



Traditions and Expectations

Welcome to Portage Rotary!

Your fellow club members want you to know that we are ready to welcome you and help you to fully engage in fellowship with the good work and great fun we share with each other, with our community, and our world. When joining any group, it takes a while to figure out a club's customs and traditions and what's expected of members. Here is a primer we hope will help you in this process. Please feel free to ask veteran members or club officers any questions you find are not answered here.

New Member Orientation

Prior to your induction, you will receive a packet of information about Rotary International and the Rotary Club of Portage. Please review these materials before your "fireside chat." The fireside chat will occur an hour before the meeting at which you will be inducted. The goal is to further familiarize you with the world of Rotary, both locally and globally. This is an opportunity for any questions you might have.

When inducted, new members are asked to give a three-minute biography. This is your chance to introduce yourself to the club. Tell us where you are from, where you went to school, where you work, your hobbies, and tell us about your family. Please adhere to the three-minute rule.

You will be presented with your Rotary pin and your name badge with a red ribbon on it. This helps club members to recognize you, so they can come and introduce themselves to you. At the end of your induction meeting, please stand at the room's exit and meet club members as they leave the room.

You should also plan on arriving early for the next few meetings and stand at the door with the Greeter of the day. In this way, you will meet and re-meet your fellow Rotarians. After several meetings and completing activities from your new member checklist, the President will ceremoniously remove your red ribbon during a club meeting.

Attendance

Members are encouraged to maintain at least 50 percent attendance. Our club goal is 60 percent attendance.

Rotarians are encouraged to make up missed meetings at other clubs. Clubs in our area include Gull Lake, Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo Sunrise, Oshtemo, Otsego, Plainwell, Climax, and Vicksburg. A list of clubs with places and times they meet is available on www.district6360.com.

The club you visit will ask you to fill out a make-up card - which some clubs will mail to our club Secretary for you; or you can bring the card to our Club Secretary showing that you did make-up. If by chance, you do not fill out a card, just notify our Secretary, who knows you adhere to the Four Way Test.

Makeup meetings must occur within two weeks before or after the missed Rotary Club of Portage meeting. It is the Rotarian's responsibility to be sure the makeup is reported to the Club Secretary. A Rotarian may check his/her attendance on the club's Web site (www.portagerotary.org) Check with the Secretary for your Login Name and Password. If you are out of town, you can locate a club on www.rotary.org Before leaving, you may wish to ask the Club Secretary for a banner for an exchange with the club you visit. You can then bring their banner to present to the President. It will be proudly displayed on our fabric panels. Making up out-of-town offers a unique experience to engage with Rotarians who may well choose to show you their town and engage in additional fellowship. You may choose to make-up online (www.district6360.com). Look to the side bar on the right to click onto the makeup club meeting.

Dollars and Sense

Rotarians commit time, talent, and some treasure to meet our goals of humanitarian service above self for our community and our world. Here is a description of financial obligations and voluntary contributions that you will encounter as a club member. The first obligation is a payment of \$15 as you enter the room for a club meeting, of which \$13 is for your meal, \$1 is for our use of the Portage Senior Center, and \$1 goes into the Portage Rotary account.

Your next obligation is payment of Rotary dues, which are currently \$225/year, payable in July of each year. Your first year's dues will be prorated to the number of months you will be a member in the current Rotary year (July 1 to June 30 each year). You will receive an invoice from the Club Treasurer and may wish to arrange a payment plan with them. Your payment(s) will cover Rotary International dues, Rotary District 6360 dues, club dues, and your subscription to The Rotarian Magazine. Check the mailing label on the magazine. Here you can find your Rotary International Membership ID #.

Giving to the Rotary Foundation and Portage Rotary Charities is important for us to meet our humanitarian goals. We recommend you support The Rotary Foundation with a donation of \$50 on your birthday and \$50 on your anniversary. If this is too steep for your

budget, a donation of any amount is welcome. Cash or a check made out to Portage Rotary Charities can be deposited in the Sergeant at Arm's fine bucket as the club sings to honor your happy occasion. In the memo field of the check, note Paul Harris donation. This will begin your account towards a Paul Harris Fellowship.

The Kalamazoo Community Foundation also manages an account for the Portage Rotary Club Foundation. A donation to this fund will increase the principle, with interest earnings paid to the club for our charities each year. Talk to the Club Treasurer about contributing to this fund.

Paul Harris Fellowships are awarded for each donation of \$1,000 to The Rotary Foundation's Annual Fund (recommended) or to Polio+. The Annual Fund is recommended because your donation will be held by Rotary International in trust for three years (with the interest going towards the Foundation's worldwide humanitarian projects). After three years, one half of your donation is credited back to our District 6360, where it is used for District Simplified Grants to clubs within the District. Our club has been awarded these grants in the past — which is our dollars coming back to us for our charitable work here at home. The other half of your money will be used for Rotary Foundation Projects worldwide.

There are several ways that our club raises money for Portage Rotary Charities, which is the 501 (c) (3) non-profit entity of our club. These are the dollars we use to fund our club's charity projects. Funds are raised by:

Fifty/Fifty Raffle Tickets can be purchased at the desk when you come in. You may if you choose to, buy one ticket for \$1, or three for \$2. The raffle dollars are split, with 50% going to Portage Rotary Charities and 50% for raffle winners. There are two chances to win at the meeting's end. A ticket is drawn for 25% of the day's proceeds. A second ticket is selected for a chance to draw the ace of spades from a deck of cards. The kitty continues to build as the deck of cards decreases week-by-week until the ace of spades is finally drawn. At that point, a new deck of cards is placed in service and the kitty starts over again. Members may keep the proceeds or donate them back to the club for a Rotary charity of choice. Winners are encouraged not to announce their desires for their winnings in front of the club (it's okay to keep them). If you choose to donate, give the proceeds or any part thereof as you choose to the Club Treasurer, and designate a charity you would like to receive the funds.

Happy Bucks are paid in whatever denomination a member desire. The happy buck period at the end of the meeting is where you can celebrate family or work achievements, kudos to another individual, or short "commercials" for work, community, or non-Rotary, charity-related events.

Fines (generally \$1) are a tradition at Portage Rotary and are levied in the spirit of fellowship and fun. Fines may result on any meeting day for the following types of infractions:

- Not wearing the Rotary pin or Rotary name badge
- Arriving late (at least you get a song for this one)
- Leaving early (you are expected to drop your fine in the fine bucket) unless the meeting runs past 1:15 p.m.
- Uttering the name of an alma mater or personal business at any meeting
- Showing up in a photograph or having your name mentioned in a public location such as the newspaper
- Allowing your cell phone to disrupt a meeting
- Sitting at a table at which both genders are not represented
- Disrupting a meeting with too much table conversation

Our Sergeants at Arms are very creative in levying fines. Please participate knowing you are helping feed our Charities account.

Service Above Self

Rotary International recognizes **Five Avenues of Service: Club Service** (for the smooth operations of the club); **Community Service** (for projects which directly serve the needs of our community); **International Service** (for projects supported by our club that reach out to our global neighbors); **Vocational Service** (for exhibiting high ethical standards and community outreach through our professions); and **New Generations** (mentoring students, and nurturing tomorrow's leaders to help secure our future).

Each year, the club may present awards to deserving club members, based on one of the five avenues of service. In addition, the Club President nominates one of our members to receive the Five Avenues of Service Citation that is signed by Rotary International's President. This award recognizes exemplary service in all five areas.

Participation in club events is highly recommended. In April/May each year, the President Elect will pass around sign-up sheets for members to serve on committees for Club Service, Service Projects, and Fundraisers. It is recommended that each year, every Portage Rotarian serve actively in one club service activity, in at least one project that addresses the other four avenues of service, and on one of our club fundraisers.

Portage Rotary has a proud tradition of both raising and donating significant funds that address these five avenues and benefit our community directly. In recent years, we have annually raised in the neighborhood of \$32,000 for charitable purposes. Recent practice is for 2/3 of these donations to directly benefit the youth of our community through support of Rotary-sponsored Interact Clubs, mentoring programs at the Portage Community High School, and scholarships to worthy students.

Fundraisers provide club members with hands-on fund and “fun” raising opportunities. See our fundraiser tab for more details.

Community Service Hours

When members participate in board or committee meetings, club projects, working at fundraisers, or other qualifying events, they are eligible to receive either a club meeting make-up credit, or community service hours. Community service hours are tallied by Committee Chairs (make sure your hours are recorded) and reported to the Club Secretary. Members who accumulate 10 or more hours of service each year are awarded a certificate annually at a club meeting. Perfect attendance awards are also presented. Our club members are known to have as many as 50 years of perfect attendance, and to provide 80+ hours of community service in any given year.

We hope that this document has helped provide background and insight into the Traditions and Expectations of Rotary Club of Portage. We are honored to have you join us in fellowship as a new Rotarian.