

Rotary

District 6150



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Brian Rega
District Governor



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IPDG



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District Administrator



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Assistant Governor

Will Branch
Assistant Governor

From the Governor

By Brian Rega

As I travel the district this year as Governor, I share Rotary's message of "belonging", and the importance of making everyone feel welcome in your Rotary club. The end of the year is a time for celebration and reflection - often marked by holidays, festivities, and gift-giving. In the spirit of the season, I thought we could learn about the different ways we celebrate the same core idea of togetherness at this time of year.

Hanukkah, also called the 'festival of lights', is a holiday commonly celebrated in the Hebrew calendar. Like many religious celebrations, the holiday is based around the story of a miracle. Around 160 B.C, Israel was under the rule of Antiochus III the Great who outlawed the practice of Judaism, and forced the Jewish population to worship the Greek gods. After a number of years of revolt, the vastly outnumbered Jewish forces eventually won against their oppressors. Once the Jews had started to rebuild their most sacred temple, they lit the menorah – a multi-armed golden candelabra. The story goes that there was very little oil remaining in the menorah – just enough for one day. However, according to legend, the menorah burned for eight full nights before going out. Throughout the celebrations, Jews often eat foods cooked in oil to remember the miraculous longevity of the oil in the menorah. Families also exchange gifts, and play with square spinning tops called **dreidels**.

Celebrated on the winter solstice – the shortest day of the year – **Yule** is one of the oldest known festivals observed at this time of year. The original celebration was tied to worshiping the sun, and honored the rebirth of life and the year. As the ancient Norse believed the sun to be a wheel upon which the seasons turned, they would ward off the darkness of the winter months by drinking, lighting bonfires, and sharing tales. Many Yule traditions have been adopted by other cultures and religions: particularly Christianity. Besides the more overt inheritance of the yule log, other customs such as the hanging of mistletoe and enjoying a feast are borrowed from the ancient festival.

Kwanzaa is a modern African-American and pan-African holiday that was established in 1966 by Dr. Maulana Karenga, a professor of African studies. Beginning on 26th December and ending on 1st January, Kwanzaa is a cultural festival celebrating African culture and community. Kwanzaa centers around the **Nguzo Saba**, or 'The Seven Principles', which are: **Umoja** (unity), **Kujichagulia** (self-determination), **Ujima** (collective work and responsibility), **Ujamaa** (cooperative economics), **Nia** (purpose), **Kuumba** (creativity), and **Imani** (faith). At its heart, Kwanzaa is a celebration of connection and togetherness. As a non-religious holiday, Kwanzaa is celebrated by people of all different faiths, alongside other religious festivals they might be celebrating at this time of year. Festivities include lighting a seven-armed candelabra to represent the seven principles, sharing gifts and stories, singing and dancing, feasting, and other activities steeped in African arts and traditions.

Bodhi Day is celebrated annually on December 8th and is a Buddhist holiday celebrating the enlightenment of Siddhartha Gautama, the historical Buddha. Buddhists commemorate the day that Gautama completed his meditation beneath the Bodhi tree. Upon awakening, Gautama is said to have had a number of profound realizations, which became the founding principles of Buddhism – namely [The Noble Eightfold Path and the Four Noble Truths](#). Other traditions include hanging multi-coloured lights around the house to represent the eight paths. These lights are lit for 30 days, alongside a candle representing enlightenment. Many Buddhists also decorate their home with a **ficus religiosa** tree – the same genus as the Bodhi tree the Buddha sat under. This tree is adorned with lights, beads (symbolizing unity), and three ornaments to represent the [Three Jewels of Buddhism](#).

In January, Sikhs across the world celebrate the birthday of the 10th guru of the Sikh faith, **Guru Gobind Singh Ji**. The 10th guru is a particularly significant figure in Sikhism, not only as a famed warrior, poet, and philosopher, but also due to his contributions to modern Sikh practices. The anniversary is celebrated around the world with prayer meetings and processions at gurdwaras (places of worship for Sikhs), as well as **kirtan** – gatherings at which hymns and verses are sung. Celebrants also take part in **sewa**, which means 'selfless service', and is an important principle of the faith. Among other acts of service on this day, families distribute food to the poor.

While many cultures hold festivities to welcome in the new year, in Japan, **New Year (Shogatsu)** is the most important holiday in the calendar. Years are viewed as more distinct in Japanese culture, so a lot of celebrations focus more heavily on beginning anew. On New Year's Eve, families commonly undertake a deep cleaning of their house called **oosouji**, so that the coming year can begin on a blank slate. Co-workers will often attend 'year-forgetting' parties called **b?nenkai**,



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Adam Robert Sartin
District Training Chair

where they'll drink and forget any woes and hardships of the year, and look forward to the next. To that end, workers are typically expected to complete all outstanding work before the year ends. It has also become common for families and friends to send each other New Year's postcards. People send their greetings via postcards specifically marked to be delivered on 1st January, with expressions of gratitude and hope for further kindness in the new year.

If you've stayed with me this far, you likely recognize that we have more in common than you might have ever known. No matter how you observe the holidays, I'd like to leave you with this poem attributed to author, Bob Perks -- "**I Wish You ENOUGH**"

"I wish you enough sun to keep your attitude bright no matter how gray the day may appear.
I wish you enough rain to appreciate the sun even more.
I wish you enough happiness to keep your spirit alive and everlasting.
I wish you enough pain so that even the smallest of joys in life may appear bigger.
I wish you enough gain to satisfy your wanting.
I wish you enough loss to appreciate all that you possess.
I wish you enough hellos to get you through the final goodbye."

December Admin Notes

By Mark A. Brasfield on Sunday, December 8, 2024

Record your Club Officers Now

2025-25 officers should be recorded in DACdb by the end of December.

Check membership information for accurate RI billing

Before Dec. 28, make sure your membership is accurate in DACdb and Rotary International to assure correct billing of RI dues in January.

