

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, July 9, 2026

July 16, 2026, Soup & Sandwiches at the Delta Program – Samaritas & Froebel School

What's Coming

July 16 – Samaritas & Froebel School

Upcoming Birthdays

July 19 Bill Marietti
July 19 Andrea Riegler
July 20 Richard Houtteman
July 20 Courtney Lohman
July 20 Jerry McDowell
July 22 Dwana Thompson



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

Stage Manager This Week

Ammy Seymour

Greeters This Week

Mary Anne Gorman
Kathy Evans

Reflector This Week

Bill Erickson

RIM Reporting this Edition

Photographer – Wyatt Huggett
RIM Reporter – Sue Samaniego
RIM Editor – Jackie Farrar

Muskegon Rotary July 9th
YouTube Video:
[CLICK HERE](#)



President **Roger Morgenstern** opens the meeting.

Muskegon Rotary Board

Roger Morgenstern, President
Lisa Tyler, President-Elect
Sarah Rinsema-Sybenga & Arlen-Dean Gaddy, President Nominees
Dave Alexander, Past President
Kimberly Taylor, Treasurer
Joanie Smith, Secretary
Kim Boersema, Club Coordinator
Directors:
Esther Ricco
Melissa Moore
Dimitri Poland
Martha Fohlbrook
Lisa Kraus
Samantha Scott
Kelly DeVos
John Selmon

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

Reflection



Bill Erickson offers the reflection.

Visitors and Guests



Karen Whitehouse with guest Chris Wildrom.



Kirk Hallman with guest Joel Zwart.



Cece Riley with her guests—and parents—**Don Munki** and **Barbara Kolen**.



Pete DeBoer with guest **Alyssa Noe**.



Dom Bunker with an inbound Rotary Youth Exchange student.



Theresa Bernhardt with her guests **Jacqui Robinson** and **Kate Reinders**.



Ammy Seymour with one of our inbound Rotary Youth Exchange students.



Annette Jack with her guest—and husband—**John Jack**.



Rabbi Alan Alpert with his guest—and wife—**Anna Alpert**.



Euginnia Seyferth with guest **Abby Leach**.



Karen Kekelik with her guest—and husband—**Steven Kekelik**.



Meredith Smillie with one of our inbound Rotary Youth Exchange students.



An exchange of flags with our Rotary International students!



This Week's Program:

Alan Alpert's 50 Years as a Rabbi

Presenters: **Jim Fisher, Bob Scolnik, Tim Vander Harr, Rabbi Alan Alpert**

Moderated by: **Lisa Tyler**

RIM Reporter:
Sue Samaniego



Our guest speakers: **Tim Vander Harr, Bob Scolnik, and Jim Fisher.**



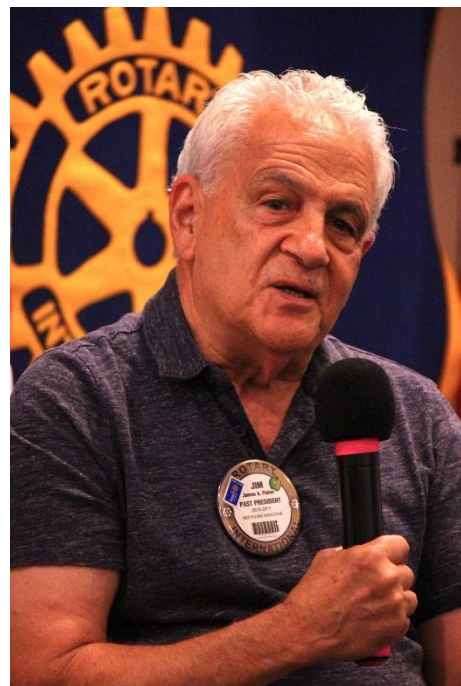
Rabbi Alan Alpert and his wife of 51 years Anna came to Muskegon in 1976, when he was installed as Rabbi of Congregation B'nai Isreal Muskegon. He served in that role until June 2026. **Rabbi Alan** and Anna will be moving to Novi to be closer to family. Rabbi **Rachel VanDyke**, recently ordained, has been installed to take over the congregation.

President-Elect **Lisa Tyler** moderated a panel discussion on the impact that **Rabbi Alpert** has had in his 50 years in Muskegon. The panel included **Jim Fisher, Bob Scolnik**, and retired minister **Tim Vander Haar**.



Lisa Tyler introduces our guest speakers and panel.

Question 1: What is your relationship with Rabbi Alpert?



Jim Fisher speaks about his friendship with **Rabbi Alan Alpert** and his impact on the local Jewish congregation and the Muskegon community.

Jim Fisher: Jackie and I moved to Muskegon in 1975, just before he and Anna came to Muskegon in 1976. We have been friends ever since. We raised our kids together. We have even raised some of our grandchildren together. When they lost their daughter, I helped with the celebration of her life. I studied for and completed my adult Bar Mitzvah at 57. I served three terms as president of the Congregation B'nai Israel. In 2100, I collaborated with Rabbi Alpert on a trip to Israel for several people in Muskegon. We will continue to be friends.



Our guest speaker panel.

Bob Scolnik: When they came to Muskegon, I was probably the bottom of the hierarchy at Congregation B’Nai Israel. At that time, I lived in Grand Haven. You could say Merle and I grew up with the Alpersts.

Merle taught Sunday School, and I was president of the congregation for 5 year. **Rabbi Alpert** presided over my daughter’s Bat Mitzvah and wedding, and services for my mother and my wife.

He was always supportive – a close friend, like a family member. Bob shares photos



1981 when they had helped two Russian families resettle in Muskegon.



Bob’s 40th birthday.



10/31/2018 of flowers placed in an outpouring of community support after some antisemitic graffiti was found.



2025 of **Rabbi Alan** and Anna when they received the Patricia B. Johnson Award from the Community Foundation for Muskegon County.



Tim Vander Harr speaks about his relationship with **Rabbi Alan Alpert** and the lasting impact he has made on the Muskegon community.

Tim Vander Haar: The first call I received to congratulate me on being installed as Minister at First Congregations Church came from Rabbi Alpert. I came straight out of seminary in 1980.

We had kids in Mona Shores together. My daughter took dance classes with Anna. **Rabbi Alpert** has been a part of many efforts to create understanding and dialogue between different faiths. He took confirmation class kids to the synagogue to worship; and we held a Seiter dinner on Maundy Thursday in our church. Rabbi Alpert helped with connections, including an introduction to Sylvia Kauffman. This helped the Jewish Christian Dialogue committee become a part of the Kauffman Interfaith Institute at GVSU. He also started the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, now the Anderson Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies.

Question 2: What has Rabbi Alpert's impact been on the Jewish Community?

Jim Fisher: I attended a national Zoom about small Jewish congregations. At Congregation B'nai Isreal Muskegon, all of the characteristics of successful small congregations are present because of Rabbi Alpert and Anna. We are small but mighty.

Bob Scolnik: Our congregation has gotten very small. So many children leave for college and don't come back. Many members of the congregation had small businesses. Without **Rabbi Alpert**, our

congregation would have disappeared. I am very happy **Rabbi Rachel VanDyke** has stepped up.

Question 3: What has Rabbi Alpert's impact been on the Muskegon community at large?

Tim Vander Haar: He was instrumental in the Jewish-Christian faith dialog and the Institute for healing racism. He has gone out of his way to welcome and get to know people in all segments of the religious community. He was able to keep everyone productively working together, talking instead of yelling.



Rabbi Alan Alpert reflects on his years serving the Muskegon community.

Rabbi Alan Alpert: Anna and I came from Santa Monica, CA. When they first arrived, people kept saying, "why did you come *here*?" We said, "It seems to be a very nice community." We have wonderful clergy in all denominations in Muskegon. Tim is modest. He is brilliant, a great speaker, and he writes well, and I told that congregation that they needed him. I've known so many great clergy: John Jack at Central Lutheran Church, Moses Jones, John Lindsey, so many. When Sylvia Kaffman came to speak, we needed a place to hold it.

We set it up at Central United Methodist Church but then got a call saying the boiler was not working so they couldn't host it. We called Mount Zion Church of Christ, but their boiler wasn't working. We called St. Mary's and they said that their boiler was working so we were welcome to hold the event there. We all worked together to make it happen. Watch Muskegon Go – we all work together most of the time.

When a man murdered several people at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, we had something here. When I went out to my car, there was a handmade paper stuck on it. I opened it up dreading what it might say. It said, "Muskegon loves it's Jewish friends."

There are so many stories. Everyone accepted us when we got here. That's what made this happen. The legacy **Rabbi Alan** and Anna Alpert leave behind in Muskegon will continue to impact future generations.

We wish them the best as they transition to the next chapter of their life.



Rabbi Alan Alpert, his wife **Anna Alpert**, and Rotary President **Roger Morgenstern**.



A standing ovation for Rabbi Alan Alpert.

Announcements



President **Roger Morgenstern** shares a bevy of announcements: **Next week's meeting is at The Delta!** Thank you to everyone who helped place the American flags along Seaway Drive, with another display planned for Labor Day. The next **Rotary ReWine** meeting will be held Thursday, July 16, at **Wonderland Distilling**. Volunteers are also invited to participate in the **Adopt-A-Highway** cleanup on Saturday, July 11. President-Elect **Lisa Tyler** will lead next week's meeting while President Roger is away.



Celebrate Muskegon Lake's Remarkable Comeback.

One Day. Two Great Events.

AUGUST 15, 2026

Sun, Fun, and a Lake Restored

9 AM – 2 PM

Celebrate Muskegon Lake's comeback with family fun, food, activities, and waterfront adventures.

📍 Grand Trunk Pavilion

Back to the Lake: An 80s Celebration

7 PM – 10 PM

Celebrate the decade when restoration began, with an 80s-themed night of music, dancing, food and fun!

📍 S.S. Milwaukee Clipper



📱 [BIT.LY/MUSKEGONLAKECELEBRATION](https://bit.ly/MuskegonLakeCelebration)

Click the link below for additional information

<https://bit.ly/MuskegonLakeCelebration>

ReWine Meeting Schedule

5:00pm social time - meeting starts at 5:15pm

Thursday, July 16 at Wonderland Distilling, 1989 Lakeshore Dr.

Thursday August 6 at Bistro at the Shoreline Inn, 750 Terrace Point Blvd.

Thursday August 20 at Motu Wine Bar 1208 8th St.

RSVP by Wednesday at 5pm prior to each meeting by contacting Kaytie Drake at kaytieely@aol.com

(Total # attending including guests)

Adopt-A-Highway Program Looking for Volunteers

ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY



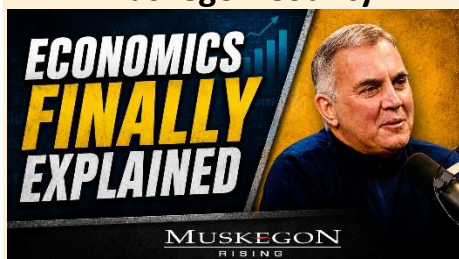
Our next pickup for the Muskegon Rotary stretch of highway on I-96 will be on Saturday, July 11.

Volunteers will meet promptly at 7:30am for a short safety talk, then head out on the road to pick trash. (We will finish no later than 10am, sooner if we get a lot of help 😊).

I am also looking for two drivers to drive along with the volunteers who are picking trash. If you can help, please contact Esther Ricco, estherricco@hotmail.com or 616-283-1810 and she can provide you with details.

Be a part of keeping our adopted stretch clean and taking action to protect our environment!

Muskegon Rising Podcast S3E13: Matt Farrar – Muskegon County



In the latest episode of the Muskegon Rising Podcast, host DJ Hilson welcomes Matt Farrar, Muskegon County's Deputy County Administrator, for a conversation on the economic forces shaping our community.

Matt breaks down tariffs, interest rates, and economic indicators in straightforward terms, then applies that lens to what's happening locally: continued housing demand, private capital ready to invest, and a manufacturing sector navigating some uncertainty. He also shares why steady, informed economic development benefits the entire county, from the city center out to the townships.

Watch: <https://youtu.be/6xpji1S1xLc?si=vXj2Vlli0XeY7rXx>

Listen: <https://www.buzzsprout.com/2269729/episodes/19440851-matt-farrar-muskegon-county>

[CLICK HERE FOR ALL PODCASTS](#)

This week's Birthday Slide



RIM Reporting Team

Editors: Susan Besteman,
Jackie Farrar, and Ginny Sprague

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

Photographers: Wyatt Huggett,
Brock Johnson, and Emily
Morgenstern



Rotary in Action Heidi Sytsema



Discover why Heidi Sytsema, Vice President of Development and Donor Services at the Community Foundation for Muskegon County, values her membership in the Muskegon Rotary Club.

In this inspiring interview, Heidi shares her journey from CPA to community philanthropy, discusses the importance of building permanent resources for education, literacy, housing, justice, and equity, and explains how Rotary's diverse membership creates meaningful connections and opportunities for service.

Learn how the Muskegon Rotary Club brings together community leaders who are passionate about making a lasting difference in Muskegon County and around the world.

Watch the full video [here](#)



Aquastar Cruise Highlights

