The RIM Newsletter

Rotary InMotion

Rotary Club Of Muskegon

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 29, 2026

Next Meeting November 5, 2026 – Noon-1:15pm Meatloaf at the Delta
Program: AI History, Benefits, Guardrails, & Ethical Considerations

What's Coming

November 5—AI: History, Benefits, & Ethical Considerations
November 12—Chispa

Upcoming Birthdays

Nov 5	Bill Erickson
Nov 5	Richard Francisco
Nov 7	Kathleen Evans
Nov 9	David Ramos
Nov 10	Ed Hunt
Nov 11	Rich Kramer
Nov 11	Mike Vogas

Caring Connections Fund

Click here to donate

Stage Manager This Week

Theresa Bernhardt

Greeter This Week

Jane Clingman-Scott



Reflector This Week

Kathy Moore (Wonderful reflection about focusing on the positives and alleviating stress.)

RIM Reporting this Edition

Photographer – Emily Medendorp
RIM Reporter – Ginny Sprague
RIM Editor – Susan Besteman



President Roger Morgenstern begins the meeting as usual with a Tom Petty song.

Muskegon Rotary Oct. 29th YouTube Video:
Click Here

Muskegon Rotary Board

President: Roger Morgenstern
President-Elect: Lisa Tyler
President Nominees: Arlen Dean-Gaddy and Sarah Rinsema-Sybenga
Past President: Dave Alexander
Treasurer: Kim Taylor
Secretary: Joanie Smith

Directors:

Kelli DeVos	Dimitri Poland
Martha Fohlbrook	Esther Ricco
Lisa Kraus	Samantha Scott
Melissa Moore	John Selmon

Club Coordinator: Kim Boersema

Please email Club Board Members through this link:

Harvest Fest a Success!

See page 5

Visitors and Guests



Melissa Horton with guest Kirk Bunke, Site Manager for the Muskegon Heritage Museum of Business and Industry.



Jason Piasecki introduces Sterling Raehtz (CEO of BLU Muskegon)



Melissa Moore introduces Jessica Brown, the new Executive Director of Pathfinders of Muskegon.



Lisa Kraus with guest Marni Kirby, owner of SerenitySleep Solutions.



Ed Ryan, retired banker is the guest of **Eric Seifert.**



Denise Sabo with her guest, Katrina Walker who is transitioning as an educational consultant.



Sue Samaniego introduces MCC's Rotaract present and future Rotaract leadership (from right): Tina Wallace (current MCC Rotaract President), Kaitlin Bruno (current VP), Jonathan Reuter (current Secretary), and Keagan Decker (new member).



Fruitport High School is in the house! School Counselor Marissa Higgs with senior students Landon McMullen and Emily Robinson.



President-Elect Lisa Tyler introduces this week's program.

This Week's Program:

Webb Chemical Services Corporation and Trace Analytical Laboratories, Inc.

Speaker: Brad Hilleary
Introduced by: **Lisa Tyler**
RIM Reporter: **Ginny Sprague**

Lisa Tyler's heart-felt introduction for today's speaker, Brad Hilleary, showcased the importance of family, service, commitment, and his dedication to the Muskegon community. These themes echo throughout his presentation on two Muskegon industries, Webb Chemical Services Corporation and later in the program, Trace Analytical Laboratories, Inc.



Taking his Rotary audience back to 1963, Brad told the story of entrepreneur Bill Barger, who worked for one of the many chemical companies here in the Muskegon area. Frustrated by Chicago chemical distributors' service, he purchased a

RIM Reporting Team

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

warehouse in downtown Muskegon near Weber Lumber and a railroad line. Dressed in a suit and tie, he began his mornings with sales calls to the chemical companies with whom he had a relationship and took orders. Back at the warehouse, he would remove his suit and tie and put on overalls to fill and deliver that morning's orders. Returning home in the evening, he and his wife would handwrite invoices for the day's orders.

During Brad's business-related travels around the country, he would often hear, "That Mr. Webb was a great guy." However, there never was a Mr. Webb. The company's name comes from the Barger family names: owner Will, his wife Eve, daughter, Betsy, and son Bill.

Webb Chemical continued to grow into the mid-sixties. Bill and his wife hired a driver for deliveries and wanted to hire a sales rep, so they offered a job to a Standard Oil of Ohio sales rep whose territory included Muskegon. At the same time, Standard Oil was going to transfer the rep from Cleveland to New York City. A small-town guy at heart, Robert Hilleary accepted Bill Barger's job offer and in 1968, he and his wife, Bobbie, who was expecting Brad, moved to North Muskegon.

A few years later, the untimely death of Bill Barger's younger brother convinced him he needed to retire. Owner Bill Barger told Robert Hilleary that he was going to sell him the company. Hilleary approached one of his sales contacts at Ott Story, William White, and after several conversations they decided to go into business together in the early 1970s. At this time, the company had also outgrown its downtown Muskegon location, and moved the company to Muskegon Heights, Webb's current location.

In June 1981, a tragic plane accident occurred when a group of Board members from Mercy Hospital, including Bill White, were going to fly to Farmington, and everyone on board was killed. Overnight, Brad's father became the sole owner of the company due to a contractual buyout agreement. Fast forward another ten years, and Brad has graduated from college, worked in Detroit, Flint, and now at Aerotek in Grand Rapids when his father approached him about joining him at Webb Chemical Services. Unsure of his chemistry knowledge, Brad declined, but his father persuaded him that he could learn the chemistry, so Brad joined the company in 1993 as a salesman.

Brad next shared what Webb Chemical Services does. He stressed that Webb is not a manufacturer but rather is an industrial distributer. The company brings in bulk commodity chemicals from around the world but mainly the United States, then repackages the chemicals into smaller quantities, e.g., a 55-gallon drum or a tanker, which holds three to seven thousand gallons.

Brad stated, "Webb Chemical exists to deliver value to its four "Cs": its customers, coworkers, company, and community. This commitment drives every decision they make. From the beginning, the company has focused on service, and they strive to differentiate themselves by providing the best service experience. His next slide listed company facts and certifications they hold. Brad noted that their newest location, opening January 1, 2027, in Cleveland, Ohio, brings the company full circle.

The FSSC 22000 is a food safety certification including kosher designation. CDN is a member organization of independent chemical distribution companies, first formed in 1998 to address Y2K concerns, and now focuses on buying and industry best practices.



Sustainability is a current buzzword that recognizes the importance of best practices to protect workers, the environment, and sustainable procurement of goods and services. Webb is proud of their EcoVadis certification, which ranges from Bronze to Platinum. The company completes a questionnaire, and the organization comes in to evaluate the facility and practices. Webb's first rating last year was Bronze, and Brad learned this morning that their re-certification earned a Silver level.

Brad next spoke about the values that define how Webb Chemical approaches all decisions. In addition to results, integrity, and safety, which are values most organizations embrace, Webb is also guided by family, fun, and relationships, for not just the Webb family but all the families of those 140 plus employees. We want employees to feel rewarded, grow, and help their own families.



Brad noted that Webb Chemical is an asset-heavy distribution company located on Sherman Boulevard just west of Getty. The company property spans 20 acres in Muskegon Heights. Highlighting some of the company's assets, Brad listed 58 tankers, 26 delivery tractors, 24 box tractors, 46 bulk storage tanks, and 3,000 feet of rail siding including 36 railcars and 550 feet of rail siding at the Strongsville location. They have their own tanker washout and drying facilities, on-site vehicle maintenance, packaging buildings, and three certified truck scales.

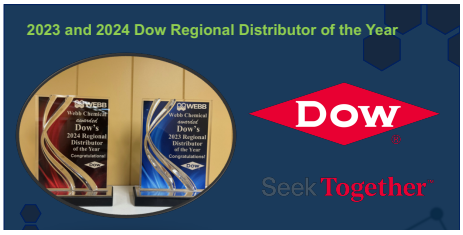
They offer annual Open House tours for their neighbors but decided to wait until next fall when several capital projects will be completed including a new Training Center. Their next Open House will be in fall 2027, and Brad invited the audience to attend.

Sharing a photo of the Muskegon facility, Brad discussed acquiring neighboring properties to expand their production capabilities. Currently, they are considering adding another available property. He pointed out the solar panels on the roofs of many of the buildings, which help reduce energy costs. He also showed photos of the Fort Wayne, Indiana and Strongsville, Ohio facilities, noting the presence or lack of rail access and bulk storage tanks.

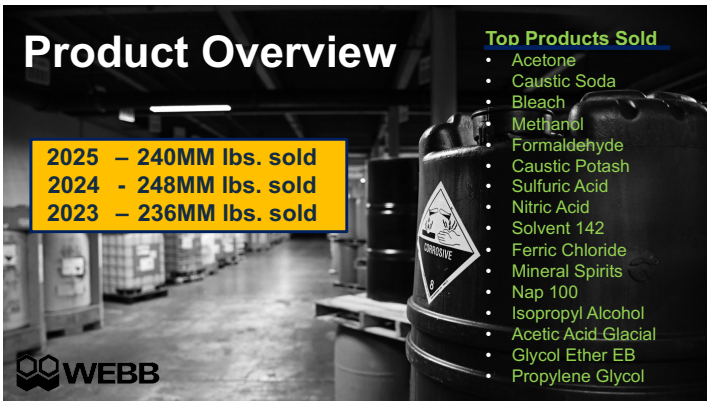


Brad noted that larger corporations like Howmet will buy directly from the manufacturer when practical, but a distribution company like Webb Chemical Services offers advantages. They fill the gap between the supplier and the customer by allowing smaller chemical purchases and more flexible payment terms. Webb is also proud of their 98% on time delivery record. Each year during strategic planning, they resolve to continue their distributor focus and improve what they do. The next slide showed their top-selling products among the 700 they produce. He pointed out the importance of volume sales for commodities. The company's goal for 2027 is 265 million pounds.

Historically, larger chemical companies used larger, nationwide companies as distributors. However, a few years ago, Dow Chemical took Webb on as a distributor. Shortly afterwards, Webb was recognized as Dow Regional Distributor of the Year in 2023 and 2024. Brad stated, "We are pretty proud of that!"



During strategic planning in 2016, they recognized the need for more lab capabilities. Given the choices available to either buy or build a lab, they decided to build a lab on site. Sharing an anecdotal story with his Rotary audience, Brad encountered Dr. Bill Schroeder, co-owner of Trace Analytical Labs, in the bar downstairs in the Frauenthal. Dr. Schroeder told him that he and his partner were selling Trace Labs. After offering his congratulations, Brad told him that Webb Chemical had considered buying Trace Labs, and then they parted ways for the evening.
Early the next morning, Bill called Brad, asked if he was serious about purchasing their company because he and his partner, "Hate the guy we are going to sell our company to."
Inviting him to lunch that afternoon, Brad, Bill, and his partner had a serious discussion. Fast forward three months, and in 2016, Webb Chemical Service Corporation purchased Trace Analytical Laboratories. Today, the company is seven times larger than it was when they purchased it in 2016.



Spotlight Video

Ken James



Ken James has been a member of the Muskegon Rotary Club for four years, but his awareness of Rotary began much earlier seeing the Rotary name on signs welcoming travelers to small communities. Today, as a leader at Muskegon Community College, he brings Rotary's values directly into his work with people throughout the community. For Ken, one part of the Four-Way Test stands out: "Will it build goodwill and better friendships?" He approaches his work by assuming positive intent, meeting people where they are, and making sure they feel welcomed and included. For Ken, success is measured in connection—when someone knows they belong, he knows he has done his job.

Watch the video here!

Announcements

Microforest





36 Charles Hackley Middle School 7th and 8th grade students learned a lot on their recent field trip to the Muskegon Lake Nature Preserve Microforest which our club helps to sponsor. Plus, they had fun! Students helped expand the MLNP Microforest to a new area with laying cardboard and bark chips. They also participated in a terrific one-hour environmental lesson featuring a fascinating debrief writing piece using the Freedom Writers Curriculum.
Their excellent work ethic and great spirit was appreciated by all. These young people belong in a Middle School Rotary Interact club! Let's work on that!



More pictures on page 10

Harvest Fest

We're still crunching the numbers, but at first blush, last week's Harvest Fest was a great success! Not only did everyone enjoy themselves, but we also raised money for our Foundation and the Baker College students. The culinary passport and students strolling with amazing cannoli's made for more interaction with these talented young chefs. Many thanks for donations to the four Beverage Bundle raffles which were a success.

Harvest Fest 2026 Picture Book—CLICK HERE



Here's a great way to remember this year's Harvest Fest and support the Muskegon Rotary Foundation too! We have a limited number of these awesome Harvest Fest shirts. They are long sleeve and all size XL. The cost is $25 each. Please pay in cash or checks made out to the *Muskegon Rotary Foundation*.
See **Carla Flanders** or **Roger Morgenstern** if you'd like one!!



Kids' Food Basket

Kids Food Basket -- Volunteer Noon

Tennille Woodward is looking for more volunteers for our monthly Kids' Food Basket commitment. See Tennille if you are available to help. Our schedule is the 3rd Monday of every month—ten people needed each time.



Tennille Woodward & **Mary Boyd** (pictured above) at October's Kids' Food Basket with the photographer, **Past President Dave Alexander**.

Veteran's Day Flags



Volunteers needed to help put flags up on Seaway Drive for Veterans' Day on November 11th. Click here to email **President Roger Morgenstern** to help.

Brave Rotarians Contest

Following our Harvest Fest Fundraiser, we're kicking off the fall Brave Rotarians Contest! Help us celebrate **President Roger Morgenstern's** impact by participating in this next Brave Rotarian contest. To participate, make a $100 gift to fulfill your suggested contribution to The Rotary Foundation. Your entry could win you a Paul Harris Fellow Award (equivalent of $1000)! Questions or want to sign up? Contact **Meredith Smillie** at meredithasmillie@gmail.com or call her.



Pop Cans Needed

Tennille Woodward and **Doug Wood** need your pop cans for the Mona Shores Middle School Interact Club from Nov. 16-20th.





Big Read Lakeshore

Nancy McCarthy reminded all who are participating in the Big Read Lakeshore (reading The Circle or its sequel, The Every) of some extra opportunities:

**Thursday, Nov 5th at 6:30pm at MCC in room 1006–Discussion with MCC Honor Students

**Monday, Nov 9th –Faculty presentation on The Circle

**Tuesday, Nov 17th at 7pm—Author talks at the Frauenthal.

See Nancy or **Sarah Rinsema-Sybenga** if you would like a copy of the book to borrow or have further questions.

ReWine Meeting Schedule

5:00 p.m. Social Time
Meeting starts 5:15 p.m.

Thursday, November 5th Lake Effect Bistro & Lounge (Shoreline Inn)
750 Terrace Point Dr., Muskegon

Thursday, November 19th
Muskegon Museum of Art, 315 West Clay Avenue, Muskegon

Thursday, December 3rd Lake Effect Bistro & Lounge (Shoreline Inn)

Thursday, December 17th
MOTU Lakeshore Wine Bar
1208 8th St, Muskegon

RSVP by Wednesday at 5pm prior to each meeting by contacting Kaytie Drake at kaytieely@aol.com
Total # attending, including guests

Bring Everyone You Know to Hackley Library Nov. 7th 10:30-11:30am!





Get ready to travel the world without leaving Muskegon!

Our Rotary Youth Exchange students are teaming up with Hackley Public Library for **Travel Through Stories**, a fun and interactive cultural experience for children and families! Our students from around the globe will share pieces of their home countries through storytelling, songs, dances, crafts, cultural demonstrations, and maybe even a few martial arts moves!

Event Details:

- Saturday, November 7, 2026
- 10:30–11:30 AM
- Hackley Public Library, Upstairs in the Children's Library
- Designed for grades K–3, but everyone is welcome!

Here's where we could really use your help! Our exchange students have put a lot of time, creativity, and effort into planning activities that share their cultures with our community. We want to make sure they have a wonderful turnout of little explorers ready to learn, participate, and have fun! **The more kids who attend, the more fun and rewarding this experience will be for our students!** Please help us spread the word to your friends, family, neighbors, teachers, and anyone you know with young children. Sharing the event on social media or personally inviting a family can make a big difference! And while this event is designed with our youngest learners in mind, **you certainly don't need to bring a child to enjoy it!** We'd love to see fellow Rotarians stop by to experience the activities, learn about different cultures, and cheer on our incredible exchange students. It's also a wonderful opportunity to see the impact of Rotary Youth Exchange firsthand.

A special thank-you to Hackley Public Library for partnering with us and helping make this experience possible. Let's help our students fill the library with curious minds, smiling faces, and a whole lot of international friendship! Thank you for always supporting our students and the Youth Exchange program!
Yours in Rotary, **Dom Bunker**

Interact Insider

Mona Shores Interact 2nd Annual Trunk-or-Treat





This week, MSHS Interact hosted our 2nd Annual Trunk-or-Treat, a tremendous community gathering put together by our Interact President, Selah Bradfield. Selah brought together over 20 clubs, teams, and local businesses for an evening of safe community fun. She also coordinated with Love, Inc. to collect food donations for the coming holiday season. All told, well over 500 people came out to enjoy a wonderful evening. It was a true credit to Selah's leadership, vision, and service-oriented heart.



































Muskegon Rising Podcast



S3E22: Veronica Campbell - USS Silversides Museum

In the latest episode of the Muskegon Rising Podcast, host Aaron Maike welcomes Veronica Campbell, Executive Director of the USS Silversides Museum, for a look at one of our community's most significant historic assets and the work underway to secure its future.

The Silversides is currently away from Muskegon for extensive preservation work, a major investment in keeping a national treasure intact for generations to come. Veronica shares what crews are learning during the refit, including a rediscovered connection to the USS Trigger, and explains why the museum's mission reaches well beyond preservation.

The museum is expanding educational programming, building more immersive exhibits, and connecting young people with engineering, advanced manufacturing, and the skilled trades. It's a clear example of how a piece of American history can help develop the next generation of Muskegon's workforce and leaders.

Listen: https://www.buzzsprout.com/2269729/episodes/20012522

Watch: https://youtu.be/tJ_NsrvTPKM?si=VxvCz_rqoenV5zr0

Muskegon Rising

Honduras Trip – Mar. 13th



Interested in learning more about the Rotary's Library Build Project with Chispa in Honduras March 13-20th? Trip details/registration can be found here: https://www.chispaproject.org/lago You have a chance to hear from Sara Brakhane, Chispa's Director, on Oct 20th at 6 PM for a zoom call as she reviews the upcoming trip and answers your questions. Sara will also be Muskegon Rotary's program speaker on November 12th.

Link to Oct 20th virtual meeting: meet.google.com/oqj-tksi-tah
Deadline to register for the Honduras trip is Nov 30th. Questions? Talk with **Linda Juarez**, **Susan Crain**, or **Sarah Rinsema-Sybenga.**

El Salvador Trip – March 31st



Our Club is looking for Rotarians and Interact students to attend two service trips: Honduras from March 13-20 and El Salvador from March 31-April 8. Your Club's board has approved contributing $500 for any Rotarians attending their first overseas trip, as well as $500 for any Interactors wanting to go. Please spread the word! For more information, see **Sarah Rinsema-Sybenga** about Honduras or **Esther Ricco** about El Salvador.

Rotary
PEOPLE OF ACTION







Charles Hackley Middle School Microforest Field Trip

October 24, 2026



















