woman.

## André Hadley Marria

- Rotary Club of Thomasville, Georgia
- Spark Thomasville

A founding mentor of a program for entrepreneurs from underserved communities, André Hadley Marria is a diversity, equity, and inclusion leader in her club, district, and community. Governor-elect of District 6900, she has served as its DEI chair since 2020 and built a districtwide effort. After encouraging each club to select a DEI chair, she helped people identify personal biases and improve their clubs' culture and inclusivity. Marria was the first Black president of her Rotary club and led the club's first Black history program. She has had a variety of roles, including board member and executive director, at Spark Thomasville, a 12-week incubator program for entrepreneurs. She has helped participants set goals, develop business plans, improve their communication skills, and perfect their presentation pitches for a competition. She initiated a partnership between Spark and her Rotary club that provides program participants with educational materials and mentorship. Her leadership at Spark Thomasville led to a redesigned curriculum, a more diverse board, a more inclusive applicant pool, and the organization's status as a federally recognized nonprofit. Marria has also raised more than $500,000 for the Marguerite Neel Williams Boys & Girls Clubs of Southwest Georgia, where she continues her work in youth development.

2023 CONVENTION

# The best of breakouts

A breakout session on peacebuilding at the 2022 Rotary International Convention in Houston

**At the Rotary International Convention,** the big ideas and inspiration don't stop at the main stage. In dozens of breakout sessions in Melbourne, fellow Rotary members will present expert advice that you can take home to your club to boost its impact — and make your own Rotary experience even better.

During the 27-31 May convention, choose from sessions that address everything from how to use your listening "superpower" as a leader to ways you can help rebuild a local economy. Rotary members and experts will share tips on how to live the Rotary Action Plan, do what you can to address the world's biggest challenges, polish your leadership skills, grow club diversity, and interest newcomers.

In other planned sessions, you'll learn strategies to embrace new perspectives from young people (Reverse Mentoring: Empowering Young Leaders), raise interest in your group and its good work (Promoting Your Club by Inspiring the Community), and make Rotary membership meaningful for everyone (Creating a Comforting and Caring Club Culture).

A variety of sessions will dig into a rich pool of service ideas, including using tech hubs to help young people out of poverty, breaking the silence about menstruation needs, considering a plant-rich diet to address the climate, and stopping slavery, plastic pollution, malnutrition, and more.

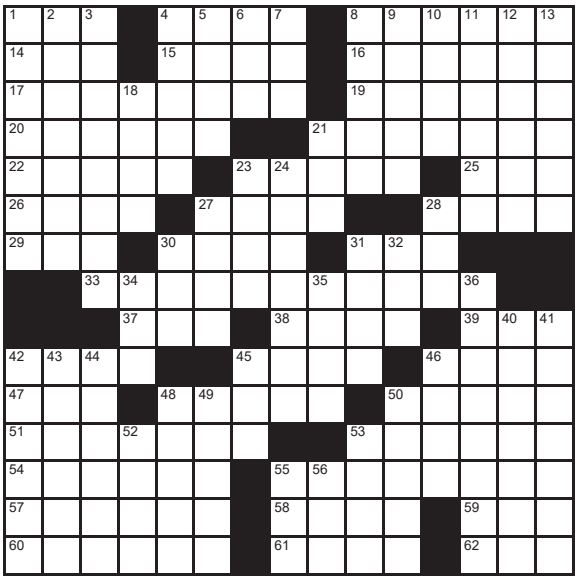
Browse the full preliminary list of sessions on the convention website to plan which workshops you want to attend. The sessions are 29-31 May. Registration isn't required, and seating is on a first-come, first-served basis. — ROSE SHILLING

Learn more and register at **convention.rotary.org.**

CROSSWORD

# Fourth-month facts

By Victor Fleming
Rotary Club of Little Rock, Arkansas



Solution on **page 10**

**ACROSS**

**1** "My country, ____ of thee ..."
**4** Hidden valley
**8** "Chances Are" crooner Johnny
**14** Card game brand
**15** Assuage
**16** 1998 British Open winner Mark
**17** Ecological awareness event first held April 1970
**19** Forward
**20** Cuts wool from, as sheep
**21** Ford introduced April 1964
**22** Brother of Marie Osmond
**23** Barn babies
**25** "Scram!" countrified
**26** Brews
**27** Navel accumulation
**28** 2017 Disney/Pixar film
**29** "Affirmative"
**30** Hair on a lion's neck
**31** Place to recuperate
**33** Bard who died April 1616, on or near his 52nd birthday
**37** Assayer's material
**38** Diplomat's talent
**39** Be advantageous
**42** Baby's boo-boo
**45** They may be wild
**46** Start to byte?
**47** Boombox button
**48** Close-knit group
**50** Assail
**51** Birthstone of 33-Across and others born this month
**53** 100-member legislative unit
**54** In the wrong, in a way
**55** One of this month's birth flowers, along with the daisy
**57** Mature viewers
**58** This alternative?
**59** ____ and haw
**60** Freak out
**61** Adventurous sort's acronym
**62** ____-Caps

**DOWN**

**1** U.S. election time
**2** Down, to gamblers
**3** Marathon aftermath
**4** Architect Frank
**5** Young fellows
**6** 58-Across, in Havana
**7** Marshal under Napoleon
**8** Iraqi city
**9** Makes ____ of things
**10** Collapsible shelter
**11** Tried
**12** Having an unexpected twist
**13** Serenaded
**18** Gets some sun
**21** "Welcome" site
**23** Speeder's punishment
**24** Low film rating
**27** Area behind a dam
**28** Airport rental
**30** Scratch, say
**31** Brief moments in time
**32** Butter helping
**34** Furrow-making tool
**35** Chopped-liver dish
**36** Memorial inscriptions
**40** Adolescents' support group
**41** Words between *una esposa y su esposo*
**42** Difficult experience
**43** 45-Down sort
**44** In myth he flew too near the sun
**45** Eccentric
**46** Fictional reporter Clark
**48** Actor Tom or composer Bill
**49** Existential turmoil
**50** Take care of
**52** "Country" unit of length
**53** Close, as an envelope
**55** Squalid digs
**56** Dr. Seuss' Cindy-Lou ____

PHOTOGRAPH: MONIKA LOZINSKA

Rotary

# IMAGINE ROTARY

Our dreams become reality when we engage and build partnerships that can change the world

Take action to:

- Imagine DEI. Expanding Our Reach: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Imagine a Welcoming Club Experience: Comfort and Care
- Imagine Impact: Expanding Rotary's Reach Media Tour
- Empower Girls

Learn more:
**rotary.org/initiatives22-23**

# Where the water is sweeter

Amritsari kulcha isn't your run-of-the-mill flatbread

**Nearly every culture** on Earth has its own version of flatbread, from Italy's focaccia to the Middle East's pita, from Native American fry bread to Chinese bing. The bread is a classic comfort food the world over.

In Davinder Singh's part of the globe, the northwest Indian state of Punjab, there's kulcha. "It's basically flour and water, a dough like any other bread," he says. But the version made in his city of Amritsar has a special ingredient: the local water. "If you use the same recipe in Delhi, you will not get the same flavor," Singh says. "Our groundwater is sweeter."

The name of his city, he explains, is made up of the words *amrit,* meaning nectar, and *sar,* meaning pool. "My city's literal meaning is pool of nectar," he says. "It's nature's gift."

**THE DISH:** Amritsari kulcha is mainly a breakfast food. The dough is made with a white flour called maida and that naturally sweet water. It's usually stuffed, perhaps with potatoes, cheese, or cauliflower, then traditionally baked in a tandoor, a clay oven. "Butter is essential," Singh adds. Most people indulge only on weekends or holidays. "When you eat it, you feel so sleepy you cannot go to work," he says with a laugh.

**THE ACCOMPANIMENTS:** Amritsari kulcha is often served with chole, a chickpea stew typically made with onions and spices, and a flavorful chutney of spring onions laced with plenty of aromatic coriander. "People from all over India eat this," Singh says, but he and his fellow Amritsari residents know the version made in their city is the best. — PAULA M. BODAH

**Davinder Singh**
Rotary Club of Amritsar, India



*Illustration by Whooli Chen*

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