

The RIM Newsletter

Rotary

In Motion



Club 16 (2809) District 6290, Chartered May 1, 1916
<http://www.muskegonrotary.org>

*Is it the truth?
Is it fair to all concerned?
Will it build goodwill and better friendships?
Will it be beneficial to all concerned?*



Celebrating the people, events, and actions of the Muskegon Rotary Club, April 16, 2026

April 23, 2026, SOUP AND SANDWICH BAR at the Delta Program – Muskegon County Composting Grant

What's Coming

April 30—Muskegon Area Arts & Culture Coalition
May 7—Student Law Day Contest Winners

Upcoming Birthdays

April 19 Paul Harris
April 24 Julia Rupp
April 25 Jeff Bessinger
April 26 Rem Sprague
April 26 Don Hutchins
April 27 Jeffrey Dana
April 28 Jennifer Bruin



Caring Connections Fund
[Click here to donate](#)

Stage Manager This Week

Rem Sprague

Greeters This Week

Lisa Tyler and Ben Carson

Reflector This Week

Eileen Stoffan

RIM Reporting this Edition

Photographer – Emily Morgenstern
RIM Reporter – Sue Samaniego
RIM Editor – Ginny Sprague

Reflection



Eileen Stoffan began with a quote by Henry David Thoreau, “Never look back unless you are planning to go that way.” She then challenged us to rethink this line of thinking.

To hear the Reflection and the rest of the meeting, watch the Muskegon Rotary YouTube video:

Muskegon Rotary
4/16/26 YouTube:
[Click here to open](#)

Muskegon Rotary Board

Dave Alexander, President
Roger Morgenstern, President-Elect
Lisa Tyler, President Nominee
Tim Arter, Past President
Kimberly Taylor, Treasurer
Jane Clingman-Scott, Secretary
Kim Boersema, Club Coordinator
Directors:
Esther Ricco
Melissa Moore
Arlen-Dean Gaddy
Sarah Rinsema-Sybenga

Brandon Turnbull
Samantha Scott
Dimitri Poland
Lisa Kraus

Please email Club Board Members through this [link](#):

Presidential Reminders



President Dave announced a Six-Point Meeting Etiquette Policy adopted by the Board on 04-14-26. (See page 10.)

Members, please sign up to help with Kids Food Basket (Tennille Woodard, Coordinator) and Muskegon Rescue Mission dinners.

Please limit guest introductions to name, employment or community role, and membership interest.

Muskegon Rotary Board Approved Membership Applications 04/14/2026

1. Theresa Bernhardt sponsor Greg Borgman
2. Lori Doriot, sponsor Roger Morgenstern
3. Martin A. Burns, sponsor Denise Sabo
4. Laura Cunningham, sponsor Kristi Pawlak
5. Beverly Thiel, sponsor Lisa Tyler
6. Rachel VanDyke, sponsor Jim Fisher

Visitors and Guests



Meredith Smillie introduced her husband, Trent Smillie.



Jill Bonthuis and her guest, Kyle Carcamo, Pioneer Resources Operations Director.



Logan Metcalf introduces his guest, **Amanda Lemmen**, Braeburn Wealth and a visiting Grand Haven Rotarian.



Courtney Lohman and her guest, Brittany Hichue, Community Choice Credit.



Greg Borgman with his guest, Theresa Bernhardt, Co-owner of The Corner.



Kim Taylor and her guest, Travis McNeil, ADP, who is interested in membership.



Karen Kekelik introduces her guest and, husband, Steven Kekelik, CEO of IndiGrow.



Kat Hyder welcomes her guest, Joycelyn Lundberg, with Harding & Grove Design.



Trevor Friedeberg introduces his guest, Max Finberg, VP Government Affairs, Chobani/La Colombe.



Kippy Ellis welcomes her second Rotary guest, Ethan Epplett, Legacy Real Estate Partners.



Melissa Horton introduces her Guest, Jackie Huss, Lakeshore Museum Center Director of Operations.



Kristi Pawlak, sponsor, is delighted to introduce Laura Cunningham on her Induction day!

Visitors and Guests



Dave Medendorp and his guest, Eric Ratkiewicz.



Scott Timmer introduces his guest, Jennifer Nygren, Gielow, Groom, Terpstra & McEvoy paralegal.



Rachel Gorman Introduces her guest, Father Steven Geerling, pastor of St. Francis de Sales and St. Michael's Catholic Churches.

RIM Reporting Team

Editors: Susan Besteman, Jackie Farrar, and Ginny Sprague

Reporters: Kathy Moore, Roger Morgenstern, Meredith Smillie, and Sue Samaniego

Photographers: Wyatt Huggett, Brock Johnson, Emily Morgenstern, and Roger Morgenstern

Student Guests



Doug Wood welcomed Orchard View Middle School Interact. Pictured R– L: Tara Gerrans, Interact advisor, Jorgia Anderson, 8th grade, Deanna Nesbory, 7th grade, Emberlee Uluund, 8th grade, Aubrey Pavlovic, 8th grade, McKenzie Noggle, 8th grade, and Ashley Keena, school counselor.



Marty Systema welcomed the Mona Shores Sailors. Pictured R – L) **Danielle Smith-Walker**, a new Rotarian and school counselor, and seniors, Catherine Conrad and Tomarion Steward.



Muskegon Rising

Muskegon Minute



President Dave reflected on the rise, impact, and removal of Muskegon's Sappi paper mill. At its height, the paper mill employed 1500 to 2000 workers, with the unionized production jobs accounting for some of the highest wages in the region. The paper mill is the reason that we built the Muskegon County Wastewater system in 1973, which saved Muskegon Lake and brought it back to a healthy ecosystem in 2025.

Flash forward to 2014 with the complete removal of the million square feet of industrial buildings and a 10-story smokestack and bio-incinerator, which reveal about one-mile of Muskegon lake frontage. This enormous piece of former industrial property is arguably one of the finest redevelopment sites in the Great Lakes area.

This Week's Program

Turning to the program, President Dave introduced today's speakers, one of Pure Muskegon's owners, **Steve Olsen**, and Pure Muskegon's attorney, **Scott Timmer**. As President Dave concluded his introduction, he noted, "Steve and Scott, you have packed the room. It's all yours."

This Week's Program

Pure Muskegon: the Future of the Sappi Papermill Site

Presenter: **Steve Olsen** and **Scott Timmer**, Pure Muskegon
 Introduction: **Dave Alexander**
 Rim Reporter: **Meredith Smillie**



for broader marketing and future reuse.

Pictured below: Sappi Papermill at the height of its operations.



Rather than developing it themselves, the group's aim has been to move the property to a qualified buyer aligned with Pure Muskegon's mission. They also noted the organization's track record with complex community assets, including its prior purchase and successful transition of the Muskegon Country Club to the Redwater Group.

Planning efforts also had to account for wetlands and regulatory constraints. Another big piece: the former railroad spur. Speakers described how difficult negotiations with CSX proved to be, and how community partners, including local leaders—helped move the conversation forward.

At this week's Rotary meeting, Dave Alexander welcomed Rotarians and introduced speakers Scott Timmer and Steve Olsen, who shared an update on what's next for the former Sappi Mill property along Muskegon Lake, one of the region's most watched redevelopment opportunities.



Scott Timmer, Pure Muskegon Attorney

Ultimately, the City of Muskegon stepped in to acquire the rail property and begin removing tracks that extended toward downtown.



Steve Olsen, Pure Muskegon

Environmental work has been central to every step. Pure Muskegon and the City pursued grant support aimed at reducing methane emissions and addressing PFAS concerns. Testing and agency review shaped what could move forward, and speakers noted that cleanup cost estimates have been significant.

How Pure Muskegon Got Involved

Speaker Steve Olsen explained that Pure Muskegon has spent the past 12 years working to protect—and ultimately reposition—the nearly one-mile, 128-acre waterfront site.

Challenges, Cleanup, and Key Milestones Scott opened his remarks acknowledging that the path hasn't been simple. Attendees heard how zoning restrictions, environmental questions, and deed/liability negotiations slowed progress for years. After the mill closed, more than 100 structures were demolished, and the remaining smokestacks—complicated by asbestos concerns—became a major hurdle. Over time, demolition and mitigation work helped open the door

In 2023, Parkland Properties entered the picture and has been under contract for nearly two years. The current concept—Windward Point—envisions a mixed-use community with housing and neighborhood-scale retail, with roughly 2,200 housing units planned.

At a Glance

- **Site:** Approximately 120–128 acres with nearly one mile of Muskegon Lake frontage.
- **Led by:** Pure Muskegon, focused on protecting the site and transitioning it to the right long-term developer.
- **Current direction:** Parkland Properties' mixed-use Windward Point concept (housing plus limited retail).
- **Scale:** About 2,200 housing units anticipated in the development plan.

Key Milestones

- **1874–1899:** Site origins as a sawmill and early industrial waterfront; paper operations established by 1899.
- **2009–2011:** Mill closure and transition period following the Great Recession.
- **2013–2017:** Pure Muskegon purchase agreement and acquisition; major demolition and smokestack removal enabled wider redevelopment planning.
- **2021–2022:** State support and grant funding pursued/awarded to advance environmental work.
- **2023–2026:** Parkland Properties under contract; Windward Point redevelopment planning continues.

Fast Facts

- Nearly **one mile** of Muskegon Lake frontage.
- Roughly **120–128 acres** of redevelopment opportunity.
- The mill employed up to **1,200** people at its peak.
- Large-scale demolition and environmental review have been key prerequisites to redevelopment.

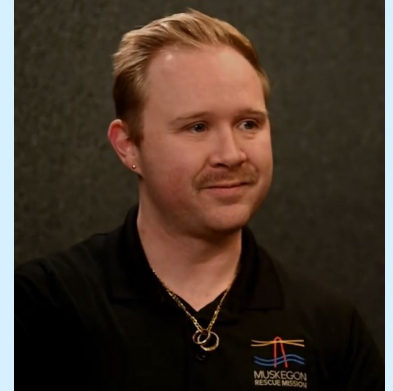
Parkland Properties Phase 1 Concepts



The Speakers emphasized that this effort has been driven by long-term community stewardship—protecting a highly visible waterfront asset and preventing industrial uses that didn't match Muskegon's vision for its shoreline. As environmental questions are resolved and redevelopment planning advances,

the former mill site is positioned to become one of the most transformational projects on Muskegon Lake.

Rotary in Action Wyatt Huggett



RIM photographer Wyatt Huggett joined Rotary in June 2024 soon after he started work at the Muskegon Rescue Mission. He enjoys telling people he meets at Rotary about the importance of your Club Runner bio because the committee chairs will come running if you have a hobby or shared interest they need. Rim Editor Jackie Farrar reached out to Wyatt right after he was inducted.

He advised us to sit at a different table each week and keep those conversations going. You will meet incredible people doing incredible work in our Club and our community! While he does not live in Muskegon, Wyatt has found his passion in the work he is doing and feels “wildly accepted” by the Muskegon community.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sW217wV6Egc>

Inductions



Laura Cunningham looks on as sponsor, **Kristi Pawlak** introduces her to the Club.

Laura Cunningham is a community leader and youth advocate based in Muskegon, Michigan, dedicated to creating opportunities for young people and strengthening the communities they call home.

She serves as Director of Membership with Girl Scouts of Michigan Shore to Shore, where she partners with volunteers, families, and community organizations to expand access to leadership experiences for girls. Her work focuses on growing membership, supporting volunteers, and building strong community connections so every girl can develop courage, confidence, and character. She is especially passionate about reaching underserved populations and ensuring every girl feels a true sense of belonging.

Laura brings a diverse, service-driven background. She has done similar community outreach work with Catholic Charities West Michigan and spent 10 years with the Michigan Department of Corrections as a Sergeant. Across these roles, she has led with empathy, built trust in challenging environments and remained committed to helping others move forward.

She is also in the early stages of founding Zachary's Hope Foundation for Youth in memory of her son, focused on connecting middle and high school students with mentorship, creativity, and positive opportunities.

Known for her collaborative leadership style, Laura brings both professional experience and personal perspective to her work, allowing her to connect with others in a genuine and meaningful way.

Outside of her career, Laura is deeply family centered. She and her husband, Alex, have been married nine years and share a blended family of six children, ages 26 to 15. Her family is her foundation and inspiration. She also has a personal connection to Rotary's youth programs, as her daughter will soon travel to South Korea through a Rotary Youth Exchange, reflecting Laura's belief in global connection and investing in future leaders. Laura is honored to join Rotary and looks forward to contributing her time, energy, and passion in service to the community.



President Dave presents **Chris and Laura** with their Rotary pins the Objects of Rotary, and copies of the Four-Way Test.



Chris Nance listens attentively to sponsor **Bill Loxterman**.

Chris Nance grew up in North Muskegon. He graduated from North Muskegon Public Schools in 1980, then earned undergraduate and graduate degrees from Michigan State University.

After finishing graduate school on a Friday, Chris began his professional career the following Monday in Chicago at Ogilvy PR, then shortly thereafter moved down the street to work for Hill & Knowlton – both then ranked Top 5 in the world. A couple years later, Chris got an itch to snow ski near where he worked, so he moved to Sacramento for a job with the California Legislature.

While working for the California Legislature, Chris got acquainted with several White House staff members. Next thing he knew he was working as a press advance representative for The White House Press Office, which required him to travel five days for domestic visits, 10 days for international visits. A few of his most memorable visits included a Vice-Presidential Debate; as well as State Department missions thru Helsinki, Finland to Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania after the Cold War ended with official dissolution of the Soviet Union; then several years later

Inductions continued

another State Department mission to Doha, Qatar, where the beginning of another war was negotiated six months after 9/11.

Between living in Sacramento and Washington, DC, Chris resided in Kansas City, where he worked for Fleishman Hillard, another Top 5 international PR firm, and where he married his lovely wife, Mignon. Shortly thereafter, Chris got a call to return to Sacramento where he again worked for the California Legislature and Ogilvy PR; state trade associations for timber and agriculture; as a deputy secretary appointed by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to manage media for departments including Food & Agriculture, the California Highway Patrol, and Caltrans, while also serving as a staff lead for state trade missions to Japan and China; and finally as chief communications officer for the California Earthquake Authority, which then managed a half-trillion in global financial exposure through the offering of earthquake insurance.

With retirement approaching and a young son at the right age to attend his dad's high school, the family enthusiastically returned to North Muskegon in 2021 to live in a house where Chris had a lawn job back in the 70s. His son Barrett (also known as Bear) is now thriving as both a student and athlete at NMPS. His wife Mignon, who previously worked for E*TRADE and State Street Bank in Sacramento, now works for Merrill Lynch Muskegon. Chris now serves as the mayor of North Muskegon, winning office with 58% of the vote.

Announcements



President Dave reminds anyone making a Rotary event or committee announcement to limit their remarks to **ONE minute!** Further information can be placed in the RIM. P

1. Rotary ReWine's next meeting is April 16 at the Vault.
2. We have a Party in the Park on Friday, May 29. Please sign up to help.
3. Save the date for Saturday, May 2nd, for the District 6290 Visioning session at the GVSU Hub. Please complete the short survey you received in your email to help the facilitators by tomorrow, Friday, April 17. A survey reminder will go out in the morning, and a SignUp Genius to participate will be sent soon.
4. The District 6290 Learning Assembly is Saturday, April 18, at Meijer Gardens. You can register on the District website: [Click here to open](#)



Brandon Turnbull reaches out to members regarding the Peace Builders Committee Bridging the Political Divide Workshop Part 2, set for Friday, May 1, from 1 to 4:00 pm at the Chamber Building GMET Offices. There are still spots for direct participants and several more for observers. **Click the link below.** <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C44AFAA2CABFFC16-62697036-bridging#/>

He also invited members to participate in the Muskegon Rotary Visioning Session with the District 6290 Visioning team on May 2, from Saturday, May 2nd at the GVSU Hub.



Pete DeBoer, co-chair of the Environment and Sustainability Committee, encouraged members to "go green" and think about Earth Day by attending the Muskegon County recycling event. Take this opportunity to recycle old electronics. <https://co.muskegon.mi.us/777/Saturday-Hazardous-Waste-Events>

Announcements cont.

Pete also invited members to a screening featuring author Audrey Peterman, who spoke about Diversity in the Environment, presented by the Wege Foundation. The screening will be held on Thursday, April 23, at 4:00 p.m., at the Louis A. McMurray Conference and Transportation Center, located at 2624 Sixth Street, Muskegon Heights.

<https://wegespeakerseries.com/>



Emma Schroeder, Early Act liaison for the Muskegon Montessori Academy, announced that the students have a succulent sale on Friday, April 24th 10 am-3 pm in honor of Earth Week, 2950 McCracken St., Norton Shores. Come out, buy a plant, and support these students!



Arn Boezaart requested help from ten more Food Truck volunteers on Wednesday, April 22, from 4:00 to 6:00 pm 2500 Jefferson Street, Muskegon Heights. Please let Arn know if you can help.



Andrew Cutler is seeking more Rotarians to help with the Muskegon Rotary Party in the Park on May 29. So far, we have approximately 33% of the number of volunteers needed, so step up and help with this important fundraiser! Ask your friends and family to help, and Andrew will send them the sign-up link.

President Dave announced that **Jennie McNeil** and **Logan Metcalf** have agreed to help co-chair our PIP. Thank you, Jennie, and Logan!



Scott Roodvoets calls on all Rotarians to attend the Pours events. "These are the perfect events for you!" Just show up, buy a drink or two, and have a good time!



Pours Events

Monday, April 20

5 to 7:00 pm
Unruly Brewing

Friday, April 24

4 to 6:00 pm
Wonderland Distilling
[Click here to sign up](#)

Tuesday, April 28

7:30 to 9:30 am
Community House **

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C44AFAA2CABFFC16-62923981-pourscommunity#/>

Thursday, April 30

5 to 7:00 pm
Muskegon Brewing
[https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C44AFAA2CABFFC16-62924159-pours- /](https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C44AFAA2CABFFC16-62924159-pours-/)

**Please note, his event is a morning coffee hour.

Thank you to our sponsors!

[Click here to see the video.](#)

Rotary Youth Exchange Cookbook

Around the Table, Around the World: A Rotary Youth Exchange Cookbook is more than a collection of recipes. It is a celebration of culture, hospitality, and the connections that are built when we open our homes and share a meal.

Inside these pages, you will find favorite dishes from host families around the world and from our current inbound exchange students who are spending the year here in West Michigan. Each recipe represents more than ingredients. It represents a family, a tradition, a memory, and the spirit of exchange that brings people together across languages and borders.

Digital copies are available for \$5, and printed copies can be purchased for \$10 and picked up at Rotary.

Order yours today: <https://bit.ly/2026RYECookbook>

Rotary District 6290 Volunteer Opportunities

<https://ridistrict6290.org/sitepage/open-district-volunteer-roles/>

Saturday, May 16, is the Epic Day of Service, nationwide. Rotarians will partner with local communities and other organizations to complete service projects in their area.



Rotary Youth Exchange Community Yard Sale May 15-17th

Muskegon Rotarians, outbound youth exchange families, and friends are invited to help our Youth Exchange by donating usable items for the Yard Sale.

Please help by coming to the Yard Sale to purchase items as well. Remember the old saying, "One person's junk is another person's treasure!"

MUSKEGON COUNTY RECYCLING EVENT

Saturday April 25th, 2026
from 9am-1pm



RAIN OR SHINE*

FREE TO COUNTY RESIDENTS ONLY

BUSINESS WASTE AND REGULAR TRASH NOT ACCEPTED*

SCRAP TIRES - **NO TIRES WILL BE ACCEPTED**

Due to a delay in the EGLE Scrap Tire Cleanup Grant, **NO** tires will be accepted at this event. Please see www.muskegoncounty.net/1954 for more information on future tire events.

HAZARDOUS WASTE

Including mercury, petroleum products, antifreeze, pesticides, herbicides, acids, bases, CFL and fluorescent light bulbs, and oil base paint products. Must be in containers no greater than 6 gallons; NO drums of any kind. Latex paint will not be accepted!

ELECTRONICS

Including computers, peripherals, TV's, and other electronic devices.
Visit: www.muskegoncounty.net/777 for a link to a full listing of accepted electronic items.

*Please note: CRT TV's WILL be accepted for this event

*Severe weather may cause a halt or shut down of the event as determined by the event coordinator.

*Event staff reserve the right to limit any collected materials and refuse apparent business waste.



VISIT: WWW.MUSKEGONCOUNTY.NET/777 OR CALL: 231-724-6001



Funding for this event:
Muskegon County Solid Waste, Muskegon County Sustainability Office
Michigan Department of EGLE Scrap Tire Clean Up Grant



United Way Day of Caring April 24, 2026



<https://www.unitedwaylakeshore.org/day-caring>



Club Meeting Etiquette Policy

1. If members have personal or professional reasons for leaving the meeting early, they should sit towards the back of the room near an exit door and leave with as little interruption as possible.
2. Introduction of guests should be limited to a welcome of name, occupation or status in the community and interest in membership, if any. Introduction of new members for induction into the club and introduction of program speakers should be two minutes or less.
3. Announcements at the end of the meeting should be limited to Rotary events and Committee messages to the membership. Announcements should be one minute or less. Details can be shared in the RIM Non-Rotary announcements need to be requested in writing to the club president by the Monday before meeting and will be allowed at the president's discretion.
4. Speakers or guests should not use the Rotary meeting to solicit funds for any non-Rotary event or fundraiser.
5. Political candidates and elected officials should not be a program speaker nor part of a program presentation during the calendar year that they appear on a ballot in Muskegon County. Political candidates brought to club meetings as a guest of a member can be introduced but limited to name and office they seek. Campaign information should not be distributed.
6. Printed handouts should not be distributed on lunch tables except from the speaker and his or her organization. All other materials of general community interest can be placed on a sharing table in the lobby outside of the lunchroom and should be removed by the member at the end of the meeting.

Policy Approved by the
Muskegon Rotary Club Board of
Directors on April 14, 2026