



## Rotary Club of Little Rock Newsletter - Expanded Edition

In the first week of each month we will produce an "expanded edition" of our weekly newsletter. This edition will include highlights from the previous month, including weekly programs with links to recordings, social and service events. Be sure to check out the member video highlights section, President Chacko's Connections and some pretty cool pics from meetings and events. Scroll down to find information about next week's awesome program and upcoming social and service events!

### Highlights: July Meetings

In case you missed a July Rotary meeting, a brief synopsis, fun pictures and links to video recordings are included below:

#### July 9: RY 24.25 Kick Off with President Jason Chacko

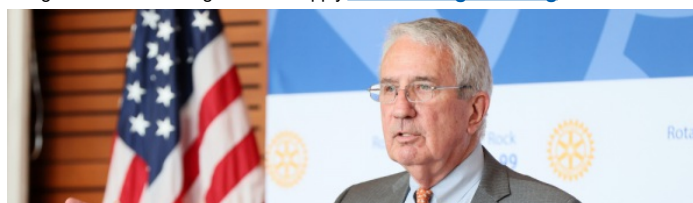
**President Jason Chacko** kicked off the new Rotary year with the inspiring theme: Global Hearts, Local Hands. The Rotary Club of Little Rock offers Central Arkansans the chance to make a difference locally and globally. The connections we build help us leave a lasting legacy in our communities. We're thrilled for the 2024-2025 year and can't wait to engage every Club 99er in new and exciting ways! President Chacko's family were in attendance. He took the opportunity to surprise his mother with a Paul Harris Fellowship! Great start to the year!!!

[View meeting recording](#)



#### July 16: Economic Updates with Randy Zook, CEO, Arkansas State Chamber

Arkansas State Chamber's President and CEO **Randy Zook** presented Arkansas' economic performance, revealing that the state was ranked 15th most competitive by the American Legislative Exchange Council for two consecutive years. He noted a 9% growth in the economy in 2021, outperforming neighboring states like Texas, and a 6.3% job growth since 2020. However, he also pointed out challenges such as a significant labor shortage, with 2.2 jobs available for every person in the workforce, and a low labor force participation rate. Zook emphasized the need to address these issues, particularly the labor shortage, to drive economic growth and highlighted the importance of immigration in maintaining the labor supply. [View meeting recording](#)







#### July 23: Ottenheimer International Scholars Program: A Madagascar Primer

The panel, moderated by 99er and Program Chair **Chris Mangum**, focused on preparing for our Ottenheimer International Scholars from Madagascar. We gained valuable insights into lemurs and conservation efforts in Madagascar from Club 99er and **LR Zoo Executive Director Susan Alturi**. Additionally, **Past President Aaron Lubin** shared his experiences from visiting the country, and 99er **Laza Razafimanjato**, who grew up in Madagascar, provided a first-hand perspective on the country.

[View meeting recording](#)







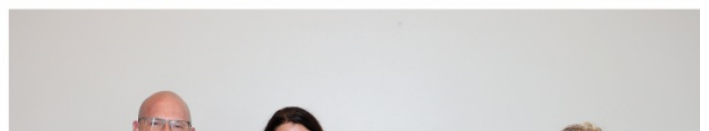
**July 30: State of the City with Mayor Frank Scott, Jr.**

**Little Rock City Mayor Frank Scott**, discussed the incredible progress and momentum in Little Rock, including the downtown development plan, recent economic wins and the upcoming tax initiative on the November ballot. Your participation and engagement are what make our community strong.

[View meeting recording](#)



**Club 99 has the BEST Greeting Team and the best meeting volunteers!**











### Member Videos: Making Connections Around the Globe

Check out our first member video for RY 24.25 featuring **Shane Carter** [here](#). We love his quote, "One mile of highway will get you...one mile, but 1 mile of runway will get you anywhere you want to be." Shane loves to be in New York and London, which we learn is one of the most sought out destinations from Little Rock.

### President Chacko's Connections

#### A note about the President's Moment at Rotary meetings from President Jason Chacko

In line with our Rotary Year theme of Global Hearts, Local Hands, I've decided to use my President's minute to highlight Rotary Clubs around the globe. There are more than 46,000 clubs worldwide, and while we will not get to each of them, we will take a minute to learn about one club a week this year, from their history, membership or special projects they support.



#### July 16, 2024: Rotary One, Chicago, Illinois

This week, we'll be looking at where it all started: Rotary Club one, in Chicago, Illinois. Club one was founded on February 23, 1905, by Paul Harris and five of his business friends as a business networking group, and they created much of the lore of Rotary: Arthur Sheldon created the first motto: He Profits Most Who Serves Best. Montague Bear designed the Rotary Wheel, to represent the rotating meeting location between each of their offices, and Herbert Taylor wrote the Four Way Test. As a group, they went on to establish Rotary International in 1910. Today, Club One boasts over one hundred members, and their club One Foundation continues to drive their service, highlighted by Job1, a summer internship providing over 500 internships a year in a partnership with the City and Chicago Public School Districts; they are approaching their 20th year of this project in 2025. And so today, we toast the Rotary Club of Chicago, Club One of Rotary for continuing the legacy of our founders.

#### July 23, 2024: Rotary in Madagascar

This week, I'm hoping not to steal the thunder of our presentation, with a look at Rotary in Madagascar. There are currently 18 clubs on the island, representing over 360 members. The oldest club is one of 8 clubs in the Capital City of Antananarivo, chartered in 1958. Interestingly, the island of Madagascar declared independence from French rule in 1958, although they celebrate their official Independence Day on June 26, 1960. Since then, this French-speaking club has partnered with Rotarians around the world to continue humanitarian efforts on the island, from fresh water projects to education, maternal health and disease prevention; this Rotary club has truly built on the Seven Pillars of Rotary Service. The club is District 9220, along with other Indian Ocean Islands like Mauritius and the Seychelles, a fact I wish I had known before going to my district training in Ft. Smith. So, this week we toast all 18 Malagasy clubs, including Club 17266 in Antananarivo.

#### July 30, 2024: Rotary Clubs of Greece



This week, I would be remiss if I didn't mention that little party happening in Paris right now, the Olympics! Athletes from 206 different countries are competing in this year's games, a poignant number to my medical background, which reminds me how many bones I could break if I tried any of those sports myself. Instead of focusing on Paris, however, I'm going back to where it all started; Greece! The country currently has 84 different Rotary clubs, and while there is no club located in Olympia, the city where the

Ancient games were held from the 8th Century BC to the 4th Century AD, there are a few clubs located in Athens, where the modern games were started in 1896. The largest club in Athens is also the oldest, Club 13410, founded in December 1928, and is one of the first 100 Rotary clubs of Europe at just 32 years younger than the modern Olympics. As a member of the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church here, Greece has always been high on my list of places to visit and while I wasn't able to attend a Rotary meeting due to their bimonthly meeting schedule, I do





places to visit, and time I wished I could to attend a Rotary meeting due to their extremely meeting schedule, I do have a picture of 10-month-old Jude at the Parthenon from our album titled "Snapping round the world." So today we toast Rotary Club 13410 in Athens, Greece, home of the original Olympic Games!

### Welcome New Members

Club 99 welcomed 3 new members in July; **Colin Crawford**, Dean, UA Little Rock Bowen School of Law, **Jamie Higgins**, Executive Director, The Centers Foundation, and **Angela "Angie" Stroud**, Director of Development, Methodist Family Health Foundation.







#### Rotary Club 99: Tuesday, August 13, 2024

##### Frank O'Mara, Author, *Bend Don't Break*

In recognition of the close of the 2024 Summer Olympic Games in Paris, we have one of Arkansas's most successful former Olympians, **Frank O'Mara** (three-time Olympian and two-time World Champion in the 3000 meters, and former Alltel executive) discussing his new book, *Bend Don't Break*, with fellow Little Rock runner and business person, **Gary Taylor**. The book chronicles Frank's running and business accomplishments and setbacks and how they prepared him for his new fight against early-onset Parkinson's disease. Copies of the book will be available for purchase, with a portion of the proceeds going to Parkinson's research.



**Frank O'Mara**, is a former Irish runner. A three-time Olympian, he was twice World Indoor Champion in the 3,000m. Frank gained post-graduate degrees from the University of Arkansas and went on to have a successful career in wireless with Alltel. He was diagnosed with early-onset Parkinson's disease at the age of forty-eight.

London native **Gary Taylor** showed an early talent for running, breaking the 16-year-old world record in the 1500 meter at 16 and running a sub-4 minute mile at 18, representing Great Britain. In 1982, Taylor joined the University of Arkansas track team, where he was a 2-time All American, won multiple conference titles, set a world record in the Distance Medley and ran the top two fastest 1500m splits in the history of the Penn Relays, times that still stand today. His proudest honor was Captaining the U of A Cross Country team to a NCAA championship. Turning his competitive nature to business, Taylor worked for Walmart as Director of Strategic Applications and for Alltel, where he was VP of Information Technology prior to the Verizon acquisition. Taylor is currently the Managing Director of Operations for Savell Management, a financial services company in North

information technology prior to the Verizon acquisition. Taylor is currently the Managing Director of Operations for Sowell Management, a financial services company in North Little Rock.

### Zoom Login for August 13, 2024

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84353244232?pwd=JPEorrMTGiobfBHVccfV8BNY1akKz.1>

Meeting ID: 843 5324 4232

Passcode: 797635

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One tap mobile

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+13126266799,,84353244232#,,,,\*797635# US (Chicago)

### Special Events and Meetings

Big thank you to 99er **T. Martin Davis** and his wife **Dr. Beverly Foster** for hosting a lovely welcome reception for our Ottenheimer scholars from Madagascar, **Mikaela Rahajarjaona and Salohinilisy (Salohy) Vololomboathangy**. It is always a special treat to be in their ABNB, the Historic Powell House. **Cindy VanVeckhoven** is the lead co-chair of the program this year and has done an awesome job getting our guests here, arranging for lodging and numerous fun, educational opportunities. Thank you, Cindy and all the 99ers that have stepped up to host.



### SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES

#### Ottenheimer Farewell Reception

Date: Tuesday, August 27, 2024

Time: 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Location: TBA

### SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

#### Dunbar Back to School Cookout Bash

Date: Thursday, August 8, 2024

Time: 4:30 PM - 6:30 PM

Location: Dunbar Magnet Middle School, 1100 Wright Ave.

#### Comfort Kits for the Homeless, A partnership with CALS

Date: Tuesday, August 20, 2024

Time: During our Rotary Meeting

Location: Great Hall, Clinton Center

### AFFINITY GROUPS

#### Book Club

Date: Wednesday, August 14



Time: 12:00 noon -1:00 PM, lunch provided  
Host: Steve Straessle  
Book: Stolen Focus by Johann Hari  
Location: CHS Library  
Parking: Park in the front lot (second entrance off University Avenue) and check in at the front office.

## Upcoming Programs

### August 2024

#### 13 "Bend Don't Break", Author Frank O'Mara

In recognition of the close of the 2024 Summer Olympic Games in Paris, we have one of Arkansas's most successful former Olympians, Frank O'Mara (three-time Olympian and two-time World Champion in the 3000 meters, and former Alltel executive) discussing his new book, *Bend Don't Break*, with fellow Little Rock runner and business person, Gary Taylor. The book chronicles Frank's running and business accomplishments and setbacks and how they prepared him for his new fight against early-onset Parkinson's disease. Copies of the book will be available for purchase, with a portion of the proceeds going to Parkinson's research.

#### 20 Providence Park, Errin Stanger, CEO

Chronic homelessness is a problem that plagues most cities today, and unfortunately, Little Rock is no exception. Providence Park is a 50-acre master-planned community providing affordable, permanent housing and a supportive community for individuals coming out of chronic homelessness. Join us as Errin Sanger, Founder and CEO of Providence Park, discusses her vision for the project. Attendees will also participate in an in-meeting service project to fill care packages for homeless people, in collaboration with the Central Arkansas Library System (which shelters many homeless people during hot summer and cold winter days).

#### 27 Ottenheimer 2024 Presentation: Madagascar

Come hear our visiting Ottenheimer scholars from Madagascar share with us their expectations and experiences of Arkansas as they wrap up their month-long visit. These two impressive young women have traveled half-way around the globe to experience American capitalism and democracy on the ground in our fair state. The Ottenheimer scholars' reflections are as much a learning experience for Club 99ers as they are for the scholars themselves, and can teach us much about how the world perceives our great American experiment.

### September 2024

#### 3 Arkansas Times 50th Anniversary

The edgy alternative news platform *Arkansas Times* is celebrating its 50th Anniversary this year. From its founding in 1974 as a small newsprint magazine called the *Union Station Times* to its current format as a monthly glossy, *Arkansas Times* has provided a consistent progressive voice and perspective on Arkansas issues for fifty years now. Along the way the publication has proven to be very innovative with its early embrace of online publishing, special events and spin-off publications. Join founder Alan Leveritt and Development Director Wythe Walker as they tell the backstory behind their Golden Anniversary.

#### 10 Arkansas Symphony Orchestra Grand Opening

The Arkansas Symphony Orchestra will open its new digs in September and the new \$11.75 million facility in the East Village neighborhood is incredible. The 20,000 square foot, state-of-the-art facility will be the first permanent home in the organization's 58-year history. Join Christina Littlejohn, ASO's Chief Executive Officer, and Geoffrey Robson, ASO's prize-winning music director, as they give us an early view of this newest amenity in downtown Little Rock.

#### 17 Little Rock Fight Litter Campaign

As with all urban areas, Little Rock experiences litter, trash and graffiti problems that impact how residents and visitors experience our city. This neglect has become an aesthetic, environmental, social and economic issue. Join Club 99er Capi Peck, Executive Chef and owner of Trio's restaurant and long-time member of the Little Rock Board of Directors, as she discusses the Little Rock Fight Litter Campaign with Rex Nelson, Senior Editor and columnist at the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* and Club 99er Michael Bynum, Assistant Attorney General.

#### 24 Six Bridges Book Festival - Author Event

##### In-meeting service project with CALS

*Books have an incredible power to unite us, to connect our diverse experiences, and to ignite our imaginations. The Six Bridges Book Festival is more than a gathering of authors and readers; it's a celebration of our shared love for stories and the communities they create.* This quote by Joyce Elliot, State Senator and 2024 Six Bridges Book Festival Chairperson, sums up the importance of this annual book festival to the rich experience of living in and visiting Little Rock. Join us as we host Ayana Gray, *New York Times* bestselling author, Pulaski Academy grad and Little Rock resident, as this year's Club 99 hosted author. Ayana's books will be available for purchase after the event.

### Club Leaders



[Jason Chacko](#)  
President



[Mitch Bettis](#)  
President-Elect



[Molly McNulty](#)  
President-Nominee



[Natalie Ghidotti](#)  
iPast President



[Drew Harper Jr.](#)  
Treasurer



[Greg McCarroll](#)  
Treasurer-Elect



[Amy Meins](#)  
Secretary



[Rachel O'Neal](#)  
Sergeant-at-Arms



[Juli Brandenberger](#)  
Club Director



[Jamie Higgins](#)  
International Service Chair



[Nate Coulter](#)  
Club Director



[Becky Finney](#)  
Club Director



[Lena Hayes](#)  
Club Director



[Tanya James](#)  
Club Director



[Viji Kuruvilla](#)  
Club Director



[John Monroe](#)  
Club Director



[Kevin Newton Jr.](#)  
Club Director



[Wendy Wood](#)  
Club Director



[Ross Burnett](#)  
Membership Chair



[Chris Mangum](#)  
Club Programs Chair



[Dan Parker](#)  
Club Service Chair