

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

October 2, 2025

Next Meeting (October 9, 2025, 12-1:30pm) — Honey Glazed Pork Loin at the Lake House
Program Topic – Innovation Academies of Muskegon

What's Coming

October 9 – Innovation Academies

October 16 – Big Read Lakeshore

October 23 – Pioneer Resources

Upcoming Birthdays

October 11 Heidi Sytsema

October 12 Ed Hendrickson

October 12 Missy Horton

October 14 Claire Root-Benson

Caring Connections Fund



[Click this link to donate \\$10 on your birthday](#)

Greeters This Week

Mary Boyd & Mary Anne Gorman

Reflector This Week

Claire Root-Benson



RIM Reporting this Edition

Photographer – Roger Morgenstern

RIM Reporter – Ginny Sprague

RIM Editor – Susan Besteman

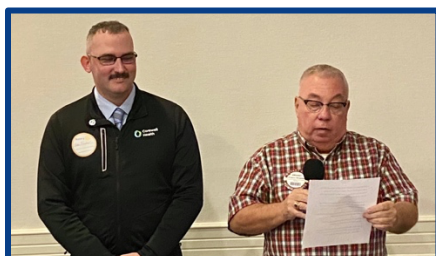


President Dave Alexander presides over the weekly meeting

Visitors & Guests



President Dave and his guest, Isabela Gonzalez



Greg Borgman with his guest and potential member, Thomas Fought

Friendly Reminder

****October 9th we are meeting back at the Lake House**



Heidi Sytsema introduces her guests, Ryan Virsik and Kathryn Peña, staff members for our speaker U.S. Representative Hillary Scholten



Kathy Hegedus, our RI District 6290 Chief Administrative Officer, introduces Assistant District Governor **Kimberly Blum** from the Allendale Club. Her duties include assisting our club with any matters involving the district

10/2/2025 Muskegon Rotary
YouTube Video Link: [Click here](#)



Karen Kekelik introduces her guest, husband and business partner, Steven Kekelik



Chad Lawie introduces his guest and wife, LeeAnn Lawie



Claire Root-Benson introduces former Muskegon High School Interact leader and now potential Rotarian, Zuri LaBrenz



Annette Jack introduces her husband, John Jack



Dwana Thompson introduces her guest and work colleague, Ann Meisch



Rachel Gorman welcomes back returning Rotarian, **Jonathan Seyferth**. Jonathan was a member when he was the Downtown Muskegon Manager several years ago



Marty Sytsema introduces this week's student guests from Whitehall High School. Accompanying seniors Hunter Parsons and Kassidy Parmley, is Assistant Principal Bobbi Oldenburg

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	Tom Palmer
Melissa Moore	Dimitri Poland
Arlen-Dean Gaddy	Lisa Kraus
Sarah Rinsema-Sybenga	

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



CAUGHT ON RIM'S CAMERA:

Heidi Sytsema has a pretty quick...and clear...reaction to **President Dave's** comment from the audience, saying "there's a future Club President." Give it time, Heidi, **President Dave** said "no" for a long time too!

RIM Reporting Team

Co-Editors: Susan Besteman
 Jackie Farrar, & Ginny Sprague
 Reporters: Kathy Moore, Roger Morgenstern, Meredith Smillie, & Sue Samaniego
 Photographers: Mark Alpher, Wyatt Huggett, & Roger Morgenstern

Heidi Sytsema introduces our speaker



This Week's Program:



Presenter: Congresswoman
Hillary Scholten
Introduced by: **Heidi Sytsema**
RIM Reporter: **Ginny Sprague**



Opening her remarks with humor, Representative Scholten asked, "Since there is not much happening in Washington this week, what will I talk about?" While she wished the House was in session so that members could continue working for the people, she values her community time to meet with her constituents. She noted that the spirit and values of Rotary serve as a

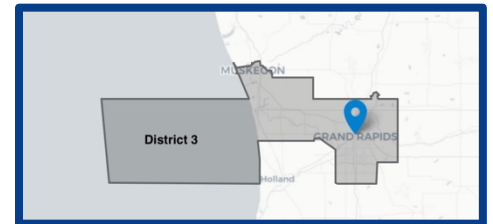
good example of what is needed in Washington now.

Congresswoman Scholten then introduced herself to the audience, telling them she was born and raised in West Michigan. Her parents were exemplars of community service, which led her to pursue a degree in sociology and a career as a social worker, focusing on issues of housing and homelessness. She went on to earn a *Juris Doctor* degree from the University of Maryland's Thurgood Marshall School of Law. She clerked for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, followed by work in the Department of Justice through the Attorney General's Honor Program under the Obama administration.

Returning to West Michigan in 2017, Ms. Scholten first ran for office in 2020 but was unsuccessful. In 2022, she was elected to office as the Representative for Michigan's Third District; she is the first woman to hold this position and was re-elected to the House of Representatives in 2024. Representative Scholten serves on the Transportation and Infrastructure subcommittees on Aviation, Water Resources and Environment, and Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation. Additionally, she serves on the Small Business subcommittees on Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Workforce Development, Contracting and Infrastructure, Rural Development, Energy, and Supply Chains. She chose to serve on this committee because it addresses the diverse needs of her

District and the 99% of businesses in West Michigan that fall under the mantle of small businesses.

The Congresswoman serves as the Vice Ranking Member on Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee and the Ranking Member on the Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Workforce Development Subcommittee. Ms. Scholten was elated to attend the ceremonial delisting of Muskegon Lake and celebrate the return of the lake to its "... full and beautiful purpose," highlighting the years of work that demonstrate what we can accomplish when we work together.



Despite the deep divides in Congress, Representative Scholten stated that she is committed to open dialogue. She joined every bipartisan group in Congress, including the Problem Solvers Caucus, Third Way, and No Labels organizations that bring people together across party lines, stating, "Partnerships for the common good will show us the way."

Representative Scholten strongly disagrees that violence is the answer to our problems. She closed her remarks by noting that Rotary shows us the way—service above self-interest, dialogue versus division, and purpose over politics.

Questions from the Audience

Ms. Scholten opened the rest of her time for questions from our Rotary audience. Four Muskegon Rotarians had questions; the first question came from **Kevin Donovan**, who had a question about Congress' inability to pass a budget on time. The following questions came from **Karen Kekelik**, who asked about the loopholes in the 2024 farm bill regarding the proliferation of intoxicating hemp products, and **Marcia Hovey-Wright** asked a question about why the government cannot keep operating under the current budget while Congress is trying to adopt a budget for the next fiscal year. The final question came from **Michelle Gravlin**, who asked about addressing the financial impacts on rural hospitals, Trinity Health Muskegon, and Trinity Health across Michigan. Representative Scholten answered these questions by reviewing the Democratic Party's positions on the budget impasse and the work to bridge the gap with the Republican Party's positions to reach a consensus on the budget.

Lend your voice to a Livability Lab 6.0 coming in February 2026!

YOUR VOICE, YOUR IMPACT

What do you love about Muskegon County? What could be improved?

Share your voice by taking our short, anonymous survey!

Your voice helps the Lab team understand what matters most & helps shape our community's future.

LIVABILITY LAB



President Dave's Muskegon Minute:



Muskegon minute: If you followed my journalism over the years, you know that I had a thing about waterfront development on Muskegon Lake.

1. A report on an EGLE webinar on a response activity plan for Windward Pointe/Sappi. The topic was on the construction of up to 220 single-family homes to be built with a podium-style construction to mitigate underground methane contamination. Public comments are being accepted by EGLE through Oct. 21. The Zoom of the event is archived on the EGLE site.
2. On Wednesday, a formal EPA announcement of the delisting of Muskegon Lake as an Area of Concern was made at Heritage Landing. A community celebration will be announced. Good on us.
3. Muskegon City Manager Jonathan Seyferth and city staff will conduct a public information session on the Mart Dock-Fisherman's Landing project on Tuesday Oct. 21 6 p.m. at Muskegon High School auditorium.
4. Finally, both Mlive and Crane's Grand Rapids had news on court action from the lead bank on the Adelaide Pointe project loans.

Rotary In Action Joanie Smith



In this heartfelt interview, longtime Rotarian Joanie Smith shares her journey in Rotary and the importance of being a greeter—a role that ensures every member and guest is warmly welcomed and accounted for. She reflects on how greeting helped her integrate into the club and encourages new greeters to simply smile and enjoy the experience. Joanie also honors her father's Rotary legacy and describes her own service, including leadership in Youth Exchange and Interact. Her story exemplifies the Rotary spirit of "Service Above Self" and the powerful connections built through community involvement.

Watch the entire video [here](#)

Rotary ReWine October Schedule

5:00-5:15pm Social time

5:15pm Meeting start time

At Core Plaza (Vault)

October 2nd

October 16th CANCELLED

Contact Kaytie Drake at kaytieely@aol.com for more information

Announcements



President Elect Roger Morgenstern (and **Carla Flanders**) have plenty more of these posters promoting Harvest Fest. Please see them if you can help place them around the community. See elsewhere in RIM for links to volunteer, become a sponsor or buy tickets to the fun third annual event coming up Oct. 23!

Please remember, all volunteers will receive a discounted ticket (half price) for themselves and one non-Rotarian guest. If you have already signed up to volunteer THANK YOU! *All volunteers will receive a code for their discounted tickets, two weeks before the event date.*

A crisp cool temp has moved into our area this week and that's got us thinking about [Harvest Fest 2025](#)! Want to attend? Want to get involved? Want to sponsor? It's as easy as 1, 2, 3!

- 1.) Get your tickets today! Click [HERE](#) to learn more.
- 2.) Click [HERE](#) to sign up to volunteer!
- 3.) Sponsor our biggest fundraiser of the year! Learn more [HERE](#)!

Thank you!
Harvest Fest Committee

Food Trucks – Need volunteers

Arn Boezaart needs our help for the upcoming Rotary-supported food distribution trucks:
October 22 at Supper House approximately 4-6pm, and April 22, 2025 (location forthcoming).

Calling all Rotarian Leaders!

Interested in being president, explore a co-presidency or being on the board of directors, see **Dave Alexander, Roger Morgenstern, or Lisa Tyler.**

Rotary's Peacebuilders - Braver Angels Workshop



Annette Jack from the Peacebuilders Committee reminds members to sign up for the Oct. 10 Braver Angels Workshop, "Family & Politics". 1-4pm in the Wheelfish (Pyramid on the Lake) offices, 700 Terrace Point Dr, Suite 200. *This workshop is open to Rotarians and family members. It will teach participants how to preserve family bonds while staying true to their values and political beliefs.* The link for sign up is below.
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C44AFAA2CABFFC16-58686261-rotary>

Can't make this event, feel free to visit Braver Angel's website: www.BraverAngels.org/attend-a-workshop



Adopt-A-Highway Pickup Fall Report

ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY



By Esther Ricco

A big **THANK YOU** to **Cindy Maynard, John Noling, Michelle Burley, Pat Walstra, Kevin Ricco,** and two outstanding Muskegon High School Interactors—**Aaliyah Jordan** and **Tobias Melton**—for their hard work during the Muskegon Rotary Club's Adopt-A-Highway cleanup on I-96, held September 27. This dedicated team collected an impressive 61 bags of trash, which were placed roadside for MDOT to pick up and dispose of properly.

We need more volunteers for future cleanups! If you're ready to put *Service Above Self* into action, please contact Esther Ricco at riccoe@gvsu.edu to join the list for upcoming pickups. Not up for walking the roadside? No problem—drivers are always needed too! Your help makes a difference.



Muskegon Rising Podcast S2E39: Angelita Valdez - Servicios de Esperanza



In the latest episode of the Muskegon Rising Podcast, we feature Angelita Valdez, founder of Servicios de Esperanza (Services of Hope). For nearly two decades she has served Muskegon as a therapist and for 12 years has led her bilingual, CARF-accredited clinic.

She shares her journey, the importance of reducing stigma around mental health, and the wide range of services her team provides including play and art therapy, EMDR, substance use counseling, and telehealth options.

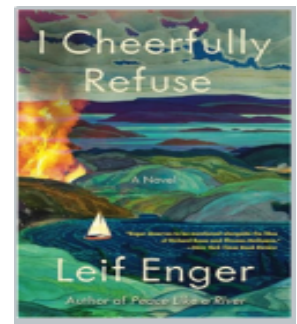
Listen to how Servicios de Esperanza is meeting people where they are and reminding us that mental health is for everyone.

Listen here:

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/2269729/episodes/17935213-angelita-valdez-servicios-de-esperanza>

[CLICK HERE FOR ALL PODCASTS](#)

The Big Read Muskegon



Muskegon Community College's English Honors Students will be hosting a book discussion on "I Cheerfully Refuse" for Rotarians on October 29th, 6:30 - 8 PM at MCC is tentative (confirming with MCC). Check out your book at MADL, Hackley, or White Lake libraries so you can get in on the discussion!

Upcoming Big Read programs:

* October 4th, 12 - 4 PM: Big Read Kick-Off at Mart Dock—FREE Family Fun

* October 8th, 6 - 8 PM: Cruisin' (on the Aquastar) with MADL (Registration required, with MADL card)

* November 13th, 6 - 8 PM: Leif Enger Author Talk (at MCC)

Second Muskegon Microforest – Volunteers Needed!

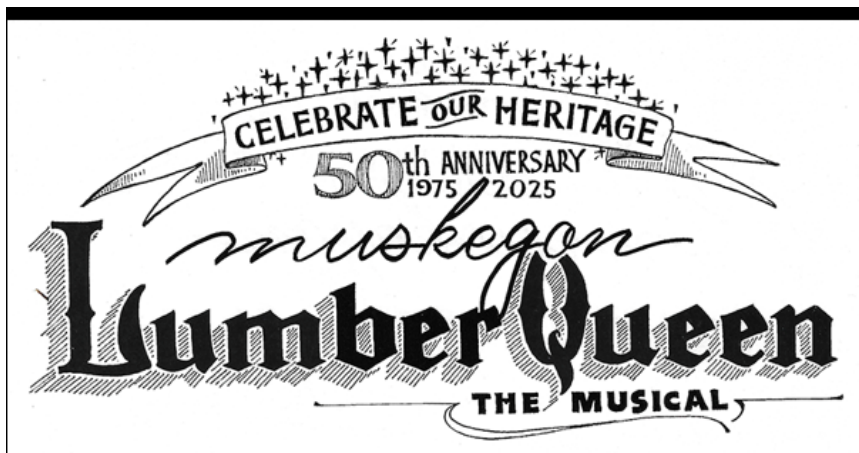


This second Muskegon microforest is being built at the Muskegon Lake Nature Preserve at 2496 Lake Ave, North Muskegon, MI 49445. Rotarians and Interactors are encouraged to attend and help on Saturday, October 18th from 9am until noon to lay down cardboard and spread woodchips.

Muskegon: Lumber Queen Musical a Roaring Success!

Congratulations to Director (and Rotarian) **Mike Vogas** on the roaring success bringing back a community treasure! Many congratulations also to the cast and crew (many fellow Rotarians) on your top-notch performances!

Vogas wrote, “Half a century ago, Muskegon: Lumber Queen was written to celebrate the history and spirit of the community that grew from the lumber era of the 1880s. Its blend of melodrama, music, and humor captured the hearts of local audiences, making it a cherished part of Muskegon’s cultural identity. As the 50th anniversary approached, a dedicated group of community leaders, artists, and theater



enthusiasts recognized the importance of reviving this work for a new generation. Through months of research, adaptation, and rehearsal, they carefully updated the script and score while preserving the original intent—ensuring that both the legacy of the play’s creators and the authenticity of Muskegon’s history shine through once again.



Perhaps most importantly, the 50th anniversary production offers younger generations a vivid reminder of the grit, ingenuity, and perseverance that built Muskegon. Through its characters and storytelling, the play encourages audiences to reflect on the sacrifices and determination of those who came before, while inspiring respect for the community’s enduring heritage. By reliving this story on stage, we not only honor the past but also pass forward a legacy of resilience, creativity, and civic spirit. Muskegon: Lumber Queen thus continues to be both a mirror of history and a gift to the future.”