



**Rotary Club 99: Tuesday, July 16, 2024**  
**11:30 a.m. buffet opens 12:00 noon program begins**  
**Great Hall, Clinton Center**

**Arkansas Economic Updates: Randy Zook, President/CEO, Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce**

Know how many people moved to Arkansas last year? (Hint: It's a lot!) Or where they moved from? (The answers may surprise you!) **Randy Zook, President / CEO** of the Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce, will provide an overview of the state's current economic development momentum and will discuss some of the key drivers behind the trends.







**Randy Zook** is the president and chief executive officer of the Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce and the Associated Industries of Arkansas. Prior to taking the helm of the State Chamber/AIA, Randy was the deputy director of administration and finance for the Arkansas Economic Development Commission. For 34 years, he worked for Atlantic Envelope Company of Atlanta, Georgia, a \$250-million manufacturer of custom-printed envelopes and business products, serving as president and CEO of the company from 1989 to 2004. He is currently serving on the boards of Arkansas Public School Resource Center, the Executive Board for the Quapaw Area Council for Boy Scouts of America, Economics Arkansas, and McGehee Farm & Real Estate Co. He and his wife, Diane, have three grown children and five above-average grandchildren.

#### Zoom Login for July 16, 2024

Join Zoom Meeting  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87409045135?pwd=uKlnCcpHFcYZEQd3uj3KHvk8Vl1qRd.1>

Meeting ID: 874 0904 5135  
Passcode: 123063

#### This Week at Club 99

##### 24.25 Rotary Theme and Goals Revealed: President Jason Chacko

Read President Chacko's remarks from the first meeting of the 24.25 Rotary year to learn how we will embrace *Global Hearts Local Hands* this year in Club 99! Watch the meeting [here](#).





## ROTARY CLUB OF LITTLE ROCK



JULY 9

I am honored to take on the role of President for this year, and could not be more proud to be a part of the history of the oldest and largest civic organization in the state of Arkansas. This club has enjoyed a storied history in the past 111 years, and my goal is to continue the legacy of community leadership our members have built.

As I was preparing for this State of the Club Address, I quickly recognized 111 years is a long time to contribute to the fabric of our community. The more I searched, the more examples I found of how Rotary continues to strive for the betterment of all. From local projects like the Miracle League and the Centennial Plaza just outside that window, to international efforts like the Stamp Out Polio campaign, Club 99 has a lengthy history of true humanity. Instead of trying to encapsulate everything in a 20-min presentation, I'd like to focus on a few highlights, and then shift to how we can build on this legacy.

I am a Little Rock native. My parents, Joe and Deena Chacko, moved from India to Little Rock in 1976, so Mom could take a nursing role at UAMS, a position she held for the next 40 years. Dad completed his undergraduate and master's degrees in accounting through the University of Arkansas and UA Little Rock, and became the CFO for United Way for 16 years; it is through their servant hearts that I learned the importance of working to make my community better. I graduated from Catholic High school in 2002, and went to Westminster College, where I majored in Biology and Business, with minors in physics and chemistry. I came back to Little Rock for three years of medical school at UAMS, before realizing I was better at fixing finances than I was at fixing the human body. I joined Morgan Stanley in December 2009, and had the honor of working with my Dad for 14 years before retiring last December, and continue to serve my clients with my team, the Pinnacle Mountain Group at Morgan Stanley. My family has expanded during this time; my wife Kristin is here, probably with the knowledge that this may be the last time she sees me till June. And my oldest son Jude is also here, he's five. His younger brother Lee is still in daycare at three years old, but hopes to add his particular brand of disruption to a meeting soon.

Community Service has long been just a part of life; from participating in the United Way's Paint Your Heart Out campaigns when I was 4 years old, to winning the Governors Award for volunteerism twice in high school, the little whisper in the back of my head has always been to make sure we can all rise together. As I tried to expand my circle of influence, I began to try to be more efficient with my time, which brought me to The Rotary Club of Little Rock.

Rotary has been on the periphery of my life from an early age; my dad was a longstanding member of the Rotary Club of North Little Rock, and I gave my first speech there when I was twelve, preparing for a speech contest. I had the honor of receiving the Rotary Youth Leadership Award, or RYLA for short, being sponsored by Rotarian Rick Furr, one of my guests here today. When I finally joined Rotary at 31 years old, Club 99 was intimidating due to size and scale, but also familiar and welcoming, as a group of people trying to build good will and better friendship. I joined an organization with the intent of adding my drive to the cause, but I couldn't imagine the capacity it has in store for me. I have had the pleasure of sitting on 11 nonprofit Boards of Directors since becoming gainfully employed, and 8 of them came through connections made in this very room. That's so incredible about our club; its size alone puts us in most conversations, but its active and engaged membership welcomes the diversity of passions, allowing us to become more than just the sum of our parts.

Since 1913, the Rotary Club of Little Rock has helped Arkansans reach out a helping hand all over the world. Our Ottenheimer Youth Exchange program has brought young adults from over 50 countries to experience life in Arkansas, continuing with two wonderful ladies from Madagascar here in a few weeks. This year celebrates the 20th Anniversary of the Miracle League, a partnership that helped make baseball available to kids of all abilities. Club 99ers have donated to humanitarian efforts in Chile, Thailand, Haiti, Romania, Slovakia, Bolivia and South Africa, as well as needs closer to home, like relief for Hurricane Katrina victims, or the tornadoes in Atkins, or even more recently, right here in our backyard. And our college scholarships, the Broyles Award for College Football assistant coaches, and the more recent Global Service Award all come from the diversity of YOUR interests.

Expanding beyond the walls of Club 99, Rotary International has been a vehicle for good around the world. The campaign to end polio has singlehandedly put the infection on the endangered species list, an extinction level event we can be proud of. I got to hear the past Rotary International President Jennifer Jones talk about putting boots on the ground in Turkey just 49 hours after a devastating earthquake rocked the country, where humanitarian efforts were already underway. Current RI president Stephanie Urchick from Pennsylvania set her theme as the Magic of Rotary, referencing the apparent magic she witnessed in Sub-Saharan Africa, where kids watched a pipe come out of the dirt to produce water. There are approximately 1.4 million Rotarians worldwide, in 46,000 clubs all over the world, all doing the same thing: trying to make it Fair to all concerned. Rotary is a facilitator, not an obligation, and that's why it will continue to thrive.

But rest assured, Club 99 is not just another cog in a giant machine. Our club was the 17th largest club in the United States in 2022, and we have continued to grow despite the lingering effects of quarantine and growing competition from other organizations. Our demographics also lead the way when it comes to diversity of thought; less than 740 clubs of the 46,000 worldwide have more than 100 members.

Among North American clubs, the average membership is 33% female, our club is 41%. And our member age demographics are much more evenly spread across the spectrum, as opposed to the global concentration among retirees.

And that diversity of thought allows us to offer a multitude of branches to our giving. Rotary Club 99 currently supports over 20 different committees, from youth outreach, to a 30+ year history of recognizing our Little Rock first responders; book clubs to baseball. If you have a passion, you have a way to build on it. And if we don't, we can create it, like the recent addition of the Women of Rotary Affinity Group, or the hopefully upcoming Food and Wine Affinity group.

Our Leadership Team this year includes the Executive Committee, made up of myself, **President-Elect Mitch Bettis**, **President Nominee Molly McNulty**, **Immediate Past President Natalie Ghidotti**, **Treasurer Drew Harper**, **Treasurer Elect Greg McCarroll**, and **Secretary Amy Meins**.

We, combined with this year's Board of Directors, will work to make this club work for you. In our Leadership Retreat this year, we as a group identified the strengths of our club we wanted to build on, as well as the weaknesses we wanted to correct. Our goals are aligned on making this the premier civic organization in central Arkansas. A quick aside here, but did you know you could update the headshots in your personal profile on DacDB? No call to action there, just food for thought.

Continuing our look to the rest of this year, let's unveil our theme. Ripping the Band-Aid off here; I can't top the Power of Fun. It's an idea that I hope will continue to live on in the fabric of our club. Thankfully, Rotary can be as enjoyable as it is effective, and I want to build on that. The size of our Club, combined with the reach of Rotary International, continues to allow us to change the lives of so many people around the world. While I was on my search for my place in the nonprofit world, I found I could be most effective as a member of Club 99. And so, the 2024-25 theme for club 99 reflects that. Club 99 will strive to grow Global Hearts, with Local Hands.

How will we accomplish this? By making Club 99 the best option for achieving your goals.

I believe that people join Rotary for a combination of three reasons: Programs, Networking and Community Service. So, we will focus on making sure that you have every opportunity to achieve these goals through your engagement.

Our success will always depend on our membership. We currently have 347 members in the Club, and I've challenged Membership Recruitment Chair Ross Burnett to continue the growth we've enjoyed the past few years. I'll ask him up to the stage to talk a few more details, and give you all a break from my voice.

Kathleen Lawson, our Membership Engagement Chair, has set the target of 75% participation; we want to reach 75% of club members attending a Club 99 event at least once a month. To make sure we reward your commitment to the club by giving you opportunities to do the things you care about, we will be doing a Committee Fair later this summer so you can combine your talents with your passions. And to make sure all of our new members see immediate value, we will be targeting no red badges by the end of the year; if you join, we will make every effort to engage you!

Our size allows for high impact programs, since speakers recognize our captive and capable audience, and we want to respect your time with a range of topics to help you make informed decisions. I've asked Chris Mangum to the front to give a brief highlight of the programs we can look forward to.



Our speaker's gift this year will reflect this local and global focus. Sage and Tom Holland, a couple I've gotten to know over the past decade, have been working on glass beadmaking since living in Seattle in the 80's. They moved to Mountain Home, Arkansas in 1993, where they continue to be one of the longest running contemporary glass beadmakers in the country, and are credited as one of the main contributors to the renaissance of the American Glass Bead Making Movement. They continue to teach their craft to select students every year, so that this historic art form will continue for generations to come.

The handmade bead uses Italian glass rods heated to between 1,700 to 2,000 degrees, depending on color, to combine layers of black with the standard Rotary yellow and blue. The outer rim is studded, reminiscent of the Rotary wheel, surrounding the globe in the center. Sage challenged herself with design, curling the yellow rays to commemorate the 2024 solar eclipse in Arkansas as a reminder of our local impact. Hopefully, this sign of appreciation will be a welcome addition and a happy reminder for our speakers of the time they spent with our club.

Our size also affords us the unique opportunity to have two foundations to streamline our fundraising: the Rotary International Foundation, and our local Club 99 Foundation. Donations to the Rotary International Foundation can go to various restricted funds, but the Foundation established the Paul Harris Fellow in 1957 to recognize donors who give at least \$1,000 to the Rotary Foundation. Similarly, our local Club 99 Foundation, directed by a Board of current Club 99 members, is the fundraising arm of our local club. The past 10 years have seen the Club 99 Foundation give almost \$700,000 to the causes we support, while growing sustainably to around \$2mm. Similar to the Paul Harris Fellow, the Sid Brooks Award was created to recognize annual donations to our Foundation of \$1,000. I hope to achieve at least one of these awards a month, starting our fundraising at \$12,000 between the two foundations.

One of the many things I've learned from my parents is to lead by example. I have been blessed by parents who taught me the importance of building my community up around me, and while my Dad, already a Paul Harris Fellow and former Rotarian of the year, taught me HOW to give, I credit my mom, a devoted nurse and friend to countless patients, as teaching me WHY I should care. The lady is smart; she speaks seven languages and has postgraduate degrees from three different continents with just three Bs on her cumulative report card, but it's her kindness and friendship that made her the legend she is at UAMS. The entire reason I entered medicine was to chase the example she set, and it's with her grace that I carry that bedside manner in every aspect of my professional career. I was blessed with two parents who poured their best into me, and then gave me the grace to follow my own path with the singular condition that I remember an old Boy Scout credo; leave it better than you found it. Therefore, it is with pleasure that I announce the first Paul Harris Award of our new Rotary Year; please join me in welcoming surprise Paul Harris Recipient Deena Chacko to the Podium.

Shifting gears, all our opportunities don't revolve around work, and I wouldn't try to erase the power of fun. Fellowship and fun will come through our social programs, where we will get a chance to network and just enjoy each other's company. Our Social chair, Laza Razafimanjato, will be aiming for club wide events once a quarter, combined with multiple smaller group events, to make sure that everyone has a chance to learn more about each other. We will also continue our active Social Media presence with the specific goal of creating FOMO; the fear of missing out will keep members engaged, and let non-members know exactly what they are missing.

In what I'm designating Chacko's Hierarchy of Rotary Needs, we've covered Programs and Networking, bringing us to our last item: Service. We are all here to help, and it is the task of your Rotary Leadership team to make that as easy as possible. By diversifying the type and time of projects, we can reach our goal of 1,000 Community Service Hours in the next year. That will involve continuing service projects like our Dunbar THRIVE partnership, as well as our new literacy lab initiative with Gibbs Elementary and content provider BookNook, where volunteers will work in teams to help second and third-graders catch up to their expected reading levels. Hopefully, as we enter our sixth year of the club's Strategic Focus on Literacy, we will continue to reinforce the importance and joy of reading.

We do recognize that it's difficult to commit time after work hours, or during family time in the evenings or weekends. So, we will be bringing the work to you, with periodic service projects DURING club meetings, so we can work while we network or learn. Projects like preparing the Dunbar backpacks or tying bows on teddy bears for Toys for Tots will allow us to add productivity to the hours you give us every Tuesday.

And finally, I hope to integrate the theme of Global Hearts, Local Hands with our Service, using the vehicle of a Rotary International Grant. The Rotary International Foundation encourages and supports the partnership of Rotary clubs across the globe, like the Farmers Feed the Children Program our club did in Romania, led by Past President Gary Parrish. We have spent the past few months laying the groundwork for such a project. Originally, I was hoping for a partnership in India, but Serendipity pointed in a different direction. In addition to this year's Ottenheimer Scholars coming from Madagascar, our literacy lab at Gibbs elementary provided a unique connection; the school was named after Miffin Wistar Gibbs, an Arkansas, a judge, and the 1897 US Ambassador to Madagascar. That, combined with the Madagascar ambassador to the US visiting Little Rock last year, has opened the unique opportunity of developing a literacy-focused service project on the African island. There are still many steps in the process, but hopefully, we will be able to build a service project to add to the illustrious history of our Club.

Global Hearts, Local Hands encompasses many ambitious goals, but I hope it creates the same excitement in you as it does me. Our Club continues to expand our impact, and I'm honored to carry the torch for the next year; I hope you'll find a way to join in the fun. Thank you all for your membership and your friendship. I look forward to working with you all!

## Special Events and Meetings

### 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 - A Look Forward

### July 2024

#### 16 Economic Updates: Randy Zook, President/CEO, Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce

Know how many people moved to Arkansas last year? (Hint: Itâ€™s a lot!) Or where they moved from? (The answers may surprise you!) Randy Zook, President / CEO of the Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce, will provide an overview of the stateâ€™s current economic development momentum and will discuss some of the key drivers behind the trends.

#### 23 Ottenheimer 2024: A Club 99 Madagascar Primer, Laza Razafimanjato, Past President Aaron Lubin, Susan Altrui

What do lemurs, vanilla and hissing cockroaches have in common? They can all be found in Madagascar. (By the way, there are no penguins there!) This yearâ€™s visiting Ottenheimer scholars will join us in August from Madagascar. Club 99er Laza Razafimanjato (a native of Madagascar himself) will lead a discussion with fellow Club 99ers Susan Altrui (Director of the Little Rock Zoo) and Past President Aaron Lubin about this Indian Ocean island and former French colony to prepare us for the scholarsâ€™ arrival.

#### 30 State of the City of Little Rock, Mayor Frank Scott, Jr.

There is an enormous amount of progress and momentum in Little Rock right now, from the emerging downtown development plan to recent economic development wins and an important tax initiative on the November ballot. Club 99er Mayor Frank Scott will give us a â€œstate of the cityâ€ update and discuss issues and opportunities facing our fair city.

### August 2024

#### 6 French Colonial Influence in Arkansas, Judge Morris Arnold

Did you know that Arkansas Post, established by the French in 1686, predates both New Orleans and St. Louis as the first French (and first European) establishment in the Mississippi River Valley? Ever thought about how Arkansas culture was influenced by being a former French colony? Did you know there was a Revolutionary War battle in Arkansas? Join us as retired federal judge and historian Morris â€œBuzzâ€ Arnold shares his insights on the French colonial influence in Arkansas.

#### 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 Arkansasâ€™ most successful former Olympians, Frank Oâ€™Mara (three-time Olympian and two-time World Champion in the 3000 meters, and former Alltel executive) discussing his new book, *Bend Donâ€™t Break*, with fellow Little Rock runner and business person, Gary Taylor. The book chronicles Frankâ€™s running and business accomplishments and setbacks and how they prepared him for his new fight against early-onset Parkinsonâ€™s disease. Copies of the book will be available for purchase, with a portion of the proceeds going to Parkinsonâ€™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 â€œon the groundâ€ in our fair state. The Ottenheimer scholarsâ€™ 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.