

ROTARY

March 2023

A TIME TO HEAL

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ANNOUNCEMENT

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Lessons from the tea master

I will never forget the gift of meeting tea master Genshitsu Sen during my trip to Japan in November.

Not only is Sen the former grand master of the Urasenke tea tradition, but he is also an accomplished Rotarian. Those accomplishments include helping charter the Rotary Club of Kyoto-South, Japan, serving as president of the Rotary Club of Kyoto and governor of District 2650, and holding leadership roles in Rotary International and The Rotary Foundation.

It was an honor to spend time with him. He is a remarkable human being and a joyful soul. And his leadership and engagement in Rotary remain strong.

During that same week in Japan, I had the opportunity to record a video for a 100-year-old World War II naval hero and two-time Rotary district governor from Park City, Utah.

Sen and the Rotarian from Park City shared similar stories, though they served on opposing sides of the war. What was remarkable to me was that each of them chose Rotary to live lives of peacemaking. It struck me that we are all on this planet simply trying to do our best, and we are much more similar than we are different.

I feel incredibly fortunate to be able to witness these stories and meet such incredible people.

JENNIFER JONES

President, Rotary International



Top: Genshitsu Sen, former grand master of the Urasenke tea tradition, performs a traditional Japanese tea ceremony for Jones during her trip to Japan in November. The tea ceremony, known as *chadō*, dates back centuries and embraces the arts, religion, philosophy, and social life. Above: Sen stands outside the Urasenke tearoom compound where he lives in Kyoto. Rotary magazine wrote about Sen's remarkable story in the August 2022 issue. You can listen to an audio version of the story at rotary.org/peace-through-bowl-tea.





Rotary members (from left) Maria Pfizenmaier, Brett Hubka, and David Borgerding stand in front of Clay Center's newest mural.

YOU ARE HERE: Clay Center, Kansas

GREETING: Hello

SMALL-TOWN CHARM: At just over 3 square miles and with about 4,200 residents, Clay Center is the epitome of a small town. “We’re off the beaten path,” says Rotarian Brett Hubka. Among Clay Center’s unique qualities, it’s situated exactly midway between Los Angeles and New York — 1,224 miles from each city.

PICTURE PERFECT: A project called A Mural Movement began in 2020 when Hubka, then president of the Rotary Club of Clay Center, suggested hiring an artist to paint something eye-catching on the wall of a downtown building. The first work, a colorful greeting in the style of a postcard, went up across the street from City Hall. Last summer, the Wardcraft Homes store got mural No. 25, *Sunflower State of Mind*. “It’s been great for the town’s morale and for business,” Hubka says.

THE CLUB: The Rotary Club of Clay Center has added a dozen members since the mural project began. Its 61 members prove that small can, indeed, be mighty. — PAULA M. BODAH

ROTARY

March 2023

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A debt to the dead

Chris Kolenda's 1,700-mile Fallen Hero Honor Ride saluted six men who died in combat — and celebrated everything their lives embodied

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You asked. Gordon McInally answered.

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Life during wartime

Part 2 of a Rotary magazine editor's Ukraine report documents the help pouring in from members

By Wen Huang

On the cover: Chris Kolenda at Arlington National Cemetery after his bike journey to visit the graves of fellow soldiers
Photograph by John Boal

Members of the Rotary Club of Madras Elite, India



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STAFF CORNER

Kei Nakai

*Manager for the Japan office in Tokyo and
for Club and District Support services*

I was born and raised in Fujisawa, Japan, about 30 miles south of Tokyo. Like Malibu in California, Fujisawa is famous for its beaches and marine sports. Growing up, I always loved boardsailing, also known as windsurfing. When I attended Meiji University in central Tokyo, I joined a boardsailing club and competed for a spot on the Japanese national team for the sailing Division II class at the 1988 Seoul Olympics. After graduation, I became a volunteer head coach for the club for 12 years. Members of my boardsailing club went on to compete for Japan's national sailing team and in the Olympics in London in 2012 and in Tokyo in 2021.

Prior to joining Rotary, I worked at Air New Zealand for 23 years, first as a clerk in its reservation department in Tokyo and later as a marketing communications executive and travel services manager. One of my happiest memories with the company involves running Air New Zealand's sponsorship program. I had the opportunity to work with the America's Cup, the oldest and biggest international sailing competition, and the All Blacks, New Zealand's national rugby union team. I met a lot of interesting sports figures and learned a lot about these sports.

My career took a dramatic turn in March 2011 when Japan was hit with an unprecedented earthquake and a tsunami. Around the same time, a series of destructive earthquakes occurred in the area of Christchurch, New Zealand. As you can imagine, the natural disasters

deterred many New Zealand tourists from visiting Japan and vice versa. Air New Zealand's business in Japan suffered, and the company had to lay off many employees. I was put in charge of negotiating between the company's staff in Japan and officials at its headquarters in Auckland. The yearlong mediation efforts left me exhausted. I developed a heart problem that needed surgery. Upon my recovery, a friend, who had been a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar while in college, connected me with Rotary.

I've been with Rotary for 10 years and am now manager of the Rotary International office in Japan. I run the day-to-day operations of our Japan office and Club and District Support.

Even though I don't do any boardsailing now, I watch it a lot on TV. For sports, I kayak, which is less strenuous. I have also become an avid marathon runner. Three months after my surgery, I participated in a full marathon and managed to finish. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, I registered for one marathon a month. I will travel to Los Angeles for a marathon in March.

While most people visit their doctors for their annual medical checkups, I check my own health by climbing Mount Fuji, the tallest mountain in Japan (12,388 feet), every year. It normally takes me four to five hours. If I complete it, I give myself a clean bill of health.

— AS TOLD TO WEN HUANG



Kei Nakai (far right) with his family: (from left) his son Keita; his daughter-in-law, Yume; his wife, Yoshiko; and his son Sota

Letters to the editor

ONE FOR THE ROAD

Interesting article about how the Rotary Club of Chelan, Washington, keeps wine bottles out of the landfill [“Turning wine bottles back into sand,” December]. Here in Klamath Falls, glass is crushed at the landfill to make a weatherproof base for roads. It works better than gravel, and it is free.

Alan Eberlein, Klamath Falls, Oregon

HOME COOKING

I am an Armenian American and a proud member of the Rotary Club of Las Vegas. What a joy to see the article “A medieval soup for today” [Last Bite, December]. Although I have never eaten [the Armenian soup] khash, I do enjoy a plate of hummus, pita bread, and home-cooked grilled lamb kabobs that my folks make. Maybe I will eat khash one day. What a treat!

David Tulanian, Henderson, Nevada

PEACE SIGNS

The December issue included Rotary ads about being a peacebuilder in your community, creating an inclusive club culture, referring new members, promoting your club, and engaging and building partnerships that can change the world. All of these beautifully designed pages demonstrate Rotary International’s commitment to the Object of Rotary’s fourth part [“the advancement of international understanding, goodwill, and peace through a world fellowship of business and professional persons united in the ideal of service”].

Rotary magazine can help by sparking Rotary members’ desire to understand people with different cultural backgrounds and to facilitate a welcoming environment to all. Each community needs positive peacebuilders to restore kindness, love, and compassion.

Huey-Ming Tzeng, Galveston, Texas

THE BEAUTY OF ROTARY

The December issue brought me back to a question most Rotarians have heard: “What is Rotary?” If you asked the 1.2 million Rotarians, I bet you would get 1.2 million answers. And I believe that is the



beauty of Rotary. Through our commitment to diversity and inclusion, each of us sees Rotary in our own way, but everyone’s view is included.

Bob Withers, Fallon, Nevada

GREAT WORK

Thank you for the excellent magazine. As a fairly new Rotarian, I recognize that the publication is a great conduit of communication for sharing knowledge about Rotary and the noble work undertaken by members to serve their communities and the world at large. Keep the great work going!

Shanthi Thiruchelvam, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

ROLLIN’ WITH JENNIFER JONES

In 2017 I was asked to drive the Rollin’ with Rotary RV [which traveled across the U.S. to promote Rotary]. On the RV was then-RI Vice President Jennifer Jones, along with several young professional Rotarians. Each day I noticed how she was always prepared and quick with a smile and a word of encouragement. As a result of witnessing Jennifer’s daily leadership and her commitment to the ideals of Rotary, those dedicated Rotarians have remained involved as club and district leaders. Rotary International is lucky to have such a talent as our president.

Steve Dakin, Boone, Iowa

OVERHEARD ON SOCIAL MEDIA

In December, we highlighted a Washington club’s project to keep glass out of landfills by using a pulverizing machine to turn it back into sand.

—
This sounds like a very meaningful project to save our environment. Thanks, Rotary Club of Chelan.

Jesse Tam
► [via LinkedIn](#)

—
We need a coalition of nonprofits to purchase and operate the machinery in every community. Stop using plastic.
William Black
► [via LinkedIn](#)

—
Wow! What an impact this group is making. Bravo!
Laura Stewart
► [via LinkedIn](#)

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THE SPECIALIST

Seize the moment

*A focus on now can be an antidote
for present tense*

I was born in Dublin, but my father worked in the Middle East when I was a child, and we lived in Bahrain for a year and a half. That's where my lifelong interest in travel and meeting people from different cultures began.

At university, I studied the economies of developing countries. That paved the way for doing aid work in Africa and Asia. During those times, I learned that there are different types of wealth and different types of poverty. You can be materially poor but rich in so many other ways.

After 14 years away, I came home to Ireland. I had experienced a lot of stress, and I decided to try meditation. When you meditate, your mind becomes clearer. You're able to face your fears, solve your problems, and let go of the past.

Anxiety comes from an unhealthy focus on the future, and depression comes from an unhealthy

focus on the past. Meditation is valuable because it connects people to the moment.

I now specialize in corporate well-being programs. I help people be less stressed, more focused, more engaged at work — to participate in life in the way they wish to.

Stress is more about how you respond to what happens rather than what actually happens. A lot of stress is created by focusing on what you don't want. Focus on what you want. Live a life you don't need to escape from.

None of us are immune to the storms. Difficulty comes to everybody's life, but we need challenges to grow. Focus on what you can control and take action. Worrying about things you can't control only causes fear and stress.

If there's something you can do to make now better, do it. If you can lift your spirits even a little, that's enough to move you into action. Newton's first law of motion says that an object in motion tends to stay in motion, and an object that is stuck tends to stay stuck. That applies to us. If we can get enough energy or inspiration to take some action, we will get motivation for the next step and then the next step and the next step. Once people get a bit of momentum, they feel so excited and happy.

— AS TOLD TO GEOFFREY JOHNSON

**Calodagh
McCumiskey**
Rotary Club of
Wexford, Ireland
CEO, Spiritual
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A Rotaractor directs a film school in Uganda

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Watch your waste

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A legacy that lasts in perpetuity

PUBLIC SAFETY

Fire extinguishers

On opposite sides of the world, Rotary clubs confront the increasing threat of wildfires

The warning, sudden and ominous, came 7 November 2019 from the Rural Fire Service in New South Wales: A bushfire burning in Australia’s Tapin Tops National Park had broken containment and was headed toward the little town of Bobin. “Seek shelter as the fire approaches,” commanded the fire service. “Protect yourself from the heat of the fire.”

For many, the warning came too late. “One of the local residents stayed behind to protect her property,” says Maurie Stack, a member of the Rotary Club of Taree on Manning, based in a town just outside the fire’s reach. “When the access roads were cut off by fires, she took refuge in a small creek, where she lay under water with just her nose protruding as the fire swept overhead, taking her home and belongings.”

That woman wasn’t the only resident to lose her home. The fire destroyed about 20 houses, nearly half of the homes in Bobin, along with the town’s schoolhouse, which dated to 1883. Nearby in Caparra, 12 homes were lost.

The conflagration that ravaged the two towns was known as the Rumba Dump Fire. It was just one of the fires that devastated Australia in the 2019-20 bushfire season. By the time the season ended, bushfires razed 3,500 homes, burned about 94,000 square miles, and left 34 people dead, including six Australian and three U.S. firefighters. The Royal Commission that investigated the disaster reported that financial losses would exceed US\$7 billion.

BUT AS ANYONE paying the slightest attention to the news can attest, cataclysmic seasonal fires — overall made more destructive and more frequent by climate change — are not exclusively an Australian phenomenon. Just ask Cindy Latham.

The first suggestion Latham had that disaster loomed came when an alert appeared on her phone 30 December 2021. She lives in Evergreen, an unincorporated town about 20 miles southwest of Denver, Colorado. It’s situated in Jefferson County, where wildfires are a constant threat, so Latham regularly tracks safety alerts on her phone.

It turned out this notification was for Boulder, about a 40-mile drive north of Evergreen. Yet for Latham, the threat remained personal. She immediately got on the phone with a sister who lives with her family in Boulder County and issued a prompt command: “You need to evacuate.”

Her sister resisted, saying she had received no official alert to evacuate, despite the fact that the grassland-fueled Marshall Fire (as it came to be known), supercharged by 110-mile-per-hour winds, was growing more and more intense. Repeated pleas from Cindy — “Get out! Your lives are in danger!” — had no effect. It was only after a county sheriff knocked on her sister’s door and insisted the family leave that they fled in their car. It took them six hours to travel the 40 miles to Evergreen, where they took refuge in Latham’s home.

Miraculously, the sister’s house survived, though many other area

The Rotary Club of Evergreen, Colorado, developed a wildfire preparedness guide. Access it at [rotarywildfire ready.com](https://rotarywildfireready.com).



Top: (from left) Julie-Ann Booth and Paul Tollis, members of the Rotary Club of Taree on Manning, talk with Bob Pope of the Rural Fire Service following a bushfire awareness training session in Bobin. The Australian club's project included the installation of an automated sign (above) that provides timely information about fire danger.

homes — by one news account, about 900 in six hours — were destroyed, making it Colorado's most destructive fire. More than a year later, Latham still has trouble understanding her sister's recalcitrance. "She didn't even know about signing up for Boulder County's emergency notification alerts," she says. "She never thought about it. People don't imagine it could happen to them, and they aren't prepared to do the things that they need to do to keep their families safe. That just reinforced every sin-

gle thing that I have been concerned about, the lack of preparedness for our communities that are at risk for wildfire."

As it happened, Latham had already begun to take steps to address that lack of preparedness — and she had turned to the Rotary Club of Evergreen for assistance.

IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE Rumba Dump Fire in Australia, members of the Rotary Club of Taree on Manning had similarly resolved to reduce future bushfires' impact, particularly in Bobin and Caparra. They carefully evaluated what had happened in the November 2019 fires and identified four areas that needed improvement. Backed by a global grant totaling nearly US\$50,000, the Taree club, with the Rotary Club of Windsor-Roseland, Ontario, serving as its international partner, set about making those improvements a reality. Maurie Stack, a past governor of District 9650 (Australia), and Aruna Koushik, who would

become 2021-22 governor of District 6400 (Canada), took the lead at their respective clubs. The team also included Taree club member Terry Kitching, who brought with him the expertise acquired during 40-plus years with the New South Wales Rural Fire Service, including serving in a command position during the Rumba fire.

The year 2019 had been the hottest and driest on record in Australia, which meant that water to extinguish bushfires was not always immediately on hand. Responding to the Rumba fire, the Bobin Rural Fire Service brigade had to travel 25 minutes each way to obtain a single load of water; the brigade serving Caparra had to travel even farther since the creek it normally relied on had dried up. In response, the Bobin and Caparra Bushfire Protection Project presented the Bobin community with a 100,000-liter (about 26,400-gallon) water tank and ancillary equipment. A second 100,000-liter tank was installed near Caparra.

The project also funded a sprinkler

system in Bobin's community center, where many residents sought shelter during the Rumba fire, and it paid for an automated sign that provides accurate and timely information about fire danger levels. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the project funded sessions by the Rural Fire Service that trained about 100 volunteers from Bobin and Caparra in bushfire awareness, which included learning how to prepare for the fires and what to do when they occur. The overall goal was to keep the communities safe — and their residents prepared.

BACK IN COLORADO, that is exactly what Cindy Latham and the Rotary Club of Evergreen were up to. Latham moved from Northern California to Evergreen in the spring of 2018, and from a distance, she watched in horror as the Camp Fire nearly wiped the town of Paradise, California, off the map. "And then," she says, "I realized that the conditions and the landscape in Evergreen were pretty much the same as in Paradise." Furthermore, she discovered that, because unincorporated Evergreen has no municipal government, there were no fire preparedness plans in place.

Latham joined the Rotary Club of Evergreen in 2019, and working alongside other members, she helped lay the groundwork for what would become the club's Wildfire Ready program. Collaborating with county officials and fire departments, the club created a website and brochures addressing topics such as defensible space preparation, fire-resistant landscaping, important wildfire resources, and "go bag" essentials.

Taking a tip from a project in Nevada backed by Rotary clubs near Lake Tahoe, the program arranged for the installation of two infrared cameras that will help fire officials



monitor potential wildfires. Beginning in 2021, Wildfire Ready repurposed a bright yellow firetruck, received as a donation, into a mobile education platform that has become a regular feature at community events. As all this was going on, Evergreen Rotary members carefully tracked data about their outreach efforts' effectiveness. "We try to measure what's working and what's not working," Latham says. "We're always learning, always trying to do things better."

Other Colorado clubs have adopted the Wildfire Ready program, including the Rotary Club of Boulder, so hopefully next time, if there is a next time, residents will be well-prepared. "That's where the power of Rotary is," says Latham. "They can get on the ground in their communities and make the connections to get people to pay attention to important issues. And that's been a powerful device to help get our community prepared for wildfires."

— GEOFFREY JOHNSON

READY, SET, GO

Tips from the Wildfire Ready program:

- Sign up for your local emergency alert system.
- Prepare a wildfire action plan, including establishing a predetermined location where family members can meet. Pack your go bag of essentials to take along, and inventory the contents of your home.
- If you receive an evacuation notice, leave early. That gives your family the best chance of surviving a wildfire and helps emergency personnel by keeping roads clear of congestion.
- Establish in advance several travel routes in case your evacuation route is blocked.
- Dress yourself and family members in clothes that offer protection from heat, flying embers, and flames. Natural fabrics, such as wool and heavy denim, are generally better than synthetic cloth, which can melt with contact to heat.

Learn more at rotarywildfireready.com.

As Cindy Latham (right) looks on, Paul Amundson, a battalion chief with the Colorado Department of Fire Prevention and Control, discusses the evacuation steps exhibit at the Rotary-sponsored Wildfire Ready fire truck during Wildfire Community Preparedness Day in Evergreen, Colorado.

Short takes

New Rotary Fellowships were recognized in the fall, focused on coffee lovers, fine arts, performing arts, public speakers, rugby fans, and literature in the Indian language Kannada.



Interota, the Rotaract convention held every three years, is 2-6 March on the Tunisian island of Djerba. Learn more at interota2023.com.



PROFILE

Lights ... camera ... person of action

A Ugandan Rotaractor teaches filmmaking to help others heal from trauma

Cedric Bichano
Rotaract Club
of Nakivale

It could have been a scene from a movie. Tragically, it was all too real. In the spring of 2007, Cedric Bichano was living with his parents and siblings in the conflict-ridden Democratic Republic of Congo. One “fateful night,” he says, “our home was attacked by armed groups, and I lost my parents. Miraculously, I escaped. I was still a child, and I didn’t know where I was going. I was just running away from a bullet.”

After finding refuge elsewhere in Congo for several years, Bichano ended up in Uganda. Since 2013, he’s been a resident of the Nakivale refugee settlement, a huge rural camp in southern Uganda that’s home to about 170,000 people. An aspiring filmmaker, he’s a member of the Rotaract Club of Nakivale, “a family,” he says, “that I found in the middle of nowhere.”

An aficionado of films about Africa, Bichano is also the founder and CEO of the World Refugee Film Academy, which teaches other displaced people about all aspects of the moviemaking business, from cinematography to screenwriting to costume design to makeup. Writing about the academy, Bichano explained that its overall goal is to equip individuals with “the creative and technical skills necessary to explore the concerns of their own communities and to help express themselves creatively.”

In so doing, the academy, established in 2017, helps both its founder and the 300 students who have attended classes heal from earlier traumas. “We have to train people to tell their stories, because sharing their stories could give them peace of mind,” Bichano says.

— GEOFFREY JOHNSON

RI President Jennifer Jones hosted Monarch Mondays, a four-part discussion series about how Rotary members can help save the butterflies and other pollinators. Watch at on.rotary.org/monarch.



The Rotary Foundation raised more than \$1.1 million in support of Giving Tuesday, 29 November.

Rotary Peace Fellowship applications will be accepted through 15 May. Learn more at rotary.org/peace-fellowships.

People of action around the globe

By Brad Webber

67 pounds, 1.8 ounces

Heaviest cantaloupe melon recognized
by Guinness World Records



United States

Southern Michigan lore tells of a wanderer who handed melon seeds to a greenhouse owner. The resulting Howell melon has been celebrated by townsfolk with an annual festival now in its 63rd year. The Rotary Club of Howell has gotten in on the festivities by selling a Howell melon–flavored ice cream. In August the 40-member club sold 7,000 cups of the ice cream and 1,500 half-gallon containers over the weekend fair. More than 100 people, including Rotarians, members of the Interact Club of Howell High School, and school athletes, pitched in to help. The endeavor scooped up \$30,000 for scholarships, local youth programs, and other community projects. “It’s so popular that no matter what time we say we’re going to start selling there’s going to be a line,” says Sandie Cortez, a past president of the Howell club. “People go crazy over this.”

Rotary
Club of Howell



Peru

This month the Rotary Club of Chinchá is scheduled to unveil a new addition to a shelter that houses vulnerable girls ages 5 to 17 in the Ica region. The girls, some of whom have been abandoned by their families or are victims of abuse, “need a lot of psychological help,” says Mónica Avilés Calderón, a past club president. The club completed the first building, with a capacity of 30 residents, in 2000. Soon the number of girls living in the shelter more than doubled. Starting in 2018, the club expanded capacity with additional buildings, costing about \$35,000 each. The three new structures were funded primarily by donations from the Rotary Club of Flawil, Switzerland, and District 2000 (Liechtenstein and Switzerland). The Chinchá club raised the remaining funds.

Rotary
Club of
Chinchá



3 in 10

Peruvians living
below the national
poverty line

Czech Republic

Amid the metaverse and other digital kingdoms, all things analog still have an appeal to younger generations, asserts the Rotaract Club of Most. The club played host to its third annual board games festival, which attracted more than 250 competitors over two days in October. "Board games in the Czech Republic are on a big rise since the beginning of the pandemic, and such an event made sense to us," says Petr Machovec, a past club president. "The secondary aspect of this was to engage new people in our club activities." For a \$3 entry fee, players could hear local professionals discuss developments in the games industry and try more than 150 games, many curated by club members and unique to the country. The most skilled won tournament prizes.



Rotaract
Club of Most

269 moves

Longest recorded tournament chess game

Circa 1590

Compound microscope invented

Australia

Since 2010, about 800 schools have been equipped with more than 24,000 portable microscopes through the Microscopes in Schools project. The Rotary Club of Freshwater Bay started the project. But for many years it became the intense focus of Diane Collins, charter president, and her husband, Kenneth, a past Rotary International director and Foundation trustee who died in August. Besides sacrificing garage space for storage and a distribution operation, the couple promoted the microscopes, enlisted Rotary club sponsors, kept records, and carried out the more mundane tasks. The project has multiplied in a big way. "It currently allows in excess of 280,000 students annually, in all states of Australia as well as many countries in Asia and the Pacific, to develop a love of science," Collins notes.

Rotary
Club of Freshwater Bay



\$2 million

Biggest prize purse at an officially sanctioned table tennis tournament



India

Table tennis ranks among the most popular sports in India. Tapping into that enthusiasm, the Rotary Club of Chennai Riviera is providing coaching to 17 deserving athletes ages 7 to 12. "All these children belong to underserved families and have the inclination to pursue the sport," says Club President Asha Daniel. "We want them to utilize this sport to improve themselves further and become good at it, giving them exposure and opportunities for a good education and life." The club covers breakfast and the cost of coaching, and a club member provides workout space, reducing the project's cost. To fund the annual \$4,000 training expense, the club in November staged a Future Paddlers Tournament that attracted 135 contestants ranging from 10 to about 70 years old, generating about \$2,700 through entry fees.

Rotary
Club of Chennai Riviera

Confessions of an obsessive

Worried about the environment? That's not weird; it's wise

By Alan Castator



My wife thinks I should seek therapy. She says I'm obsessed with waste and that I exhibit weird and unnatural behaviors that reveal my compulsive obsession.

OK, you decide. We have a sign above our toilet that says: "All TP, except brown, goes in the waste can. We know it's gross ... but you'll get used to it." I ask you: Is that weird?

My daughter dropped her paper in the toilet and then apologized. I told her, "It's not too late to put it in the wastebasket." My wife said that was weird.

My wife also thought it was weird when, feeling cold in the house, she suggested turning up the thermostat — and I suggested she might want to put on a hat. Is that weird? Suggesting that someone who is cold put on a hat?

I will admit that, years ago, when recycling came into vogue, I may have gotten carried away. First thing you know, I'm the only guy in the whole town riding his electric bicycle to the recycling facility with a load of recyclables on the bike rack. Why drive when you could ride an electric bike? OK, so I was the only guy with an electric bike. So what?

Then we moved out West and met some people who were even more dedicated to conservation. Like my neighbor. He dries his clothes on wood racks connected to pulleys so that he can raise the racks to the ceiling to utilize the rising heat. That was the end of our clothes dryer. Don't own one now; wood clothing racks all the way. And the moisture ups the humidity in the house in the winter.

We live in the mountains, where the forest desperately needs thinning and the summer wildfires are out of control. The forest service thins the forest and gives you wood to burn, all cut into rounds. We started using our wood stove to burn that free wood, but then we noticed the smoke coming from our chimney. Unacceptable.

So we purchased a well-engineered, high-efficiency wood stove, which we use to heat the house and cook our food. The stove has a catalytic converter that reburns the smoke before it goes out the chimney. Our HVAC consists of a floor fan attached to the wall that blows the heat downstairs. Unattractive, but it works quite well.

An empty car idling in front of a store angers me. Not only is it a waste of gas, but it pours carbon dioxide and other

greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Trucks, SUVs, and big cars rankle me, but an unattended vehicle idling at the curb is outrageous.

As for trucks, SUVs, and big cars, they not only burn lots of fuel, but their manufacture dumps carbon into the atmosphere due to the pig iron necessary to make those huge things. My wife and I reduced our automobile inventory to one car decades ago. And always a Prius, purchased used.

Most passenger flights deposit tons of carbon emissions into the atmosphere, so we don't fly. Instead, we drive the Prius and take the extra days necessary to arrive at our destination. And look at the benefits we enjoy: We get to see the United States, and we don't get treated like an animal going to the slaughter by airport personnel. You reclaim your independence when you don't fly.

My wife and I take "military" showers. That means water off when soaping up and water on when rinsing off. We stand in the shower in plastic tubs that catch the gray water, which we then use to flush the toilet. Nothing weird about that.

Our energy conservation has cost us at least one friendship. We were gone from our home in Michigan for several months, and the 30-gallon hot water heater was turned off. Our friends wanted to stay in our house for 14 hours while attending a party. We said, "Fine, but please do not turn on the hot water heater." End of friendship. You have to walk the talk.

This isn't political; it's personal. It's existential. What kind of an environment awaits a child born today? I won't be alive 30 years from now, but if you will, what do you think the planet is going to look like? Do you think you're going to ski in the mountains? Do you think you'll be able to see objects 100 feet below the surface of Lake Tahoe? What will Florida's coastline look like? Can we just be bothered to change our habits and preserve the place a little longer?

Thomas Friedman, the Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist for the *New York Times*, recently provided an unflattering assessment of our demands as Americans: "We want the cheapest possible gasoline and heating oil prices so we can drive our cars as fast and as much as we want — and never have to put on a sweater indoors or do anything to conserve energy." Can we dispute that notion generally?

I'm sorry, but we can't have it all. We have to address this climate crisis — and there's nothing weird about that.

Fortunately, there's one extraordinary group of people well-positioned to address this problem: members of Rotary. In the five years before Rotary adopted protecting the environment as an area of focus (in 2020), The Rotary Foundation allocated more than \$18 million in global grant funding to environment-related projects. So Rotary is already walking that talk.

It would be weird to show members of Rotary a problem and not offer some solutions. So here's one: solar panels. No speeches, no legislation, no agonizingly long wait for a return on your dollars and efforts. No carbon exchanges, no carbon tax credits to calculate. One solar panel, anywhere, means fewer greenhouse gas emissions over time. Buy one today, maybe 100 next year. You always get a bang for your buck. Just like a single polio vaccine. Or a million polio vaccines.

Is it possible for you members of Rotary to start funding some solar panels? I know that your clubs already have their budgets in place and that your favorite projects are already rolling along. And you're to be commended for that. But could you perhaps schedule solar panels for next year? Your mission statement could be: decrease the more than 50 billion tons of annual global greenhouse gas emissions by generating electricity for individual households through solar panels.

That's one solution. And there are lots more. Making the change from our former habits to new habits of continuous conservation is an easy mental adjustment. There's no extra work, just different work. Different habits. It can be fun, kind of a game with yourself.

I have a game with *my* self. I pick up clothing from the side of the road, launder it, and wear it. Makes for great conversations. And funky hats. I aspire to find a leather belt with someone else's name tooled into the leather that I could wear. I mean, why not? It's fun, and it conserves energy and resources. It's just one more positive environmental habit. And if that's weird, all right then, I'm weird. Just don't tell my wife. ■

A retired trial lawyer and a champion of Rotary's solar oven projects, Alan Castator is a docent at the Tahoe Environmental Research Center.



GOODWILL

Making a plan

The power of giving in perpetuity

Gityjoon and Mike Hebel have been part of Rotary for more than 30 years. Now in their 70s, they intend to be members of their club for the rest of their lives.

They've made plans for beyond that too.

"We want a way to continue that participation, let's just say post-death," Mike says. "The way we can do that is through the endowment we have set up with The Rotary Foundation. We feel comforted that we will be a part of all the projects Rotary does, and all the projects it will do in the future. We want to have an endless participation in Rotary."

Mike joined the Rotary Club of San Francisco-Greater Mission in 1990. He was a police captain assigned to a station in the neighborhood when the city's police chief, who was a Rotary member, urged him to join the newly chartered club. Although he was soon transferred to another station and later retired to work full time as an attorney and welfare officer with the San Francisco Police Officers Association, he stayed with the club, "mainly because of the friends I have made and the international and community projects we are involved in," he says. "Rotary became very important to me."

Gityjoon joined the club a few years later, finding Rotary's motto of Service Above Self consistent with her spiritual teacher's philosophy: "love all, serve all, help ever, hurt never." "That's my religion," she says. "That's what I live by."

Gityjoon, who moved to the United States from Iran in 1967 and is involved in real estate, has long donated 10 percent of her gross income to those in need, with a particular interest in mothers and children. She was inspired by her mother. "If it was the last penny in her pocket, she'd give it away."

As Gityjoon saw the impact her own donations had, she learned of more need and was inspired to give more. "It's like a chain from one step to another," she says.

The Hebels have included The Rotary Foundation in their charitable giving for three decades, but it was at the 2014 Rotary International Convention in Sydney that they were moved to do more. There, they heard about a \$1 million donation toward ending human trafficking, a goal that Gityjoon is especially passionate about. They noticed a Rotary Foundation booth, where they learned about the power of giving to Rotary at higher levels. They have since become Arch Klumph Society members, donating \$1 million to the Foundation. And they've included a bequest for \$10 million in their wills.

The Hebels encourage other Rotary members to join the Legacy Society, which recognizes those who promise a gift of \$1 million or more to The Rotary Foundation in their estate plans. "You will never see a hearse with a luggage rack on it," Mike quips. "You can't take it with you." — DIANA SCHOBURG

Visit rotary.org/legacy to find more information about including a commitment to the Foundation in your will or estate plan.

WHY GIVE TO THE ROTARY FOUNDATION?

The Hebels say the Foundation stands out for the following reasons:

Outstanding ratings by independent organizations

Charity Navigator has given the Foundation a four-star rating, its highest possible, for 14 years in a row.

Low overhead

In 2021-22, 89 percent of the money given to The Rotary Foundation went to programs. "To me the standard is Rotary's standard," Mike Hebel says.

Stewardship

"Their financial reporting is done very well — it's very clear, very easy to understand," Mike says. Money that Rotarians donate is "being guarded well, used well, protected well, invested well."

Gityjoon Hebel adds: "We believe in the Foundation and the whole of Rotary. The money goes to good use, and we have seen it. That trust for me is the most important part."



RECRUIT PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT LEADERS

FOR THE 2024 ROTARY PEACE FELLOWSHIP

Selected fellows receive full funding for a master's degree or post-graduate diploma in disciplines related to peace and development.

Rotary members play a key role in recruiting candidates globally!



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^A *debt* TO THE *dead*

Chris Kolenda's 1,700-mile Fallen Hero Honor Ride saluted six men who died in combat — and celebrated everything their lives embodied



Three days after completing his honor ride, Chris Kolenda sits on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C.

*Break, break
Bulldog-6, Bulldog-6.
Where are you?*

*Bulldog-6, come in
Bulldog-6*

*Bulldog-6 ...
Come in*

Bulldog ...

Tom ...

The family of Jacob Lowell had arrived early. They milled about for a while and then sat on the folding chairs they had arranged at the edge of a vast expanse of grass. Spread before them, in precisely laid-out rows, stretched a landscape of identically shaped headstones, bone white against the green. More people arrived: in jeans and garrison hats, in ball caps with crossed rifles stitched in gold, and in T-shirts bearing slogans like, “Remember Our Fallen Heroes.” They shook hands and embraced, sometimes weeping, sometimes chatting, sometimes simply standing in silence before one of the many markers casting slanted shadows under a mostly cloudless sky.

They had been told to be at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood, Illinois, at 1 p.m., and now, the hour having arrived, they turn their gaze down a long driveway. There they spot the man for whom they have been waiting. Gripping the handlebars of his custom-painted Specialized Aethos Pro bike, he coasts the last couple of hundred yards to where the people have gathered.

Fifteen years earlier, Private First Class Jacob Lowell, 22, had been on patrol in Gowhardesh, Afghanistan, when insurgents fired a rocket-propelled grenade into his Humvee. When he and the other members in his squad jumped out to return fire, a bullet ripped into his leg, spraying blood and muscle. Despite that, Lowell managed to climb back into the Humvee, heave himself into the vehicle’s turret, and seize the twin handles of the mounted .50-caliber machine gun. He was blasting the attackers when a second, fatal shot hit him in the chest. He died 2 June 2007, only a few days after the arrival of the new commander, Lieutenant Colonel Chris Kolenda, the man now stepping off his bike at the Illinois cemetery.

Kolenda, since retired as a full U.S. Army colonel, led a unit in 2007 and 2008 of some 800 paratroopers, including Lowell, in what was then among Afghanistan’s most lethal regions. Over the summer and fall of 2007, Kolenda lost six men. As the 15-year anniversary of those deaths approached, Kolenda, a member of the Rotary Club of Milwaukee, decided he needed to do something to honor the memory of those six paratroopers.

The best way, in his mind, was to visit the graves of each man: Lowell, Chris Pfeifer, Ryan Fritsche, Adrian Hike, David



Images from Afghanistan (clockwise from top left): Jacob Lowell; (from left) Tom Bostick, General Joseph Votel, and Kolenda; Chris Pfeifer; Bostick; and (from left) David Boris and Adrian Hike



Boris, and Tom Bostick. At the gravesites he would meet their families, tell them their loved one was not forgotten, and allow them to share their grief with him, while also sharing his own.

But how to do that, given that the gravesites stretched across 1,700 miles, from Nebraska to Arlington National Cemetery outside Washington, D.C.? Driving seemed too easy; walking would take too long. He settled on riding a bike. The only problem? He hadn't ridden a bicycle in 20 years. Would his body hold up? He was in his late 50s and, while reasonably fit, was hardly in shape for such an undertaking.

Equally as uncertain: Would his emotional and mental state be OK? After all, each of the six men who died had done so following his orders. And they were not strangers. Among them were close friends, men he had come to love and admire. When a neighbor told him he was "nuts" to try the ride, it struck Kolenda that she was probably right.

I MET WITH KOLENDA IN MILWAUKEE, at the century-old home he is renovating with his wife, Nicole. At 57, he is a central-casting prototype for what you'd imagine a retired military officer to be, in manner,

looks, and bearing. He has a neatly trimmed full head of salt and pepper hair, a squarish jaw, and a face on which plays a mix of earnest forthrightness and playful humor.

When we spoke in late September, Kolenda was preparing to fly to Spalding, Nebraska, to begin the first leg of his journey with a visit to the grave of Chris Pfeifer. He would start the ride 25 September, 15 years to the day since the private first class died from wounds inflicted in combat a month earlier at his outpost.

"He was shot in late August," Kolenda says, sitting across the dining room table from me. "The bullet just missed his body armor by a fraction of an inch and penetrated his chest." Nearly as bad, the round nicked Pfeifer's liver, causing mass bleeding that would require multiple surgeries and blood transfusions over several weeks.

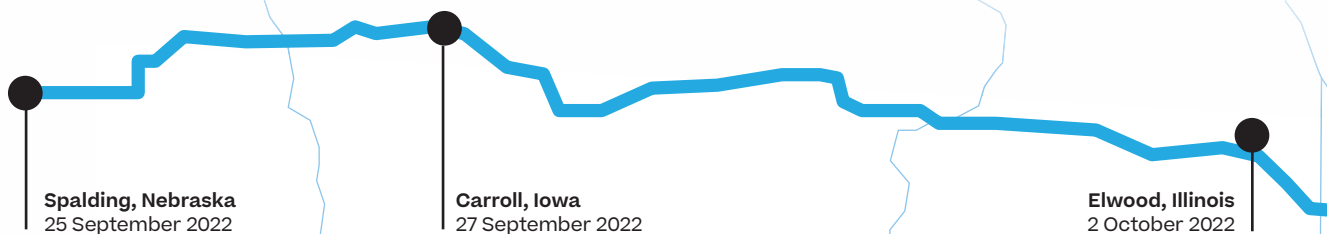
Kolenda says that many aspects of that day continue to haunt him, but one most deeply. "I just remember those eyes," he says. They were searching but couldn't really focus. "I was talking to him, and he knew it was my voice. I was telling him to hang in there, saying 'Go Huskers' and stuff like that because we're both from Nebraska. His eyes were orienting on me, but they weren't really tracking." Eventually, Pfeifer was evacuated home to San

Antonio, Texas, where his wife was entering her ninth month of pregnancy. The wounded paratrooper fought for his life for a month, but died 25 September 2007. "The next day his wife went into labor," Kolenda says, "and the day after that, his daughter, Peyton, was born."

DECLARING HIS INTENTIONS TO MAKE

such a daunting journey — a trip that would span nine states and 1,700 miles on pedal power alone — was one thing. As a military man, Kolenda knew the trip would succeed or fail on two things: training and logistics. For the former, he turned to a riding coach recommended by a friend. He needed a bike, of course, but not just any bike — one that was durable, but lightweight. He had no clue what to pick, so his next-door neighbor suggested he visit a nearby branch of Wheel & Sprocket bike shop.

"I met a guy named Jerry Cahak there," says Kolenda. "I told him what I was doing and said, 'I have no idea what kind of bike to get.'" Cahak outfitted Kolenda with the Trek Domane bike he'd use while training for the ride. (The bicycle company Specialized donated the custom-painted Aethos Pro that Kolenda used during his trip.)



A memorial in motion

Over 28 days last fall, Chris Kolenda bicycled 1,700 miles to honor the six paratroopers from his unit who were killed or fatally wounded while serving in Afghanistan in 2007.



Pfc Chris Pfeifer

11 April 1986 - 25 September 2007. St. Michael's Cemetery, Spalding, Nebraska



Sgt Adrian Hike

21 July 1981 - 12 November 2007. Carroll City Cemetery, Carroll, Iowa



Spc Jacob Lowell

4 May 1985 - 2 June 2007. Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery, Elwood, Illinois

And then Kolenda took a decisive step. "I started telling people what I was going to do so I couldn't chicken out," he says with a laugh.

For the next 17 months, Kolenda rode 25 to 60 miles per day, with barely a day off. Kolenda had taught at West Point, and one of his former students plotted his route. Kolenda booked hotels in each of the six locations and contacted the families of the six paratroopers he was honoring. He would have to pray that the weather — and his body — held up.

He did not kid himself that any of it would be easy. Still, he was a little taken aback when a cyclist friend told him about the realities of long-distance biking on major roads. "He said that some deranged driver ran him off the road one time, and now he's got 11 pins in his clavicle. So, it's the injuries, the accidents, and those kinds of uncertainties that are the biggest fears."

His primary focus, as planned, was on honoring the dead — never forget — and the living, the families that grieve yet. But

Kolenda wanted his effort to have a larger impact. The varied mental health and substance abuse issues that await service members who make it home are a heart-breaking reality. Kolenda often speaks about the particular vulnerabilities of veterans, including himself, to post-traumatic stress, feelings of aimlessness, and a lack of a sense of belonging.

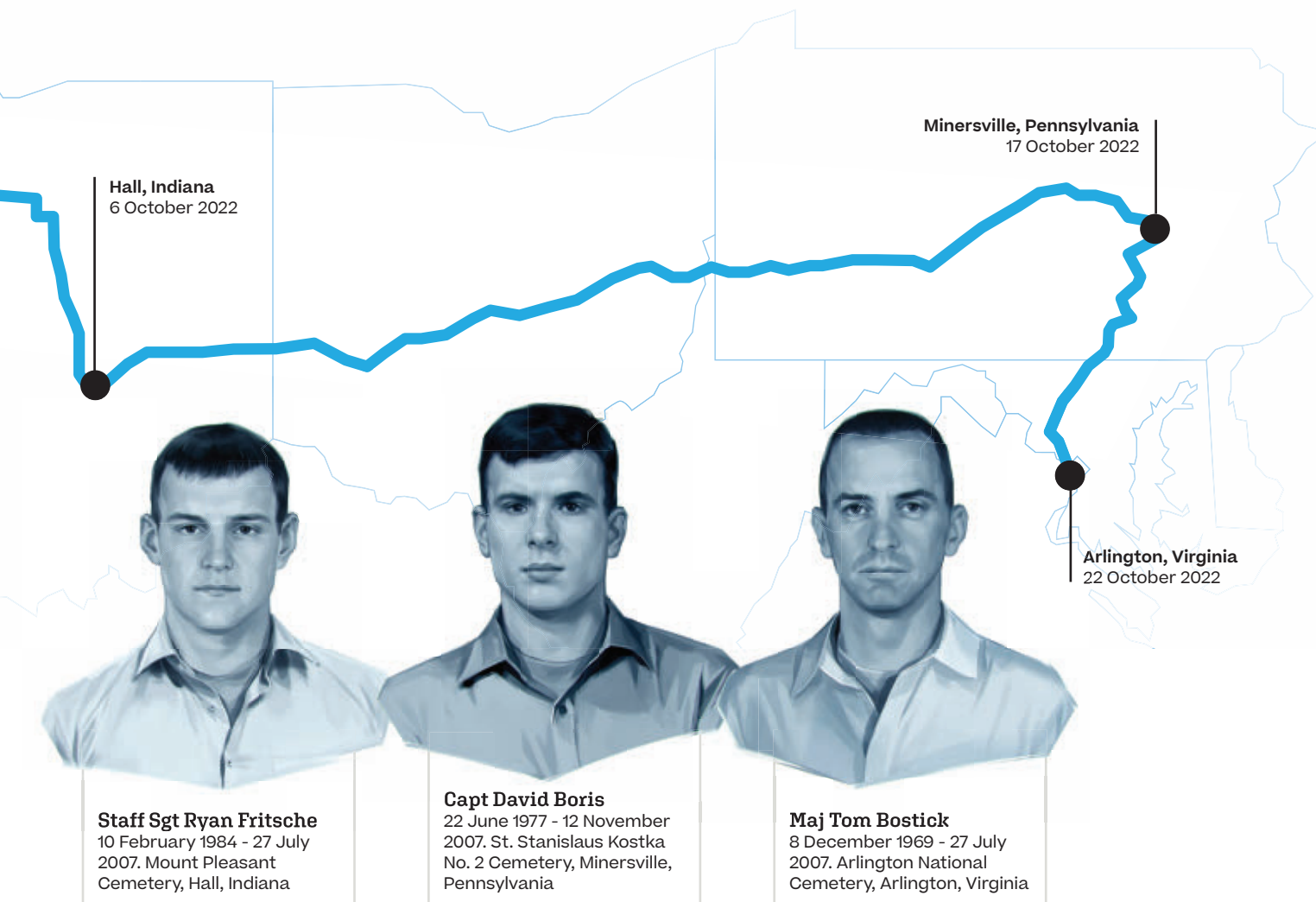
"When most of our paratroopers are in combat, they've got this incredible sense of purpose," he explains. "You know, we are deployed to a foreign land defending our country. They have this tremendous sense of belonging. They've got the United States of America wanting them to be successful, giving them the resources to succeed. That's very powerful. A lot of people will look back on their days in combat as among the happiest days of their lives."

Life is the opposite after they return, he says. "Now, 'Nobody gets me. I don't feel like I belong.' And so our folks, at ages 35 to 45, are entering the most dangerous parts of their lives."

Kolenda points out that the United States lost about 7,000 service members in the post-9/11 wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, while more than 30,000 veterans and active duty members of those wars have died by suicide. They are figures Kolenda cites at every stop on his Fallen Hero Honor Ride.

He's also using the ride to raise money for an endowment for his Saber Six Foundation to support veterans of the 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade and their families. The endowment will also fund a scholarship, hosted by the Rotary Club of Milwaukee, to assist underserved youths in the area. "The Rotary Club of Milwaukee is honored that Chris entrusted us to carry forth the legacy of his men by creating paths for young people to pursue their education and create better lives for themselves and their families," says Todd Bentley, the club's 2021-22 president.

John Page, a former infantry officer who was with Jacob Lowell in 2007 when



the paratrooper was killed, is among those who battled (and largely overcame) the kinds of issues Kolenda describes. Page believes that the collapse of his marriage is largely due to his “inability to connect” with people after returning home from Afghanistan, and he still struggles with post-traumatic stress disorder — what Kolenda calls “post-traumatic stress normal” for combat veterans. “I’ll watch a war movie,” Page tells me in Elwood after remarks by Kolenda, “or walk out onto my porch in Tennessee on a cold night, and suddenly I’ll be back [in Afghanistan]. It’s so strange how the mind works.”

Page, who retired as an Army major in 2015, is a social worker and suicide counselor for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, working “with families like the Lowells who have lost someone,” he says. He traveled from Nashville to Elwood for the ceremony honoring Lowell for two reasons: to meet Lowell’s family and, he hoped, to help heal the guilt he has felt over Lowell’s death. “It was my job to

bring Jacob back, and I failed,” he says. “It’s been hard to let that one go. I thought it would be helpful for me to come up and meet them [Lowell’s parents] and tell them a little bit more about Jake’s story.”

Ray Lowell, Jacob’s father, says the presence of Page and others who served with his son moved him deeply. “I talked to John Page for three hours yesterday,” Lowell says, standing a few feet away from his son’s grave, as bells peal in the distance. “And just seeing the guys who served with Jacob: It meant a lot.”

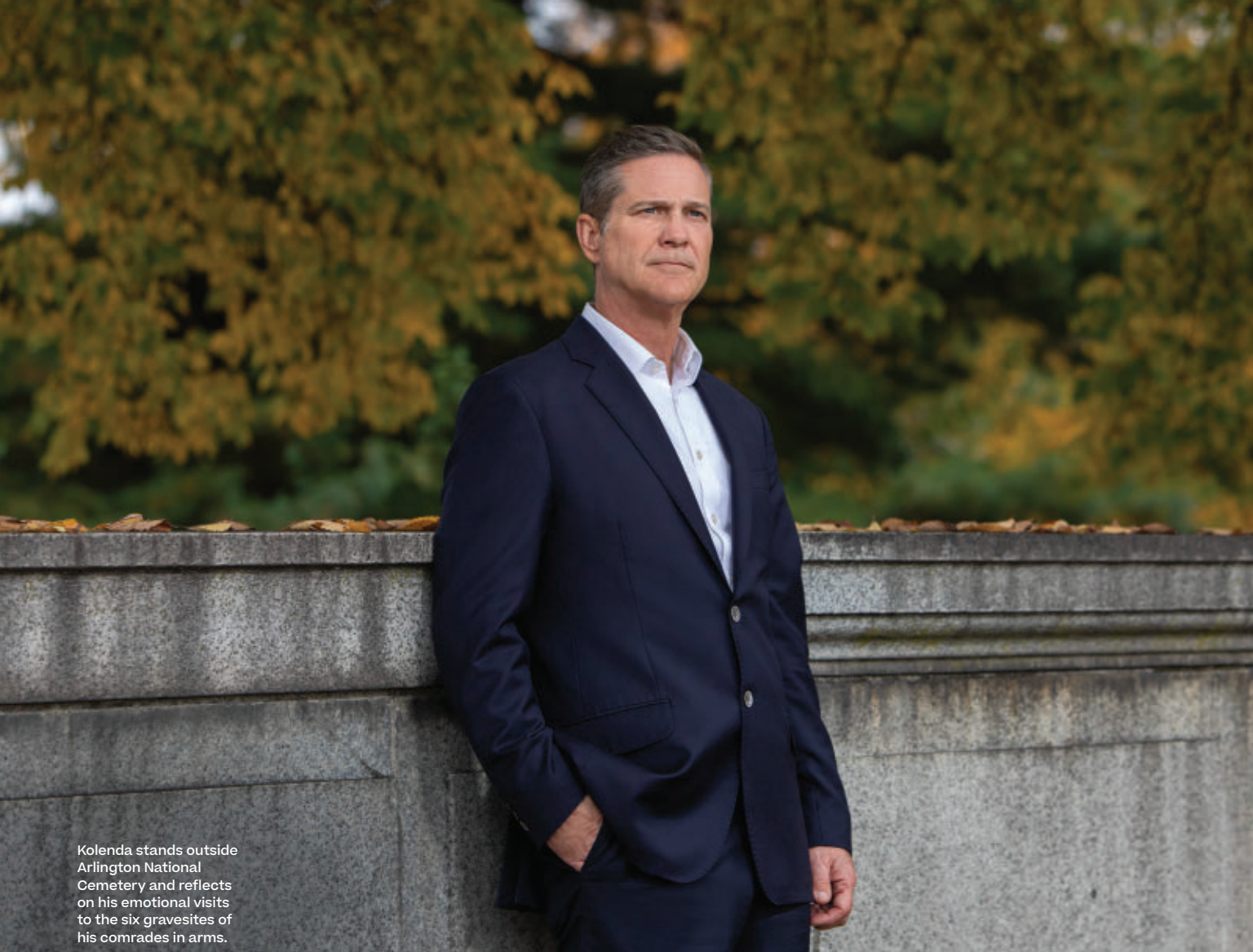
When I caught up with Kolenda in Elwood, he had already logged some 600 miles, much of the distance “against some pretty strong headwinds,” he says. His journey began at Chris Pfeifer’s gravesite in Spalding, Nebraska. “Because I was born in Omaha, Chris and I would talk about Nebraska football all the time,” Kolenda says. In Afghanistan in August 2007, Kolenda and Pfeifer often chatted about the Cornhuskers’ upcoming season when Kolenda visited Pfeifer’s outpost. “He was

always Mr. Reliable,” Kolenda says. “Always doing the right thing to protect his comrades.”

From Nebraska, Kolenda rode 200 miles to Carroll, Iowa, to visit the grave of Sergeant Adrian Hike. Killed 12 November 2007 when the Humvee in which he was a gunner was hit by an improvised explosive device, Hike was the first soldier Kolenda ever pinned with a combat medal. “He saw some really heavy fighting in Iraq in 2004, 2005,” Kolenda says. “He was an extraordinary soldier. I remember one of my staff sergeants said, ‘There is nobody I trust my life with more.’ He was that good.”

The trip wasn’t all plaudits and solemnity. Kolenda experienced his first road rage incident in Nebraska, when someone with Iowa plates yelled expletives at him as he made his way along the highway shoulder. He was drenched in Pittsburgh during a long day of rain, the only real weather issue he encountered.

Throughout the ride, Kolenda followed a strict regimen. He rose each morning at



Kolenda stands outside Arlington National Cemetery and reflects on his emotional visits to the six gravesites of his comrades in arms.

7:15 and ate a bowl of oatmeal with walnuts, fruit, and honey. On the road, he would fortify himself with energy gels and Honey Stinger waffles. At night, he ate a high-protein meal and mapped his itinerary for the next day. He usually plunged himself into an ice bath or stepped under a cold shower and then pulled on what's called a Speed Hound — inflatable compression sleeves and boots for his legs and feet that massaged his muscles and dramatically accelerated recovery time. He was usually asleep by 10 p.m., then out the door by 8 a.m., “ready to rock and roll again.”

AS THE FIGHTING RAGED, KOLENDA monitored by radio. It was 27 July, and the battle was not going well. His men had been pinned down along a switchback that ran through a bowl of a valley, frowned down upon from all sides by mountain

ridges. Sounds of battle shattered the otherwise quiet valley: grenades, machine guns, rocket-propelled grenades. Mortar shells whistled overhead, followed inevitably by concussions and smoke, while A-10 Warthog jets roared across the sky, leaving in their wake the shuddering boom of their payloads exploding.

Captain Tom Bostick, one of Kolenda's closest friends in Afghanistan, was leading the imperiled Bulldog Troop. As Kolenda recalls it, one paratrooper, Ryan Fritsche, had already been shot dead. Others were wounded. Bostick, whose radio call sign was Bulldog-6, and three other men were pinned down on a steep mountainside. Tom Bostick, whose family traced its military roots to the Revolutionary War, whose paternal grandfather was at Pearl Harbor when it was attacked, who had another relative who survived the Bataan Death March.

Now Bostick, one of Kolenda's best and brightest, was in deep trouble. Enemy grenades were landing ever closer to his position.

“We need cover!” Bostick radioed. “I think they're coming from the ea —”

Kolenda heard the grenade blast from well across the valley and immediately got on the radio.

Break Bulldog-6, Bulldog-6. Where are you?

No answer.

Bulldog-6, come in Bulldog-6. Where are you?

Bulldog-6.

No answer. Kolenda knew. His friend was gone.

ON KOLENDA CHUGGED. FROM ILLINOIS and the ceremony honoring Jacob Lowell to Hall, Indiana, where Ryan Fritsche was

In Illinois, Kolenda grieves at the grave of Jacob Lowell.



Spread before them, in precisely laid-out rows, stretched a landscape of identically shaped headstones.

buried. “When I think of Ryan Fritsche, I think of benevolence,” Kolenda says. “It’s this combination of good grace, good spirit, wanting to make everybody feel like a winner.”

Kolenda cycled east through Ohio, to Minersville, Pennsylvania, and the grave of David Boris, a captain. “Dave was one of my troop commanders,” Kolenda says, and like Kolenda, Boris was a West Point graduate. Kolenda had known Boris since late 2003, longer than anyone in his unit. “Dave was like a little brother to me,” Kolenda says. Boris was killed in the same IED explosion that took the life of Hike.

Kolenda’s trip through Pennsylvania proved to be the most difficult. He was holding up fine physically. But riding through the state he encountered hostility. “Road rage on a Sunday,” Kolenda says. “It was in Amish country, so there was a lot of horse and buggy traffic.” But

there were also cars and trucks roaring by at 80 miles per hour, and more than once, Kolenda was almost run off the road. “I was white-knuckling for 77 miles,” he says.

He made it unscathed, and that meant he had one last stop — the grave of Tom Bostick at Arlington National Cemetery.

DRENCHED IN THE LEMON SUNLIGHT of a cloudless early fall afternoon, the seemingly never-ending sea of white marble headstones at Arlington National Cemetery appears almost incandescent against the deep green of immaculately trimmed grass from which they rear.

It is a Saturday, and the shrine to the nation’s war dead brims with families visiting graves. Tourists absorb the vastness from a steady stream of trolleys. Despite the throngs, the grounds are still enough to hear the snap and snarl of a giant Amer-

ican flag flapping nearby.

As had been the case weeks earlier at Lowell’s grave in Elwood, Illinois — and at the four other stops along Kolenda’s journey — a group of about 30 friends and family strains for a glimpse of the arriving colonel’s bike, eager to greet him at his final destination.

When he finally appears, however, about an hour beyond the scheduled time, he is on foot — in his socks. He had alerted the park’s security about the event, but guards refused to let him ride his bike. Since his only shoes were his riding cleats that bolt to his pedals, he took them off. He had come this far. He wasn’t going to let Bostick’s loved ones down, even if it meant crawling the half-mile to the grave.

He pinches the bridge of his nose and his eyes are wet, and he nearly falls into the arms of the people who receive him. He had begun the journey nearly a month

earlier. In preparing, he knew it would be tough — physically, of course, but spiritually as well. Each of his previous five stops had been deeply emotional — healing, yes, but also draining.

None more so, however, than this last visit to the grave of Tom Bostick (who received a posthumous promotion to major). After composing himself, Kolenda calls for a long moment of silence and then, as he had done throughout, he recounts the last moments of the serviceman's life. This time, Kolenda could barely choke the words out, his own words to Bostick that day 15 years earlier, after the rocket-propelled grenade had hit:

"Bulldog-6, where are you?" Kolenda says.

"Bulldog-6, where are you?"

Kolenda's voice trails off as he repeats the phrase one last time.

There would be a dinner later that night to celebrate the trip. But for Kolenda, in this moment, the journey is over.

KOLENDA AND HIS MEN, IT TURNED OUT, were part of a history-making effort. By diplomatically reaching out to an insurgent group, they were not only able to motivate that group to stop fighting but convinced them to support the Afghan government, a singular achievement in the 20-year history of the war. It's one of the things Kolenda is most proud of and one that, to him, elevates the heroism of the six paratroopers who perished under his command.

Kolenda drew on that truth in the days after he completed his Fallen Hero Honor Ride. "All of that emotion," he says. "Just being at the six gravesites and meeting all of those families and seeing the people who served with them. And thinking about Afghanistan and those deployments." And remembering the grief and the monthlong journey to honor that grief. "Now that it is done, you can kind of let it go," he says.

"You know, this is the end of this 1,700-mile journey, it's the end of this chapter," he continues. "And it's like, we actually did this. So, it's a sense of finality and gratitude, all at once." A feeling of a job well done. ■

A regular contributor to Rotary magazine, Bryan Smith wrote about the Chicago rapper Phenom and his Emcee Skool for our February 2022 issue.



Kolenda completes his journey at Arlington National Cemetery, the final resting place of so many of America's fallen heroes.



PHOTOGRAPH: BRYAN SMITH



You asked. Gordon McInally answered.

Responding to your
questions, Rotary's
president-elect says
he plans to lead
with caring as his
core value

Photography by Kevin Serna

If you ask Gordon McInally anything about his upcoming year as Rotary International president, he'll immediately stop you. "It's not about *my* year. It's about one of Rotary's years," he corrects. "I'm a great believer in continuity, and I don't see the years in isolation."

On a blustery October day, McInally (that's pronounced MAK'-ihn-al-ee) sat down with six members of Rotary's communications team to take questions gathered via social media from Rotary members around the world. He has a quick sense of humor and an easy banter that filled the room with laughter as a film crew set up boom mikes, cameras, and lights. In introducing himself as a member of the Rotary Club of South Queensferry, Scotland, he quipped about his distinctive speech: "Despite the lack of an accent, I am Scottish, and very proud of that fact."

McInally's Scottish heritage is apparent in his office, where a brightly colored landscape painting by the Scottish artist John Lowrie Morrison adorns a wall. Scotland isn't always as dreary as it is typically depicted, he notes. "Sometimes it's a very bright place." In fact, there are a lot of stereotypes about Scotland that McInally is looking to move past. "The tartan, the plaid, it's very traditional, very stereotypical," he says. His presidential tie, instead, was inspired by the bright colors used by Morrison, his favorite artist, along with the colors in a seashell from Thailand that helped inspire his presidential theme. Among other colorful curiosities in McInally's office is a giant cardboard rendition of his head, which he received after a Rotary institute in Minneapolis. Visitors are keen to hold it up for social media selfies. "I think they get more sense out of the head than they do out of me," he says with a laugh.

McInally joined the South Queensferry club when he was 26 years old. He and his wife, Heather, had recently gotten married and wanted to put down roots in the community outside of Edinburgh. A farmer they had met invited them to a Rotary social event and then to a couple of Rotary meetings, and before McInally knew it, he was on the road to Rotary membership. (Heather McInally is also a Rotarian, belonging to the Borderlands satellite club of the Rotary Club of Selkirk.) "I couldn't see how a dentist working in isolation in Edinburgh could make a huge difference in the world," he recalls. "But I very quickly realized that by being part of Rotary, I could, and I did."

He would like to use his year — scratch that, the 2023-24 Rotary year — to spotlight mental health, an issue that has touched his family directly and that is all too often kept under wraps. McInally is an ambassador for Bipolar UK, an organization that supports people with the illness as well as their families and caregivers. Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland recently launched a partnership with the organization to bring members' skills to help build a more robust network of support groups around the country. "I'm a big believer in using Rotary members' skills, rather than just their checkbooks," he says.

The following is a condensed version of the town hall. Watch it at rotary.org/mcinallytownhall.



What are your core values, and how do they shape how you lead?

■ **Natarajan Sundaresan**, Rotary Club of Koothapakkam, India

My core value can be expressed in one word, and that is “caring.” I like to think that I care for people. Professionally as a dentist, I cared for people for many, many years. It’s something that was instilled in me by my parents. It’s something that we have instilled in our own children. And the great thing is I now see it being instilled in our grandchildren. I think if the world was a more caring place, a kinder place, then it would be a much happier place and a much more peaceful place. Peace is one of the issues that I particularly want to see us move forward.

How can we reignite members of Rotary who appear to have “lost their spark”?

■ **Jannine and Paul Birtwistle**, Rotary Club of Guernsey, in the Channel Islands

I know Jannine and Paul very well, and it’s nice to receive a question from them. I think the way to reignite the lost spark in certain members of Rotary is to make sure that the Rotary club experience is as good as it can be and suits everybody. It’s not a case of one-size-fits-all. Some clubs will want to meet in a country club and spend 2.5 hours over lunch. Other

clubs will want to meet for 45 minutes on a Saturday morning over coffee and a bagel, and then get out and do service.

It all comes down to the service. We are a membership organization and a service organization. It’s not either/or. We need to be out there doing service, because not only will we enjoy that more, we will also see more people want to come and join us because they can see us.

What concrete plans does Rotary have to address climate change in 2023-24?

■ **Abdur Rahman**, Rotary Club of Secunderabad, India

One of the big projects that we’re working on at the moment is planting mangroves in various places around the world, and there are many others. But we have to remember that Rotary, on its own, will not be able to solve the problem of climate change. We need to work at the level we are capable of working at and encourage and advocate governments around the world to ensure that we address the issue of climate change going forward.

How can we motivate more Rotaractors to join Rotary clubs?

■ **Dale Kerns**, Rotary Club of North East, Maryland

We need to bring them into Rotary

I’m a great believer that everything starts with hope.

clubs as Rotaractors and allow them to help shape the club going forward. We talk about mentoring. But there’s reverse mentoring, as well. We can learn so much from Rotaractors. One of the most successful places in the world at integrating Rotaractors into Rotary is in Hong Kong. They move seamlessly from Rotaract into Rotary. As a result, there’s hardly a division. They have a wonderful way of integrating Rotaract and Rotary together. Both sides gain so much from that. People say that Rotaract is the future of Rotary, but it’s actually the present.

What youth programs are important to you?

■ **Lindy Beatie**, Rotary Club of Penn Valley, California

I'm a great fan of RYLA [Rotary Youth Leadership Awards]. We have seen very successful RYLAs in our part of the world. If you take a high school student with potential to a RYLA experience, the change that can take place is amazing. Sometimes the quiet, introverted young students who go to a RYLA experience have, by the end of it, found themselves and are blossoming. It's important we send people with potential to the RYLA experience — not the highfliers, because they're going to fly high anyway. It's the people we have the potential to develop.

I'm also a great believer in Rotary Youth Exchange. I'm delighted that we are now in a position to reignite the Youth Exchange program. Just over the past few weeks, I've seen young people flying all around the world for what will be a life-changing experience. That comes back to the whole issue of creating a more peaceful world. Because if we can take young people and let them meet other young people and live in other cultures for a year, then we realize that basically we're all the same people. There is no need for conflict because we're all trying to pull in the same direction, and we all desire the same thing.

Rotary keeps creating new partnerships and launching new projects. How can we ensure continuity as one president takes over from another?

■ **Marissa De Luna**, Rotary Club of Sweetwater San Diego, California

When I talk about continuity, I don't just mean doing the same old things year after year after year. What I mean is a process of continually moving forward, continually improving. To do that, we need to be looking at different projects and at different initiatives, because at any given time, there are different needs and different demands being placed on us. So I don't think the two are mutually exclusive. I think we can be part of new projects, and we can look at doing new things. But we can still be practicing continuity, in that we're taking it forward in the long term and not rushing to conclude things in the space of any one presidential term.

What is the biggest potential you see in Rotary as an organization that has not been fully realized?

■ **Claudia Arizmendi**, Rotary Club of Hermosillo Milenio, Mexico

We saw a great increase in volunteerism during the pandemic. I think we have a great opportunity to connect with those people and encourage them to carry on volunteering through Rotary. I believe it's

in everybody's nature to care for other people. If we can bring that out of people, and if we can build on the spirit of care that we saw during the pandemic, what a wonderful legacy. About 6.5 million people died as a result of COVID around the world, and so they must not die in vain. If we can connect with the people who reignited their spirit of volunteering during that period, then we will have achieved something. ■

You can't gather a group of journalists and not allow them to ask a few questions of their own. Here's what Rotary magazine's editors wanted to know:

Tell us about your presidential theme.

The theme is going to be *Create Hope in the World*. I'm a great believer that everything starts with hope. While I was in Thailand inaugurating a village that Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland had built after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, I met a lady. She looked to be about 70 or 80 years of age, and it turned out she was only about 50. She had lost everything in the tsunami. Her house had been destroyed. And as I looked around her house, there was nothing else there. This was a new home, but she had lost everything. But she insisted I take a seashell that she had saved for over 30 years. She said, "I had lost everything, including hope. But Rotary has given me hope to continue." And I have this shell to this day. If people don't have hope, then they will never be able to make their way forward. It's a call to action: Create hope in the world.

What are your priorities?

In terms of continuity, we want to carry on empowering girls and women. Also, we're going to be encouraging people to do virtual exchanges. That will speak to peacebuilding from the ground up. It's not about stopping wars; it's about stopping wars from starting. Prevention is better than cure. Almost every one of our areas of focus has the potential to do that.

The third thing is a mental health initiative. Coming out of the pandemic, there are a lot of people who are struggling with poor mental health. I think it's the next pandemic. I've got experience with friends who have suffered poor mental health. I guess we've all suffered through poor mental health on occasions. Rotary has to be

big enough and brave enough to enter that space and to start talking about where we can make a difference. At the most basic level, it's just opening up the conversation about mental health and helping people get access to any professional help that they might need, and then supporting them through that journey.

I lost my brother to suicide. It's still very painful. I share this not to get people's sympathy, but to make people realize that everybody is affected by this sort of thing. We can't sweep it under the carpet. As a global network of 1.4 million people, we do have an opportunity to make a difference in making it less of a taboo and less of a stigma.

You have also served as president of Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland. What did you learn from that experience that you'll bring to this role?

I learned how to sleep in different beds every two or three days — I traveled a great deal during that year around Britain and Ireland. I learned that Rotary clubs are all different, and that everybody has a different interest. Not everybody is as passionate as I am — I'd sometimes feel I'm a bit of a zealot. But everybody has something. And the secret is to tap into people's interests and to make sure that they're allowed to do things that they want to do. That speaks to bringing members in as well. We don't bring members in and then tell them what they need to do. We bring members in and ask them what Rotary can do for them.

You're a dentist. If you were a tooth, which would you be?

I'd probably be an incisor, because that's the first tooth that does the work. You don't shove anything straight to the very back. You lead with your incisors, and I like to think I lead from the front. That said, an incisor is no more important than any other tooth; all are equally important in the eating process.

A FRONTLINE REPORT

LIFE DURING WARTIME

PART II: UKRAINE

Last fall, as the first anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine approached, *Rotary* magazine's **Wen Huang** traveled to Europe to see this humanitarian crisis firsthand. In the second installment of his two-part report, Huang visits Lviv, where he witnesses the resilience of the Ukrainian people and the wide reach of Rotary's global network.





PHOTOGRAPH: WEN HUANG

As an act of defiance, young people get on with their lives in Lviv's Old Town.



FRIDAY, 10 A.M., SOUTHEASTERN POLAND

"I can smell Ukraine now," exclaims Vasyl Polonsky with a broad smile on his boyish face. "We are getting very close to the border."

We're zooming through southeastern Poland on a newly paved country road. Polonsky pokes his head out the window and takes a deep breath. I do the same but fail to catch the scent of anything distinctively Ukrainian. Polonsky reads my thoughts. "Only we Ukrainians can detect the unique smell of our land," he says. "Each time I return from trips abroad, I always know I'm home, just from the smell of it. I love my country very much, and the war has only made my love stronger."

I met Polonsky earlier this morning in the Polish town of Zamość. Tall with a slender build, he's the president-elect of the Rotary Club of Ukraine Unity Passport. He and Hennadii Kroichyk, a member of the Rotary Club of Lviv and a past governor of District 2232 (which encompasses Ukraine and Belarus), rose at dawn to drive across the border to fetch me and Ed Zirkle, a professional photographer and a member of the Rotary Club of Columbus, Ohio.

Following the Russian invasion, the Ukrainian government prohibited most men up to age 60 from leaving the country, to make them available for military service. I ask Polonsky about his military status. "Not yet," he replies. "I'm helping my country in a different way." Equipped with a special pass, he and other Rotary members drive into Poland several times a month to collect food, medicine, clothing, and electric generators donated by Rotary clubs around the world; they arrange for the distribution of those necessities to hard-hit cities across Ukraine. Shortly before my visit, they traveled to Poland to pick up the second of two ambulances donated and driven from



stops us. “If the guards suspect you’re with the media,” he warns, “they could pull us aside for interrogation.”

At the border checkpoint, Polonskyy tells the officers that Zirkle and I are civilian volunteers from the United States. In a matter of minutes, two visa stamps are added to my passport.

The thought that we are about to enter a country at war has left me visibly tense during the journey, but that jittery feeling gives way to excitement at the border. I snap a photo of a big blue sign indicating the distances to Lviv and Kyiv, and text the photo to my friends in the U.S., along with a jubilant message: “I just entered Ukraine.”

Wen Huang crosses Ukraine’s border (left) after being picked up in Poland by Rotarians (above, from left) Hennadii Kroichyk and Vasyl Polonskyy.

FRIDAY, NOON, APPROACHING LVIV

“We’re 67 kilometers away from my home city of Lviv,” Polonskyy declares. He slides on a pair of aviator sunglasses. “It’s a great feeling to be home.”

Ahead of us stretches an endless vista of lush green farmland. “If it wasn’t for the road signs in Ukrainian, we could be driving through Ohio or Illinois,” says Zirkle.

“We have black soil, very fertile,” Kroichyk chimes in. “One can sow anything and it will grow.”

“Ukraine is one of the world’s breadbaskets,” adds Polonskyy. “Our grain is exported to Europe, Africa, and Asia.” He says that Russian President Vladimir Putin has resurrected Stalin’s tactics to destroy Ukraine as a free country by ruining its industries and agriculture while freezing and starving its people into submission.

The Lviv region has been the funnel through which millions of Ukrainians, mostly women, children, and older people, have escaped the country. At the time of my visit, that metropolis in western Ukraine has largely been spared massive Russian bombing and missile attacks, although more recent assaults on the city’s energy grid are making for a grim winter.

Yet life seems normal on the rural approaches to Lviv. We pass farmhouses with red roofs and see farmers working the fields. Occasionally I spot the dome of a church. The peaceful scenery lulls me to sleep.

The car jolts to a stop. I wake up to find a soldier peering through the window. We are at a military checkpoint. Sandbags and concrete blocks partly barricade the road, and farther along there are metal anti-tank traps, called hedgehogs. They

Germany to Poland by members of the Rotary Club of Medford Sunrise, New Jersey. They also recently returned with a minibus packed with medical supplies from Rotarians in Finland.

“At a time like this, the Rotary network is truly amazing,” says Kroichyk, who, until then, had been sitting quietly in the back of the car.

As we approach the Polish border, we pass a long line of trucks. Kroichyk says that the queue can extend as long as 2 or 3 miles, and drivers sometimes have to wait days to cross the frontier. Luckily, the line for passenger cars is short — the war has decimated tourism. Zirkle and I want to photograph our moment of entry, but Polonskyy

are a stark reminder that we are in a war zone. My anxiety returns.

After being questioned, Polonsky rolls up the window and announces that we have arrived in Lviv. Once again, he cautions against taking photos of guarded bridges or checkpoints on our way to the hotel. People might suspect that we are *dyversanti* — saboteurs who try to alert the Russians to potential targets.

As we drive past a shopping center, I am surprised to see a new construction site with colorful billboards advertising a beautiful residential complex. Since the start of the war, Polonsky says that more than 150,000 displaced Ukrainians have settled in Lviv. The city is building apartments to accommodate them. “People try to keep life as normal as possible,” says Kroichyk.

FRIDAY, 3 P.M., LVIV HOTEL

With its faux marble floor, the lobby of Lviv Hotel is a study in Soviet-era utilitarianism. But as I glance around, I spot a familiar banner near a clunky elevator door. In big purple letters it proclaims *Imagine Rotary*, the theme of RI President Jennifer Jones. It suddenly feels like I’m on home turf.

When you check into a hotel in another part of the world, you’re usually briefed on the location of the restaurants, the gym, and the bar. But here in Lviv, the serious young receptionist hands me directions to the bomb shelter. I have no idea how to respond.

My room has electricity, but warm water escapes the faucet grudgingly. I am nonetheless grateful after my long journey. An hour later, I join about 50 Rotary members packed into a small conference room on the hotel’s second floor. They have traveled here to participate in a district Rotary Foundation seminar. Mykola Stebljanko, publisher of Rotary’s regional magazine in Ukraine, is making a presentation. A week earlier, while I was vacationing in Berlin, Stebljanko had surprised me with an invitation to attend the seminar. I have been spending my holiday traveling eastward ever since, following directions from a cryptic caller with a British accent named Borys Bodnar.

During a break, that familiar accented voice sounds behind me. “Borys,” I blurt out and turn around. The mysterious man who had orchestrated each leg of my trip to Ukraine materializes as a towering figure with a handsome face. I ask about his British accent.

His parents, he explains, fled Ukraine during World War II and settled in the United Kingdom. Born in Leicester, he spent the better part of his life in London as a tax adviser and auditor with various financial institutions, but he came to Lviv four years ago. He started an office furniture export business and connected with Rotary to “get to know people and become involved in doing good works,” he says. In June 2020, Bodnar



“We welcome the refugees and offer them an opportunity to lead a normal life until the horror ends.”

— **Borys Bodnar**, Rotary Club of Ukraine Unity Passport



TOTAL FUNDING:

\$14.5M

Number of grants awarded: **441**

Districts that sponsored a grant: **274**

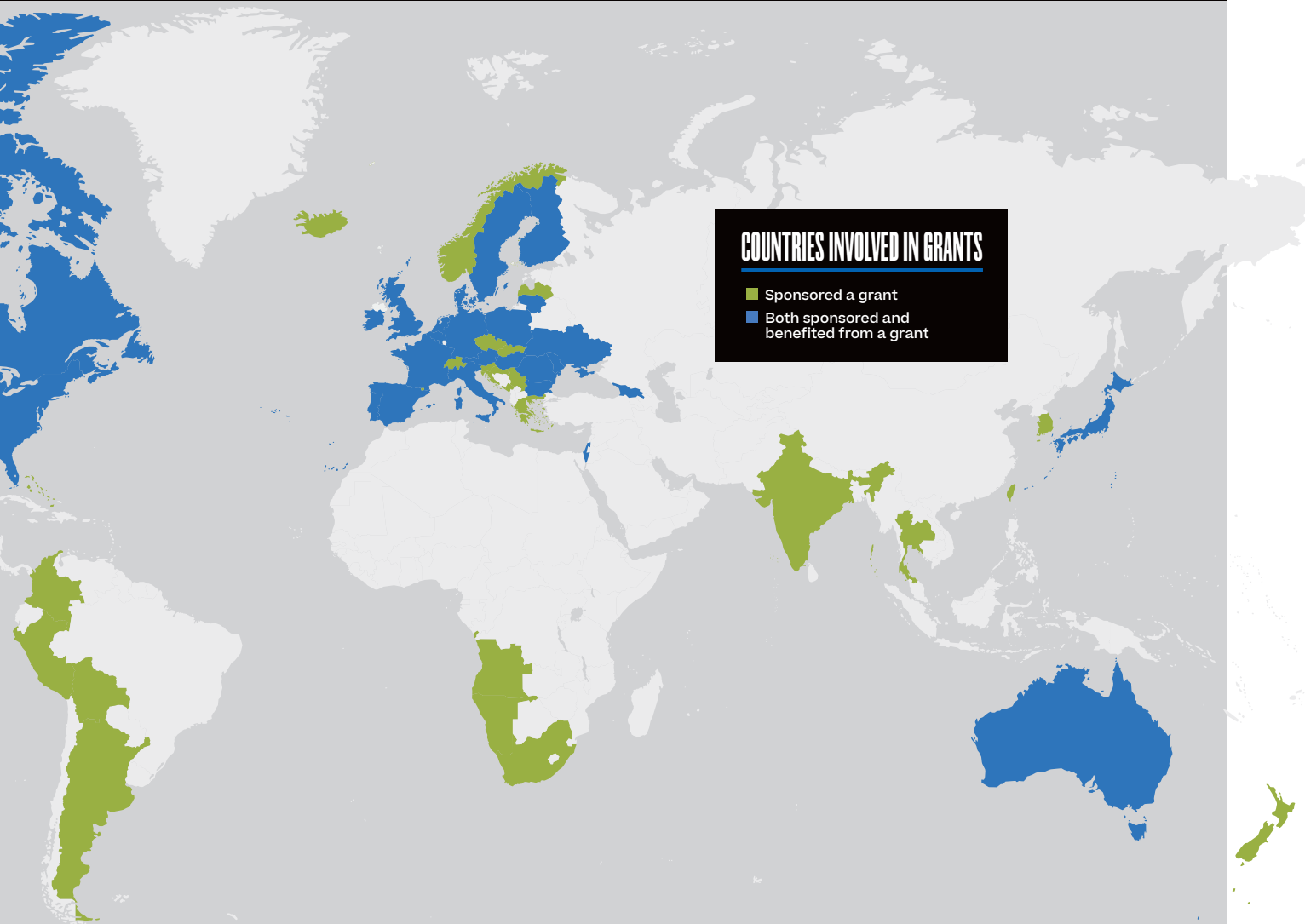
Countries and areas that sponsored a grant: **55**

Countries and areas that benefited from a grant: **29**

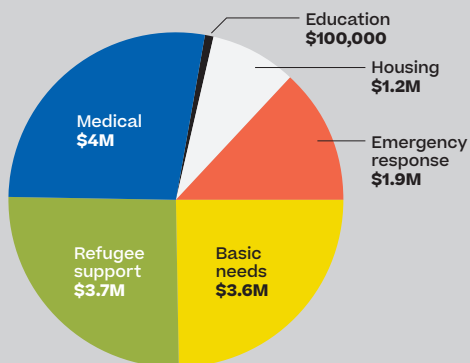
Number of multidistrict grants: **27**

PHOTOGRAPH: ED ZIRKLE

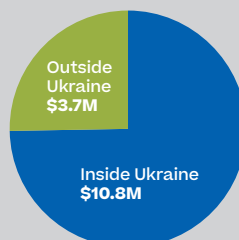
ROTARY DISASTER RESPONSE GRANTS FOR UKRAINE



PROJECT CATEGORIES



LOCATION WHERE SUPPORT WAS PROVIDED



ITEMS INCLUDED IN EACH CATEGORY

INSIDE UKRAINE Medical: equipment, services, medicine, medical supplies, first aid kits, mental health, wheelchairs, generators for hospitals

Basic needs: food, furniture, linens, mattresses, blankets, diapers, clothing, toiletries, clean water, basic medical supplies for home use, transportation

Housing: modular homes, temporary housing, generators (homes and shelters), renovations (homes and shelters) **Emergency response:** ambulances, equipment for ambulances, firetrucks, protective clothing for firefighters, fuel and generators for fire departments **Education:** school equipment, renovations, laptops, shelters for schools

OUTSIDE UKRAINE Refugee support: housing, transportation, food, clothing, medicine, language training, employment, hygiene kits, furniture, education support, legal assistance (obtaining visas)

All data as of 18 November 2022



PHOTOGRAPHS: WEN HUANG

became the charter president of the Rotary Club of Ukraine Unity Passport. "Within six weeks of organizing the club, we registered 35 members," he says. "We now have 37 members. People want to join us and help."

Bodnar says that, when the war began, Rotary members in Ukraine formed a crisis committee. One of their first priorities was to assist refugees fleeing cities under attack. "We welcome the refugees and offer them an opportunity to lead a normal life until the horror ends," Bodnar explains. "In very difficult circumstances, we help them cross the border as best we can to ensure that the Rotary network outside can help make them feel safe."

The war has disrupted Bodnar's business; for now, Rotary has become his 24/7 job. "I'm on call all the time, engaging with districts and clubs around the world," he says. "I also help organize logistics for donated supplies." The crisis committee ensures that those supplies, donated by Rotary clubs from across the globe, are distributed to the places where they are needed most.

Bodnar shows me a packet of water purification tablets. With the help of The Rotary Foundation, the Rotary Club of Ukraine Unity Passport and clubs in Great Britain, Ireland, and the United States have purchased the tablets for families in frontline regions where clean water sources have been destroyed. At the same time, Bodnar's club is working alongside Aquabox and Water Survival Box, charities founded by UK Rotary clubs, to obtain water filter kits for distribution in Ukraine.

A bearded young man joins our conversation. Two months ago, Sergii Fedotov joined the Rotary Club of Kharkiv New Level because he wanted to help. An optimist, he's already talking about rebuilding Ukraine after the war. Fedotov struggles to express himself in English. "By helping others," he says, "I feel that my soul is rising and my smiles are broader."

Iryna Ivanova, a member of Fedotov's club, shares her story. She and her husband, Hennadii, also a club member, fled Kharkiv in March with their four children after the Russians shelled their city. After a long and circuitous trip, they arrived in Dublin. Though her

family has found refuge with the Irish, Ivanova has not forgotten her home. At the Rotary seminar, she hopes to reconnect with her Rotary network to secure the essential supplies that the people of Kharkiv will need to survive the harsh winter.

Ivanova tells me proudly how the eight Rotary clubs in Kharkiv have established a large warehouse inside a Rotarian-managed shopping center. There club members receive, load, and distribute supplies donated by Rotary and various relief agencies in Europe and North America. More than 50 volunteers work daily to sort and distribute the donations. "Before the war, many people, including some Rotary members, probably didn't understand the power of Rotary," she says. "Now, when they see how Rotarians help people, they want to be part of Rotary."

FRIDAY, 5 P.M., LVIV HOTEL

The air raid siren hits my eardrums with a blunt force. Momentarily panicked, I run back to my room. I grab my laptop, wallet, and phone charger and dash down the stairs to the lobby. It's empty.

Fumbling my way to the basement, I see four young people sitting on chairs in a circle, typing on their phones. Two older people are chatting in Ukrainian about something funny. Nobody appears scared. "Do you know where everyone is?" I ask in English. They stare at me, baffled.

I ascend to the street. People are casually going about their business. Back in the hotel lobby, I run into Iuliia Pavichenko, president of the Rotary Club of Kharkiv Nadiya. She explains that the Ukrainian word *nadiya* means "hope."

"Listen to the siren," I shout. "How can everyone be so calm and unafraid?"

"It's a nationwide air alert, not specifically for Lviv," she says in her accented English. "We were scared [when the war began] and ran fast to the shelter. But we know that life has to go on and we have to fight the Russians. We cannot be afraid."

We settle on a couch. Pavichenko shows me a photo of her house, the ceiling damaged by bombing. She does not dwell on it. Instead, she is eager to tell me about a club project, dubbed Healthy Future of Ukraine, that provides psychological support for children and their families. "Ukrainian children have suffered tremendously during the war," she says. "Many have been forced to leave their homes, and their families are separated. Their fathers have joined the army, and their grandparents have fled to other cities. That's why we decided to help them."

In early October, her club, along with the Rotary clubs of Uzhgorod, Uzhgorod-Skala, Rakhiv-Center of Europe, Ivano-Frankivsk, and Rivne, connected with the Rotary Club of Rovaniemi Santa Claus in Finland to sponsor a Santa spectacular. A Santa Claus from Lapland dropped in on multiple Ukraine cities. Children, including orphans and those displaced from their homes, greeted him enthusiastically.

"We asked children to write letters to Santa about their dreams and to draw pictures of their dreams," Pavichenko explains. Scrolling through her iPad, she shows me photos of Santa with the children. "During Santa's visit, they presented their letters and drawings. It was a wonderful experience. It will stay in their memory for a long time."

In one city, Russian missiles sent Santa scurrying to a bomb shelter, but they didn't put a halt to his visits. "We are proud of our brave friend," says Pavichenko, "and we thank him for his Rotary service."

Iuliia Pavichenko shows me a photo of her house, the ceiling damaged by bombing. She does not dwell on it. Instead, she is eager to tell me about a club project.

Opposite page: In Lviv, photos of war orphans and fallen soldiers hang in a church; a street performer plucks a bandura.

FRIDAY, 8:30 P.M., OLD TOWN

The medieval and Renaissance facades are dimly lit — a necessity given the city's shell-shocked power grid — and most of the windows are boarded up, but tonight the vast square in front of the Lviv National Opera theater is abuzz with activity. Mykola and Olga Stebljanko, married members of the Rotary E-Club of Ukraine, have taken me out to see the city's nightlife, and we're strolling through Old Town, the historic center of Lviv and part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site. A large crowd of youngsters are gathered around a street singer sharing a melancholy Ukrainian song about (as Olga explains) a mother mourning her son who died on the battlefield. About 50 feet away, college-age revelers hold hands and dance in a wide circle to a lively tune played by an acoustic guitarist.

"Everything seems so surreal and at the same time normal," I say, but before the Stebljankos can reply, I spot shocking evidence that nothing here is normal. On the side of the street sit several burned-out Russian tanks, their wheels warped and partly melted. A nearby sign indicates that they were destroyed in a battle on Kyiv's outskirts.

We slip into Saints Peter and Paul Garrison Church, a Baroque-style building where colorful murals adorn the vaulted ceiling. Since the church is now under the care of the military chaplains of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, people visit the building to hang photos of the war dead: Ukrainian soldiers, young and old, who only a year earlier had been farmers, merchants, or tradesmen. I catch my breath. Among the aisles are also photos of Ukrainian war orphans — children whose fathers have fallen in battle.

Beneath its soaring arches, two women dressed in black kneel in prayer. One is sobbing. I freeze in the presence of her pain. Numb, I walk slowly from the church trying to process the consequences of this war on innocent lives.

By the time we take our seats at a candlelit restaurant, we have only an hour before curfew. "When in Ukraine, one has to drink *horilka*," Mykola exclaims as he orders a colorful array of test tubes that contain different types of the Ukrainian vodka. "I need it," I reply, even though I seldom drink liquor.

Born in the Kharkiv region, Mykola, 49, grew up in Crimea. After its occupation by Russia in 2014, life there became difficult. "We could no longer talk freely in public places because someone might report us to the authorities," he says. "Russian intelligence officials tried to infiltrate my Rotary club." The dire situation prompted him and Olga to sell their house and move to Odesa in southwestern Ukraine.

Over the past year, as the war raged on, Mykola established himself as a conduit between Rotary members in Ukraine and Rotary International headquarters in the United States. I talk with him via video calls every week. He seldom mentions his personal situation, but one day when I press him, he says that Odesa was enduring constant rocket attacks and that Olga and their dog, Yurasik, sometimes had to huddle in the bathroom, the safest place in their apartment.

And yet, the couple keep their optimism. When I ask if he would consider leaving Ukraine, he replies, "No, this is my home, and I want to stay and help." He reminds me that his name, Mykola, a Ukrainian variant of Nicholas, means "victory of the people."

Olga offers a toast: "Victory of the people of Crimea and Ukraine."

SATURDAY, 2 P.M., LVIV NATIONAL OPERA

We have returned to the opera house to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the founding of the Rotary Club of Lviv, though technically it's a celebration of the club's re-founding. Chartered in 1935, the club, the first in the city, was disbanded during World War II; today's club was readmitted in 1992.



Among the speakers is Vitalii Lesko, governor of District 2232. Lesko used to run a public relations company, but he showed up at the military recruitment office on the first day of the Russian invasion and stood in line for about six hours. "I had no military training and had never touched a weapon," he tells me, and he was turned away. The next morning, he was back in line before dawn; moved by his patriotism, the officers assigned him to a volunteer battalion of territorial defense of the Rivne region in northwestern Ukraine.

I also speak with Sergii Zavadskyi, another past governor of District 2232 and a member of the Rotary Club of Kyiv-City. He's eager to tell me what Rotary is doing in Moshchun, a once-picturesque village outside of Kyiv that was almost obliterated by Russian forces. At least 70 percent of its houses were damaged or destroyed, and many civilians were killed or injured.

Zavadskyi's club banded together with the Rotary Club of Ivano-Frankivsk



and the charitable organization UA Dream to establish the Moshchun recovery project. They were joined by the Rotary Club of Kyiv-Sophia and assisted by disaster response grants from The Rotary Foundation and contributions from Rotary clubs and districts in several other countries. Their objective: clear the debris from Moshchun and assemble 300 modular homes.

The first modular house was installed in June for Lyubov Topol, who lost her home and her only son when a bomb landed next to their house. Soon, more modular houses arrived for Topol's neighbors and other families in Moshchun. Flipping through the photos on his phone, Zavadskyi says, "We strive to revive this ancient village, providing local residents with a decent life, including walls, heat, and a roof over their heads."

SUNDAY, 6 A.M., FAREWELL

It is still dark when Bodnar and Polonskyy pick me up at Lviv Hotel to drive me to the Polish city of Rzeszów. From there I'll fly to Warsaw and then Berlin.

The previous afternoon, the two men had driven me through Lviv's cobblestone streets to a warehouse containing donated supplies from around the world. "Our Rotary network has enabled us to ship the supplies to frontline towns and cities that are difficult to access," Bodnar said. "We expect to fill the warehouse next week with a third donation of medical supplies from the German Rotary clubs of Ingelheim am Rhein and Mainz."

But, added Polonskyy, "We'll need continued help from Rotary." I had no idea at the time, but the young man's mother had recently been diagnosed with cancer. She died shortly before Christmas.

The line at the Polish border is long. By the time a border control agent has thoroughly examined my passport and suitcase, it is already noon. In Rzeszów, before we say goodbye, Bodnar flashes the three-finger salute used during the days of the Ukrainian independence movement. And then he repeats the words spoken two months earlier by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy: "We used to say 'peace.' Now we say 'victory.'" ■

Clockwise from top left: Olga and Mykola Steblianko distribute donated medicine in Odesa; Vasyi Polonskyy loads supplies in Lviv; volunteers work at a warehouse in Kharkiv.

OUR CLUBS

VIRTUAL VISIT

A platform to raise their voices

Rotary Club of
Madras Elite, India

It was, he says, the worst year of his life.

Sanjiv, a transgender man in his mid-20s from a small town in southern India, remembers 2018 as the year he jumped from a moving train to escape being sexually harassed. It was the year he argued bitterly with his parents, who refused to accept his gender identity and dragged him to a psychiatrist who would slip drugs into his coffee and give him mysterious injections by force. It was also the year he shaved his head and moved 350 miles away to Chennai, after a failed suicide attempt, leaving behind Sengottai, the town he grew up in and loved, for a harsh life on the streets.

Despite having a degree in business administration and having trained as an accountant, he could only find menial jobs because, at first, his parents refused to hand over his graduation certificates, which he needed for interviews. So Sanjiv worked long hours in a restaurant for low pay, washing mountains of dishes. "Just

surviving was a daily challenge," he says. (Like others interviewed for this story, Sanjiv goes by first name only.)

But five years later, Sanjiv has made a dramatic turnaround. He went from dishwasher to trained cook. Then he got a job at Wipro, a technology services and consulting company. A friend reached out with an invitation to join Rotary, where he found community and support. Today, he's president-elect of the Rotary Club of Madras Elite.

Chartered in November 2021, the Madras Elite club is the first of its kind in India, made up entirely of transgender members and dedicated to addressing the needs of the transgender community. Among its charter members is Nila, a trans woman and social activist. Nila was trained as a pharmacist and has served as a public relations representative for PeriFerry, an organization that creates job opportunities for the transgender community. She also runs her own service organization called the Pharm Foundation, which advocates for the neglected health care needs of transgender people as well as those experiencing poverty in her community. ("Pharm" stands for People Health Action and Research Management.)

In 2017, N. Dhanraj, a social entrepreneur and at the time a member of the Rotaract Club of Dexterous, invited Nila to his club to give a speech on the challenges that the transgender community faces. "Nila was always a good friend," says Dhanraj (who like many people in South India goes by his first name and an initial for his family name). "Her speech helped members understand more about

the lives and struggles of trans men and women, and how we could help promote inclusivity and acceptance in our society."

Later, he asked Nila if she'd like to become a Rotaractor herself and join the Dexterous club. "Rotary has always been inclusive," says Dhanraj, who is now a member of the Rotary Club of Madras Coromandel. "There are many clubs across India who have welcomed transgender members."

While Nila is still a member of Dexterous, she realized that to focus specifically on transgender-related projects and needs, it made sense to charter a new club. The initial hurdle was financial. Facing discrimination, many of the club's members struggled to find and keep jobs. They couldn't afford the Rotary International dues, but other Rotary members, including District 3232 Governor-elect Ravi Raman, stepped in to cover costs during the club's first two years.

Each of the club's 25 charter members has overcome adversity and pain. "We've all seen a lot of problems in our lives," says Deepthi, a trans woman in her late 30s who works in an IT company and is the club president. "Our goals are to now help other transgender people avoid these pitfalls and save them from extreme discrimination." The club has three major goals: to improve public awareness of issues concerning transgender people, to help people who've fought with their loved ones and left their homes, and to prevent bullying.

Recently, they've connected with schoolchildren in online workshops, asking them to support peers who may be exploring their gender identity. "We



Members of the Rotary Club of Madras Elite, India, including (from left) Sivapriya, Sanjiv, Saran, Nila, and Deepthi, are focused on serving the needs of India's transgender community.

tell them to be a buddy, not a bully,” says Nila. “That kind of sensitization starts at a young age.” They’re also helping secure national ID cards and documentation for transgender people who may not have access to their identity documents because of family disputes. They would like to use microfinancing programs to help club members set up small businesses and become financially independent. “We wish to be seen as productive members of society,” says Deepthi. “People rarely see transgender individuals as being in positions of strength and tend to typecast the entire community as either beggars or sex workers, and that’s a problem.”

Other initiatives they’d like to take on include a nationwide photography project to showcase portraits of successful members of the trans community whose gender identity may not have been widely known. Another is a documentary about the challenges they face.

Meanwhile, Sanjiv continues to thrive after the cascading challenges he faced

in years past. He has reconciled with his family and is hopeful about the power of greater representation to influence change. “Parents of trans children would be far more accepting if we had a chance to make something of ourselves,” he says.

“We need to give the community a reason to come out and the support to do so. Rotary has given us a platform; it’s a chance to unite, to work together, to raise our collective voices against discrimination.”

— KAMALA THIAGARAJAN

EMPOWERING INDIA'S TRANSGENDER COMMUNITY

The members of Madras Elite found it empowering to form a club for transgender members dedicated specifically to serving the needs of their community. The club's priorities include helping transgender individuals:

Complete their education. Bullying in schools leads many transgender students to drop out. Based on 2011 census data, the literacy rate among India's transgender community has been estimated at 56 percent, compared with India's overall rate of 74 percent.

Obtain new identity documents. Without a government ID, transgender individuals cannot open a bank account, vote, or access government assistance and health care. For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, fewer than 6,000 transgender people (out of an estimated population of about half a million) received government relief payments, according to news reports.

Make their voices heard. Charter member Nila serves on the Transgender Welfare Board for the southern state of Tamil Nadu, an important platform for promoting the social welfare and economic empowerment of the transgender community.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Lessons learned

Experience taught Deloitte's Punit Renjen that corporate and community collaboration is a best business practice

Punit Renjen was 14 years old when his life turned upside down. Since the age of 7, he had attended an elite boarding school in the foothills of the Himalayas, where his parents felt he could get a better education than in his hometown of Rohtak (about 50 miles northeast of India's capital, New Delhi). But when his father's electrical switchgear factory faced a financial crisis, Renjen was forced to return home, where he continued his studies while working for the business.

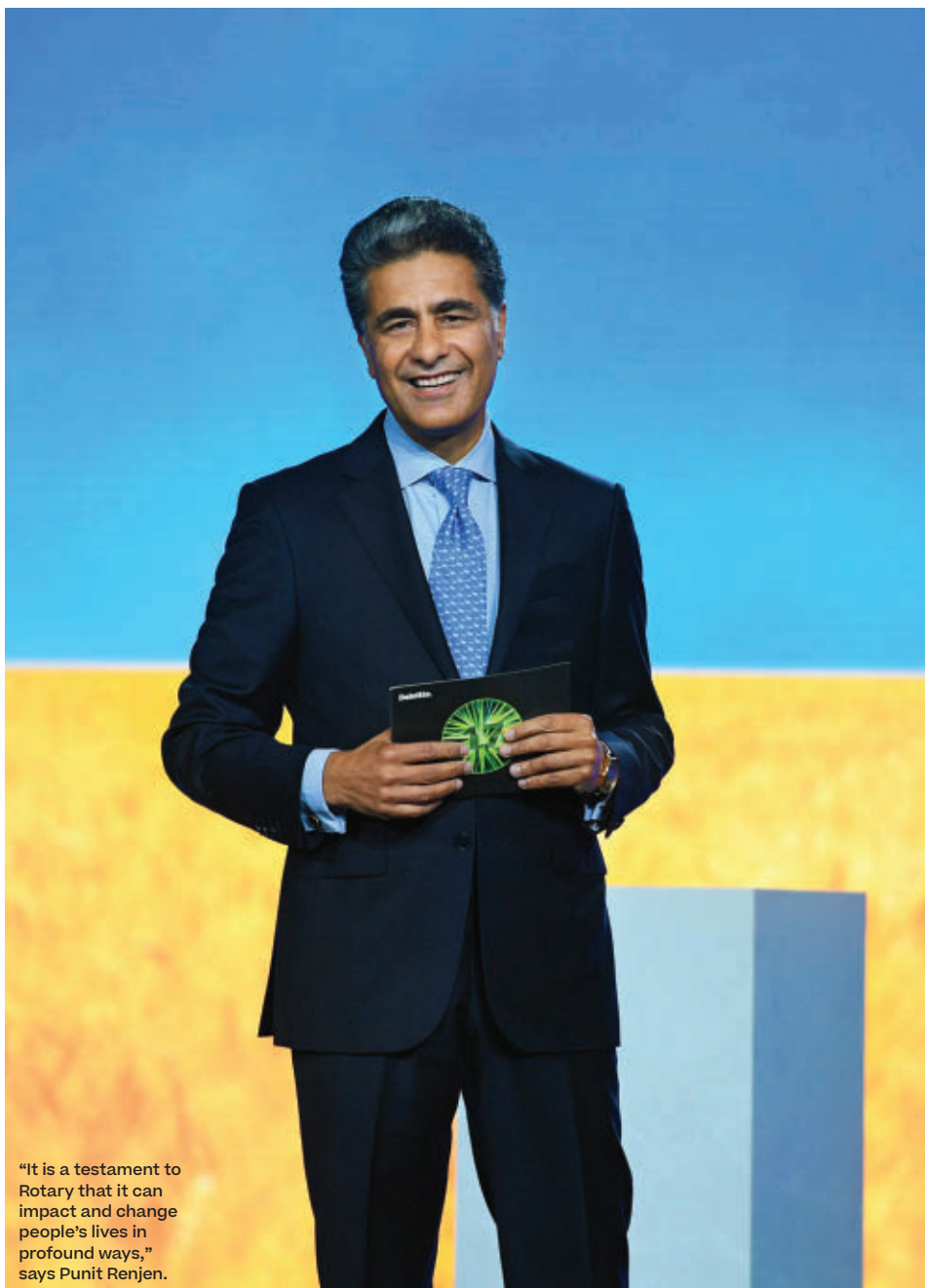
Several years passed. After earning a degree in economics at a local college — not one of the top universities in Delhi as might have been the case in rosier times — Renjen landed a job with a home appliance manufacturer. Then, in 1983, his life took another unexpected turn. A Rohtak Rotarian told Renjen's father about something called an Ambassadorial Scholarship from The Rotary Foundation. Renjen applied, and to his surprise, was awarded the scholarship. His life would never be the same.

"Without that scholarship, I would not be where I am," says Renjen, who today, after a stunningly successful 36-year career with the business services company Deloitte, serves as its CEO emeritus. "I am profoundly grateful, and I think it is a testament to Rotary that it can impact and change people's lives in profound ways."

As things turned out, it wasn't just Renjen's life that was profoundly changed. But 40 years ago, all that lay in the future.

After receiving his Rotary scholarship, Renjen, despite never having left India nor flown in an airplane, chose to attend Willamette University in Salem, Oregon. He flew from India to New York to Portland, Oregon, where he took a van to Salem late at night. "My first impression of the United States was how the freeway was lit," he recalls. "It's completely changed now, but on the roads in my hometown, we didn't have streetlights back then."

At Willamette, Renjen mastered, as he puts it, "the language of busi-



"It is a testament to Rotary that it can impact and change people's lives in profound ways," says Punit Renjen.

ness.” But, he acknowledges, “the lessons that I learned outside the classroom were maybe as important if not more important than what I learned in the classroom.” He points to his term as the head resident of an undergraduate dorm, where he learned how a leader can help others “buy into a sense of community,” a skill that served him well in the years ahead.

In 1986, Renjen received a master’s degree from Willamette’s Atkinson Graduate School of Management. His success in the years that followed speaks for itself; as CEO at Deloitte, for instance, he led an organization with 415,000 employees in about 150 countries that generated revenue of nearly \$60 billion in fiscal year 2022.

But success and achievement can be measured in different ways, and some of Renjen’s accomplishments bear a remarkable resemblance to the causes championed by Rotary. Here’s where Rotary’s investment in that young man from Rohtak had a profound and unexpected impact on countless other lives.

For example, during Renjen’s seven-year tenure as CEO, Deloitte contributed \$1.7 billion to the communities where its employees work and live. (“It is not only the right thing to do, it is the right business thing to do,” he says.) Though he’s now a U.S. citizen, he considers India his second home, and invariably, some of that money was

directed toward his native country. For instance, during a deadly wave of the pandemic, Deloitte helped lead an effort that provided 25,000 oxygen concentrators and launched a program that used digital telemedicine technologies to treat people afflicted by COVID-19. Those contributions helped lessen the burden on India’s overwhelmed health infrastructure.

“Twenty-five percent of our workforce is India-based,” he says, “so this was personal. My mother lives in India, my family lives in India, my extended business family — 100,000 of them — live in India. If we were to live our purpose and our values, we needed to have a credible response.”

Deloitte also chose India as a special focus of its WorldClass program. The effort aims to provide economic and social empowerment to 50 million girls and women in India by 2030 — an idea that could have been drawn directly from the Rotary playbook, and one that Deloitte is rolling out in other countries. “As China had developed, they have left behind children in rural communities,” Renjen explains, so the goal there is to assist 15 million rural children and farmers. “In the United States, where the disparity between nonminority and minority communities in terms of college and access to a better life is so great, the focus is around minority communities and getting them to college. So

that’s the WorldClass program. It is focused on education and on underprivileged people, community by community, and trying to get them to a better place.”

Elsewhere, Renjen’s life mirrors Rotary’s emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion. At Deloitte, he prioritized a culture of diversity and inclusion, especially among leadership, and at Willamette University, the Office of Multicultural Affairs is housed in the Renjen Center, which he established with his wife, Heather. These impulses were inspired, in part, by Renjen’s experience in his adopted country, where he was welcomed, educated, and offered opportunities to succeed. “The United States is one of the greatest countries in the world, and that’s because we are a diverse, welcoming community,” he says. “We aren’t perfect, and we certainly have things that we need to work on, but that’s what makes this place unique. We’re an immigrant country.”

Renjen also emphasized that the life he has enjoyed would never have happened without Rotary. No surprise, then, that Rotary’s core values have been a centerpiece of Renjen’s life. “Rotary is a wonderful organization, based on the notion that all Rotary members should represent and give back to their communities,” he says. “What a wonderful concept.”

— GEOFFREY JOHNSON



Punit Renjen

- **Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship, 1984-85**
- **Master’s degree, management, Willamette University, 1986**
- **Global Indian of the Year, *The Economic Times*, 2021**

From left: Punit Renjen receives an honorary doctorate from his alma mater in 2019; in India with his father, Madan Mohan Renjen.

HANDBOOK

Mouthwatering Melbourne

Eat your way through the host city for the 2023 Rotary International Convention with *Rotary Down Under* magazine Editor **Meagan Martin**





Dining

With more than 2,000 cafes and restaurants across the city, Melbourne's culinary landscape represents a kaleidoscope of cultures and flavors. Expect a little treasure hunting in this city of secret laneways, underground restaurants, and rooftop bars.

1 COOKIE

252 Swanston Street
cookiemelbourne.com.au

Cookie is housed in the iconic palazzo-style Curtin House. You'll be greeted with a vibrant wall mural, a bustling bar (the building's original), dark timber floors, and soft light filtering in from large, arched windows. The menu lives up to the accolades, effortlessly blending a Thai and Australian ethos to deliver plate after plate of informal, share-style flavor bombs.



2 CECCONI'S FLINDERS LANE ↑

61 Flinders Lane
cecconis.com

Cecconi's Flinders Lane is hidden below street level, nestled in a New York-style basement on Melbourne's most famous laneway. Within the theater of an exposed kitchen and a sleek yet warm dining space, head chef Sebastiano Pezzoli dishes up some of Melbourne's finest Italian cuisine with a focus on simply prepared, Venetian-inspired food.

3 IL SOLITO POSTO

113 Collins Street
ilsolito posto.com.au

Enter Il Solito Posto, another subterranean treasure, via the small backstreet of George Parade. Its name translates to "the usual place," and Melburnians return again and again for its buzzing, welcoming vibe. While the warm and inviting cafeteria offers a relaxed and casual space with an ever-changing menu, the sub-sub-basement trattoria, lined with racks of fine wine, provides a formal dining experience for special occasions.

4 BOTTEGA

74 Bourke Street
bottega.com.au

For modern Italian fare where handmade pasta is the star of the show, try Bottega at the top end of Bourke Street (within what is often cited as the central business district's Italian quarter). Grab a booth or pull up a seat on the pavement as you would in Rome.

5 GELATERIA PRIMAVERA

157 Spring Street
springstreetgrocer.com.au

Directly across from Parliament House, tucked into the entry of Spring Street Grocer, you'll find the marble-topped counter of Gelateria Primavera. Just don't go looking for the name on a sign — there



isn't one, bar a soft-glowing "Grocer" on the curved entry roof and "Gelati" in the window. The menu is always changing, but gelato scoops could include anything from licorice and bergamot to basil with honey and pecans.

6 CITY WINE SHOP AND THE EUROPEAN

159-161 Spring Street
citywineshop.net.au
theeuropean.com.au

City Wine Shop is both a wine store with a vast, global selection of vino and a chic cafe. Pull up a seat at either the sleek timber bar inside or the intimate tables nestled under umbrellas on the pavement. The nose-to-tail menu, with dishes mined from the traditions of rural France, Italy, and Spain, is shared with the adjoining restaurant

The European, which includes a laid-back dining room. Be sure to order the steak frites.

7 RED EMPEROR ↑

131 Little Bourke Street
redemperor.com.au

Melbourne's Chinatown dates to the gold rush days of the 1850s. For an elegant but welcoming Cantonese dining experience, seek out the glowing neon sign of Red Emperor. The restaurant, famed for its daily yum cha and sumptuous banquets, has become a staple on the city's dining scene.



Register now at
convention.rotary.org.

Drinking

Whether you're after a classic cocktail, a craft beer, a vintage vino, or a good old Aussie pub, Melbourne's bar game is on point. From rooftops to hidden doorways and basement dives, you will never go thirsty in this city.

8 CAMPARI HOUSE

23-25 Hardware Lane
camparihouse.com.au

You haven't fully experienced Melbourne until you've ventured to the city's "ceiling." A brew with a view is a rite of passage. Take the stairs to the rooftop of Campari House for casual cocktails, wine, chilled beers, and incredible city views.

9 IMPERIAL HOTEL

2-8 Bourke Street
bourkestreetimperial.com

The historic Imperial Hotel dates to 1863, but today is best known for its large rooftop beer garden, live sports, ice-cold beers, and classic pub fare. The 360-degree city views aren't too shabby either.

10 FARMER'S DAUGHTERS

95 Exhibition Street
farmersdaughters.com.au

Farmer's Daughters offers seasonal eats courtesy of local farmers and producers. The sunny rooftop bar features locally sourced craft beer, wines, and spirits. Also on the roof is a garden that supplies herbs for both food and cocktails.

11 HER ROOFTOP

270 Lonsdale Street
her.melbourne

Built in 1903, the heritage-listed Pacific House recently

reopened as Her, a multifaceted drinking, dining, and music venue. Enjoy wine and cocktails along with Thai bites, prepared in the kitchen of the tiny BKK restaurant below.

12 POMELO ROOFTOP BAR

169 Melbourne Place
pomeloroof.com.au

Pomelo is known for its perfectly executed concoctions. Order yourself a boozy slushy or a refreshing seltzer crafted and canned in-house. The rooftop bar is the playful sister of Bouvardia, a small, experimental cocktail bar downstairs — itself worth a stop.

13 BAR CLARA

87 Little Bourke Street
barclara.com

Bar Clara bases its cocktail list around clarified fruit

juices (the Clara in the name). Jars of homemade concoctions can be seen nestled between the top-shelf spirits lining the shelves of the back bar. Grab one of the soft, green velvet lounges and settle in for the night.

14 BENEATH DRIVER LANE

Shop 3, Driver Lane
driverlanebar.com

Housed in the vault of the old Money Order Office, you'll descend into another time and place in this basement bar. Nab one of the original brick-arched booths, order yourself a signature cocktail or top-shelf whiskey, and enjoy live blues music. Just make sure you get there early.

15 HEROES

188 Bourke Street
heroesbar.com.au

Adjacent to Chinatown, you'll find Nitro Lab ice cream shop. But you're not here for dessert. Seek out the elevator within and be transported to Heroes with its multiple levels of revelry.

16 NEW GOLD MOUNTAIN

21 Liverpool Street
newgoldmountain.com.au

On Liverpool Street, keep your eyes peeled for a push-bike suspended on the wall

above the number 21. Step through the golden doors and into the opulence of New Gold Mountain. The intimate bar serves up some of the city's best cocktails using 100 per cent Australian ingredients.

17 SIGLO BAR

161 Spring Street
siglobar.com.au

An unmarked door on Spring Street opens to a staircase to Siglo Bar. The open air, black-and-white paved terrace is a perfect location to enjoy a post-theater single malt and a Cohiba Cuban cigar, with views of Parliament House, St. Patrick's Cathedral, and Princess Theatre.



18 TRINKET

87 Flinders Lane
trinketbar.com.au

From the outside, Trinket is an unassuming, vintage-inspired cocktail bar. Step through a Narnia-like wardrobe, however, and you'll find a basement bar complete with velvet couches, candlelit tables, and chandeliers.

19 STATE OF GRACE

27 King Street
stateofgracemelbourne.com.au

Housed in the Melbourne Steamship Co. building on King Street, State of Grace is an eclectic Euro bistro that boasts a stunning rooftop bar. Slide back a bookshelf, and enter Fall From Grace, a secret cocktail den in the basement.



DISPATCHES FROM
OUR SISTER MAGAZINES
ROTARY NEWS
(INDIA)

Cricket player's third innings: saving children's lives



↑
Former cricket player Sunil Gavaskar (center) receives a lifetime achievement award at a Rotary institute in India from Rotary leaders, including RI President Jennifer Jones, Past RI President Shekhar Mehta, and RI Director Mahesh Kotbagi (second from right).

Every human being needs a second chance in life, and more so a child, as the gift of life is precious. And few could understand the importance of a second chance as Indian cricketing legend Sunil Gavaskar, because without a second chance, his career would not have been what it was, he said while addressing the *Visakha Vista* Rotary institute in Visakhapatnam in December. A trustee of the Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Hospitals, which provide free operations for poor children with congenital heart diseases, Gavaskar signed a memorandum of understanding between the hospitals and Rotary India, committing about \$610,000 for conducting

2,025 pediatric heart surgeries at the hospitals through 2025.

Elaborating on what it means to get a second chance, the cricketer said, “When I made my debut for India in a match with West Indies, I was batting only on 12, when I played a shot and the ball took the outside edge and went to second slip where the greatest of them all, the one and only [Sir Garfield] Garry Sobers, was fielding. And it was, as we in cricketing circles call it, a dolly catch ... a sitter, and he dropped it. He dropped it and gave me a second cricketing life. With that second life, I got the second opportunity to continue batting, and I got a half century and kept my

place in the team for the next test match as well,” he told an audience that lapped up every word. Continued Gavaskar: “When again I was batting on 6, I flashed hard at a delivery from a fast bowler and the ball flew off from the edge of my bat again to Sir Garfield, and this time around it was really a hard catch. It bounced off his chest before he could see it, and again it fell to the earth, and I went on to get my first ever test century.”

Thereafter, he managed to keep his “place in the team for the next 17 years till I decided I had enough of the game.”

The cricketer explained that he was an ardent devotee of spiritual

teacher Sri Sathya Baba of Puttaparthi and “apart from being his devotee, this cause resonated with me simply because seeing a child being given another chance at life is extraordinary.” Even more touching was watching the joy of parents when being told by doctors after the surgery that their child would now be healthy. About 99 percent of the patients coming there were from families with financial challenges and mostly from villages and small cities. “Sometimes they don’t even have the money for a return ticket back home. They come to the hospitals totally bewildered; firstly, they are worried about the child, and then seeing so many people, so many buildings, cars, honking, etc., they are anxious and nervous. When one of our own is sick, we,

From left: Mehta, Gavaskar, and Kotbagi at December’s Rotary institute in Visakhapatnam, India

the world travelers, while waiting for the doctors at the hospital, are so nervous ... so just imagine the plight of these parents.”

Once the doctor tells them after the surgery that their child is now going to lead a normal, healthy, and long life, “the change of expression on their faces, the relief from anxiety and worry, is something to see. I have seen it, and I tell you it has given me more joy than scoring a double century for India.” The surgeries done at these hospitals have a success rate of almost 99.4 percent; “these hospitals are saving just about every child who comes to them.”

Gavaskar then added: “This then is my third innings in life. I’ve had my first innings as a cricketer, second innings, which

is still carrying on but tapering off, which is being part administrator, part media, doing TV commentary, writing about the game. But this third innings which started a few years back is the most fulfilling, most rewarding.”

Thanking Rotary for helping this cause, he added: “Throughout my first innings, I was always looking for the partner with whom I could build the innings for my team, India. I’ve had several partners, almost 19 of them, who opened the innings with me for India. Some were very good, some successful, and some played only a couple of test matches and fell by the wayside. But this partnership with Rotary is something which is going to last ... together we will save thousands and thousands of children’s lives.”

In addition to four such hospitals in India, he added, there is one in Fiji and another in Colombo, Sri Lanka. “More will come in the next few years,” he said. “The motto is simple, only dil [heart], no bill!”

The Rotary districts recognized Gavaskar at the meeting with a lifetime achievement award, which he received from RI Director Mahesh Kotbagi in the presence of RI President Jennifer Jones and Past RI President Shekhar Mehta. He was honored for “being a sporting legend of our times who epitomized the elegance of the game of cricket on and off the field,” said the citation.

Earlier, welcoming the cricketing legend to the institute, Kotbagi called Gavaskar a big hero of his life. He said when he had visited one of the Sanjeevani hospitals, he was struck by the fact that “this was one hospital where there was no billing counter, no insurance claim, nothing ... everything is about passion and love.” Hence Rotary India had decided to partner with these hospitals under the Rotarian-organized Gift of Life program.

— RASHEEDA BHAGAT





TRUSTEE CHAIR'S MESSAGE

A precious resource inaccessible to many

Living in Australia, you think a lot about water. When you travel to the nation's vast interior, the Outback, you can't help but wonder how such an arid climate has supported life for millennia. There, each sip of water feels precious.

Each sip seems to get more precious by the day as climate change continues to impact water supply everywhere. Where Juliet and I live, on the temperate coast not far from Melbourne, I remember times not long ago when water supplies were so low that severe usage restrictions were put into place. We now live on rainwater that falls onto our roof and is collected in a tank. In many parts of the world, people don't have that luxury.

Water is essential for life no matter where we live. Yet many of us take it for granted. Think of all the times today you turned on the tap. About 1 in 4 people in the world have quite a different experience when they do — if they have a tap at all. Today, 2 billion people lack access to safely managed drinking water, according to the United Nations. It is heartbreaking that each year, about 300,000 children under age 5 die from diarrheal diseases caused by poor sanitation, poor hygiene, or unsafe drinking water — all preventable circumstances.

This is where Rotary comes in. Through your support, The Rotary Foundation pro-

vides water and sanitation for countless communities around the globe. Foundation global grants have ranged from providing toilets and hygiene education for villages in the Philippines to building infrastructure for year-round access to safe, affordable drinking water in Brazil.

The water and sanitation problems that we face are too great for any of us to solve alone. But whether we work with global grant partner districts across the world or with large agencies such as USAID, we are making a difference.

When thinking of teaming up to provide safe drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene, remember that one of our greatest partners is right here within the family of Rotary: Rotaract.

Effective this Rotary year, Rotaract clubs may apply for global grants. I encourage Rotary and Rotaract clubs to work together on existing grants and for Rotary clubs to support grants sponsored by Rotaract clubs. Together, Rotary and Rotaract clubs are going to take the power of the Foundation to a new level.

The Rotary Foundation has more potential than ever to make a difference in the water and sanitation challenges we all face, thanks to your generous support.

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.

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CALENDAR

March events

SIP WINE, FEEL FINE

Event: Wine and Beer Tasting and Silent Auction

Host: Rotary Club of Old Saybrook, Connecticut

What it benefits: Local projects

Date: 3 March

Located at the mouth of the Connecticut River, the Saybrook Point Resort and Marina is the seaside setting for this annual evening fundraiser. Attendees are invited to sample wines and beers and nibble on appetizers while bidding on silent auction items from area businesses. Local TV meteorologist Scot Haney will serve as master of ceremonies, and a jazz band will perform.

SWING INTO ACTION

Event: Charity Golf Tournament

Host: Rotary Club of Sun Lakes, Arizona

What it benefits: Local and international projects

Date: 11 March

The 29th annual golf tournament, held at Oakwood Country Club, is played in a scramble format. It starts with a ceremonial ball drop, which in previous years has been carried out by helicopter. The day includes a buffet lunch, catered by the Blazing Desert Dogs food truck, and a banquet dinner and auction.

GLITZ, GLAM, AND GATSBY

Event: Gatsby Garden Party

Host: Rotary Club of Longwood, Pennsylvania

What it benefits: Local charities and international projects

Date: 11 March

This *Great Gatsby*-themed gala takes place at the Longwood Gardens conservatory, a 4.5-acre greenhouse with 20 indoor gardens and thousands



TEE PARTY

Event: Charity Golf Outing

Host: Rotary Club of Four Peaks (Fountain Hills), Arizona

What it benefits:

Local and international charities

Date: 27 March

In its 25th year, this annual tournament, held at the Ancala Country Club in Scottsdale, is a favorite among local golfers. The marquee event is a shootout, which drew more than 100 competitors last year. Each golfer hits a tee shot on a par-3 hole; the seven who come closest to the pin then get a chance to win \$1 million if they score a hole-in-one. The registration fee includes 18 holes of golf, as well as lunch, dinner, a raffle, and an auction.

of plants that has hosted social events since 1921, four years before F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel was published. The event comes on the heels of the 25th anniversary of the club, which is a longtime supporter of the gardens. Members will celebrate by dancing to a live swing band on the building's original sunken marble floor.

GO GREEN

Event: St. Patrick's Day Dash

Host: Rotary Club of Bend-Mt. Bachelor, Oregon

What it benefits: Neighbor Impact

Date: 11 March

The family-friendly 5K run, which encourages participants to show up in festive green apparel, has supported various local charities over the years. This year's beneficiary is Neighbor Impact, a nonprofit that provides a

variety of services to help people in central Oregon. Proceeds from the race, along with contributions from other Rotary clubs in the area, will go toward a new warehouse for the organization.

SHRIMP THE BEST

Event: ShrimpaPalooza

Host: Rotary Club of Homosassa Springs, Florida

What it benefits: Local charities

Date: 18 March

Mardi Gras fell in late February this year, but this outdoor New Orleans-style festival on Florida's Gulf Coast keeps the party going. The club expects thousands of attendees, many festooned in beads, who will enjoy a boisterous parade, live music, and food — including plenty of shrimp. Local merchants will host additional activities in conjunction with the event.

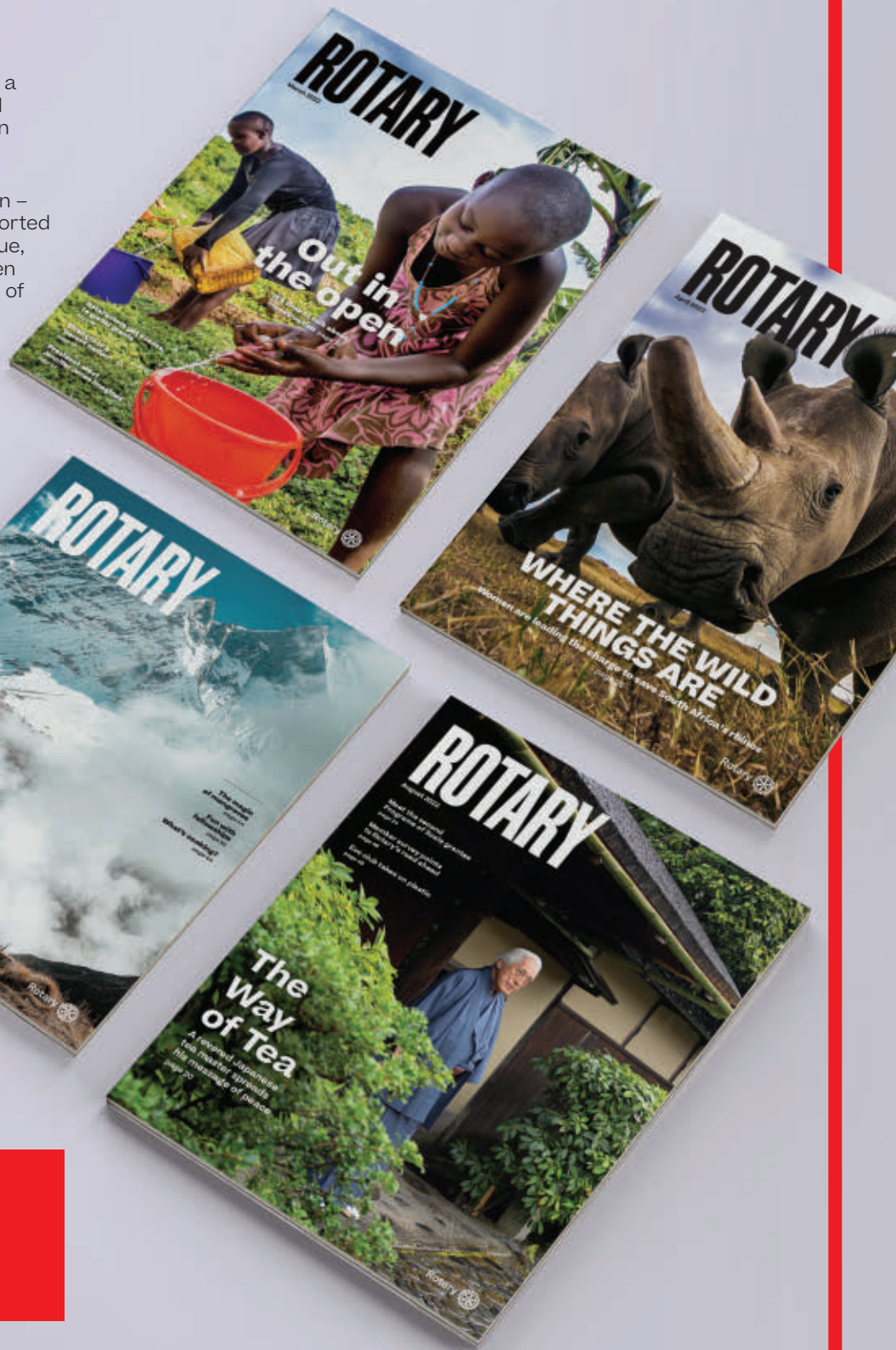
Tell us about your event. Write to magazine@rotary.org and put "calendar" in the subject line. Submissions must be received at least five months before the event to be considered for inclusion.

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IN BRIEF

Trustees approve targeted funds for Ukraine and Pakistan

In response to the worsening humanitarian crises in Ukraine and Pakistan, The Rotary Foundation Trustees voted in January to create two new targeted funds to continue offering lifesaving aid to people who have been affected.

The Ukraine Response Fund and the 2022 Pakistan Flood Response Fund will be separate from the general Disaster Response Fund, which had previously supported relief efforts for the war in Ukraine and devastating flooding in Pakistan.

“Since Russia invaded Ukraine last February, Rotarians have already shown amazingly generous support to the people of Ukraine. This new temporary fund is prompted by the ongoing, urgent need and the wish of Rotarians to keep making a difference for the people there,” says Trustee Chair Ian Riseley. “At the same time, the dreadful floods in Pakistan have caused extreme hardships for people there, and the 2022 Pakistan Flood Response Fund will help with the recovery.”

According to the United Nations, about 18 million Ukrainians, or 40 percent of the population, required humanitarian assistance by the end of 2022. Russia’s escalating attacks on Ukraine’s critical infrastructure and civilian targets have caused massive destruction and death, leaving millions of people without reliable access to electricity, heating, and water. As of mid-January, nearly 8 million refugees from Ukraine were recorded across Europe, and many are in dire need of help.

In Pakistan, flash floods during the 2022 monsoon season affected more than 33 million people, washing away 2 million

homes and displacing 8 million people. About one-third of the country was submerged. By early January, UNICEF said as many as 4 million children still lived near contaminated flood waters, putting their health at risk.

To alleviate that suffering, Riseley calls on Rotary members to support aid projects by contributing to the 2022 Pakistan Flood Response Fund and the Ukraine Response Fund once they are set up. Contributions to both funds will be accepted through 31 December 2023 and will be spent by 30 June 2024.

The Trustees specify that donations to both funds may include District Designated Funds. Unused money will be transferred to the general Disaster Response Fund on 30 June 2024.

District 2232 (Belarus and Ukraine) can simultaneously apply for three Ukraine Response Grants of up to \$100,000 each. Districts bordering Ukraine can apply for a grant of up to \$100,000 at any one time. Other districts are eligible for one grant of up to \$25,000 at any one time.

As for the 2022 Pakistan Flood Response Fund, Districts 3271 and 3272 (Pakistan) can apply for two grants simultaneously of up to \$50,000 each.

“Having seen how generously Rotary members donated to both causes in 2022 through the Disaster Response Fund, the Trustees knew this opportunity for continuing support would be met with enthusiasm,” Riseley says.

For more information and to contribute, visit my.rotary.org/donate.

— ETELKA LEHOCZKY

IN MEMORIAM

With deep regret, we report the deaths of **Gustavo Gross Cuadra**, El Rímac, Peru, who served RI as director in 1994-96 and district governor in 1977-78; **Noel Fryer**, Newport (Shrops) Lite, England, who served RI as director in 1999-2001, president of Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland in 1995-96, and district governor in 1986-87; and **Kenneth Ernest Collins**, Freshwater Bay, Australia, who served RI as director in 2000-02 and district governor in 1985-86.

In addition, we report the deaths of the following Rotarians who served RI as district governors:

Earl M. Rogers
Duluth Skyline, Minnesota,
1988-89

Dong-Soo Kim
Iri Central, Korea, 1993-94

Hajime Amano
Fukuyama, Japan, 1996-97

Thomas L. Neuman
Tappahannock, Virginia, 1997-98

David B. Kirk
New Westminster, British
Columbia, 2000-01

Woo Hong Kim
Daegu West, Korea, 2003-04

Robert E. Preston
James River (Richmond),
Virginia, 2005-06

Maurice Amégmizi
N'konou Edorh
Lomé, Togo, 2014-15

Yoshinori Endo
Yokote, Japan, 2014-15

Peter E. Simonsen
Hamilton-Wenham,
Massachusetts, 2014-15

Masaharu Tanaka
Nagaoka Nishi, Japan, 2016-17

Hong Soon Park
Cheonan-South, Korea, 2018-19

Richard Bricker
Brainerd, Minnesota, 2019-20

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Golfers who get to town ahead of the 27-31 May convention can attend a Rotary day at Victoria Golf Club, one of eight courses in the Melbourne Sandbelt, known for beautiful layouts on sandy soil ideal for the game. Proceeds from the outing 26 May go to polio eradication.

Visit another Melbourne treasure among Rotary friends during the Night at the Museum welcome cultural event 27 May. Explore Melbourne Museum after hours to learn about the city's history, and catch up over regional food and drinks.

Rotary members who live throughout metropolitan Melbourne are ready to have fellow convention goers over for dinner. For Host Hospitality evening, you'll attend a dinner 29 May given by a member at home or by a club.

For another special evening meal, Rotary members get exclusive access to the South Wharf restaurant area 29-30 May to taste the multitude of foods that draw visitors to the city. The Streets of Melbourne food exposition is just outside the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, one of the Rotary convention venues.

Or book an evening outing 30 May to the famed Flemington Racecourse, including three-course fine dining and photos with winning thoroughbreds.

Reserve your exclusive excursion at rotarymelbourne2023.org/events.

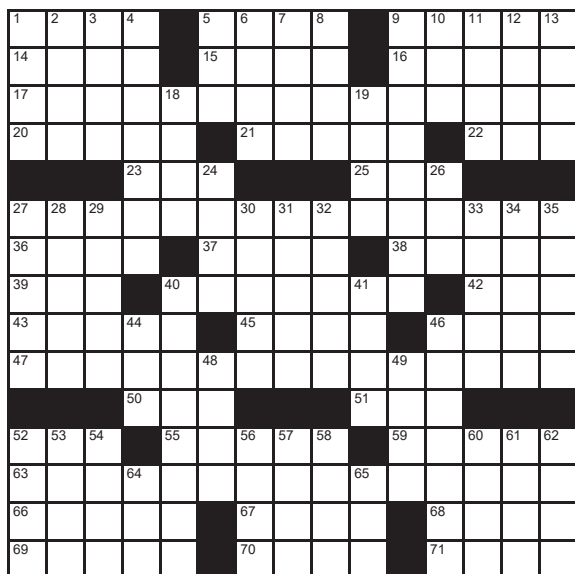
— EVA REMIJAN-TOBA

Learn more and register at convention.rotary.org.

CROSSWORD

Spring forward

By Victor Fleming
Rotary Club of Little Rock, Arkansas



ACROSS

- 1 Big hairdo
- 5 Sonnet or ode
- 9 Flower part
- 14 Betty ____
- 15 1871 Verdi opera
- 16 Hi alternative
- 17 Start of an apt March verse
- 20 Informal language
- 21 Blizzard or hurricane
- 22 Brain monitor letters
- 23 Miss Piggy's scarf
- 25 Fed. loan agency
- 27 Part 2 of the verse
- 36 "Get ____ it!"
- 37 Fictional plantation
- 38 Autumn zodiac sign
- 39 One of 10 in an alley
- 40 Old boom box feature
- 42 Early times, briefly
- 43 Certain lab vessels
- 45 Aladdin parrot
- 46 Aberdeen resident
- 47 Part 3 of the verse
- 50 "How about a ____!"
- 51 West of Hollywood
- 52 33⅓ rpm disks
- 55 Common sculpture
- 59 Agape, maybe
- 63 End of the verse
- 66 Tasty mushroom

- 67 Shakespeare was "the" one
- 68 Phony (abbr.)
- 69 Funeral song
- 70 Stretches sometimes named for presidents
- 71 Beach-storming vessels (abbr.)

DOWN

- 1 "Now I know my ____ ..."
- 2 Dupe or duped person
- 3 Kind of tomato
- 4 Spot for free drinks
- 5 Cooking utensil
- 6 Adds lubrication to
- 7 Browser function
- 8 Blue-gray shark
- 9 1973 Three Dog Night hit
- 10 Cave-dwelling fish
- 11 Ballerina's bend
- 12 Skin-cream element
- 13 Beyond the baseline
- 18 Stravinsky or Sikorsky
- 19 Gaelic language
- 24 Abbr. on an envelope
- 26 Rope-a-dope pugilist
- 27 Dunderheads
- 28 "Don't Cry for Me Argentina" musical
- 29 Old Canadian coin
- 30 Caesar's language
- 31 "____ the news today ..." (Beatles lyric)
- 32 Pal of Pooh
- 33 Ancient calculators
- 34 1983 Keaton comedy
- 35 Butter up?
- 40 In a clever manner
- 41 Expected outcome
- 44 Baseball bat wood
- 46 Letter drawer's device
- 48 Astounded
- 49 Emcee's place
- 52 Connecticut town
- 53 The Hustler game
- 54 "Glad to!"
- 56 After-bath attire
- 57 Actor with top billing
- 58 Another, in Aragon
- 60 Hand holders?
- 61 "Cool your heels!"
- 62 Ambulance workers
- 64 Do nothing, with "out"
- 65 "Classified" listings

Solution on **page 10**



The king of kale

In northern Germany, there's more to kale dishes than leafy greens

Warner B.J. Popkes has two rules when it comes to preparing kale (Grünkohl in German). First, harvest the plant after the first frost, which induces it to produce more sugar. Second, “don’t use oil, don’t use butter,” he advises. “If you want to have the best taste out of the kale leaves, it has to be Schmalz,” or rendered pork fat used in Germany.

Kale dinner is a traditional winter dish in northern Germany, and although the vegetable may be the star, local meats play a supporting role. While each city has its specialties, stewed kale is often served with Kassler, cured and smoked pork; Kohlwurst, smoked sausage; Pinkel, smoked sausage made with oats; and Schinkenspeck, bacon streaked with fat. “Each butcher has his own secret, what he puts in,” Popkes says. “Only God knows.”

A GREEN GATHERING: A common winter gathering in northern Germany starts with a walk and culminates in a kale dinner, called a Grünkohlfahrt. This month, Popkes’ Rotary club will meet with the Rotary Club of Winschoten, Netherlands, to play the outdoor sport Boßeln, or road bowling, before heading out to eat kale at a nice restaurant, an annual tradition between the two clubs.

THE ROYAL TREATMENT: Cities in the region hold contests to crown the king or queen of kale. In Leer, contestants are weighed before and after eating as much kale dinner as they can; the one who gains the most is declared the winner. “Specialists will eat eight to 10 plates,” Popkes says. “That means you really gain weight.”

— DIANA SCHOBURG

Warner B.J. Popkes
Rotary Club
of Leer/
Ostfriesland,
Germany



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