

The RIM Newsletter

Rotary

InMotion



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

February 19, 2026

**February 26, 2026, 12 – 1:30pm — Meatloaf at the Delta
Program – Three Mayors (Johnson, Nelund, & Nance) and updates on their cities**

What's Coming

- Feb 26—Three Mayors
- Mar 5—Transportation Options in Muskegon County
- Mar 12—District Governor

Upcoming Birthdays

- Feb 27 Jonathan Scouten
- Feb 28 Cody Chipman
- Feb 28 Logan Metcalf
- Feb 29 Esther Ricco
- Mar 1 Jason Kennedy
- Mar 1 Stephen Olsen
- Mar 1 Jen Wakely
- Mar 4 Blake Cramer



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

Stage Manager This Week

Ammy Seymour

Greeter This Week

Jane Clingman-Scott & Ivan Ivanov

Reflector This Week

Eric Seifert

RIM Reporting this Edition

Photographer – Roger Morgenstern
RIM Reporters – Jackie Farrar & Roger Morgenstern
RIM Editor – Susan Besteman



Eric Seifert, usually high tech in his Reflections, said he went “old school” with pen and paper for this week.



Kat Hyder introduces her guest, Angela Fox

Visitors & Guest



Mary Anne Gorman introduces her guest, former Rotarian Susan Meston (who even won the 50/50!)



Pete DeBoer introduces his guest, daughter Emerson DeBoer. With no school this week, dad said he quickly figured out Thursday lunch plans!



Trevor Friedeberg with his guest, Nick Rabach



Tiffany Dupont-Novak introduces her guest, new Muskegon Civic Theatre Executive Director Caitlin Cowan, and her daughter Joy....clearly one of our youngest guests!

Muskegon Rotary Feb. 19th
YouTube Video: [CLICK HERE](#)



Pat Shafer introduces her guest from the Hackley Public Library, Christina Rowland. Pat encouraged members to contact Christina regarding Hackley's new "Library of Things" available for borrowing!



Jamie Sowa with Culinary Institute of Michigan & Rotaract guests
A large contingent from Baker College joined us for the Harvest Fest check presentation. Guests included David Spicher, Travis Alexander, Erin Riley, Kiana Roberts, Amanda Miller, Laura Brown, Courtney Trobaugh, Trevor Watrin, Isaac Watson, Chloe Knieper, Ella Falkenhagen, Jessy Stewart and Chris Sowa.

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 Brandon Turnbull
 Melissa Moore Samantha Scott
 Arlen-Dean Gaddy Dimitri Poland
 Sarah Rinsema-Sybenga Lisa Kraus

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



Roger Morgenstern and Carla Flanders present two checks to Baker College from last fall's Harvest Fest proceeds: \$2,500 to the culinary school's scholarship fund and \$1,000 to the Baker Rotaract Club. Many thanks to Baker's students and staff for all their work to make Harvest Fest possible. Mark your calendars for this year's Harvest Fest Oct. 22!



Rotary ReWine Schedule
 1st and 3rd Thursdays each month 5:00-5:15pm Social time
 5:15pm Meeting start time at the Core Plaza (Vault)

RSVPs are due by Wednesday at 5pm for the Thursday meeting.

Contact **Kaytie Drake** at kaytieely@aol.com to RSVP (total # of people including any guests you are bringing) or if you have any further questions.



President Dave pulled double duty to introduce the program. As a former journalist, Dave said he knows the importance of storytelling in Muskegon County. He said the Muskegon Rising podcast, with its focus on Community Development, Workforce Development and Education, is helping fill that void.



Aaron Maike, one of this week's program presenters and co-host of the Muskegon Rising podcasts.

This Week's Program: Muskegon Rotary Club's Muskegon Rising Podcast



Presenters: **Aaron Maike, DJ Hilson, & Producer Mike Vogas**
 Introduced by: **Dave Alexander**
 RIM Reporters: **Jackie Farrar & Roger Morgenstern**

Muskegon Rising was created to share stories in Muskegon County. The launch took place two years ago with the creation of over 100 episodes. These episodes highlighted multiple people, places and partnerships. Mike Vogas, Aaron Maike, and D.J. Hilson worked together to re-brand Muskegon Rising.

The focus areas of the re-brand include

- Economic Development
- Workforce Development
- Education



The program goals are to offer 24 high-quality issues that will be released on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month, with a potential opportunity for special episodes.

Twelve episodes have already been recorded with more in the pipeline.

Revenue Sources Include

Title Sponsorships

- \$10,000 annual investment
- Brand featured across all episodes
- Alignment with Rotary impact areas
- Featured on YouTube site

Episode Sponsorships

- \$1,000.00 per episode
- Spotlight on your business
- Direct community storytelling
- 20-to-30-minute interview focusing on your business

YouTube Monetization

- YouTube subscriptions
- Audience growth through algorithms
- Ad revenue overtime
- What is produced:
 - High Quality 20–30-minute audio and video podcast
 - Shorts for each episode that increase interest in the longer podcast

The funds go to the Muskegon Rotary Foundation. The funds support economic, workforce, and education initiatives that are reinvested into our community. You can start supporting by scanning the Muskegon Rising QR Code below and click subscribe.



Muskegon Rising



It was very fitting that **Mike Vogas** was at the presentation controls when he was recognized for his amazing behind the scenes production work for the Muskegon Rising podcasts, now in their third year with a renewed focus. Muskegon Rotary's "shine and polish" is due to Mike's hard work!

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/2269729/episodes/18515690-why-muskegon-is-rising>

[CLICK HERE FOR ALL PODCASTS](#)



D.J. Hilson, one of this week's program presenters and co-host of the Muskegon Rising podcasts.

**Muskegon Rising Podcast
S3E3: Greg Sherburn -
Muskegon State Park**



In this episode of Muskegon Rising, host Aaron Maike sits down with Greg Sherburn, unit manager of Muskegon State Park and Duck Lake State Park, to talk about why Muskegon State Park was ranked among the top nine state parks in the nation by National Geographic.

They dive into what makes this park stand out, from miles of Lake Michigan shoreline and four-season recreation to the Muskegon Luge Adventure Sports Park and a strong commitment to universal accessibility. The conversation also explores how Michigan's state parks support outdoor tourism, protect natural resources, and contribute to the local economy right here in Muskegon County.

If you have ever thought of Muskegon State Park as a summer destination, this episode will give you a whole new perspective on why it is truly a year-round asset and one of our community's greatest strengths.

Listen:

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/2269729/episodes/18684115-greg-sherburn-muskegon-state-park>

Watch:

<https://youtu.be/6B0AOMivcd4?si=xk7S-IGgPebQQP5->

CLICK HERE FOR ALL PODCASTS

RIM Reporting Team

Editors: Susan Besteman,

Jackie Farrar, & Ginny Sprague

Reporters: Kathy Moore, Roger

Morgenstern, Meredith Smillie,
& Sue Samaniego

Photographers: Wyatt Huggett, Brock

Johnson, Emily Morgenstern,
& Roger Morgenstern

**Spotlight Video
Alejandro Alonzo**



This week we highlighted Honduras Rotarian and physician Alejandro Alonzo and the work he's done with the Chispa Project and building libraries with Muskegon Rotarians! Click [here](#) to see his heartwarming message. A group from the Muskegon and Grand Haven clubs will be in Honduras in late June.

Alejandro Alonzo, a Honduran medical doctor and passionate Rotarian, shares how joining Rotary connected him with Michigan Rotarians through the impactful "Chispa Project," where he helped build a school library in rural Honduras. In this inspiring interview, he encourages listeners to look beyond common misconceptions about Honduran safety and instead recognize the nation's vibrant culture, warm community, and extraordinary potential. Alejandro highlights how Rotary-led initiatives empower local youth, strengthen education, and uplift entire communities, inviting visitors to experience Honduras with an open heart and open mind.



Paul Harris Fellow

**Jamie
Sowa**



Nancy Crandall and Aaron Maike introduced the newest Paul Harris Fellow (PHF) in the world, Aaron's Baker College colleague **Jamie Sowa**. The PHF's timing was great as Jamie's husband Chris and a large contingent of Baker College students and colleagues attended this week's lunch as part of a presentation related to Harvest Fest (more on that elsewhere in the *RIM*). Here is Aaron's heartfelt presentation to Jamie: "It is truly my pleasure to introduce and induct Jamie Sowa as a Paul Harris Fellow. I personally cannot think of a more deserving person. Jamie lives her life in service to others. Her commitment to our community is so extensive that I would not dare attempt to list all of the organizations she supports. Jamie and I have had many conversations about the importance of saying no when requests come her way. She rarely, if ever, does. Jamie is a true Rotarian. I have known Jamie

professionally for nearly 25 years. She has led the Culinary Institute of Michigan since the new building opened in 2008. As a woman in the culinary field, she has led in a traditionally male dominated environment with grace and courage, always placing students first. Jamie now serves as our Director of Student Affairs. Her role is to support students, and she is exceptionally well suited for it. Her empathetic approach ensures that anything impeding a student's success is addressed, removed, or supported. More than anything, Jamie works tirelessly. I always hear how hard people work. I can honestly say Jamie works harder than anyone I know. She cares deeply about our community and about Baker College students. Jamie tried to give Her Paul Harris Fellow award to someone else, and I told her absolutely NO. This example clearly shows Jamie's service and humility. I am absolutely thrilled to present Jamie with her first Paul Harris Fellow recognition.



Nancy Crandall, a proud Indiana University alum, said she never thought she'd wear her Hoosiers scarf to celebrate the school's football program, as it's known as a legendary basketball school! She said she often thought during this memorable season of her fellow IU alum, the late **Bill Johanson**, RIM's founder. He'd be happy to see the IU swag in the newsletter!

Announcements

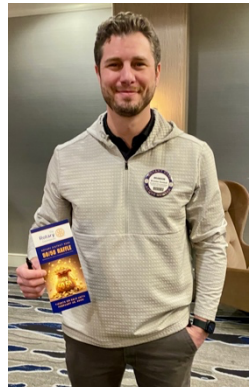
Paralympics Skiing



President Dave shared great news from our own **Jules Terry**. On Monday, eight of her fifteen Paralympics skiing athletes, that she coaches, qualified for the Winter Paralympics in two weeks in Cortina, Italy. She and her team leave March 4th. We wish them well! Dave has already asked Jules to share her Olympic story with the club when she returns to Muskegon.

Annual District Raffle

Brandon Turnbull is heading up the Rotary International District 6290 50-50 raffle. Tickets are just \$20 and will be available for sale before and after next week's meeting. Cash or checks (made payable to the Muskegon Rotary Foundation) are accepted. See **Brandon, President Dave, or President Elect Roger** if you'd like to buy a ticket or two! The proceeds will go to the Rotary International Foundation's Annual Fund. Last year's winner took home \$1,200!



TOGETHER, WE CAN CHANGE LIVES BY BUILDING BETTER COMMUNITIES.

Join us in the great 2026 50/50 raffle. Half of your ticket goes to the Rotary Foundation to do good in the world and half of your ticket will be returned in prize money to 6 lucky winners!

Clubs are asked to sell the raffle tickets at **\$20 each** from January 1- February 28, 2026.

Ticket stubs and sales must be returned no later than **March 5** to **Bob Marcus**, Rotary District 6290 Treasurer, 5741 South Morey Rd, McBain, MI 49657

First Prize:	30% of the prize money
Second Prize:	20% of the prize money
Third & Fourth Prizes:	15% of the prize money each
Fifth & Sixth Prizes:	10% of the prize money each

The more tickets sold, the larger the prize payouts!



The District 6290 Rotary Foundation Raffle is operated by the Rotary Club of Muskegon, license #R83712. Prize drawings will take place 3:00-3:30p.m. on March 21, 2026, at the Great Lakes Rotary PETS, Radisson Plaza Hotel, 100 W. Michigan Ave, Kalamazoo, MI 49007. Need not be present to win.
MARCH 21, 2026 3:30PM
 Drawing to be held at the Great Lakes PETS Radisson Plaza Hotel 100 W. Michigan Ave, Kalamazoo, MI 49007

Caring Connections Point Person Found



Mary Anne Gorman announced that **Greg Borgman** has agreed to be the Club's point person on the Caring Connections Committee to coordinate sending cards, flowers, etc. to Rotarians and their families during milestones in their lives, from celebrating the birth of a child to sending get-well wishes when someone is hospitalized or a note to the family or a memorial gift from the Club if a Rotarian passes away. Thank you, Greg for stepping up. Any Rotarians who know of someone who would benefit from a card, flowers or other outreach, please see Greg!

Joint Service Project Muskegon & GR Rotary Clubs – Feb 21st

The Muskegon & Grand Rapids Rotary Clubs join forces for good on February 21st to help volunteer at Feeding America. Stay tuned to the upcoming RIM Newsletters for the updates! Thank you to all those that volunteered and President Elect **Roger Morgenstern** for your leadership!

Helping address Food Insecurity

Our Rotarians know our club has sponsored and helped staff food distribution trucks from Feeding America West Michigan for years and we have another truck planned April 22. *RIM* has learned that Baker College and the YMCA are partnering to support our community by hosting a food distribution truck in the Baker College Farmers Market parking lot in downtown Muskegon every other month in 2026, beginning with a truck 10 a.m. Feb. 23.

Baker's Aaron Maike, President Dave and President Elect Roger are discussing possible Rotary involvement in continuing this effort, both with volunteers and financial support. Dave told *RIM* he will discuss the item with the Rotary Board and Aaron will give the Club some information at an upcoming weekly meeting.

Please Welcome Potential New Members:

Bridgette Zappacosta who is the CFO of Samaritas. Bridgette will be sponsored by **Roger Morgenstern**, has been approved by the Muskegon Board, and will be inducted in the next few weeks.

Also - Returning member, Brad Demirjian who is a Manager with FM Global.



March Madness Brave Rotarian Contest



March Madness Paul Harris Fellow competition means that **Meredith Smillie** is looking for 64 Rotarians to participate in this year's contest. \$100 saves your spot in the madness. Not only could you win a coveted Paul Harris Fellow, but you will also fulfill your recommended donation to The Rotary Foundation. Sign-ups will continue through March 12, 2026; as the brackets kick off on March 16, 2026. Payment is expected prior to March 12. You can pay with cash, check (made out to The Rotary Foundation) or use the QR code listed here to pay via credit card. Please see **Meredith** for any questions.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0A4BACAF28A2F58-62039851-brave>



YOU'RE INVITED TO:

COFFEE CONNECT

A New Member Rotary Event

NEW MEMBERS AND THEIR SPONSORS ARE INVITED TO JOIN US FOR COFFEE AND CONVERSATION

2026 DATES:
FEBRUARY 18
APRIL 15
JUNE 10
SEPTEMBER 9

8:00-9:00 A.M.

RSPV:
MELISSA
@LAKEHORE MUSEUM.ORG

MUSKEGON MUSEUM OF HISTORY & SCIENCE
430 W. CLAY AVE
MUSKEGON, MI 49440

Pours Committee Finalized Dates

The Pours Committee finalized its 2026 Happy Hours.

1. Wednesday, April 15: 5:00-7:00pm, 794 Kitchen & Bar
2. Monday, April 20: 5:00-7:00pm, Unruly Brewing
3. Friday, April 24: 4:00-6:00pm, Wonderland Distilling
4. Tuesday, April 28: 7:30-9:30am, Community House
5. Thursday, April 30: 5:00-7:00pm, Muskegon Brewing

**A special note that the April 28 event at Community House is a coffee hour in the morning.

ReWine Updates

Adopt-A-Highway Program Looking for Volunteers

Our next pickup for the Muskegon Rotary stretch of highway on I-96 will be on Saturday, April 18. Volunteers will meet promptly at 8:45am for a short safety talk, then head out on the road to pick trash. (We will finish no later than 11:00am, sooner if we get a lot of help 😊). Also looking for two drivers to drive along with the volunteers who are picking trash. If you can help, please contact **Esther Ricco**, riccoe@gvsu.edu and she can provide you with details. Be a part of keeping our adopted stretch clean and taking action to protect our environment!

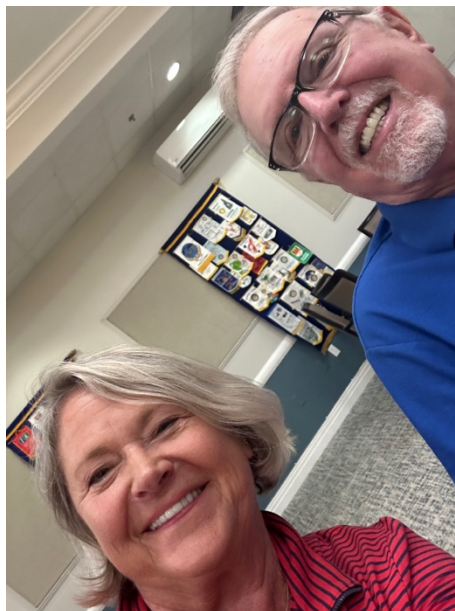
Interact Insider

Reeths-Puffer Interact Thanks You!

Rotary is helping Reeths-Puffer Interact to bring noted magician Anthony Grupido to speak to their school about mental health as soon as they can raise the funds.

Interactors Olivia Yonkman and April Thompson rang up \$363.20 this week thanks to your generous donations.

Keep 'em coming Rotary please! Bring to Rotary or contact **John Noling** for pick-up—[click here](#).



Where Are They?

Where are **Susan Crain** and **Bill Loxterman**? Answer-- Rotary Club of Cape Coral Goldcoast. If you are traveling and visit another club, send your pictures to us for the next RIM. 😊