

Bloomington Rotary Club

Roundabout

May 27, 2025

Next Week's program



We will meet on June 3 in the Frangipani Room. Our speaker will be Suzanne Koesel, the CEO of Centerstone of Indiana for the last 16 years. She will discuss certified community behavioral health clinics and a national operating model for public mental healthcare.

This Week's News

The Bloomington Rotary Foundation Annual Report



Sally Gaskill is the president of the Rotary Foundation board. She noted the board is not a committee, but an independent nonprofit charged with supporting the charitable work of

the club. Members of the Rotary Club make up the board and the membership of the Foundation. The Foundation was founded in 1986. In 1998 it created an endowment fund at the Community Foundation of Bloomington and Monroe County. In 2004 Rotary Foundation provided start-up funds for Teachers Warehouse. Its two priorities now are the club scholarships and community service. It is supporting our refugee program and an annual district grant right now, and last fall gave a larger grant (\$20,000) to the Beacon capital campaign fund. There is a grant-making committee looking for opportunities to spend down some of the excess funds sitting in the bank.

She also noted the Fountain of Youth Fund that is seeking to raise \$200,000 by 2030 to endow our scholarships. At this point, \$164,000 has been raised.

A new slate of officers was elected: **Alain Barker**, president; **Ron Barnes**, vice president; **Sara Laughlin**, secretary; **John Zody**, treasurer. Board members elected were **Jim Capshew**, **Sally Gaskill**, **Amy Osajima**, **Jerono Rotich**, **Hank Walter** and **John Whikehart**.

She said club members can support the Foundation by opting into the 80/20 fund (which authorizes the club to charge your account \$20 quarterly for a total of \$80 per year), making a pledge to the Fountain of Youth campaign, or making a bequest in your will. All funds in Bloomington Rotary Foundation stay in this community.

Vibrant Club Workshops time change and Zoom

DG Mandy Lohrum and DGE Kari Akin have moved the Vibrant Club Workshop meeting, scheduled for this coming Saturday in Bloomington, to a Zoom workshop in order for more Rotarians in our district to participate. All Rotarians can attend. The event will be from 9 to 11 a.m. on Saturday, May 31.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87687692887?pwd=UMWJpknz3QLbmPU9QAdN9ZBazWgza.1>

Meeting ID: 876 8769 2887

Passcode: 574904

Why Club Officers Should Attend:

- **Effective Leadership Training:** Gain valuable insights and practical tools to lead your club with confidence and purpose.
- **Strategic Planning Skills:** Learn how to set achievable goals, plan impactful projects, and drive engagement throughout the Rotary year.
- **Membership Growth & Retention:** Discover innovative strategies to attract new members and keep existing ones active and engaged.

- **Enhanced Club Experience:** Understand how to create a positive and vibrant club environment that fosters fellowship and impactful service.
- **Networking and Collaboration:** Connect with fellow leaders from across the district to share ideas, challenges, and successes.

This Week's Program



Michael Shermis introduced our speaker, **Caleb Poer**, whose topic was “painting a shared vision: the Duke Substation mural.” He has been a member of our club since 2023 and serves on the John Waldron Arts Center’s visual arts committee.

He started with a question: “Does Public Art Matter?” The club answered with a resounding yes. He said he thinks public art is necessary for these reasons: It’s a way to celebrate shared values, develop our identity and culture, and it makes our spaces attractive for those who want to move here, go to school here or open a business here.

He had little experience with public art before he had the opportunity to create something permanent on the wall of the Duke Substation at 11th and Rogers. The wall is 16 feet tall and 64 feet wide, and they had seven months to do the work. Duke Energy provided \$25,000 to launch the project, and the City of Bloomington provided support as well.

Caleb and two other artists developed this mission statement: “We will facilitate a collaborative workspace which contributes to the enhancement of the Bloomington community by emphasizing virality, neighborhood connectivity, and the soulful realities of the arts.”

They wanted the art to be for the public, to make the Maple Heights neighborhood feel seen, to use flora and fauna found in the area, use colors and images that reflect the neighborhood, and to celebrate what binds neighbors together.

They settled on the idea of a porch party. He took us through several rounds of drawings. He said the design grew from the mission statement to a visionary tribute; it's not just a porch party, but a snapshot of the community.

Caleb explained how the painting was done, including on Community Paint Day, which he said was a very meaningful part of the project for him. He said that day shifted the dynamic from "Look what they made" to "Look what we made."

He said every step of the project reinforced the idea that public art matters.

May 27 Celebration of Service

President Traci Jovanovic welcomed Rotarians and guests. She skipped her Thought for the Day and Happy Dollars to allow time for a report about the Rotary Foundation.

REFLECTION: Bill Brown gave the reflection. To mark his recent birthday, he consulted Perplexity AI to get a sense of his travels over the last year. Counting spinning around on the Earth, orbiting the sun, and being dragged around the Milky Way, he traveled in a nonlinear, whirling path more than 5.88 billion miles since his last birthday. He also asked Perplexity about the odds of his existence. His calculations noted his odds of existing were roughly zero. But he concluded he and all of us are unique in the history of the universe. "We're the rarest of creatures, worthy of being seen and heard," he said. To learn more about how Bill arrived at his calculations, review the Zoom video of this meeting.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS: Mark Peterson introduced the following guests: Willow Irwin, guest of **Liz Irwin**; Nicky Belle, guest of **Hank Walter**; Andreea Aluuei, guest of **Jonas Chang**; and Maisie Cochran, guest of **Sara Cochran**.

ROTARY BIRTHDAYS: Bill Brown on March 25 and **Marcus Debro** on March 30.

ROTARY ANNIVERSARIES: Marcus Debro, 4 years; **Joy Harter**, 19 years; **Judy Lucas**, 28 years; **Wilson Shitandi**, 2 years

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. President Traci said the club received a note from fellow Rotarian **Kim Gray**, who is the Peace Corps in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. She exchanged a banner with the Bishkek club. *(See her letter at the bottom of this newsletter)*

2. President Traci congratulated our Service Committee for securing the approval from the District 6580 Foundation team for full funding of \$3,000 towards our Meals on Wheels service project. The proposal will now progress to The Rotary Foundation for final approval.

3. Please keep Mr. Rotary **Jim Bright** in your thoughts and prayers as he is suffering from pneumonia and also keep **Don Hossler** in your thoughts as he had successful back surgery on May 7 and is recovering nicely at home in preparation for shoulder surgery. Don did attend the meeting.

4. There were four Living Room Conversations held this past weekend, and the peace building committee worked diligently to help facilitate creating an environment for conversations with opposing viewpoints that were healthy. More information can be found on our Facebook page.

Acknowledgements:

- Executive Asst: **Natalie Blais**
- Greeter: **Katie Cierniak**
- Introductions: **Mark Peterson**
- Zoom Host: **Joy Harter**
- Reflection: **Bill Brown**
- Reporter: **Bob Zaltsberg**
- Camera/Mic Operator: **Hank Walter**
- Zoom and Audio Producer: **Tylar Martin Nichols**

Kim Gray's letter

Greetings from Bishkek:

I hope you are well! Yesterday I had the pleasure of exchanging our club banner with that of the Bishkek Rotary Club. They are a small but mighty club of 20 active members. They do not have an active website, but I've included their Instagram page so you can see the kinds of projects they've been working on in recent years. They were founded in 1999 and their District HQ is in Istanbul.

<https://www.instagram.com/rotaryclubofbishkek/?hl=en>

As I mentioned to Traci when I was in Bloomington this spring, the meetings are conducted in Russian, so I have not attended many. But I just learned of a Global Grant project (together with a club in Germany) I think I can help them with, supporting young adults with disabilities.

Hopefully I will be able to stay through my entire service period, ending March of 2026. The Peace Corps just announced they are canceling the Kyrgyz Republic and Cameroon incoming cohorts (regular two-year Peace Corps volunteers who teach English alongside teachers in the rural villages) so that's not a good sign. But we're remaining optimistic. The Peace Corps has had a presence here for 31 years (except the two-years period during Covid).

I'm fortunate in that I have valuable projects to be working on, alongside great counterparts in the Kyrgyz Community Based Tourism Association HQs and regional offices.

My best to you, and to all of our club members. I'm looking forward to plugging back in on my return in the spring of 2026.