

# The Catalyst



A Monthly Membership Newsletter for Rotary International District 6890 • May 2020

## Clubs Retain Autonomy... and Responsibility

I once presented my grandparents with a *Happy 60<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary* card. My grandfather looked at it and exclaimed, "Has it been 60 years? Whew! It feels like a *hundred!*" Many of us are in our ninth week of lockdown and online Rotary meetings. And for some of us, it feels like a *hundred!*



Understandably, many Rotarians are eager to begin "dipping toes into the water" or, in some cases, diving in head first! As states and counties begin implementing phased approaches to lifting restrictive ordinances, it is important for clubs to carefully consider their options and actions. Like many issues in Rotary, our clubs have tremendous autonomy and, with it, tremendous responsibility.

Recognizing that Rotarians have experienced the COVID-19 crisis differently around the world, the Rotary International Board of Directors urges clubs to follow all state and local recommendations for gatherings. In his May 18<sup>th</sup> email message, DG Kip outlined the RI Board's stated principles:

- Health & safety of all participants in Rotary programs, meetings, and events is of paramount importance.
- No in-person meeting or event shall be mandatory for any Rotary participant who may feel uncomfortable attending because of the pandemic.
- All conveners and organizers of Rotary meetings are strongly encouraged to consider all health concerns in deciding whether to hold in-person meetings.
- All conveners and organizers of Rotary meetings shall fully comply with all [local] health & safety rules in effect.

Your Rotary District 6890 Leadership Team has elected to postpone all face-to-face meetings and training sessions until at least August 1<sup>st</sup>. In the meantime, district events will be conducted via Zoom and we will continue to evaluate the current climate as we move into the new Rotary year.

In March, District 6890 Rotary clubs made decisions to suspend in-person meetings based on social responsibility and public relations. Looking to the future, these same considerations must be fully vetted as Rotarians determine how to interact with each other and their communities.

## "Rotary Opens Opportunities" (We Just Have to Look for Them!)

In January, Rotary International President-Elect Mark Daniel Maloney unveiled the annual theme for our 2020-2021 Rotary year: *Rotary Opens Opportunities*. Surely, he did not imagine that we would all enter the new year on the heels of a worldwide pandemic that has radically changed the way we meet. But, perhaps by meeting radical change with a radical response, Rotarians can discover opportunity not previously considered. In the face of digital meetings, what if clubs:

- Engaged speakers that would be otherwise unavailable (including out-of-town, out-of-state, or out-of-country)?
- Contacted former members with distance or time constraints, inviting them to reconsider in digital format?
- Actively recruited new members to whom online meeting access would have much greater appeal?
- Explored available technology to accommodate future hybrid-format meetings that would allow for "virtual" participants (speakers and/or attendees)?
- Assigned digitally-savvy club members to serve as "buddies" for technically-challenged existing members? This might require a weekly phone call to check in, or it could result in two Rotarians sharing a laptop – from a socially safe distance, of course.

### Membership Resources Online

[Rotary6890.org](http://Rotary6890.org) has a dedicated document folder solely for club reference regarding COVID-19.

Please enjoy this month's edition of Zone 34 **MEMBERSHIPPLUS** on the following pages!

# MEMBERSHIP PLUS

A NEWSLETTER FROM YOUR ZONE 34 ROTARY COORDINATOR AND MEMBERSHIP TEAMS

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## Seeing our way ahead

I hope you are feeling pride in the way your Zone, District and Clubs have quickly adapted to our new situation of physical distancing, with online innovation being very much in evidence. So what of the next stage and when will this change. Well unfortunately my crystal ball is in for service, so we must continue to follow the best advise we have been given by the Rotary International Board, which is to follow local government recommendations regarding gatherings.

No matter when an easing of restrictions may happen, this enforced experiment into the virtual world may leave a lasting impression on Clubs and members, and the question will arise as to whether to continue fully, partially or not at all with virtual meetings. There is no doubting that many have found this form of meeting easier to attend, and many have undoubtedly enjoyed the change. Others miss the face to face too much to have it replaced. The main thing we must remember is to consult ALL of our members regarding future formats and certainly before we make major changes.

And what of the content of our meetings, have we learned more about what works best, and is there an argument for lasting change due to our virtual experience. This pandemic has certainly tested our powers of communication and hopefully we will have learned much about keeping our membership engaged, even in difficult circumstances.

The acceptance of online formats has also led to an increase in the use of social media, and this undoubtedly helps us (continues on page 2)

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connect to the communities we serve.

Few believe that when the pandemic is over, that we will simply go back to the way things were, our experience will give us the possibility, or perhaps the need, for change. There are Clubs who will assess that the previous format and ways were successful for them and will return as far as possible to that format, others will perhaps embrace a greater flexibility. Having

face to face meetings which are live streamed has been around for a while, but may see major growth in the future.

While our fundamentals will remain, we have this wonderful opportunity to reinforce and grow our fellowship, and bring lasting and effectual change, let us not waste this unwanted but 'good crisis'.

I leave this topic for now with my current favorite quote - There is much more to the generative nature of a crisis that leads to innovation than simply an opportunity to solve problems. Crises present us with unique conditions that allow innovators to think and move more freely to create rapid, impactful change.

## Zone 34 Latest Membership figures as compared to 1st of July 2019 year start figures.

Zone 34 progress to MembershipPlus. This is a simple +/- table. For full details of Attraction and Retention figures, please see full report from ROTARY INTL. Figures as of 5/15/20

District	Start Membership 7/1/19	Current Membership	+/- for the 2019/20 year
District 7020	2384	2485	101
District 7000	941	989	48
District 6980	1729	1772	43
District 7030	2228	2266	38
District 6990	1842	1864	22
District 6930	1520	1538	18
District 6960	2278	2291	13
District 6920	3005	3010	5
District 6890	1709	1697	-12
District 6910	3195	3183	-12
District 6900	4188	4174	-14
District 6950	1833	1819	-14
District 6970	3272	3257	-15
District 6940	2204	2177	-27
	32328	32522	194