

Philippine Rotary

JANUARY 2025 MAGAZINE

Happy School
Project in Samar
page 12

Electronic waste
threatens the
environment
and public health
page 18

Protect yourself
and your club from
financial fraud
page 26

Sunrise on ice

Icy grandeur from a viewfinder



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Bring the joy

I always walk into meetings at my home club of McMurray, Pennsylvania, with a smile on my face.

A few years ago, someone arrived late. Instead of scolding the person, we cheered. Since then, we've made it a tradition to applaud all members when they arrive for meetings. It's tough not to smile with a greeting like that.

There's nothing more powerful for engaging and retaining members than a club that's vibrant, welcoming, and — yes — fun.

Think back to what drew you to Rotary. Chances are, it wasn't just the service projects or professional networking. It was the people — the friendships, the shared laughter, and the joy of working toward a common purpose. That's what keeps us coming back.

If you're looking for that sense of joy in your meetings, don't be afraid to ask yourself and your fellow members some tough questions. If you were a prospective member, would you join your current club? It's a powerful question but don't stop there.

Do members of your club feel that they belong? Are your meetings fun? If not, what can you do about it together?

At your next meeting or event, try something new to bring out a few extra smiles. It's the simple things that create lasting bonds and make clubs simply irresistible.

Here's one example of a club moving in the right direction. The Rotary Club of Fukushima, Japan, has been combining environmental responsibility with

community fun since 2021. In Japan, people have made picking up trash into a sport known as SpoGomi, and every year the club hosts a game. This year, more than 400 participants cheered each other on while they came together to improve their community.

This event is an excellent example of how Rotary clubs can have fun, make a difference, and raise awareness for broader global challenges all at the same time. And the inclusive, family-friendly format allows people of all ages to participate.

When we enjoy what we do, that energy becomes contagious. It's what attracts new members and keeps our clubs strong and engaged. It helps people feel that they belong.

Retention and culture go hand in hand. The healthier our club culture, the more likely members are to stay. *Rotary* magazine is an outstanding resource for inspiration on how to enhance our club culture and deepen member engagement. I encourage you to explore the stories and strategies in these pages, drawing from other clubs' successes to find ideas that work for you.

Together, we can create a more engaged, enjoyable, and inclusive Rotary that every member can feel proud to be part of. Let's continue with renewed commitment and enthusiasm, living *The Magic of Rotary*.

STEPHANIE A. URCHICK

President, Rotary International

For resources on engaging and growing membership, visit rotary.org/membership.



▲ ON THE COVER:
Mark Allen, of the Rotary Club of St. Charles Breakfast, Illinois, snapped this photo of skaters at sunrise on an ice fishing trip. Anglers venture onto the ice in pursuit of lake trout and other species.



January 2025

- 1 President's message**
- 3 Chairman's message**
- 5 Editor's note**
- 49 Trustee Chair's message**

FEATURES

- 26 Scam alert**
How to protect yourself and your Rotary club from becoming victims of financial fraud.
- 34 The liberation of Julie Mulligan**
After being kidnapped abroad, this Rotarian set out to live a more authentic life of Service Above Self.
- 25 Hearing is believing**
An audiologist strengthens family bonds by helping people hear their loved ones' words clearly.
- 44 New Year reflections**
A song translation
- 46 How we make the magazine**
It takes months of work behind the scenes to produce the magazine in your hands. The rest is up to you.
- 48 The Rotary Foundation yearend update**
- 50 A leader who fought poverty at its roots**
- 51 Rotary Action Groups**
Canada will surpass \$1 billion to fight polio with latest pledge.
- 52 2025 Convention**
Unforgettable evenings in Calgary.

OUR WORLD

- 18 A burning issue**
Electronic waste threatens the environment and public health. Refurbishment programs can help.
- 21 Let's chat**
Fighting the loneliness epidemic with an online playground.
- 22 People of action around the globe**
- 24 Light a fire under your club**
Members say they thrive with clear, specific goals and the continuity they provide.

OUR CLUBS

- 6 Pathways in solidarity through service**
D3860 focus
- 10 Transformative leader**
DG Caroline Lee-Andrade
- 12 Happy School Project in Samar**
Rotary Club of Makati-Mckinley
- 14 PRM gets high ratings**
Rotary Regional Magazine Reader Survey
- 16 Nelson Aspe: A life of service**

Delivering our magazine to all readers

Happy New Year to everyone!

We reflect on the blessings on the past year and look forward to the opportunities ahead, including an upsurge of viewership of our Philippine Rotary Magazine (PRM).

After careful review of the status of PRM subscriptions for RY 2024-2025, the PRMFI Board of Trustees extended anew the deadline of submission of the duly accomplished subscription forms for the third time last October 15, 2024. The subscription form is used by the PRM office to determine the number of copies to be ordered from the printing press, based on print subscriptions, and know the email addresses where the digital copies are to be sent.

As clubs may face suspension and termination by RI for non-subscription and non-payment of magazine subscriptions, the PRMFI Board considers all active clubs as fully subscribed to digital copies of the monthly magazine, until such time that clubs formally submit a duly accomplished subscription form indicating the number of print copies which will be applied prospectively starting on the month following its submission.

The main responsibility of distributing the monthly digital magazine to the club member-subscribers rests with the Club President. The Club President should gather and maintain a list of members' email addresses, share the link for the magazine, and inform the members every time the new issue becomes available.

Since the relaunch of the digital transformation project in April 2024, PRM has made available multiple access points so members can conveniently access the digital copies using the links below.

PRM proactively explores other ways in serving our clubs and members to ensure delivery that our Rotarian subscribers receive the full value of the quality publication that we endeavor to produce and deliver every time.

EMILIANO D. JOVEN
Chairman, PRMFI



“Since the relaunch of the digital transformation project in April 2024, PRM has made available multiple access points so members can conveniently access the digital copies.”

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Philippine Rotary

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Renew commitment to vocation

January marks Rotary International's celebration of Vocational Service Month — a time to reflect on one of Rotary's cornerstones: the dignity of work and the responsibility we all share to use our vocations in service of others. This observance challenges Rotarians to exemplify ethical practices, inspire others by our professional conduct, and harness our skills for the greater good. My present classification is Media Publishing.

My journey with Rotary began 40 years ago, when I was invited to join by my boss at the time to join the Rotary Club of University District Manila. My classification then was Human Resource Management, reflecting the vocation that shaped my early career. Four years later, when I transitioned to the academe, my classification changed to Management Education. Years later, during my tenure as Press Secretary, it evolved yet again — to Government Service.

These shifts in classification reflect more than a mere change in roles; they signify a deepened understanding of what it means to serve through one's vocation. Rotary has taught me to approach each chapter of my professional life with integrity, commitment, and the belief that every vocation holds the potential to uplift and inspire.

Vocational Service Month serves as a reminder that Rotary's influence extends far beyond our meetings, projects, and events. It is present in our workplaces, in the way we lead, mentor, and contribute to society. As Rotarians, we are called to be examples of professionalism and to uphold the Four-Way Test in all aspects of our careers.

Let us take this opportunity to honor the diverse vocations represented in Rotary and the countless ways they enable us to serve humanity. Whether you are a teacher, entrepreneur, doctor, public servant, or artist, remember that your work is a platform for service. By excelling in our professions and sharing our expertise, we create ripples of positive change that extend beyond our immediate spheres.

This month, let us renew our commitment to our vocations and use them as instruments of peace, progress, and service above self.

Sonny Coloma
SONNY COLOMA
Editor-in-chief



“Vocational Service Month serves as a reminder that Rotary’s influence extends far beyond our meetings, projects, and events. It is present in our workplaces, in the way we lead, mentor, and contribute to society.”

Fellowship is central to Rotary's enduring strength. DG Caroline believes that fellowship is more than tradition; it is the essence of Rotary's impact and the cornerstone of its legacy.



D3860 FOCUS

Pathways in solidarity through service

by Maricel Amores

Caroline “Caycay” Lee-Andrade, the first female District Governor from the Tacloban Rotary clubs and the sixth in Rotary District 3860, exemplifies leadership that inspires, vision that transforms, and service that uplifts.

DG Caroline manages an area that has 101 Rotary Clubs with a total of 2,793 Rotarians. Rotary District 3860 is composed of the Clubs located in Mindanao Oriental, Eastern Visayas and Negros Oriental — specifically in Cebu, Negros Oriental, Bohol, Siquijor, Agusan del Norte, Agusan del Sur, Surigao del Norte, Surigao del Sur, Samar, Davao del Norte, Davao del Sur, Davao Oriental, South Cotabato and General Santos.

District 3860 covers a wide expanse. Governor Caroline has to travel via land, sea and air to visit the clubs.

ROOTED IN FELLOWSHIP

Fellowship is central to Rotary's enduring strength. DG Caroline emphasizes building and deepening connections among Rotarians, cultivating trust, fostering creativity, and enabling

meaningful collaboration. She believes that fellowship is more than tradition; it is the essence of Rotary's impact and the cornerstone of its legacy.

District 3860 aims for a net gain of 100 members by June 30, 2025, focusing on attracting younger generations who bring fresh energy and innovative ideas. This initiative ensures the sustainability of Rotary's mission and lays the foundation for dynamic leadership in the years to come.

BOOSTING TRF

DG Caroline inspires Rotarians to strengthen their support for the Rotary Foundation by fostering awareness, encouraging donations, and actively participating in its mission to eradicate polio and address critical issues worldwide. Her vision turns every contribution into a collective force for meaningful and lasting change.

She advocates for community projects that are characterized by sustainability, measurable results, and profound impact. She believes that service is not about the quantity of initiatives but their transformative potential, ensuring that



Top row: Rotarians of RC Ormoc Bay serve fish porridge with carrots and malunggay to malnourished children under its “IWEIGHOK” program; DG Caroline gamely shows her dancing skills with Rotarians from RC San Juanico.



Below: RC Downtown Butuan implanted an artificial coral reef in the shape of the Rotary wheel in the sea waters of Barangay Sacul, Buenavista, Agusan Del Norte in cooperation with District 3860 Areas 3I & 3J, Petron Dealers Association (PETDA), Bureau more; RC Koronadal built a water station in a public school under its “Water is Life” program.

Opposite top: RC Banilad Metro plant mangrove at the South Poblacion Coastal Area Ocean Side in Naga Cebu, to protect the nearby coastal communities from extreme weather events, climate change and the rise of sea levels, and to help restore ecosystems and more. **Above:** RC Cebu Midtown collaborated with the Confraternity of Mother of Good Counsel in a Tree-Planting/Tree-Caring activity to nurture the trees and foster a deeper connection with nature, creating a greener future for generations to come.

every effort enriches lives and strengthens communities for the long term.

Recognizing the power of storytelling, DG Caroline encourages the sharing narratives of the lives touched and changes created by Rotary’s work. This approach strengthens Rotary’s public image and motivates new members to join its mission, celebrating Rotary’s values and calling people of all backgrounds to contribute to its legacy of service.

PURPOSIVE LEADERSHIP

Inspired by RI President Stephanie Urchick’s call to create the Magic of Rotary, DG Caroline encourages Rotarians to uplift communities, improve lives, and be agents of peace. Her vision goes beyond achieving numbers; it embodies Rotary’s ideals in every action, paving the way for a brighter future.

Providing transformative guidance, her lead-

ership embodies the core principles of RI’s Action Plan: Increase our Impact, Expand our Reach, Enhance Participant Engagement, and Increase our Ability to Adapt.

DG Caroline calls on Rotarians to reimagine their roles as peacebuilders and changemakers, weaving the Magic of Rotary into every act of service. By strengthening fellowship, embracing growth, championing the Rotary Foundation, and delivering impactful service, Rotarians honor their heritage while building a more compassionate and connected world.

Together, the Rotarians of District 3860 are not just people of action — they are architects of peace, bridge-builders of unity, and stewards of hope. Behind DG Caroline’s inspiring leadership, District 3860 shall illumine new pathways of service, solidarity, and transformation, leaving a legacy that endures.



Top row: RC Mandaue takes pride that it raised the Rotary flag on Osmeña Peak in Badian, the highest peak of Cebu; RC Cebu West Project welcomed over 23 students from the National University of Singapore (NUS) in a joint initiative with RC Singapore west to conduct a series of impactful projects that included a visit to the Area Vocational Rehabilitation Center II, supporting the center's mission and engaging with the community.



Second row: RC Toril Davao rehabilitated and repainted a Rotary sign-age; RC Central Panabo City joined hands with the Rotaract Clubs of Imus, Isulan, Downtown Davao, Calinan and Central Panabo City Smasher Chapter-Community Based to deliver hygiene kits, food packs, groceries and school supplies to the children and families in Ba-lay Paglaum in Brgy. Lower Panaga where resources are scarce.



Third row: With its partner, SM Cares Butuan, RC Midtown Butuan gave away 400 "Bears of Joy" worth P80,000 to SPED (special children) - Butuan, children of 23IB Masigasig Battalion, children of BJMP inmates, students of Dugyaman Elementary School in Anticala and other children who needed to be cheered up; RC Dadiangas, together with its Rotaract and Interact Clubs, provided food and hygiene kits for 250 families affected by the floods in Purok Upper Bayan, Brgy. Maribulan, Alabel, Sarangani Province.



Fourth row: RC Wal-ing-Waling held an online live-selling project that benefited the House of Hope Foundation, a half-way home/temporary transient for kids with cancer and their caretakers who are ongoing treatments; Rotarians from RC Digos were enthused by the company of DGCae-line Andrade as they participate in the bowling tournament held at SM Lanang Premier.





Top row: RC Calbayog donates P20,000 to support the SOS Children's Village, a private, non-political NGO that provides a normal family environment to children who have lost or are at risk of losing parental care by providing these children with food, education, and health care, along with social, intellectual, physical, personality, and spiritual development. RC Calbayog has been supporting SOS Village for two decades; RC Cebu Port Centre turned over solar lights to RCC Mahusay.



Second row: RC Cebu Fort San Pedro donates two 55" television sets to Engaño Elementary School to be used by teachers to enhance classroom learning as part of its Brigada Eskwela program; RC San Juanico visited its first signature project, a new building for high school and college students of Leyte and Eastern Visayas named after the club partner's patriarch for this signature project, Manuel Ngo. The building will serve as a center to develop youth community leaders in Leyte and Eastern Visayas for nation-building.



Third row: RC San Juanico, together with clubs from Areas 3B1 and 3B2 and the Rotaract Club of Leyte Council, educated parents of young children on the dangers of polio. Babies were given polio vaccines. The event was made possible with the help of Central; RC Davao-RCD partnered with the Talomo Police Station in the KP3 Program, "Katawhan Protektahan, Pag-Panglugs Pugngan (People Protected, Rape Prevented)" aimed to strengthen efforts for safety and security in the community.



Fourth row: GV RC Maasin City; RC Central Panabo City.



Bottom row: RC Digos; RC Uptown Butuan; RC Tagbilaran.



D3860 FOCUS

Transformative leader

by Maricel Amores

District Governor Caroline Lee-Andrade, or “Caycay” as she is fondly called by friends, was inducted into the Rotary Club of Kandaya, Tacloban. She is the first lady Governor from Tacloban City. Since her induction, she has held various positions at the club level: Director for Membership, The Rotary Foundation, Club Administration, Public Image, Club Treasurer, Auditor, Vice President, and finally as Club President in 2012-2013.

DG Caroline served with Rotary International President Sakuji Tanaka who espoused the theme, “Peace through Service”. She garnered several district awards, notable of which is Outstanding President and Outstanding Club during her term. She served a second term as Club President in 2013-2014 when the devastating super typhoon Yolanda struck Tacloban City.

Beyond the club, DG Caroline has generously extended her time and talent to serve in various

Above: The Andrades’ five children are Carl, a specially gifted child, Tanya, a lawyer, Meggy, a graduate of Hotel Restaurant and Institution Management, and Denise, an incoming college student. Not in photo is Sean, a certified public accountant. **Right:** Her husband Bobby shares her passion for Rotary service, leading his club and being a perennial TRF donor.

capacities as Assistant Governor, Deputy District Governor for three consecutive years, District Governor’s Representative to the Philippine Rotary Magazine, District Stewardship Subcommittee Chair, District Endowment and Major Gifts Adviser, District Empowering Girls Chair, and as District Executive Secretary.

An avid supporter of The Rotary Foundation since 2006, she became a Paul Harris Society member prior to becoming a Rotarian. DG Caroline and Spouse Bobby are Major Donors Level 4 with a named endowment fund.

In the community, Governor Caroline is known as “Mrs. McDonald’s,” a respected brand ambassador, being the first franchisee in Tacloban. She opened the first McDonald’s branch in Tacloban





DG Caroline is the first lady Governor from Tacloban and the sixth in her district.

City. To date, she has grown her business in the region and operates several branches.

Her management style has been recognized through the years. She is the recipient of numerous awards and recognitions—to name a few, these are Ray Kroc Press On Award, Community Excellence Award, George T. Yang Leadership Award, People Award, Regional Franchisee Award for Visayas, National Franchisee Award (from the Philippine Franchising Association), Franchising Excellence

Awards and the most coveted Fred L. Turner Golden Arch Award, an award given to the Top 1% of McDonald's franchisees which total more than 38,000 branches across the globe.

DG Caroline is married to Robert "Bobby" Andrade, a past president of the Rotary Club of Tacloban. The couple is blessed with five children: Carl, a specially gifted child; Tanya, a lawyer; Meggy, a graduate of Hotel Restaurant and Institution Management; Sean, a certified public accountant; and youngest Denise, an incoming College student.

From L.A.C.E.S. Golden Gazette, the official publication of the Rotary Club of Tagum Golden L.A.C.E.S. (Ladies in Action Committed to Effective Service)

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Club of Paranaque Central
District 3830

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ROTARY CLUB OF MAKATI-MCKINLEY

Happy School Project in Samar

by Bing Icamina

The Rotary Club of Makati-McKinley fulfilled its commitment to return to Northern Samar and finish the job it started last year, providing school bags and shoes to the schoolchildren of selected remote schools in the province for Part 2 of its Happy School Project.

Northern Samar is among the poorest provinces in the country, and the schools targeted as beneficiaries are those in most need of support from kind souls.

The previous year, RCMMc gave out school supplies and uniforms to 600 Kindergarten to

Grade 6 learners in seven schools. This time, on October 10-11, the distribution of bags and shoes benefited 417 in four schools, namely Canjunmadal Elementary School, Busak Elementary School, Manahaw Elementary School, and San Ramon Elementary School.

The RCMMc mission composed of Pres. Vilma Alas, IPP Glace Genson, PP Jane Lobos, and club Treasurer Mayzl Domingo trudged through three kilometers of muddy and slippery road to reach the first two schools on Day 1, San Ramon and Manahaw. Rains in the past few days rendered the path hardly passable. The Rotarians

Above: Learners from Busak Elementary school line up to get their school bags and shoes.



had to walk along some segments of the road, with caution to avoid slipping, as their “habal-habal” motorbike transport service was unable to drive through certain stretches of heavy mud.

The teachers and schoolchildren enthusiastically welcomed the RCMMc members, literally transforming these places into happy schools, as this part of the world rarely gets visits, much more from those giving gifts.

In addition to the gifts, Dir. Mayzl hosted an engaging game among the learners and their parents that stressed the importance of vegetables to health, nutrition, and well-being. Prizes were given to the participants, notably vegetable seeds. Families in the barangays subsist on backyard staple crops for food. They rarely could afford meat and fish as source of nutrition.

To the RCMMc members, the mission, although physically challenging, was a mix of fun and excitement, bringing forth a sense of fulfillment with the magic it created in the school community. The fellowships, delectable meals, hiking along picturesque trails, and fun on the beach

before and after their Rotary duties were also memorable experiences.

With a direct cost of nearly PHP200,000, the project would not have been possible without the added support from sister club RC San Fernando (Pampanga) D3790, led by Pres. Ernesto “Erning” Dumas, and RC Champaign West of Illinois D6490 helmed by Pres. Paula Santiago.

RCMMc delegates met then President-Elect Paula during the 2024 RI Convention in Singapore after she overheard the members animatedly talking about service projects over coffee — the club was preparing for its breakout presentation on “Small Clubs, Big Projects” set that afternoon — which piqued her interest. She traces her Filipino roots in Samar.

RCMMc also expresses its thanks to the Pamujan local government, led by its Hon. Mayor Felipe Sosing, Jr., and the officials and teachers of the four beneficiary schools for their cooperation and support to the project.

The author is a past president of RC Makati-McKinley

Clockwise from top left: The learners of San Ramon Elementary School receive their gifts of school bags and shoes; The muddy and slippery road towards RCMMc’s beneficiary schools; Then President-Elect Paula Santiago (extreme right) meets fortuitously with members of RC Makati-McKinley during the 2024 Singapore Convention (photo courtesy of the Champaign West Rotary Club); From left to right: PP Jane Lobos, IPP Glace Genson, Dir. Mayzl Domingo, and Pres. Vilma Alas; Club director Mayzl Domingo hosts an engaging game on the value of vegetables to health, nutrition, and well-being.

ROTARY REGIONAL MAGAZINE READER SURVEY

PRM gets high ratings

Philippine Rotary Magazine (PRM) readers gave high ratings to their publication's 2024 performance in a recent survey conducted by Rotary International (see box for summary).

This was conveyed in a Zoom meeting last Jan. 9, 2025 by Gundula Miethke, Regional Content & Magazines Lead - Global Communications Group and Jennifer Gilbert, Regional Magazines Coordinator.

Present at the meeting were PRM Foundation, Inc. Chair Emiliano Joven;

Vice Chair Sue Sta. Maria; Trustees Manny Along, Bing Garcia, Saldy Quimpo, and Raphy Tayco; and ex-officio Trustees Efren Lim and Sonny Coloma.

PRM obtained higher than Very Good (4.5) ratings for Promotion of RI Initiatives and Digital Presence; Very Good (4.0) ratings in Brand Fidelity and Overall Appearance; and higher than Good ratings for Content Balance, Designated Content, and Timely Publishing.

Editor-in-Chief Coloma acknowledged the "highly commendable team ef-

fort" that made this possible, especially the "consistently supportive stance" of the Trustees and the "unstinting dedication" of the editorial team and office staff in assuring the consistent and timely delivery of information to the PRM's readership from almost 1,000 Rotary clubs in the Philippines.

He cited ongoing efforts to accelerate the pace of digitalization. This program was initiated by past trustee board chairpersons Samuel Pagdilao, Jr., Reynaldo David, Edgardo Limon, and Nestor Borromeo.

'Very Good' in timeliness, brand fidelity

Internal review shows a good to very good compliance with designated content, good responsiveness and good to very good timeliness as well as adherence to brand standards.

- Magazine creates good original content with a variety of regional projects, initiatives and interests.
- Magazine publishes longer features like the one about the Philippine initiative for best environmental projects and promotes regional activities concerning our Areas of Focus.
- Magazine does a good job in incorporating the flagship magazine layout with their own layout.
- The digital presence is very well structured, good to navigate and includes pictures and a video section. The Breaking News ticker needs a little updating.
- The digital magazine flip through version is easy to navigate but does not include QR codes or links that would make it interactive. The mobile presence is well designed and works well. The current issue is not directly listed and clickable though (latest issue is May)
- The support for RI initiatives and events like People of Action, Polio, and Convention promotion is very good.

Overall, the magazine is very professional and attractive. The high journalistic standard of the articles and the variety of topics helps keeping our members informed and engaged and is a good tool for promoting our brand in public.

— RI GLOBAL COMMUNICATIONS GROUP



2024 Rotary Regional Magazine Reader Survey

Qualitative Report, Philippine Rotary

Please tell us why you do not read [the magazine] - Selected "Other"

Several of the respondents state that they have not received the magazine.

Why do you prefer to access the magazine online? - Selected "Other"

There are very few comments. No significant themes.

You stated you do not think the magazine is published at an appropriate frequency. How often would you like to see the magazine published? - Selected "Other"

There are very few comments. No significant themes.

What do you enjoy most about the magazine?

Service Projects: Several respondents stated that they enjoy reading the most about the service projects other Rotarians are doing.

Some example comments:

- "You get information on what is happening in the other districts, and, at the same time, gives you opportunity to benchmark on how other clubs implement projects."
- "The local service projects being featured that are very relatable to what we do in our club"
- "the editorial, the projects and activities of the different zones, districts, clubs and the stories about Rotary, the pictures and the news happening around the world"
- "Stories about Club Experience, accomplishment projects in their respective communities."
- "service projects"
- "rotary projects to the communities..."
- "Am in ecstasy knowing updates and projects of all Rotary Clubs."

Feature Articles: Several respondents state that they enjoy reading about the featured clubs and members.

- "The feature articles and learnings articles"
- "The articles about clubs performance"
- "Relevant Articles together with great photos and inclusivity"
- "reading interesting articles that captures my eyes"
- "Feature articles"
- "District Features Articles"
- "Articles about our District achievements and other close district affairs..."

Additional topics you would like to see more of in the magazine?

Rotarian Profiles: Several respondents want to read more about Rotarians who are in leadership positions or who are doing inspirational things.

Some example comments:

- "inspiring life of a Rotarian..."
- "More features on young Rotary/Rotaract leaders"
- "Projects & personal experiences"

Projects: Although several respondents already stated they like reading the stories about projects, there are respondents who would like to see more of this content in the magazine.

Some example comments:

- "Post club projects that really touches lives."
- "Pictures of club / district projects"
- "More feature projects per district per clubs. Biased news and relatable."
- "Life changing projects and connections and joint projects around the world."
- "Future projects and milestones."

Please share any additional comments or feedback regarding [the magazine]

Representation. A few comments highlight how the magazine gives Rotarians and their clubs opportunities to share their service projects and activities, and encourages the editors to continue to do so but also feature some project from clubs not typically featured.

Some example comments:

- "To continue empowering other local clubs to share or contribute their activities, stories, events etc. rather than dominated by certain areas or districts so as to have the idea on what's going on in some places all over the Philippines where rotary club is present."
- "Continue to give chance to every District to be featured their accomplishments in every projects that they have accomplished. Give the chance to every District to shine in their own little way."
- "Philippine Rotary encourages us to submit articles about our local community projects for publication in the magazine, which makes us feel to be really part of the Rotary community in our country."

IN MEMORIAM

Nelson Aspe: A life of service

For decades, he toiled in the fields of Philippine public service, moving through the ranks until he became the second highest official in the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR). While being in government service, he joined and led the Rotary Club of Wack Wack, before his election as District Governor of D 3800. He carved a marvelous record of service in 2019-2020, rising above the enormous challenge posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, and sailing through with flying colors. In 2021-2022, he was elected Chair of the Philippine College of Rotary Governors, shepherding the organization through the travails of a pandemic and presiding over a highly productive Rotary Concerns (Rotacon) Conference in Clark. He was among the movers of the Host Organizing Committee for the hosting of the RI convention. He passed away on December 27, 2024. Truly, he was a gentle and convivial leader who inspired those whose lives he touched with empathy and compassion for humanity.

Above right: The Ignatian philosophy of “a man for others” is how people describe Nelson Aspe. **Below, from left:** DG Nelson and Spouse Mila at an End Polio Now fundraising event, at a TRF dinner gala, district training assembly, and enjoying Oktoberfest.





Above: The amount raised during the End Polio Fashion Show was turned over by the Spouse Committee to DG Nelson Aspe and DRFC Mac Hermoso.



Left: DG Nelson and spouse Mila with End Polio mascot; PCRG Board Trustees are joined by Past RI Director Guiller Tumangan (l-r) Immediate Past Chair Nelson Aspe, Lindon See Diet, Edwin Afzelius, Tonipi Parungao, Co-Chair Dindo Berino, John Mark Sarraga, BH Herrera and Rudy Bediones.



Bottom: Incoming PCRG Chairman Nelson Aspe speaks in Zoom meeting with members of the Board who will serve with him in 2021-2022; Passing of gavel from outgoing PCRG Chair Jude Doctora to incoming PCRG Chair Nelson Aspe

PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

A burning issue

Electronic waste threatens the environment and public health. Refurbishment programs can help.

The smoke is black and poisonous. Palestinians in the West Bank, desperate to eke out a meager living, collect discarded electronic equipment — computers, TVs, printers, cables — and burn it to extract trace amounts of valuable metals. The resulting smoke is full of toxic chemicals that infiltrate the soil, the water, and people's bodies.

"People do it just to have a couple hundred shekels worth of copper, lead, whatever they can claim," says Akram Amro, founder of the non-profit Green Land Society for Health Development in the West Bank city of Hebron. "It's an opportunity and a problem at the same time."

Noxious plumes of smoke, like those in the West Bank, can be found in poor communities across the globe. As the world becomes more dependent on laptops, tablets, and smartphones — and as people continually upgrade to new devices — the need to find ways to repurpose or safely recycle old electronics, or e-waste, has become urgent.

Amro and his organization have studied the environmental and health impacts in villages near burn sites. They've found high concentrations of lead and chromium in the springs that people had relied on for water. "Now people can't use the water from those wells, because it's black and contaminated," says Amro, an associate professor of physiotherapy at Al-Quds University. "And we found evidence of contamination in the blood of people working and living in those areas."

If that weren't bad enough, Amro also found it particularly grim that toxic smoke from old electronics from Israel was affecting Palestinian villages where many schools don't have computers for students. He recruited a Rotary club in Jerusalem and one in the United States to help create a program to refurbish old computers for schools and hopefully divert at least some from ending up in burn sites.

The \$13,000 pilot project, funded by a district grant and donations from multiple clubs, hired local workers to wipe disk drives and upgrade necessary components. In this way, the initiative addressed another problem in the community: It provided a few good jobs, says Merrill Glustrom, a member of the Rotary Club of Boulder, Colorado. "They're refurbishing computers, which could lead to programming computers or doing refurbishing elsewhere," says Glustrom, whose club has partnered with similar electronics recycling ventures in Colorado. "There's lots of possibilities for them besides dead-end jobs."

A record 137 billion pounds of e-waste was generated around the globe in 2022, but only about a quarter was formally collected and recycled in an environmentally sound way, according to a report from the United Nations Institute for Training and Research and other organizations. Most of the remainder was burned, dumped, or recycled unsafely, leeching dangerous substances into the environment and generating high levels of

To learn more about reducing e-waste, visit esrag.org/circular-economy.



Before the vast Agbogbloshie scrapyard in Accra, Ghana, was demolished, teenagers burn cables from computers and other electronic devices to recover valuable copper.

greenhouse gases. Researchers estimate that waste from devices such as computers, mobile phones, and flat-screen TVs was responsible for 580 metric tons of carbon dioxide emitted in 2020 alone.

“You have a range of heavy metals in there — lead, cadmium, and others that are toxic — and you frequently find those in groundwater close to waste sites,” says Sara Brosché, a science adviser at the International Pollutants Elimination Network. “You also have toxic chemicals in the plastics in e-waste. Flame retardants, for example, are very common.”

But there is an alternative. As in Hebron, Rotary clubs around the world are repairing and updating used electronic devices and donating them to people who need them. In Australia, members of the Rotary Club of Chadstone/East Malvern collect devices, refurbish them, and

donate them to nonprofit organizations in the area. In Taiwan, members of the Rotary clubs of Ping-Tung Feng-Huang and Kaohsiung secured a Rotary Foundation global grant to fund a refurbishment program at a local junior high school. Like the Hebron program, it donates the computers to schools in needy areas. The initiative is on track to donate 100 computers by next June and 80-100 computers every year after that, says Fu-Chuan Shih, a member of the Kaohsiung club.

With guidance, the students fix up the old machines themselves. “We let the students personally disassemble the computers, clean them internally, reinstall and test the software, reassemble them, and carry out the final sorting and packaging,” Shih says. “In addition to allowing students to make a practical contribution to environmental protection,

it is hoped that their demand for information equipment will no longer be just a blind pursuit of speed and efficiency but also reflect a concern for the environment.”

In Italy, members of the Rotaract Club of Milano Sforza are four years into a grant-funded refurbishing program launched during the COVID-19 pandemic. “In the COVID period, a lot of young people needed computers and other devices in order to [join online classes] and do their homework,” says Gianluca Cocca, the club’s service projects chair. “I have a technical background, so I said, ‘OK, let’s do it. We’ll start a whole new service.’”

Cocca had to teach his fellow members how to refurbish the machines they collected, but now more than 100 people contribute to the project. The club members clean the computers inside and out and

upgrade some components, such as hard drives, that are too old to keep up with current computing demands. They then donate the equipment to nonprofit organizations in the area.

The only problem? Fewer and fewer devices can be refurbished. “A computer made 10 years ago is totally perfect once it’s regenerated with good software and some upgrade of the hardware. It’s fine for Zoom meetings, things like that,” Cocca says. “But updating a smartphone is really difficult. We can do nothing with the hardware.”

That’s because the phones — and increasingly tablets and laptops — aren’t designed to be upgraded when their technology starts to lag. Often, smartphone repairs are very difficult or impossible because you can’t remove and replace components without damaging other parts of the device. Manufacturers want to force people to buy new equipment regularly, says Brandon Smith, a member of the Rotary Club of Wenatchee Confluence in Washington and the owner of an IT consulting company. “It’s planned obsolescence. Manufacturers do stuff like using industrial adhesive on the glass on the back of a phone. When that breaks, you have to chip it out one piece at a time,” says Smith, whose club led a computer recycling event on Earth Day last year.

There are exceptions among manufacturers, though, at least where computers are concerned. Smith recommends that ecologically minded consumers buy from companies that design their machines to be repairable and upgradable. However, he adds, not many manufacturers do this. One is called Framework. “Framework built [its] platform to be fully upgradable, no matter what,” he says. “You can change out the keyboard. You can change out the trackpad.



You can change out the ports. You can change out the screen. It’s pretty cool.”

There’s no real cure for the e-waste problem, experts like Brosché say, except to make the whole life cycle of consumer electronics more eco-friendly. Unfortunately, the very existence of the problem comes as a surprise to many. Glustrom remembers how shocked he was when Amro told his club about the computers burned in the West Bank. Though Glustrom is proud of what their pilot project accomplished, he acknowledges that such efforts are just a small part of what needs to be a much more comprehensive movement.

“We have a throwaway society. That’s our consciousness. And we need to somehow get to a more circular economy,” Glustrom says. “But we’re running out of space and time in our environment, and we just can’t live this way any longer. We’ve got to make a switch.”

— ETELKA LEHOCZKY

BY THE NUMBERS

5.1 billion lbs.

Yearly increase in the generation of e-waste since 2010

53%

Increase in greenhouse gas emissions from some types of e-waste between 2014 and 2020

5x

Factor by which the increase in e-waste is outpacing the rise of formal recycling for it

Short takes

In September, Brazil awarded the Oswaldo Cruz Medal of Merit to Rotary for its work to end polio and increase vaccination coverage.



For the 16th consecutive year, The Rotary Foundation received the top rating (four stars) from Charity Navigator, an independent evaluator of U.S.-registered charities.



PROFILE

Let's chat

Fighting the loneliness epidemic with an online playground

Steven Shagrin
Rotary E-Club
of Silicon Valley,
California

More than a year into the frightening and lonely days of his pandemic isolation, Steven “Shags”

Shagrin found solace, joy, and friendship. He had joined an on-line community for older people sponsored by his insurance plan. In the virtual space, he and thousands of other participants could take classes and workshops, share recipes, watch movies at the same time, or just chat in small groups.

In 2023, with COVID-19 precautions declining, he learned the site was being shut down. But Shagrin knew how important this meeting place had become. He remembers thinking, “I can’t let this happen.”

Within a day, the retired money coach from outside San Francisco had built a nearly identical platform called ThePlayground Senior Circle (theplaygroundcircle.org). To his delight, nearly 100 people from the other online community joined his new group that first week, and other people from around the United States soon followed.

Its members, who join the non-profit site for free, can spend time in a 24/7 drop-in Zoom room that, for Shagrin, recalls the feeling of hanging out in a college dorm lounge. They can attend movie nights, take part in singalongs, play games, join study groups and grief support groups, and more. “We have fun, and that’s why it’s called ThePlayground,” he says. “Just like when you’re a kid, you go to the playground, and if your friends are there, you stay and play.”

These online connections have enriched his life and given him new purpose: to fight our current epidemic, loneliness. “I took this on as a personal service project,” Shagrin says, “because it needed to get done.” — KATE SILVER

Minneapolis will host the Rotary Convention in 2028, a year earlier than previously planned. A replacement host city for 2029 has not yet been chosen.



A new Instagram channel highlights RI youth programs (Rotary Youth Exchange, Rotary Youth Leadership Awards, and Interact). Follow [@rotariyoungleaders](https://www.instagram.com/rotariyoungleaders).

The Foundation will accept nominations this month for the Distinguished Service Award. Learn more at rotary.org/awards.

People of action around the globe

By Brad Webber

6,000

Animals treated each year at the Toronto Wildlife Centre

Canada

Since 2020 the Rotary Club of Toronto has supported the Toronto Wildlife Centre, which rehabilitates 300 species of sick and injured animals. The club has donated more than \$18,000 to construct enclosures for bats, mourning doves, woodpeckers, water birds, squirrels, and groundhogs. Hammers and drills in hand, club members Kurt Kroesen, Stuart Muirhead, and Michele Guy joined other volunteers and employees in October to assemble a structure for red squirrels. Nathalie Karvonen, the organization's founder and executive director, lauds the Rotarians for their devotion. "Their generosity is giving hundreds of wild patients each year a safe space in which to prepare for a healthy life back in the wild," she says.

Rotary
Club of Toronto

United States

After New Orleans signed a sister cities agreement with its French namesake, Orléans, in 2018, Rotary clubs in the two cities forged their own international ties. Looking to celebrate the connection, the New Orleans club discovered that both cities have Joan of Arc festivities and select a high school student to represent the French national heroine in parades and events, says Gayle Dellinger, a member of the Louisiana club. In true Rotary fashion, the clubs decided to create an exchange opportunity for their cities' "Joans." In June, the American "Joan," Marley Marsalis, a member of the legendary jazz family and a pianist herself, visited Orléans as a guest of French Rotarians. This month, the American Rotarians will host the French "Joan," Maÿlis Boët. The Joans ride in each other's parade and visit historical sites. "It gives you hope for the future and gets you excited," New Orleans club member Sarah Dickerson says. "It's so uniting for absolutely everybody involved."

Rotary
Club of New Orleans

1920

St. Joan of Arc canonized



905,000+

Automobiles manufactured
in the UK in 2023

England

A cavalcade of 120 vintage vehicles, including tractors, steam lorries, and penny-farthing bicycles, rolled into the Mortimer Fairground in June for a fundraiser of the Rotary Club of Reading Matins. The Transport Through the Ages event drew about 4,000 people and raised more than \$13,000 for charities. The idea came from similar shows held during celebrations of the Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II and the coronation of King Charles III. "We are delighted at the success of the event and the amount of money raised for the charities we feel so passionate about," says Club President Valerie Robinson. The resulting fanfare has encouraged the Rotarians to reprise the fundraiser in the future, says club member Carrie Wise.



Rotary
Club of Reading Matins

India

After heavy rains triggered flooding and landslides in India's northeastern state of Tripura in August, the Rotary Club of Agartala City and the Rotaract clubs of Agartala City and Agartala Central mobilized to help. The clubs set up relief camps providing food, clothing, health care, and medicines in Agartala, reaching 400 people. During a second phase, club members distributed groceries and sanitary pads among 125 families in a remote village that was devastated by the floods. "Villagers lost all their belongings. Farms and agricultural crops were destroyed," says Agartala Rotary club member Anannya Das. Rotary members also organized clinics in the region where patients could see pediatricians, eye specialists, dermatologists, and general practitioners, including Rotarian doctors.

Rotary
Club of Agartala City



Over \$200 billion

Estimated cost of
natural disasters
worldwide in 2023

Philippines

Members of the Rotaract Club of Calumpit are passionate about supporting young people with disabilities through skill development and advocacy. As part of their Breaking Barriers initiative, they've recorded podcasts on the rights and challenges of people with disabilities. In August, Rotaractors and members of the Rotary Club of Calumpit visited an elementary school, offering hygiene kits, medicine, and school supplies to 160 students with disabilities, as well as mentoring in reading, writing, and art. "The event was met with overwhelming positive feedback from participants, who appreciated the thoughtful activities and valuable resources provided," says Rotaract Club President Daniel Balingit. A session for caregivers was especially well received, he says. "It offered a safe space for mothers to share their experiences and gain insights into managing the mental health and psychological needs of their children."



12%

Share of Filipinos
15 and older with
a severe disability

Rotaract
Club of Calumpit

GOODWILL

Light a fire under your club

Members say they thrive with clear, specific goals and the continuity they provide

A rainbow of colors brightens the scorecards Hilda Addah shows members of the Rotary Club of Accra-South in Ghana. The activity is a monthly exercise to let members know how the club is doing on its goals.

Red on the homemade scorecards means a goal is behind schedule, while yellow reflects progress on track and green indicates a pace ahead of schedule. The system has been in place for about five years, and Addah, the club president, says it's helping to reveal achievement gaps and drive improvement. Committee members are motivated to keep their goals out of the red.

Many successful clubs have one thing in common: goal setting. When club leaders plan for the future, they provide their club with direction and purpose. Setting goals in areas such as membership growth, service projects, and club experience motivates members and inspires them to work together with a common purpose.

Rotary Club Central makes it simple. Accra-South club leaders set and track their goals in this online goal-setting tool for Rotary and Rotaract clubs. "Rotary Club Central is a very simple and user-friendly tool," Addah says. "It helps me as a leader follow and track progress."

While club leaders can use Rotary Club Central to set goals and record accomplishments, members can use it to view the club's

progress. New club leaders can use previous goals to make informed decisions about the club's future and set up to three years' worth of goals. They can adjust goals as needed, always planning three years ahead.

Planning for multiple years is important to ensure continuity and ease transitions in leadership.

"Some things that come out of strategic planning, you can't do in a short period of time," says Tony Winter, secretary and past president of the Rotary Club of Batavia, Illinois. "We also deliberately wanted some goals to stretch out longer to span different leadership teams and instill consistency in our club."

To start setting goals in Rotary Club Central, club leaders can use the club's current situation as the baseline and its strategic plan as a guide for the next three years. Clubs should make sure incoming leaders have a My Rotary account and report their role in My Rotary to ensure they have access to the online tool.

The Batavia club learned there's no such thing as too much communication. It decided in 2021 to use Rotary's Club Health Check to kickstart the goal-setting process. The club sought input from the dozen new members who had joined during the COVID-19 pandemic and was thrilled when most of them took part in a visioning session, Winter says. The club used the feedback to set goals, create a strategy, and develop an action plan.

"The information we got from that session was vital in telling us, in combination with the health check, what we needed to start doing, what we needed to keep doing, and what we needed to change," says Winter. "It was something we had never done before. It was a big step forward and gave us maybe a dozen items to work on over the next three years."

Quantifying goals and regularly reporting progress to members can light a fire under a club, Winter says. "There's a big difference between saying, this year let's do some social events, and this year we are going to do six social events," he says. "Once you put that number on it, it becomes somebody's responsibility to get that done. When you don't quantify it, it's just a statement."

Club President Margaret Perreault instituted a quarterly assembly this year to report to members on the club's progress, complementing the updates featured in the club newsletter.

"Overcommunicating is a healthy strategy for a club," Perreault says.

The Batavia club also uses Rotary's Member Satisfaction Survey at least once a year to fine-tune objectives and identify new needs.

"It's an ongoing challenge. People evolve, things evolve," Winter says. "You need to get out in front of things. You have to constantly communicate back to the club. It's the only way to plan."

— ARNOLD R. GRAHL

To support long-term planning, RI directors will appoint regional plan team leads to coordinate customized plans for their regions, aligned with Rotary's Action Plan. District leaders will share their region's plan with presidents-elect to use in their goal setting.

Start planning your club's future at rotary.org/clubcentral.



THE SPECIALIST

Hearing is believing

An audiologist strengthens family bonds by helping people hear their loved ones' words clearly

Audiology intrigued me because it combines medicine, electronics, and psychology. Also, my grandfather had severe hearing loss from World War I and my father suffered similar injuries from World War II. Having witnessed the stress that poor hearing causes for families, I wanted to help people like my grandfather and father reconnect with their families through better hearing.

When people come in for an examination, we test how they hear when sound is conducted through the air and through bone and in response to speech. We also do otoacoustics, which tests the outer hair cells of the inner ear. The test involves placing a probe tip in the ear, which gives off a sound. If the ear is healthy, the hair cells vibrate in response, sending a sound back to the instrument. If surgery or other medical treatment is necessary, we'll direct the

Roger Fagan
Rotary Club of
Portland, Maine

Doctor of
audiology

patient to an otolaryngologist. But most cases can be managed with hearing aids.

If we catch hearing loss in babies, we can do miraculous things. Children develop a speech and language center in their brain during their first two years. If we can help it develop, they'll have it throughout their life. If we wait to treat them until they're 3 or 4 or 5, they don't have a developed speech and language center. It's much harder to rehabilitate them.

I fell in love with international service after I spent time training doctors on modern hearing aids in China and India. My wife, Elizabeth, has a doctorate in speech-language pathology. Together, we established a hearing aid program in the Dominican Republic in 2002 because of the high incidence of hearing loss there. We've worked with a hospital in La Romana for 20 years, and I hope to build a permanent audiology facility. With donations from manufacturers, we have fitted more than 4,500 hearing aids.

Earlier on, we encountered a stumbling block — batteries. People had to travel far to buy batteries and many couldn't afford them. To make the program sustainable, we offer each recipient a solar charger, which extends the life of the batteries to about four years.

Rotary has enabled me to do things that I couldn't do by myself. When people see the Rotary wheel on my clothes, they know I'm there to help. ■



How to protect yourself
and your Rotary club
from becoming victims
of financial fraud

By AMY HOAK

ILLUSTRATION
BY
MADISON
WISSE



SCAM ALERT

Don Griffing realized something was wrong when he received a text from a fellow Rotarian asking: “Is this really you?”

The question was about an email that appeared to have been sent by Griffing asking for help, but the wording seemed off. As a retired software developer, Griffing immediately suspected he was being impersonated by a scammer trying to swindle money from his network and alerted his contacts not to respond to the request.

His suspicions were bolstered when he learned that another Rotary district leader had likely crossed paths with the same scammer requesting Amazon gift cards. “I’m a retired IT person; I’ve been down this path. I know what to do. But I still had that little bit of a pit in the stomach, an ‘OK, here we go again’ kind of thing,” says Griffing, a past governor of District 6270 who lives in Oshkosh, Wisconsin.

This wasn’t Griffing’s first or last brush with fraudsters.

In the early 2010s, someone claiming through Facebook to be his uncle said he was in Europe and needed Griffing to send money — something he quickly debunked by checking with his cousin. In retrospect, he says, it was an early version of the popular “grandparent scam,” in which someone posing as a distressed relative, often a grandchild, asks for money.

More recently, he received a questionable email sent to Rotary club and district leaders asking for project funding. After some digging around, he couldn’t confirm that the person who sent the email was even a Rotary member.

With the impersonator emailing his contacts, here he was again, an IT expert, having to send a warning to members throughout his district. He worried a little about causing annoyance by adding another fraud alert to the inboxes of people who receive so many emails each day. But he knew how important it was to protect his network from fraudsters and quickly brushed his hesitations aside.

The number of scammers on the prowl is proliferating.

Americans lost a record \$10 billion to fraud schemes in 2023, an increase of more than \$1 billion compared with 2022, according to the Federal Trade Commission. The

most money was lost through investment scams: a total of \$4.6 billion that year. Impostor scams had the second-highest reported losses, totaling \$2.7 billion in 2023.

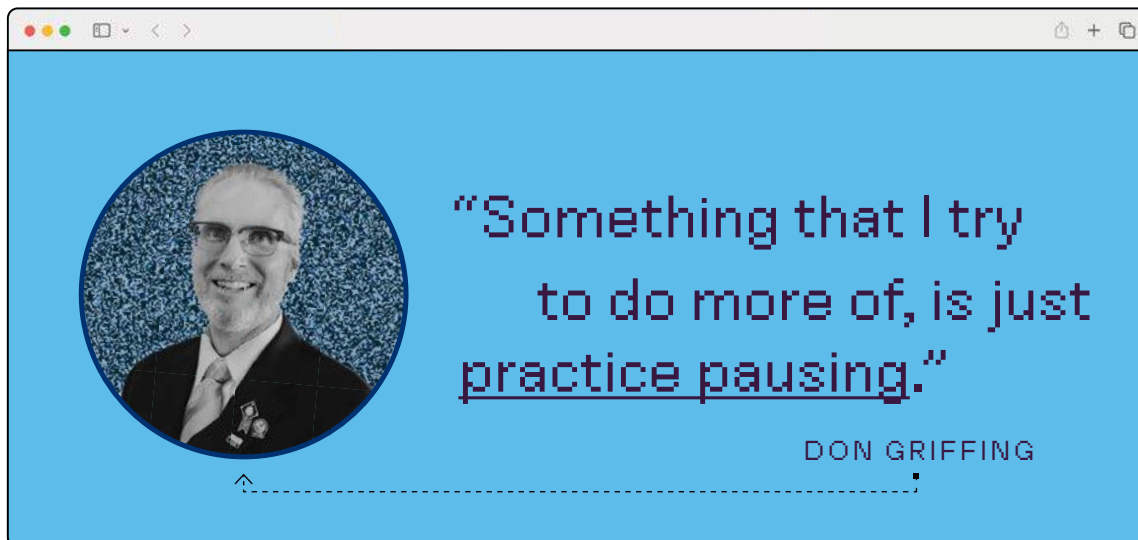
But even these big numbers are an underestimate, experts say.

“We know that fraud and scams often go unreported because people may be ashamed or embarrassed, or not know where to report,” says Lisa Schifferle, senior policy analyst in the Office for Older Americans at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, a U.S. government agency. “This is really just the tip of the iceberg.”

Criminals usually get away with the cash they’re able to take through fraudulent phone calls, emails, texts, and social media interactions, experts say.

“Fraud complaints continue to go up because the crime is so lucrative and so low risk for the criminals who perpetrate it,” says John Breyault, vice president of public policy, telecommunications, and fraud for the National Consumers League. “The vast majority of fraud goes unpunished. So unfortunately, when we talk to consumers, most of the time, we simply have to say, ‘Your money’s gone.’”

Moreover, it’s getting more difficult to spot fraud, as scammers use artificial intelligence to appear legitimate. People hawk tools through the





dark web with names like FraudGPT, a deviant cousin to the popular AI tool ChatGPT, Breyault says.

Consumer advocates like him are watching carefully to see how criminals use AI to come up with well-worded messaging or deepfakes that impersonate someone's voice or likeness in their schemes, he says. The technology also could help criminals develop targeted lists of potential victims, based on location, income, and other demographics, he adds.

"I can imagine punching [a query] into an AI that says, 'I need a list of 100 women with net worths of more than \$250,000, who recently lost their significant other and live alone ... and their phone numbers.' And an

AI could spit that out for you," Breyault says. "We're dreading seeing the data starting to roll in as these tools become more accessible."

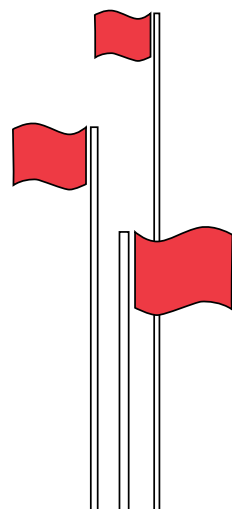
A common misconception is that scams primarily affect older people, but young people too report losses, especially to online shopping fraud and bogus offers of work-from-home jobs or help starting a business. Instead of earning a paycheck, you end up paying for useless training kits or certificates. Scammers also target people who are vulnerable by the nature of their work or circumstances: those recovering from natural disasters,

for instance, or those involved in humanitarian service who regularly see appeals for aid.

At the heart of Rotary's mission is the goal of serving others and fostering goodwill throughout the world. That's exactly what puts Rotarians at an elevated risk of fraud, members say.

"As Rotarians, we're such trusting, giving, warm-hearted people. We want to help," says Amelia Stansell, governor of District 7610 in northern and central Virginia. That makes Rotary members an easy target for people looking to profit from phony charity appeals, she adds.

Recently, members of the Rotary Club of Herndon-Reston, part of



Stansell's district, suspected they had been targeted by a scam. A person identifying himself as a Rotarian on Facebook bombarded people with messages requesting help.

But interactions with this person felt suspicious. And the misspelling of "Rotary" on his profile seemed like a red flag to people who took the time to closely inspect it.

When Stansell found out about the situation, she notified members to not only unfriend this person but to report the account to Facebook.

In another case, at the beginning of the Rotary year in July, Stansell received an email that a Rotary Foundation global grant was approved — a message that included instructions on how to wire funds for the project.

"It was not a real global grant number. It was totally not legit," she says. But an inexperienced Rotarian giving the item a quick read could easily be tricked, Stansell adds. "It's the beginning of the year, all of a sudden districts have money for grants. All this stuff comes in July, August, September. And you have new leaders who are eager to get things done, don't have that experience, and may not have that Spidey sense," she says.

Stansell's Spidey sense is finely honed; she only agreed to an interview for this article after confirming that the request was legit and not part of a scam.

All around the world, senior leaders of Rotary are routinely impersonated on Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp, says Andy Sternberg, manager of social media and audience development at Rotary International. Once the impostor is a contact in your network, a direct message often follows.

"It seems like members might be talking to the president, but then after a few messages, the scammer would say: 'You know, I'm in a bind. I need some money. Can you send me money via Cash App or via PayPal?'" he says. "If you receive a direct message or even a text message from someone claiming to be our president or our general secretary, that immediately should be a red flag," he says. This is not how senior

leaders would reach out to people for the first time.

Even if a fraudster doesn't fool you into parting with money, allowing the person into your social network gives them access to other members, and more potential victims. That's why it's important to carefully evaluate each friend request you receive.

"Last year, I almost got caught with a scam of somebody trying to impersonate Gordon McNally," Griffing says, referring to the 2023-24 Rotary president. But upon closer examination, he saw that McNally's last name had been misspelled. "Something that I try to do more of, is just practice pausing," he says.

For charitable donations, create a giving plan at the start of the year and stick to it, so as not to stumble into scams when they arise, says Amy Nofziger, director of fraud victim support for the AARP Fraud Watch Network. Criminals can exploit GoFundMe and other crowdfunding sites, so people should only give to one of these accounts if they personally know who's behind it and can verify its legitimacy, Nofziger says.

Taking these extra steps could protect your money — and your heart.

When "giving-hearted" people get taken advantage of, "it's like



How to report fraud

To report fraud in the U.S., visit the Federal Trade Commission's website at **reportfraud.ftc.gov**. In Canada, visit the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre at **antifraudcentre-centreantifraude.ca**.

Another channel for reporting fraud in the U.S. is AARP's Fraud Watch Network Helpline at 877-908-3360, where trained volunteers across the country also can help consumers — even as the fraud is in progress. The helpline fields 400 to 500 phone calls every day. Consider adding the number as a contact in your phone, since you never know when you will need it. The service is available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Eastern time.

a double punch in the stomach," says Derrick Kinney, a personal finance educator, author, and Rotarian from Arlington, Texas. "It's not just I got money taken from me. It's money that I wanted to also give to help other people, and now I feel almost doubly bad."

While the median amount that Americans lost through an individual scam was \$500 in 2023, according to the FTC, some people lose much more.

Experts say that instead of trying to spot specific trickeries, people should look for common red flags that span the universe of deceptive plots.

One of those warning signs is a sense of urgency, Schifferle says. "Scammers try to push people into getting in a state of frenzy," she says. They try to convince you that you must act immediately.

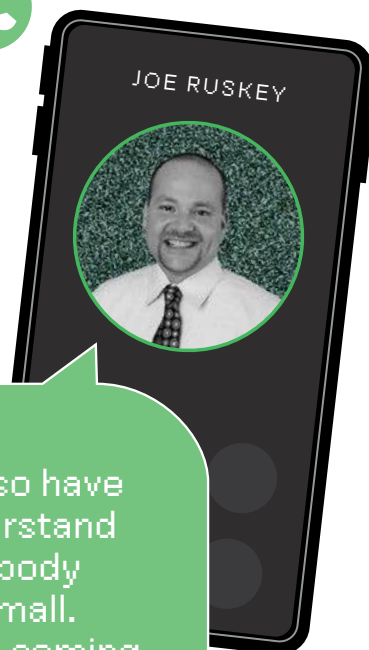
Don't fall for it. If you aren't sure what you should do, call the AARP fraud helpline or a friend you trust for some advice.

Another tip: Pay close attention to what's being requested, Nofziger says. "If they're asking for a prepaid gift card or directing you to go to a crypto ATM machine, if they're asking for money through Venmo or

Zelle, if they're asking for your Social Security number, your Medicare number — it's, let's say, 99.9 percent of the time a scam," she says.

In the U.S., methods of payment including cryptocurrency, gift cards, and peer-to-peer networks like Venmo and Zelle aren't protected in the same way as credit and debit cards. And when people lose money through these channels they're likely to incur a higher financial loss, experts say. In contrast, credit and debit cards have stronger consumer protections. "Groups like mine have been very vocal in saying we need the services that scammers are relying on to defraud consumers to have more skin in the game," Breyault says.

With credit and debit cards, the financial institutions can be on the hook if someone steals your account number and runs up charges, thanks to U.S. laws that hold the companies accountable for charges they authorize. "Most of the banks and credit card companies have adopted zero-liability policies that basically say you're not liable for anything, as long as you report it," Breyault says. "Consequently, the banks and the credit card networks invest a tremendous amount of money to identify fraud." That's also why you will get a call from your credit card



"You also have to understand that nobody is too small. They're coming after everybody."

company to alert you when fraudulent activity is detected, he adds.

There's no way to stop fraudsters completely, says Joe Ruskey, a cybersecurity expert who owns a technology protection firm and a Rotarian in LaCrosse, Wisconsin. But there are ways to mitigate the risk.

The question experts want people to consider is: "How can we slow it down as much as possible, or make sure that when it does happen it's not as much of a disaster?" he says.

Ruskey has given presentations on the subject to Rotary clubs, underscoring how important it is to verify contacts, properly vet pleas for donations, and use multifactor authentication for communication and financial websites, requiring more than just a password. For Rotary members to follow The Four-Way Test, they need a system of evaluating requests from people to ensure that those inquiries aren't fraudulent, he says.

Keep in mind, criminals will often lurk for a while, watching how you communicate with people in your network and even learning nicknames before they strike — which can make them very convincing, Ruskey adds. They're also indiscriminate, targeting people of all ages and income levels.

"You also have to understand that nobody is too small. They're coming after everybody," he says. "They're coming after you because you've got very valuable data."

In the end, Griffing doesn't know of anyone who lost money during the scams he has dealt with. But even when there are no financial losses, the experience comes with some amount of stress and headache. The fact that people must carefully vet everyone also says something about the realities of modern communication and how little faith we can afford to have in new interactions, he says.

"Without getting too philosophical or anything, it goes to the eroding of trust we have going on in society right now," Griffing says. "Getting everybody to pause and take a breath before they respond to an email, that's really all we can do. Calm down and prevent damage going forward." ■

The most common scams

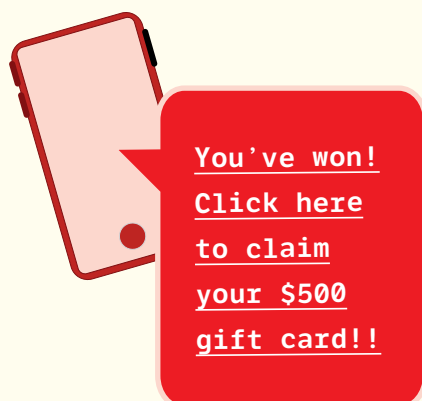
What's your eta??

Wrong number!

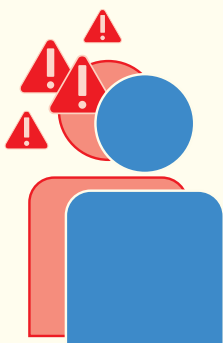
Hey, what r u up to?

Wrong-number texts that start with an innocuous message, perhaps what time someone is coming to dinner. After the recipient tells the person they have the wrong number, a back-and-forth conversation starts, a sort-of friendship ensues, "and the next thing you know, they're asking you to invest in cryptocurrency," Nofziger says.

Text message scams that lure people to click on a link, perhaps tricking the recipient into thinking it's related to a package that wasn't delivered to them.



Impostor scams including ones that involve people pretending to be entities such as Amazon customer service or the Internal Revenue Service. The popular grandparent scam involves the scammer posing as someone's grandchild on the phone, pretending to be in trouble and asking for funds.



Romance scams that often begin on dating sites or social media apps, with a scammer nurturing a sham relationship to take advantage of someone looking for companionship — right up until the deceiver gets money, personal financial data, or both, then disappears. “This is not just financially devastating; it’s emotionally devastating as well,” Nofziger says.



Tech support scams where criminals allege the victims have viruses on their computer when they don't, then make them pay for a worthless software package. “They say you’re going to lose all your data or all your photos, or your computer will be blocked, but oftentimes you just turn your computer off and on, and it’s fine,” says Schifferle, of the CFPB.

By Kate Silver
Photography by Taylor Roades

The liberation of Julie Mulligan

**After being kidnapped abroad, this
Rotarian set out to live a more authentic
life of Service Above Self**





A man dozes in his bedroom.

It's around midnight, quiet except for the gentle hum of the TV. The phone rings, jarring him awake.

"John?"

"Julie? What's wrong?"

"You haven't heard?"

"Heard what?"

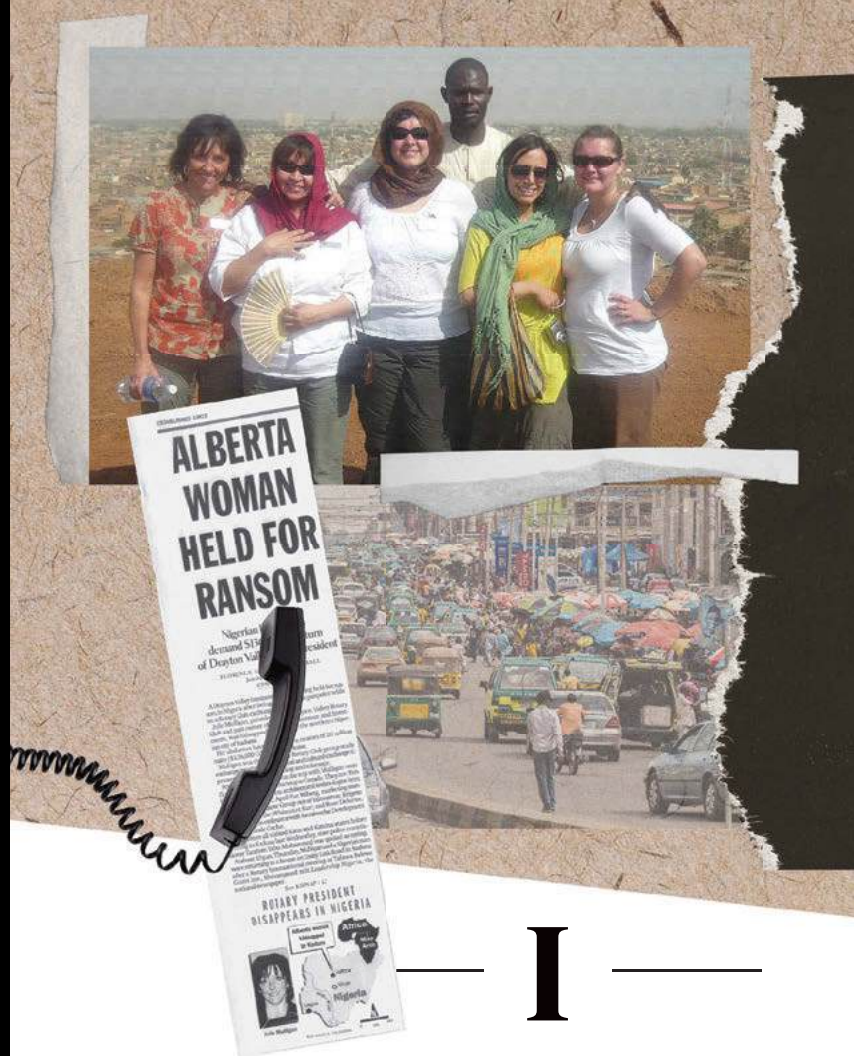
"John. I've been kidnapped."

Julie breaks down crying. Then a man's voice comes on the phone. Sharply, he demands 100 million naira — or about US\$700,000 — for her safe return.

"We'll call back," the man says. He hangs up.

Nearly 16 years have passed since that phone call from northern Nigeria to a home in Drayton Valley, a small town nestled between two rivers in central Alberta. Julie Mulligan has reflected on the events of April 2009 many times. How they changed her and her family. How they continue to stir complex emotions. How they engendered a deeper understanding of the nature of forgiveness and of our interconnectedness.

Today, Julie and her husband, John, live in British Columbia, where they remain devoted Rotary members. And Julie has come to understand what happened to her, though still painful, as almost a gift, for it opened a path to seeing the goodness in people instead of the bad.



Clockwise from top: Julie with fellow Group Study Exchange participants before her abduction; a bustling street scene in Kaduna; a 2009 newsclip from a Canadian paper.

THE JOURNEY TO NIGERIA IS SUPPOSED TO be a once-in-a-lifetime professional and cultural exchange opportunity for the five women traveling together. They've been accepted to a Group Study Exchange program through Rotary. For a month, they expect to explore different cities, visit government offices and cultural sites, and spend time in workplaces while living with Rotarian hosts. They plan to befriend a Nigerian team, whose members they will later host in Canada as part of the exchange.

Leading the Canadian team is Julie Mulligan, president of the Rotary Club of Drayton Valley. At 44, Julie is slender with caring green eyes, brown hair, and a quick, dry wit. She's the oldest in the group, which is made up of four other professionals in their 20s and 30s, and she's the only Rotary member.

Julie, who works in the insurance industry, is giddy. She loved her time in Africa the year prior, when she and John cycled through parts of Tanzania. She can't wait to get back. A Rotary member since 2001, she's especially excited to make new Rotary connections in Africa.

Located in north central Nigeria, Kaduna is a bustling and sometimes chaotic

city of about 1.2 million. Although it's a major industrial center, the town's infrastructure and services have failed to keep up with its growth. Power outages are frequent, and many people lack access to safe drinking water. Across the state, also called Kaduna, about 45 percent of people live below the national poverty line.

Today, kidnappings have become a lucrative business and a growing threat in parts of Nigeria, including the state of Kaduna. In addition to armed bandits and criminal enterprises that use kidnappings for ransom to fund their operations, Boko Haram and other militant groups have carried out mass abductions for ideological reasons and leverage in negotiations with the government. In March 2024, gunmen kidnapped 287 school children in Kaduna state.

But in early 2009, this wasn't the case. Back then, kidnappings were concentrated around the country's oil fields to the south, in the Niger Delta, but in the north visitors were welcomed with open arms. In fact, showing visiting Rotarians the "real" Nigeria is something that Leonard Igini has always loved to do. As a member of the Rotary Club of Nassarawa-Kano, Igini has hosted visitors from Norway, Sweden, Japan, Canada, the U.S., and elsewhere.

And he is among the hosts for the Canadian group's visit in 2009, with plans to later lead the Nigerian team that is to visit Canada. "The word 'risk' did not occur to any one of us," says Igini about the local Rotary team, "because it's something we have never experienced."

On 16 April, about a week into the trip, Julie and her Nigerian host, Moses Kadeer, who belonged to the Rotary Club of Kaduna, are driving home from a Rotary meeting at an inn, where her exchange group members had been guests of honor. As they pull up to Kadeer's home, a teal hatchback drives up alongside them. The driver rolls down his window and asks Kadeer a question — does he know so-and-so? When Kadeer says no, three men jump out and drag him from the front seat, throwing him on the ground.

Then they grab Julie. "Moses!" she screams as they beat her with a large gun. They shove her into the back seat and speed away.

JOHN IS IN SHOCK FOLLOWING THE PHONE call with Julie. Usually, he's a soft-spoken voice of reason when it comes to his family, whether it's Julie, her two teenage children — Stephanie Dean, 19, and Mackenzie

Dean, 17 — or his adult sons, Greg and Rob Mulligan. But this is uncharted territory.

John awakens Steph and tells her what happened. Then, he calls his sons and his most trusted friends, who also happen to be Rotarians. Within hours, Alex and Gayleen Blais, Mary and Terry Drader, and John's son Greg have gathered round. Together, they debate what to do. Should they get to work gathering the ransom? Do they call the police? They decide on the latter, and by morning two agents arrive from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, or RCMP, Canada's national police force.

The agents tell John the kidnappers will likely call again soon. They write down the exact words John is to say when he answers the phone, and he is not to stray from the script. "They were scared the kidnappers were going to get more information about who I was, what I owned, what organizations I belonged to, all that kind of stuff," John says, "which would lead them to increase the ransom."

The agents motion to a chair at the end of a table and tell John that's where he'll sit until his wife is released. And, in no uncertain terms, they tell him they will not be paying a ransom. "The government of Canada does not negotiate with terrorists or hostage-takers," says Peter Ryan, who was in charge of the RCMP's extraterritorial response unit in 2009.

Then, they wait for the phone to ring.

IN THE MORNING LIGHT, JULIE ASSESSES the situation. The night before, she and two of the kidnappers were dropped off at a dark, desolate construction site. It's clear now that they're sitting inside the walls of an unfinished house, with dirt floors and no roof. She peers down at her dusty clothes — a blazer with intricate cutouts on the sleeves, cropped black pants and high heels — and recalls, sardonically, that she'd worn that same outfit not long ago at the Beverly Wilshire hotel for a business conference. Now, her arms and legs are covered in mosquito bites. And she no longer has her anti-malaria medication.

She's starting to make sense of things. The driver — who'd returned temporarily and instructed her to call John — appears to be the boss. The two young men staying with her answer to him. In the daylight, they look to be about the same age as her teenage children. As lizards and scorpions skitter by, she starts talking to the guys, telling them about herself, her kids, her family. She shows them photos from her camera, desperate for them to see that she matters.

She asks them why they're doing this. The younger one, who says his name is Anthony, needs money for school. The older one, who calls himself Oyo, just needs money, period. "They had this idea that in North America — in Canada — the streets were lined with gold," says Julie.

She tries to negotiate with the two, to get them on her side. Her wedding ring, she says, could probably get them \$1,000. "What if we left here, we sell the ring, and you get the money?" she asks. They don't take the bait, and she tucks her ring into her bra — along with the photo memory card from her camera — for safekeeping.

Recognizing that Anthony and Oyo are not the masterminds but most likely pawns, Julie feels a kind of maternal connection to them. Years later, she will think of them as "the boys." And as the situation wears on, Oyo starts to call her "Auntie."

"JOHN, WHEN ARE YOU FLYING OVER HERE? *When are you coming? What's happening with the money?"*

When she calls the next day, Julie's voice is John's salvation — she's alive. It's also torture because she's distressed. She's frightened. She's impatient, even angry. And under the careful watch of the police negotiators, he's not allowed to say what he really wants to say. "I had to stay calm. I couldn't show emotion," he says. "I couldn't show my love. Because that would give the kidnappers more energy."

By now, the house is in full lockdown to squelch any news from spreading and putting Julie at even more risk. The Canadian authorities give John permission to have five couples join him at the house. Day in and day out, Rotary friends and family keep him afloat, even as the tension grows.

"There was a lot of commotion, and then a lot of stillness," remembers Julie's daughter, Steph. She and her brother are pulled from school and told they can't talk to anyone. The house was like a submarine, closed off from the world, she says. "Everything was just so heavy."

To escape the stress, Steph and Mackenzie take long drives. They listen to music and call their mom's cellphone. "It would go straight to voicemail," says Steph. "We would put it on speaker and just keep calling to hear her say, 'Hi, you've reached Julie Mulligan.'"

As the ordeal goes on, the agents advise John that the kids shouldn't be at home. They're worried that the kidnappers could turn violent against Julie while on the calls. So Steph and Mackenzie are sent to stay with family and friends.

“THIS IS JULIE MULLIGAN. I’VE BEEN kidnapped. I’m being held somewhere in Nigeria. I’m in an open-air house, getting bit by mosquitos. I’m not feeling well and I probably have malaria. The kidnappers are sitting with me now. I need some contact information of Rotary members.”

The call comes into Rotary International headquarters in Evanston, Illinois. David Alexander, manager of Rotary’s public relations division at the time, feels his adrenaline surge as he answers the call. Sitting nearby, General Secretary Ed Futa takes instructions from the Canadian Mounties on another line. They’re trying to trace the call; keep Julie talking, the agents say.

It’s been several days since the kidnapping, and Alexander has been overseeing a Rotary crisis response team in close contact with the RCMP as well as with Rotary members in Drayton Valley. “We had never encountered anything like this before,” says Alexander, “and I think we all felt a real sense of responsibility to do everything we were told to do.”

Steadying his voice, Alexander’s brain goes into overdrive as he tries every tactic he can to stall the call with Julie. She asks for the phone numbers of specific Rotary members — presumably so the kidnappers can ask them for money — and he fumbles through a series of questions. “Can you spell that first name? Can you spell the last name? Can you tell me what Rotary club she’s a part of?”

The call ends after about a minute and a half — too short to trace. Then the phone rings again. “We’re working on it,” Alexander tells Julie, asking more and more questions. When she responds, she sounds frustrated, angry. “I’m in a serious situation and I need help,” she cries. The call cuts out. The phone rings again.

After the third or fourth call, all is quiet. Alexander sits there, haunted and afraid for Julie. “It was the most difficult half hour of my work life I’ve ever had,” he says. “It’s seared into my memory.”

ON ABOUT THE FOURTH NIGHT, THE BOSS orders Julie into a car and they drive to a cramped house in a nearby town. Inside are two new people: a pretty young woman, whom she comes to know as Ann, and a menacing man named Christian. In her mind, Julie thinks of this as “the inside house,” and the previous site without a roof as “the outside house.”

The boss takes her to a small bedroom with bars on the windows. Now in her own space, she starts scheming. When Ann

brings her breakfast — a drink similar to Ovaltine — Julie swipes the spoon and tucks it into a hole in her mattress. When no one’s watching, she uses the spoon to try to dig into the cement around the window bars.

To keep up her strength, she does biceps curls using bottles of water as weights; and when no one’s paying attention, she practices whipping the mattress off the bed to block the door.

“YOU HAVE 24 HOURS TO PUT THE MONEY into this account. If you don’t do it, you may never hear from us — or from Julie — again.”

There are so many things John wants to say to the man on the phone. He wants to say he’ll send the money. He wants to cry and tell his wife how much they all miss her. He wants to beg them to send Julie home. But he has to stick to the script. To pay a ransom could put other travelers at risk. Plus, there’s no guarantee payment would result in Julie’s release.

“Quiet,” an agent writes on a sheet of paper. John glares at them, but follows their orders, giving the kidnappers nothing. He’s terrified it will be the last call. “I cried for 24 hours,” he says.

JULIE CAN’T UNDERSTAND WHY JOHN ISN’T paying the ransom. After more than a week, the kidnappers have lowered it to about \$68,000. It doesn’t make sense that she’s still here this long. She’s been forgotten, she just knows it. She’s convinced that John has gone back to work. Everyone has gone back to living their lives. She feels abandoned and incredibly alone.

The kidnappers are growing increasingly agitated. Food supplies are dwindling, and rice is now the mainstay. During this time, calls start coming into the house. It’s a local woman, asking to speak with Julie, and the kidnappers allow her to take the call. Day after day, she calls to ask the same questions: Are you being treated OK? How is your health? What are you eating? Believing the woman was from a church or a local Rotary club, Julie would always answer the same: “I would tell her I think I have malaria. We have no food. I just want to go home.”

TWELVE DAYS INTO THE ORDEAL, THE phone rings at the inside house. Julie hears muffled conversations. Excitement. Something is happening. There’s talk of collecting money. But nothing happens.

The next evening, there’s new tension in the air. Anthony, Oyo, and Ann are run-



ning around frantically. They tell Julie to sit still. “Don’t open the door. Don’t open the windows. Don’t speak to anyone.” And they leave.

She learns later that Christian has been arrested. He’d gone to collect the ransom from the woman who had been calling the house. The woman turned out to be an agent of Nigeria’s State Security Service, and the ransom drop turned out to be a sting operation. His accomplice got away and got word back to the house that the jig was up.

Alone in the house, Julie is panic-stricken. She doesn’t know what’s happening. Then, Anthony and Oyo come back for her. In the dark of night, they lead her down a road, into a village. As people walk past and motorcycles stream by, Julie is frightened of everyone. The boys keep talking frantically into their phones. Then they stop and look at her. “Auntie, don’t follow,” Oyo says. And they run away.

She stands there on the side of the road, in the dark, frozen. Within minutes, a police



From left: David Alexander oversaw Rotary International's response to the crisis; John and Julie look through news coverage of the kidnapping; Julie with (from left) fellow Drayton Valley Rotary members Mardi Dancey and Terry Drader, and Ross Tyson.

officer approaches. Initially, Julie pushes her away. For 13 days, the kidnappers had been feeding her lies that everyone was out to get her. But then, she relents. She begins to accept that her ordeal is over.

Over the next day, she's taken to different police stations where she gives her account of what happened, and she identifies Christian in a police lineup. Then, finally, accompanied by an RCMP officer who arrived soon after her rescue, she boards a plane and flies home.

JULIE'S RELEASE MAKES THE NEWS BEFORE

John hears about it, and his phone starts ringing. First, there's elation. But only when he hears Julie's voice on the phone, saying "I'm OK. I'm OK," does it sink in. After nearly two weeks as a hostage, his wife is coming home.

When Julie's plane lands, John is waiting for her at the jet bridge. It's an image he will never forget. "She was coming down

the aisle, and it was the greatest thing," he says. "I still tell her that I fell in love with you twice. When you came down the aisle when we got married. And when you came down the aisle when you were rescued."

Julie, who did not end up contracting malaria, returns in good health. They arrive home to a house full of friends and family in full celebration mode. The relief at being together again is indescribable. And yet, for the family, there are layers of trauma beneath the joy.

In the immediate aftermath, Julie struggles with feelings of abandonment; sometimes she has panic attacks when she's left alone. John wants to keep her close, so much so that he stands outside the door while she showers. Steph has a breakdown when she can't reach her mom on the phone one day. Mackenzie, they say, still prefers not to talk about any of it.

Julie finds healing in sharing her story. She travels to Rotary clubs to talk about

the ordeal and raise funds to help women in Nigeria who suffer from a condition called obstetric fistula, a debilitating injury that can occur during childbirth. Despite her harrowing experience, she makes it clear that she had no regrets. A month after her homecoming, in a letter of thanks to Rotary members, she writes, "I want Rotarians to know that I still believe that the Group Study Exchange program is the best vehicle to promote cultural understanding and peace. It is second to none in shortening the distance between two countries."

To her relief, the Group Study Exchange team from Nigeria still travels to Canada, although the trip is pushed back a couple of months. For Igini, the visit makes a profound impression. Canada is the first place he's been where people don't always lock their doors or windows. To this day, he still tells his children about what he saw. "Mankind is one," he tells them. "Everybody was at peace with each other."



II

AFTER SUCH A TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCE, some people might have lost their way. Julie seemed to find hers. As she learned about the people who fought for her, she was deeply moved by the goodness of humans. She read about thousands of people coming together in Kaduna for a candle-light vigil while she was held hostage. In Australia, students and professors at a university had been praying for her. She met a bishop who held prayer circles for her in Mexico. “There was just all this movement going on for peace,” she says. “My name was attached to it, but it was something so much deeper.”

Back at Rotary headquarters, too, senior leaders up to the general secretary were deeply involved throughout the emergency, reviewing updates from the RCMP with their crisis team and staying in contact with Canadian Rotarians directly supporting the family. Their efforts were bolstered by staff members at Rotary whose responsibilities included monitoring the safety of global travel and assisting with emergencies.

Throughout her life, Julie had participated in countless service projects to help others. Now, she found herself on the receiving end of others’ kindness. It ignited

something inside of her to do more, to not hold back. “When she was released, I thought our traveling was done,” says John. “And that’s when our traveling doubled.”

Within months, John and Julie traveled to Cuba. The next year, they did a group biking trip in China. In 2012, they raised money to build a school in Nepal and traveled there with the Calgary West Rotary club, trekking to a base camp on Mount Everest. And in 2013, Julie joined other Rotarians in administering polio vaccines to children in India.

But she also needed people to see her as a whole person, a complex human, someone who is more than a kidnapping victim. Living in a small town, that was hard. The motto of Drayton Valley is, literally, “Pulling Together,” and everyone had done just that when she was a hostage. But in the “after” era, she was struggling with that identity. In line at the grocery store, strangers would commend her for being so brave. In her job as a financial adviser, the veil between professional and personal felt permanently removed. She tried therapy.

Mostly, she found herself on a quest for authenticity. She threw herself into yoga, a practice she once despised but learned to appreciate for the focus and strength it demanded. She decided to become a yoga

Julie leads a yoga class; she threw herself into the practice for the focus and strength that yoga demands.





From top: Julie and John, who raised money to build a school in Nepal, visit the country in 2012; Julie gives a polio vaccine to a child during an immunization drive in India in 2013; the couple trek to an Everest base camp with Calgary West Rotary members; the family celebrates Steph's high school graduation.

PHOTOS: (ABOVE) COURTESY OF JULIE MULLIGAN

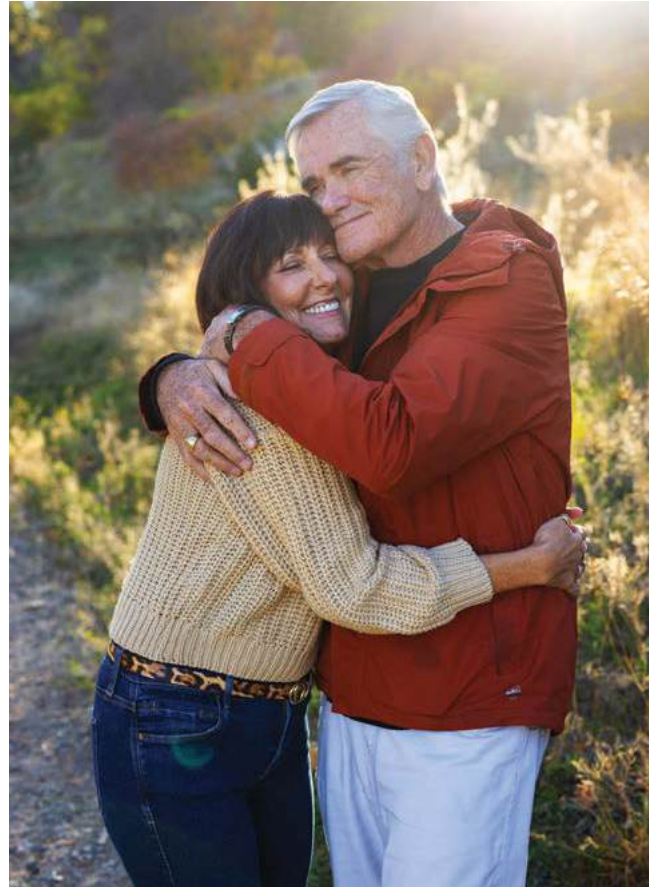


Above: Julie shares a laugh with a shopkeeper during a 2011 cycling trip in Sichuan province, China, and with attendees at a meeting of the Rotary Club of Kelowna, British Columbia. Right: Messages of support from friends and family.



instructor. In 2017, they moved to British Columbia, to the stunning town of West Kelowna, where the mountains and lakes were teeming with the promise of adventure — and serenity. There, her life has become full and rich. She loves paddleboarding in the morning. She plays pickleball and gardens. When she and John aren't traveling, they're hosting visiting friends and family. And they've found yet another family at the Rotary Club of Kelowna.

Of course, she has emotional scars. There are nights when she'll sit bolt upright in bed and start talking, waking John. She's also highly sensitive to other people's suffering. She broke down crying once after seeing a motorcyclist injured in a crash. Even scenes in movies can trigger feelings of distress and leave her sobbing. And she



can't stand to hear the TV at a loud volume. The kidnappers always had the television blaring at the inside house.

But other things conjure more positive associations. When she was held hostage at the inside house, she would eat a mango every so often, a welcome change from regular meals of rice. Today, the fruit holds a special place. "When I bite into a mango, I'm transported," she says. "There's something hopeful about it, in a weird way."

Perhaps most surprising, she thinks fondly of Anthony and Oyo. They were not among the four people imprisoned over the abduction, and she wonders what they're doing now. She remembers how, even in the worst moments, when she wasn't sure she would live, she saw the boys' vulnerability, and their bravado, and knew they were just

kids doing what they thought they needed to do to survive.

Julie made it a mission to meet and thank the law enforcement officials involved in her case, traveling as far as Jordan, where one agent was based. It's as though she was trying to show them, too, that she's more than Julie Mulligan the kidnapping victim.

Ryan, who went on to become a chief superintendent with the RCMP (he recently retired), remembers an email from Julie nearly 10 years after the ordeal. She and John were traveling to Ottawa, where Ryan is based, and wanted to know if they could take him and his wife to dinner. "My wife, to this day, still speaks about it," he says. Of all the hostage-taking investigations he'd overseen, this was the only one that led to a personal meeting afterward.

For Steph, watching her mother march on is inspiring. "Hard things don't need to take you down," she says. "She couldn't control that she was kidnapped, but she can control what she does after. She did not stop traveling. She did not stop going out of her front door."

If you ask Julie, she'll tell you that her family bore the brunt of the trauma. Outside of those brief phone calls, they never knew if she was alive.

For all of them, it's been a long recovery. But, Julie likes to think, they've come out stronger. "The kidnapping definitely changed my life. It changed my family's life, for sure. But I like to think it was for the good," she says. "I feel that life is a little sweeter when you know how quickly it can be taken away." ■

SONG TRANSLATION

New Year reflections

by Jaime A. Florcruz



As we age and mellow through the years, we reach a time of reflection and perhaps realization. To my Filipino contemporaries, especially those who grew up as teenagers in the late '60s and early '70s, here's a Salinawit version I've been working on of a song popular then. You may sing the lyrics to the tune of ... can you guess which song?

Bahid Ng Kulay Grey

Nu'ng ako'y batang paslit, kahapon lamang
Buhay ay tumbang preso, laro-laro lang
Kay daling tantuin, tama o mali
Daling tantuin, matatag o hindi
Lalaban ba, walang urungan
O sunud sunuran na lang?

E ngayo'y wala ng gabi o araw
Ngayo'y wala ng dilim o ilaw
Wala ng itim o puting pananaw
Pawang bahid grey na lang

Dati, nu'ng ang sagot, naku, kay linaw-linaw
Walang duda at kaba sa ating buhay-buhay
Kay daling tantuin, tama o mali
Ibenta ba ang sariling budhi?
Sino ang lab, sino'ng kadiri?
Sino'ng hibang, sino'ng bayani?

E ngayo'y wala ng gabi o araw
Ngayo'y wala ng dilim o ilaw
Wala ng itim o puting pananaw
Pawang bahid grey na lang.

Kay daling tantuin ang dating gawi
Magtabi ba o magbahagi?
Kelan unahin ang sarili
Kelan magbigay paki?

Ngunit ngayo'y wala ng gabi o araw
Ngayo'y wala ng dilim o ilaw
Wala ng itim o puting pananaw
Pawang bahid grey na lang.

*Salinawit by Jaime A. FlorCruz
November 2024
Beijing*

P.S. May we all embrace humility, gratitude and grace even as we hold on to our naïveté, idealism, and quest for justice and love. Happy New Year!

The author, a member of the Rotary Club of Makati West, D3830, is Philippine Ambassador to the People's Republic of China.

Shades of Gray is a song written by Barry Mann and Cynthia Well, recorded by the Monkees for their 1967 album *Headquarters*. Lead vocals were shared by Davy Jones and Peter Tork, and this is the only track on the album featuring instruments performed by session musicians instead of the band members (and producer Chip Douglas) themselves (French horn and cello). *Source:* [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shades_of_Gray_\(song\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shades_of_Gray_(song))

Shades of Gray

When the world and I were young,
Just yesterday.
Life was such a simple game,
A child could play.
It was easy then to tell right from wrong.
Easy then to tell weak from strong.
When a man should stand and fight,
Or just go along.

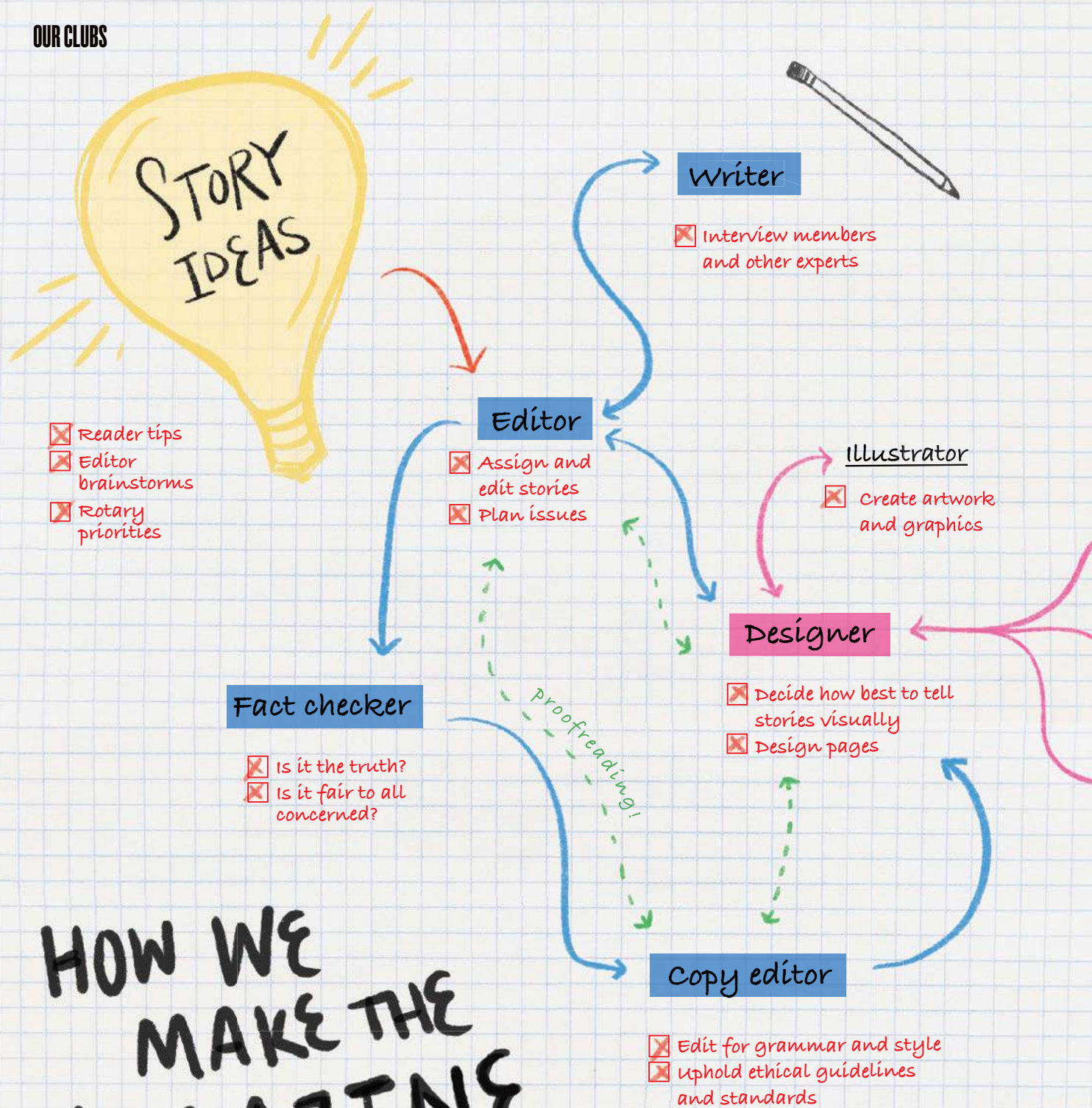
But today there is no day or night
Today there is no dark or light.
Today there is no black or white,
Only shades of gray.

I remember when the answers seemed so clear
We had never lived with doubt or tasted fear.
It was easy then to tell truth from lies
Selling out from compromise
Who to love and who to hate,
The foolish from the wise.

But today there is no day or night
Today there is no dark or light.
Today there is no black or white,
Only shades of gray.

It was easy then to know what was fair
When to keep and when to share.
How much to protect your heart
And how much to care.

But today there is no day or night
Today there is no dark or light.
Today there is no black or white,
Only shades of gray.
Only shades of gray.



HOW WE MAKE THE MAGAZINE

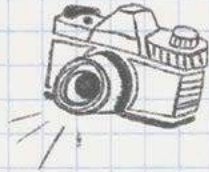
HANDBOOK

Ideas to impact: It takes months of work behind the scenes to produce the magazine in your hands. The rest is up to you. Tell us how you've been inspired to act at magazine@rotary.org.



ROTARY GLOBAL MEDIA NETWORK

30+ REGIONAL MAGAZINES



Photographer

- ☒ Capture members in action

Photo editor

- ☒ Direct photo shoots
- ☒ Select images

Web producer

- ☒ Manage rotary.org/magazine

Podcast producer

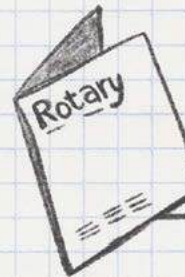
- ☒ Plan the magazine's Rotary Voices podcast

Print production manager

- ☒ Accept ads
- ☒ Prep pages for printing

Printer

Reader



- ☐ Inspired to take action
- ☐ Make the most of Rotary membership
- ☐ Connect with other members
- ☐ Support The Rotary Foundation
- ☐ Reach new members and partners

THE ROTARY FOUNDATION

TRF
yearend
2024
update

Philippine Rotary clubs, while lagging slightly behind last year's performance, have chalked up a creditable The Rotary Foundation (TRF) giving performance thus far.

Table 1 shows that total amount garnered as of yearend 2024 is six (6) percent behind 2025, at \$2,905,391 versus \$3,091,960.

The first table shows the well-performing districts in each category, as follows:

Compared to all other countries in the Rotary world, the Philippines is ranked number 6 to number 8 in vital performance categories, as shown in the second table.

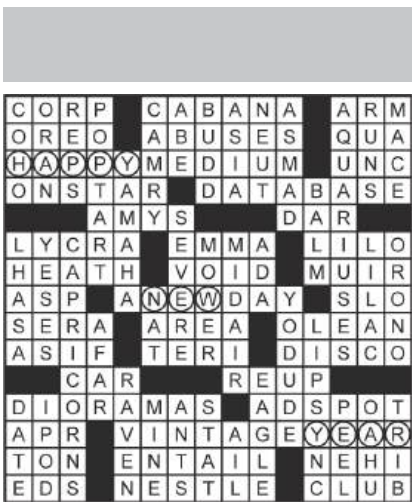
Finally, the third table shows the Extraordinary and Major Gifts scorecard for the country as of yearend 2024.

Acknowledging EMG Adviser, Past District Governor Virgilio Farcon, Jr., for compiling the foregoing statistics.

ZONE 10A TRF PERFORMANCE AS DECEMBER 31, 2024											
	NO. OF ROTARIANS	ANNUAL FUND	ENDOWMENT FUND	POLIO	TOTAL GIVING	PAU L HARRIS FELLOW	EREY	SUSTAINING	MAJOR DONORS	MAJOR GIFTS	PER CAPITA
3770	2,396	232,755	83,060	60,930	411,860	425	656	504	7	4	97.14
3780	2,456	160,870	8,000	2,555	174,727	100	225	220	12	1	65.50
3790	2,606	175,833	0	35,101	213,734	210	883	333	14	2	67.47
3800	2,929	295,383	31,000	82,447	415,384	190	785	422	15	8	100.85
3810	2,888	177,812	54,957	17,652	289,349	126	430	229	9	3	61.57
3820	4,653	279,132	7,000	44,160	435,180	221	980	582	6	6	59.99
3830	3,356	170,841	5,500	46,101	327,853	126	942	236	15	5	50.91
3850	1,347	86,309	0	12,579	99,938	15	109	38	4	2	64.08
3860	2,793	314,215	73,575	76,053	464,893	273	776	456	30	8	112.50
3870	1,374	67,779	0	4,694	72,473	46	179	169	1	0	49.33
	26,798	1,960,929	263,092	382,272	2,905,391	1,732	5,965	3,189	113	39	73.17

No. 6	No. 8	No. 7	No. 8
IN ANNUAL FUND	IN POLIO	IN ENDOWMENT	IN TOTAL GIVING
1. USA 2. Korea 3. Japan 4. India 5. Taiwan 6. Philippines	1. USA 2. Japan 3. Germany 4. Canada 5. Korea 6. Italy 7. Taiwan 8. Philippines	1. USA 2. Korea 3. Taiwan 4. India 5. Japan 6. Canada 7. Philippines	1. USA 2. Korea 3. India 4. Japan 5. Taiwan 6. Canada 7. Germany 8. Philippines

EMG SCORE CARD			
	RY 2022-23	RY 2023-24	Dec 31, 2024
MAJOR GIFT DONORS	76	63	39
MAJOR DONORS	181	126	113
NEW NAMED ENDOWED FUNDS	33	15	7
ENDOWMENT FUND	\$1,173,308	\$ 588,122	\$263,092
ROTARY PROMISE CLUB	1	1	0
NEW BEQUEST SOCIETY MEMBERS	26	24	7
NUMBER OF BENEFACTORS	165	76	20
AKS TRUSTEES CIRCLE MEMBERS	10	4	5
AKS CHAIR CIRCLE MEMBERS	2	2	1





TRUSTEE CHAIR'S MESSAGE

This year, become a regular

January marks a fresh start, a time to take stock of what we have achieved and plan for future success.

It is important to remember that we are in the middle of a major year for fund development. The Rotary Foundation has set an ambitious goal to grow Rotary's Endowment to \$2.025 billion by this year, 2025. This will only be possible through the generous support of every person reading this message.

January is also Vocational Service Month, when we recognize how vital each member's professional calling is to the work Rotary accomplishes.

During the Arch Klumphy Society weekend in October, Gay and I were inspired by the diverse vocations represented among some of our most generous supporters. They included teachers, engineers, health care professionals, and builders. Uniting them was a shared commitment to building a better world through The Rotary Foundation.

So many of us bring the insight of our professions into Rotary through Vocational Service. The Rotary Foundation Cadre of Technical Advisers exemplifies this. These Rotary members use specialized skills to guide project planning, grant applications, and evaluations, ensuring the projects you fund and implement are sustainable and effective.

To enroll in Rotary Direct, visit my.rotary.org/rotary-direct.

The work of The Rotary Foundation, from safe water initiatives to literacy programs, depends on regular giving by our members. One convenient solution for many is Rotary Direct, which provides a simple way to make monthly, quarterly, or annual contributions. This empowers Rotary to plan effectively, respond promptly to urgent needs, and continue transforming lives.

The Paul Harris Society, which honors those who contribute \$1,000 or more annually, also strengthens the Foundation. Paul Harris Society members, like Klumphy society members and Rotary Direct contributors, embody the spirit of sustained giving.

When setting your personal goals for this year, remember that by supporting The Rotary Foundation, you extend your impact worldwide. Every contribution — no matter the size — adds to the momentum driving meaningful change. So, as we enter 2025, let us reaffirm our commitment to The Rotary Foundation.

By combining our efforts and our giving with others in our great organization, we can truly say that no matter our vocation or location, we are contributing to a global force for good.

Thank you for all you do.

MARK DANIEL MALONEY

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:

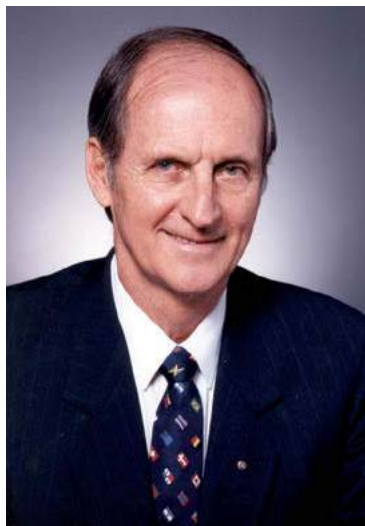
As a Rotarian, I will

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.

IN MEMORIAM

A leader who fought poverty at its roots

Glen W. Kinross, 1931-2024



Glen W. Kinross, the 1997-98 president of Rotary International, who urged members to help eliminate poverty and hunger in the world, died 10 September. He was 93.

A member of the Rotary Club of Hamilton, Brisbane, Australia, for over six decades, Kinross exemplified the Rotary ideal of Service Above Self. His presidency was marked by the theme *Show Rotary Cares — for your community, for our world, for its people*. He called upon Rotary members to eradicate the root causes of poverty, illiteracy, innumeracy, unemployment, child abuse and abandonment, and child labor.

“Poverty and hunger are Enemy Number One to a more understanding and peaceful world,” Kinross wrote in the July 1997 issue of this magazine. “There will never be understanding and peace while poverty and hunger exist anywhere.”

He said Rotary’s most significant challenge was to chart a course that addressed the problems of communities and people, and to address them “*in the future and for the future*.”

“We can have a better world, a world without poverty and hunger, a world where everyone can read, write, and use numbers; a world where children are safe,” he wrote. “But Rotarians must lead in shaping that world.”

As president, Kinross initiated a program that resulted in the construction of thousands of low-cost shelters in dozens of countries. When a family in Brazil moved into the first dwelling built

through the program, he said, “This was one of my greatest experiences in Rotary.”

Kinross joined Rotary in 1960 as a member of the Hamilton club and became club president in 1965-66 and a district governor in 1973-74. At the international level, Kinross was a director in 1982-84, serving as vice president in 1983-84, and a Rotary Foundation trustee in 1995-96 and 1999-2003, serving as chair in 2002-03. He also was an International Assembly group discussion leader and a member of the executive committee of *Rotary Down Under*, the Rotary regional magazine out of Australia.

Professionally, Kinross was a joint proprietor with his older brother of the family’s furniture manufacturing business, John Kinross & Co., which his grandfather, a Scottish craftsman, established in the 1880s.

Kinross entered the business at an early age, after excelling at several sports in high school despite having asthma. As he worked his way up in the firm, he became fascinated with furniture design. It was there that he developed his philosophy of honesty, fair trade, and vocational excellence that would transfer into his Rotary service.

He served as chair of the Australian Council of Furniture Manufacturers and as president of the Queensland Guild of Furniture Manufacturers.

He is survived by his spouse, Ruth, and a large family. He was preceded in death in 1998 by his first wife, Heather.

— ARNOLD R. GRAHL

With deep regret, we report the deaths of the following Rotarians who served RI as district governors:

Ünal Ural

Çankaya, Turkey, 1986-87

Raymond Assad Zard

Ibadan, Nigeria, 1992-93

Taek-Young Shin

Pohang-East, Korea, 1995-96

Carl K. Gaddis

Bethel-St. Clair, Pennsylvania, 1996-97

Heung-Bok Lee

Onyang, Korea, 1996-97

Tin Tin Nu Raschid

E-Club of District 7610, Virginia, 1996-97

Sam Hyo Yoon

Yeoju, Korea, 1998-99

Nobuyoshi Kuwahara

Awa Tokushima, Japan, 2003-04

William Tubbs

North Scott (Davenport), Iowa, 2004-05

Hugh C. Haggerty

Bellows Falls, Vermont, 2005-06

Seung Nam Kim

Cheongju Sangdang, Korea, 2006-07

Atsushi Taguchi

Nagasaki, Japan, 2006-07

Joan Batory

Philadelphia, 2010-11

Kazuaki Shibata

Obihiro West, Japan, 2010-11

Takaki Kumazawa

Otaru, Japan, 2011-12

Daniel P. Semenza Jr.

Sanford, Florida, 2016-17

Takashi Nakagawa

Omiya, Japan, 2018-19

Teijo Räsänen

Kuopio, Finland, 2020-21

Rotary Action Groups

Rotary Action Groups help clubs and districts plan humanitarian service projects on various focused topics. The groups are organized by Rotarians, Rotaractors, and Rotary Peace Fellows with skills and interest in a particular field. Membership is open to people who want to share their expertise to make a positive impact or support action groups' projects and activities. Action group members have the opportunity to engage in meaningful service activities outside their clubs, districts, or countries. Clubs can draw on these groups to enhance projects, engage members, and attract new ones.



The Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Rotary Action Group supported a WASH in Schools project in Bugiri district in Uganda.

Addiction prevention
rag-ap.org

Alzheimer's and dementia
adrag.org

Basic education and literacy
belrag.org

Blindness prevention
rag4bp.org

Blood and organ donation
ragbloodandorgandonation.org

Clubfoot
rag4clubfoot.org

Community economic development
ragced.org

Diabetes
rag-diabetes.org

Disaster assistance
dna-rag.com

Endangered species
rag4es.org

Environmental sustainability
esrag.org

Family health and AIDS prevention
rfha.org

Food plant solutions
foodplantsolutions.org

Health education and wellness
hewrag.org

Hearing
ifrahl.org

Hepatitis
ragforhepatitiseradication.com

Malaria
ram-global.org

Menstrual health and hygiene
ragmhh.org

Mental health initiatives
ragonmentalhealth.org

Multiple sclerosis
rotary-ragmsa.org

Peace
rotaryactiongroupforpeace.org

Refugees, forced displacement, and migration
ragforrefugees.org

Reproductive, maternal, and child health
rotaryrmch.org

Slavery prevention
ragas.online

Water, sanitation, and hygiene
wash-rag.org

IN BRIEF

Canada will surpass \$1 billion to fight polio with latest pledge

The government of Canada will contribute \$151 million in new funding over the next three years to support the work of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative. The amount (about US\$110 million) will bring Canada's total contributions to the GPEI to more than \$1 billion, supporting the coalition's goal to immunize 370 million children annually.

Rotary is a founding member of the GPEI, and the pledge was announced in September at a Rotary institute in Toronto to an audience of Rotarians and civic leaders.

The contribution will ensure the continuation of increasingly important health infrastructure in some of the most vulnerable regions of the world. In addition to polio vaccinations for children, this infrastructure delivers other essential health services, including critical surveillance and tracking systems.

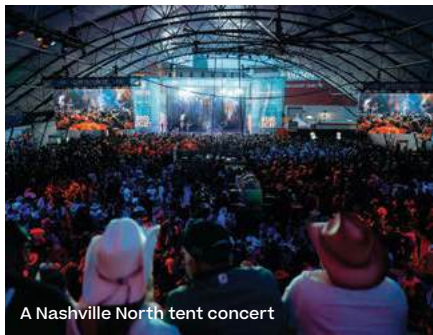
Ahmed Hussen, Canada's minister of international development, said the investment will strengthen the country's partnership with the GPEI. "By protecting children who are most at risk from this preventable disease and providing support for health workers at the forefront of this effort, we will be one step closer to eradicating polio."

Rotary members in Canada and throughout the world are thrilled by the new support, said Jennifer Jones, the 2022-23 Rotary president and a member of the Rotary Club of Windsor-Roseland, Ontario. "Ending polio has been Rotary's top priority since the very beginning, and the Canadian government has been with us every step of the way," she said. "With the finish line so close, every contribution to the global effort is a critical step towards a world without polio for children everywhere." ■

Find out more by emailing or visiting the website of the group you're interested in, or by writing to actiongroups@rotary.org.

2025 CONVENTION

Unforgettable evenings in Calgary



A Nashville North tent concert

Get your cowboy hat. Your Rotary pals in friendly Canada are excited to welcome you to signature convention events, including dinner in their homes, a country music jamboree, and boot-stompin' celebrations of the Western culture in Calgary.

"We're a big small-town city, and so the hospitality we have, the ticketed events, the experiences — they will be fantastic," says Mark Starratt, co-chair of the Host Organization Committee for the Rotary International Convention 21-25 June. Buy tickets at rotarycalgary2025.org.

■ **Grandstand Spectacular**, 21 June: This night of showmanship includes Indigenous hoop dancing, toe-tapping music, and horseback relay races.

■ **Rockin' the Big Tent**, 22 June: Country music fans and people who want to sample Calgary's Western charm will enjoy the

honky-tonk beats and twangy guitars. The concert is billed as the night "Rotary rocks the roadhouse" in the Nashville North tent.

■ **New Blood with the Calgary Civic Symphony**, 22 June: The dance show features Peter Gabriel's music and explores Black-foot traditions through the story of a man who survived a government residential school for Indigenous children.

■ **Host hospitality evening**, 23 June: For this convention favorite, members invite Rotary visitors to their dinner tables, restaurants, or other venues to "break bread and share in fellowship," Starratt says.

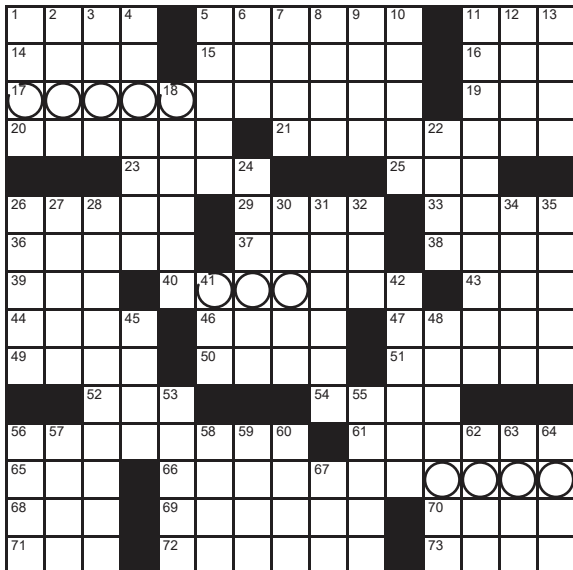
■ **Western Ranch Showcase**, 24 June: You may notice you're holding your breath from excitement when you watch bronc riding of the "wildest, orneriest, out-of-line" horses. The organizers advise, "Pull down that hat brim and hold on tight." ■

Learn more and register at convention.rotary.org.

CROSSWORD

Opening statement

By Victor Fleming
Rotary Club of Little Rock, Arkansas



Solution on **page 48**

ACROSS

- 1 Bus. entity
- 5 Bathhouse
- 11 The long ___ of the law
- 14 Sandwichy cookie
- 15 Bullies
- 16 Sine ___ non
- 17 Smiling seer?
- 19 Tar Heel's sch.
- 20 GM security system
- 21 Collection of information
- 23 Vanderbilt and Grant
- 25 Patriotic women's org.
- 26 Stretch material
- 29 Thompson or Watson
- 33 ___ & Stitch
- 36 Evergreen shrub
- 37 "___ where prohibited"
- 38 Conservationist John
- 39 Cleopatra's snake
- 40 What dawns?
- 43 ___ -mo replay
- 44 Shot contents
- 46 Vicinity
- 47 City near Buffalo
- 49 "Like that'll happen!"

- 50 Garr or Hatcher
- 51 *Saturday Night Fever* setting
- 52 Airport rental
- 54 Begin another hitch
- 56 Grade-school projects
- 61 Short-form promo
- 65 Fourth mo.
- 66 Wine's birth unit?
- 68 "This weighs a ___!"
- 69 Impose, as a burden
- 70 Classic beverage brand
- 71 Begley and Harris
- 72 Crunch creator
- 73 "Join the ___"

DOWN

- 1 Kind of salmon
- 2 Algeria's Gulf of ___
- 3 Agents, briefly
- 4 Eggo alternative
- 5 Toyota model
- 6 Honest ___
- 7 Melville's *Billy* ___
- 8 "Bamboo curtain" locale
- 9 Neither fem. nor masc.
- 10 Equally angry
- 11 Some born this month
- 12 Baseball tally

- 13 Armor-breaking weapon
- 18 Big name in bikes
- 22 Chapped lips application
- 24 Draconian
- 26 ___ apso
- 27 "For" words
- 28 Some born this month
- 30 Lawn tool
- 31 Flight locale
- 32 Central Oklahoma town
- 34 Spring bloom
- 35 Home to the University of Maine
- 41 Music's ___ King Cole
- 42 Bro's greeting
- 45 A long way off
- 48 Mouth lyrics
- 53 Baltimore NFLer
- 55 3 on a par 5, e.g.
- 56 Calendar entry
- 57 Old Apple gizmo
- 58 "Make ___ a double"
- 59 Picnic invaders
- 60 Datum
- 62 Banana covering
- 63 Honolulu's island
- 64 Chi-Town daily
- 67 Be laid up, say

J. Alfonso L. Katigbak
Chairman of the Board



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Katigbak Enterprises, Incorporated
Website: KatigbakRoofing.com
Globe Mobile Phone: (63) (917) 504-31-24
Email: al_katigbak@hotmail.com

MAY ANDREA LOCSIN KATIGBAK
Katigbak Enterprises, Incorporated
Website: KatigbakRoofing.com
Globe Mobile Phone: (63) (917) 526-20-53
Email: may_annkatigbak@hotmail.com



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convention.rotary.org



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