

# 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

August 29, 2024

**Next Meeting (September 5, 2024, 12-1:30pm) — Lemon Pepper Chicken Buffett - at the Lake House**  
**Program Topic – New Environment Committee**

## What's Coming

September 5 – New Environment Committee

## Upcoming Birthdays

September 5 Darwin Smith  
September 6 Kim Keessen  
September 6 John Snider

## Caring Connections Fund

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



## Greeter This Week

Doug Brown  
Mallory Meston

## August Reflectors

Bill Loxterman August 29

## RIM Reporting this Edition

Photographer – Roger Morgenstern  
RIM Reporter – Roger Morgenstern  
RIM Editor – Jackie Farrar



President Elect **Dave Alexander** got some Rotary meeting practice this week, filling in for President Tim who's enjoying time with friends and family Up North for the Labor Day holiday. Dave gave us a sneak peek of some of his plans for his year, which begins next July 1, including playing classic rock music to kick off the meetings and sharing a "Muskegon Minute" about something cool going on in town. This week, the song was "Eye of the Tiger" and the Muskegon Minute was on West Michigan Trails, an organization which helps promote and expand the incredible bicycle/pedestrian trails across our region.



Rotary's morning crew, **John Noling**, and pictured above, **Eric Seifert & Sue Noling** honored the workers who built this great country with their labor. The evening crew of **Carim Calkins, Cindy Maynard, & Bob Irwin** also helped place the 35 flags and pick up trash between Southern & Hackley Aves.

## VISITORS & GUESTS



**Melissa Moore** introduces her guest and work colleague, **Jenna Lakos**.



**Lisa Kraus** introduces her guest **Emma McClintok**.



**Rita Caviness** introduces her guest **Teresa Fetterley**.



**Jeremy Garcia** and his guest **Gary Hall**.



**Andrea Riegler** introduces her guest **Dee Hatcher**.



**Greg Pittman** and his guest and work colleague **Lee Fonstein**.

## Paul Harris Award



**Arlen-Dean Gaddy** introduces his guest and work colleague **Aaron Mead**.



**Parker Aerts** introduces his guest and work colleague **Ira Williams**.

Looked like **Frank Peterson** brought his entire WheelFish Group office with him as part of this week's presentation. (((top photo))) His colleagues included, from left, Kevin Murphy, Joe Keck and Ann Pendery. Also attending (below photos) were company founders **Brad Playford** and his wife **Kathleen Playford**. Several of Frank's colleagues also won the 50/50 drawing so it was a banner day!



**Meredith Smillie** shares the significance of receiving a Paul Harris Fellowship from our Club.



**Past President Jim Fisher** introduces our newest Paul Harris Fellow.



Our newest Paul Harris Fellow, Brad Playford, founder CEO of WheelFish Group and Reset Ventures.

The timing of the Club’s latest Paul Harris Fellow was appropriate as we honored Brad Playford, founder of WheelFish Group and Reset Ventures, the focus of this week’s program. Here is the introduction by **Past President Jim Fisher**:

“Brad has more than 35 years of entrepreneurial and small business experience. He has worked for and with seven entrepreneurial organizations over those 35 years - primarily in leadership, sales, marketing, and strategy roles.

As VP of Marketing and Strategy, Brad helped TTM Technologies through their IPO in 2000, raising \$120M. The company now boasts annual revenue in excess of \$2.5B.

Brad bought R&K Time Systems in 2005 for \$140k with one employee and grew it to ROK Systems, a leader in providing innovative security systems and video surveillance.

In 2008, Brad started AvaSure, growing the company to \$57M annual revenue, with EBITDA greater than

30%. By 2021, AvaSure employed a team of 230 employees, and was considered a leader in remote patient monitoring. In 2022, AvaSure was recognized as the top solution to reduce the cost of care in the KLAS 2022 Emerging Solutions Top 20 report.

In May of 2021, Brad sold a controlling share to a private equity syndicate made up of Goldman Sachs and Heritage Group, earning his investors an average annual rate of return over of 58% over 16 years.

Brad invested the proceeds of the sale to create the WheelFish Group. Brad currently serves as the CEO of WheelFish Group and spends his time focusing on both philanthropic and economic endeavors. The WheelFish Group’s blended community and economic mission have both exceeded expectations under Brad’s leadership – resulting in more than \$5 Million in community-based gifts in Muskegon, Grand Rapids, and Detroit since 2022.

Brad and his wife Kathleen are very active in the Muskegon community. You can usually find them here in the summer months – tending to gardens and throughout Downtown Muskegon. The love spending their winters at their second home in Hawaii.”

### RIM Reporting Team

Co-Editors: Susan Besteman &

Jackie Farrar

Reporters: Kathy Moore, Roger

Morgenstern, Meredith Smillie,

Sue Samaniego

Photographers: Mark Alpher &

Roger Morgenstern

Contributors: John Noling, & Mike Vogas



A great group of community leaders! From left, our newest Paul Harris Fellow Brad Playford, his wife Kathleen, Lee Fonstein and (as some on Facebook may say) her “smokin hot boyfriend” **Bob Scolnik**.

## This week’s program: Wheelfish Group

Speaker: **Frank Peterson**

Introduced by: **Melissa Horton**

Reporter: **Roger Morgenstern**



**Melissa Horton** introduces our program.



Our fellow Rotarian and speaker **Frank Peterson**, vice president for WheelFish Group.



**Frank Peterson** readily admits the WheelFish Group’s logo may be a little unusual, but as its tagline “Be Memorable” suggests, it is always a conversation starter. Frank, Muskegon’s city manager for nearly nine years, jumped to the private sector to join WheelFish in 2022 as vice present of operations.



WheelFish Group is a collection of businesses and initiatives that “balances economy and community to make investments in Muskegon County,” Peterson said. For example, its acquisition of Barry’s Greenhouse “has helped us beautify Historic Hackley Square and Hackley Park.”

Brad Playford serves as the founder and CEO of both WheelFish Group and Reset Ventures, his “community-based arm” Peterson said.



As part of its community outreach, Peterson said WheelFish and Reset “made the strategic decision” to lease out the entire second floor of the former SPX “pyramid” office building next door to the Lake House “even though we only have five employees”

For a reduced or no cost, Peterson said they work with community groups to provide them office or meeting space on a short-term or longer-term basis to lend a hand. For example, Frank said, Michelle Tyson, founder of the non-profit Taking Back Muskegon, “needed office space and now she’s surrounded by people who think big.”

Quality housing at all price levels is another WheelFish Group priority. Peterson said “Brad want to help build 3,000 more housing units in Muskegon County by the next U.S. Census.” For example, WheelFish helped acquire several properties near Apple Avenue which will be

turned into two 50-unit affordable apartment complexes. They are working on another 40 units of affordable and market rate apartments in the former Catholic Charities West Michigan building on Third Street in downtown Muskegon.



Frank also used his presentation to announce plans for the former Hackley Administration Building which was renamed “Historic Hackley Square” after WheelFish Group bought it for \$1 from Muskegon Public Schools in 2021. Constructed as a school in 1892 with money donated by lumber baron and philanthropist Charles Hackley, the building and its iconic clock tower will be converted into a luxury “boutique” hotel with 40 to 45 rooms. The facility will be known at the Hackley Castle Inn and Suites, featuring some rooms filled with early 20<sup>th</sup> Century antiques collected by Brad and Kathleen Playford and other rooms with a more modern look. In the past year, WheelFish has stabilized the building by reinforcing the structure’s roof and rebuilding a portion of the south wall facing Muskegon Avenue.

In addition to “extended stay” hotel rooms and suites, current plans call for a speakeasy bar, high-end restaurant and an “historical walk through” open to the public. The building’s four-faced clock will be automated with current plans to put the original 1890s mechanical clock

windings on display for the public. Opening is anticipated in early 2025.

Interior demolition of modifications made to the building in recent decades is underway, Peterson said. “We think we’ve assembled a team to save this building and have people enjoy it...something the community can be part of and be proud of.”



As a former city official, Peterson is aware that short-term rentals in residential areas can have its detractors. Hackley Castle and Suites looks to address this. “We’re trying to give the experience of a short-term rental in a luxurious way without going into a neighborhood.”

## Microforest Mondays

8:30am –  
10:30am

Help is needed for summer months  
Contact **John Noling** for more  
information



## Rotarians in Action Spotlight Henrietta Hadly



This week’s spotlight features Henrietta Hadley, owner of Infinite Solutions Consulting Group. Her company recently received a grant from the Business Equity Initiative Fund. The Fund was among the recipients of a recent round of Muskegon Rotary Foundation grants. Listen to Henrietta’s story [here](#).

## Muskegon Rotary Board

Tim Arter, President  
Dave Alexander, President-Elect  
Roger Morgenstern, President Nominee  
Ginny Sprague, Past President  
Kristi Nagengast, Treasurer  
Jane Clingman-Scott, Secretary  
Kim Boersema, Club Coordinator  
Directors:  
Aaron Maike  
Brandon Turnbull  
Marty Sytsema  
Tom Palmer  
Esther Ricco  
Lisa Tyler

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

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Ep 34: Gabrielle Gerlach Muskegon YMCA



Join us as we sit down with Gabrielle Gerlach, the CEO of the Muskegon YMCA.

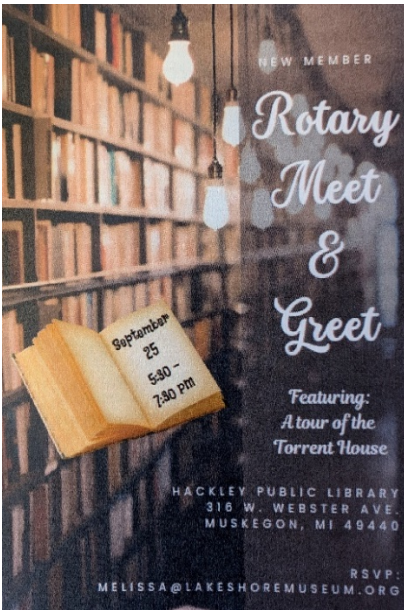
Did you know The Y reaches over 10,000 people in our community EVERY YEAR? Gabrielle will take us behind the scenes to explore the incredible range of programs and services they offer, from youth development and healthy living initiatives to fostering social responsibility.

The Muskegon YMCA is thriving, and we can't wait to hear more about its impact.

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/2269729/15651330-gabe-gerlach-muskegon-ymca>

ReWine meetings are every

1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday each month at  
5:15pm at **Unruly Brewing**



# Harvest Fest

We have a special visual for you today! You are the first to see the amazing PURPLE succulent that Barry's will be providing especially for Harvest Fest! Each attendee can choose from a signature glass OR the succulent, while supplies last.

There is also still time to become a sponsor and support Harvest Fest! Posters will be printed soon! Also, we are excited to share that we are halfway to our sponsorship goal! We are looking to raise \$15,000 more dollars and we need your help! Please let me know if you have a potential sponsor in mind. Remember this will be our biggest fundraiser of the year!

Finally, please let non-rotarians know about this event. It is for the entire community and we welcome anyone to join in on the fun! Get your tickets today!

## Sponsorship:

The HF committee would like to challenge each member to help raise funds for this event. It is very simple challenge, they ask that EACH OF YOU you call or email ONE friend or business person you know, and ask them if they would be willing to sponsor the event! [HERE](#) is a link to view and download the sponsorship document. Feel free to email it or print it off and share it with someone you know! There will also be copies at the weekly Rotary luncheons on the back table. The instructions for returning the form are listed on the document.

## Volunteer:

Volunteer registration is open! [HERE](#) is the link with more information. All volunteers that would like to enjoy the Harvest Fest activities before or after their shift will enjoy a discounted ticket price for the event!

**Rotary Club of Muskegon**  
**YOUTH EXCHANGE PROGRAM**  
 March - June - September - December  
**Online Auction**  
 October 2, 2024  
 Donations needed - Scheduled Pick-ups  
 August 26, 2024 - September 6, 2024  
**ITEMS NEEDED**  
 - Household Items - Sports Equipment  
 - Appliances - Furniture - Electronics  
 - Cars - Jewelry - Tools - Toys - Misc.  
**CONTACT**  
 - Craig Pirrotta (craigpirrotta@gmail.com)  
 - Kristi Pawlak  
 - John Noling  
 - Joanie Smith  
 - Chip Chipman  
 - Chauncy Williams  
 https://bid.shorelinetopbid.com/auctions

**Harvest Fest**  
 OCT. 24, 2024 @ 5-8pm  
 Baker College Culinary Institute of Michigan  
**Barry's**  
 Tickets on sale for \$85  
 Proceeds support the Muskegon Rotary Foundation

## Tickets:

Tickets are on sale now! More information can be found [HERE](#). Tickets are limited so be sure to get your ticket(s) soon!

**YOU'RE INVITED TO:**  
**COFFEE CONNECT**  
 A NEW MEMBER ROTARY EVENT  
 FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2024  
 8:00 - 9:00 AM  
 MUSKEGON MUSEUM OF HISTORY AND SCIENCE  
 430 W. CLAY AVE  
 MUSKEGON, MI 49440  
 RSVP: MELISSA@LAKESHOREMUSEUM.ORG



Working to start a vigorous Rotaract Club here during Jayhawk Frenzy today and tomorrow...



Jay Hawk, Susan Samaniego, Amanda Rupert, and John Noling are making the case!



Rotarian **Bill Loxterman** was honored this week with a Legacy Jaycee Award for his distinguished service over many years to the Muskegon Jaycees.

Presenting the award to Bill is Past Jaycee 2023 President Sara Sherwood and current President DeMarcus Evans. Congrats Bill on your legacy of service to Muskegon Jaycees and Muskegon Rotary!



## Register Now for The United Way Day of Caring

- Sept 6<sup>th</sup> 8am-2pm
- Installing signed pathway and weeding at Microforest
- Breakfast and lunch provided
- Many other work sites available

Register at:

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



**Many hands make light work. Join United Way and make a personal difference!**