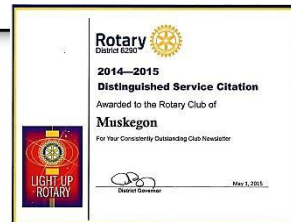


“Service Above Self” Muskegon Rotary in Motion

<http://www.muskegonrotary.org>



Ginny Sprague, President
Tim Arter, President-Elect
Dave Alexander, President Nominee
Jane Clingman-Scott, Past President
Kristi Nagengast, Treasurer
Don Hutchins, Secretary
Kim Boersema, Club Coordinator



Muskegon Rotary Club

Club 16 (2809) – District 6290, Chartered May 1, 1916

Next Mtg—August 10, 2023, 12-1:30pm

The Lake House

ReWine Sat Club—Next mtg 8/17/23 5:15 pm

Walkers (in the Delta)



CREATE HOPE
in the WORLD

Aaron Maike, Director
Roger Morgenstern, Director
David Ramos, Director
Asaline Scott, Director
Marty Sytsema, Director
Brandon Turnbull, Director
Roger Morgenstern, RIM Photographer & Reporter
Lori Weiler, RIM Editor



THE FOUR WAY TEST THAT ROTARIANS USE IN MAKING ETHICAL DECISIONS:

Is it the truth? Is it fair to all concerned? Will it build goodwill and better friendships? Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

Next Meeting (8/17/23) — Life Leadership/Returning Exchange Students

“This is it: the absolute edge of no return: to turn back now and make home or sail irrevocably on and either find land or plunge over the world's roaring rim” - William Faulkner

MEETER - GREETER

8/3 Doug Brown & Joan Smith
8/10 Doug Brown & Joan Smith

REFLECTORS

J.J. Lewis
(Contact Alan Alpert if you can help)

Upcoming Birthdays

Mark Meyers Aug 8
Nancy McCarthy Aug 8
Frank Peterson Aug 9
Diana Osborn Aug 10

Caring Connections Fund

(Remember to donate \$10 on your birthday for this great cause!)

PROGRAMS / EVENTS

Aug 10 - Life Leadership & Returning Exchange Students
Aug 17 - Theatre Arts Education
Aug 24 - Muskegon Area District Library

Muskegon Rotary Board

Ginny Sprague	Aaron Maike
Tim Arter	Roger Morgenstern
Dave Alexander	David Ramos
Jane Clingman-Scott	Asaline Scott
Kristi Nagengast	Marty Sytsema
Don Hutchins	Brandon Turnbull

Please email Club Board

Members through this [link](#):

VISITORS & GUESTS



A very proud **President Ginny** introduces, from left, her guests: grandson Hunter Sprague and son Steve Sprague



Carla Flanders with her guest and potential member Andrew Zahrt



Dave Alexander introduces his guests, from left, Jake Eckholm and Rory Charron



Myra Dutton introduces her guest and potential member Carly Andrews



Nancy Crandall shares a laugh with her guest, son Brad Crandall



Melissa Boughner with her guest and potential member Angelita Valdez



Annette Jack, with her guest, husband John Jack

THIS WEEK'S PROGRAM: Parkland Properties with Speaker Jon Rooks

Reporter: **Roger Morgenstern**

Introduced by: **Dave Alexander**

We got a great overview of Parkland Properties from its leader, Jon Rooks, and plans for his latest project: Completion of the redevelopment of the former Shaw Walker Furniture Company property near downtown Muskegon and adjacent to Muskegon Lake.



Founded in Grand Rapids by Rooks in 1989, Parkland Properties is a real estate development and hospitality firm that employs over 250 people, primarily in the greater Muskegon area. Among their properties are Rotary's two weekly meeting locations: The Delta hotel and the Lake House/Shoreline Inn Conference Center.

The company is one of the largest real estate development firms in West Michigan in terms of square footage of properties owned, managed, or under development. While Rooks' first project was the Ellenwood Landing marina and Weathervane Inn project in Montague, much of his focus in the 1990s was in Grand Rapids.

"Our projects are primarily within a 45-mile radius of Grand Rapids, tied to Lake Michigan and a focus on urban redevelopment projects," Rooks said. "It's much more fun doing impact development."

He said while his projects are not always profitable, they're worth doing because of the difference they make in the community. For example, a project in downtown Grand Rapids, Union Square, redeveloped the former Union High School "right next to a highway with crack houses across the street."

"We worked with the city of Grand Rapids to clean up the drug houses" and added a roof-top pool "which is the sizzle that sells the steak when you're living next to a highway."

"We try to keep it simple...They're not always profitable but we don't regret a single one of them because they made an impact in the community," he said.

Parkland began buying properties in Muskegon in 2009. Parkland's offices are in the refurbished historic central station once home to the Muskegon Fire Department. "That was a small project but it's fun to be there."

One of the highest profile Muskegon redevelopments was Highpoint Flats, the eight-story former Hackley Union Bank building in downtown Muskegon. He joked "we're still trying to find the Confederate gold," a reference to the long-rumored stash of Civil War era loot allegedly hidden in several downtown Muskegon locations.

Rooks said the Shaw Walker Furniture Company project reminds him of the challenges presented with the Union Square property.

Rooks called the Shaw Walker site "an amazing story...it's a huge piece of history and it happened all here in Muskegon...Everyone had a relative, neighbor or friend who worked there...The property had a huge role in making Muskegon what it is today."

A few highlights about the property at West Western Avenue and Division Street:

- 1902: Shaw Walker Furniture Company begins operations in Muskegon
- 1951: Shaw Walker is the largest maker of office furniture and filing equipment in the world with over 1,200 employees and over 4,000 items offered.
- 1989: Shaw Walker Furniture Company is sold and a majority of the former furniture factory is abandoned.
- 2001: Property is purchased by Brooklyn-based, ANM
- 2005: 55-unit Watermark Lofts Condominiums is constructed in Building 1 of 7
- 2011: Watermark 920 Event Center opens in Building 2 of 7
- 2023: Property is purchased by Parkland Properties

Rooks said AMI "did great things with the first phase" but it's just 1/7th of the site. Parkland has "completed every project we started" and the Shaw



Walker site will be no different. He joked he decided to take this on after marking “a big birthday and I looked in the mirror and said it would make me young again.”



He admitted the project is daunting. “The current condition of the Shaw Walker site is very intimidating” with scores of broken windows overlooking the Hartshorn Marina and Muskegon Lake. “This must be the ugliest backdrop to a marina in the country.”

Rooks said he thinks about visitors to Muskegon and the negative impression the site makes at such a prominent location. “Right now, it doesn’t help sell our city.”

Showing pictures of impressive views of Muskegon Lake from the structure, Rooks said “We want to fix it...we want to make it gem for our city...We want 1,000 people to live here like 1,000 people used to work here.

The detailed plans for the redevelopment are still being finalized, but Rooks said he wants to commence site cleanup late this year and begin construction in Spring 2024. The goal is to complete the work within four years, creating 220 long-term jobs.



The \$220 million project got a big financial boost recently when the state’s new budget included a \$18 million housing redevelopment grant. “At 730,000 square feet this project is the largest known adaptive reuse site in the state of Michigan,” Rooks said.

The site encompasses 15 acres and the work would be completed in two phases. Five of the acres are vacant and will be filled with additional housing units. The plan is for approximately 530 new housing units, a mix of apartments and condominiums. It would include over 20,000 square feet of residential supporting retail and commercial space including restaurants, bar, daycare, pet care, hair salon, massage therapy, fitness center, coffee shop, and more, he said.

“This development will have more amenities than any property in Michigan,” Rooks said. “The amenities will be the sizzle that sells the steak.”

A recent housing study calls for 3,000 new housing units. Rooks said with this development “we can do 20 percent of those units in one site.”

He said the rental units, ranging in size from studios to 3 bedrooms, will target 80 to 140 percent of the area’s median income, commonly known as ‘workforce’ or ‘attainable’ housing. Rooks said this price range is critical for people who “make too much money” to qualify for subsidized “affordable housing.”

To view the video of the entire presentation, click [here](#).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Tim Arter reminded us that volunteers are still needed for **Rotary’s Party in the Park** on **Friday Aug. 18**. Signup clipboards will be at our weekly meetings; also check your e-mail for notes from **Andrew Cutler** to sign up online via [Signup Genius](#).

Harvest Fest tickets are available! Event co-chair **Roger Morgenstern** said early ticket sales are helpful for planning for the great food we’ll have **Oct. 26** from the students at Baker College’s Culinary Institute of Michigan. Tickets are \$65 but increase to \$75 on Sept. 25, so get yours now. You can buy your tickets right [here](#)! Complete information on this great new fall fund-raising event, including sponsorship opportunities,

is available [here](#) via our Rotary website. A volunteer sign up will be shared with members after we get done volunteering for Party in the Park...let’s take it one Rotary event at a time 😊. Questions? Contact Roger or co-chair **Dave Alexander**.

Mike Vogas, with his usual humor, presented a short step-by-step video on **how to review and update your member profile** in Club Runner. We recommend you DON’T have your photo be of Alfred E. Neuman. Check out the video [here](#) and thanks Mike for always combining humor with education! **President Ginny** thanked Mike for his efforts and said it’s a great way to make sure we have updated, accurate information for our next printed membership directory.

RIM Reporting Team

Susan Besteman
Kathy Moore
Meredith Smillie
Jackie Farrar
Roger Morgenstern
Lori Weiler
Mark Alpher, Photographer
Bill Johanson, Contributor
John Noling, Contributor
Mike Vogas, Contributor

Our Newest Paul Harris Fellow: Jonathan Rooks

It was a 2-for-1 deal at last week’s meeting as the Club, with help from **Meredith Smillie** and **Dave Alexander** surprised our program presenter, Jon Rooks, as the world’s newest Paul Harris Fellow. Here is Dave’s introduction:

“Our speaker today is likely very familiar to the Muskegon Rotary Club membership, Jon Rooks, president of Parkland Properties. Jon is here to update us on his plans for the Shaw-Walker Buildings on the West Western waterfront. We all know his company as the owner and operator of the Shoreline Inn, Delta Hotel,

HighPoint Flats and a private investor and operator of the VanDyk Mortgage Convention Center. Jon, we look forward to seeing your latest plans for Muskegon.



Jon Rooks thanks the club for presenting him a Paul Harris Fellow, which came as a pleasant and humbling surprise.

The Muskegon Rotary Club honors and recognizes today's speaker Jon Rooks, president of Parkland Properties, as our latest Paul Harris Fellow. Jon and my paths first crossed in the early 1990s as he was creating the Ellenwood development in Montague and I was business editor of *The Muskegon Chronicle*. Boy were we young. Jon Rooks has been a great story ever since.

Jon started his real estate development and investment career at the age of 15. In the late 1970s, he purchased his first house to renovate while going to Grand Rapids South Christian High School. He continued his real estate deals through college at Calvin and then graduating from the University of Michigan's Steven M. Ross School of Business with degrees in finance and real estate.

Founded in 1988, Parkland and Jon Rooks cut their teeth in real estate development with the Montague, water-based Ellenwood project with a marina, condominiums, inside boat storage and the Weathervane Inn. Ellenwood remains the largest tax base in the City of Montague.

Jon is a world traveler, is fluent in German and is a lover of Oktoberfest in Munich and skiing in the Alps. One

time I called Jon on a story 20 years ago and he answered from the Dubai Airport.

He eventually settled in his hometown of Grand Rapids in the early 2000s developing more than 450 condo units at the Boardwalk, Union Square, City View and Monroe Terrace developments. In Ottawa County he's developed the Wharf Marina in Grand Haven and Highbrook Townhouse Apartments in Hudsonville. Parkland also developed Whispering Dunes Cottages in Norton Shores and redeveloped the Michillinda Lodge in Fruitland Township.

In 2009, Jon set his sights on Muskegon with the purchase of the then-struggling Shoreline Inn and Suites, Terrace Point Marina and this restaurant and event center. He hasn't left since. Jon redeveloped the Comerica Bank Tower into HighPoint Flats; purchased the Holiday Inn and upgraded it to the Delta Hotel and developed Muskegon Lake's Terrace Point Landing neighborhood.

Jon has been a fearless risk taker, the first developer to significantly bet on Muskegon in the modern era and has been at the heart of the ongoing historic transformation of Muskegon. Anyone who has seen Jon's white board analyzing a development project knows his decisions are backed by meticulous financial analysis. Nothing better has shown his skills than the development, construction and operation of the VanDyk Mortgage Convention Center, linking his Delta Hotel and the city's Trinity Health Arena. I would say the convention center project is the most significant public-private partnership in our lifetimes. The public end of the deal was put together by former Muskegon City Manager **Frank Peterson** and Muskegon County's **Mark Eisenbarth** and **Bob Lukens** but the private side of the deal was pure Jon Rooks. Parkland continues to

operate and manage the convention center, a facility the community had sought through multiple generations of community leaders.

So what drives Jon Rooks? In his words: "We believe strongly in West Michigan's potential and decided a long time ago to stay in West Michigan and specialize in the two areas that I have a passion for: Urban Redevelopment and Lake Michigan-access waterfront real estate."

History will record that Jon Rooks is the first significant and most enduring developer in the current resurgence of our community. We heard today about his plans for the Shaw-Walker buildings. My guess is it won't be the last development Jon does in Muskegon. I present to you Muskegon Rotary Club's Paul Harris Award winner Jon Rooks."

Member Spotlight Howard Hardesty



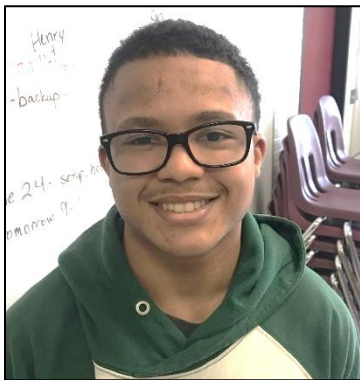
This week's member spotlight features **Howard Hardesty**. He's been a Rotarian since 2009, shortly after coming to town when he purchased a local business. "At my first meeting as a guest, I was so impressed with the size of the group and learned what was going on in the community before it showed up in the newspaper." He enjoys being on the Orientation Committee so he has a chance to meet all the new members joining the Club. View the full video [here](#).

Interact Insider

Rotarians: For a great opportunity to hear and see Tobias Melton and Jakob Price review the 2023 Life Leadership Conference please click on the link below where **Mike Vogas** and **John Noling** interviewed two of Muskegon's finest. Both are new recruits to their Rotary Interact Club at Muskegon High School. Their written reports to our club follow the video link. Please look for more LLC reports in *RIM* in the coming weeks.

<https://muskegonrotary.org/Stories/life-leadership-conference-2023>

Tobias Melton, Muskegon High School, Muskegon Rotary Club



When I first got to Ferris State University for LLC, I was not exactly ecstatic about being there. I kept more to myself when getting there, but after I was able to meet other participants, I became more comfortable. I actually met more people than I thought, some even have become friends of mine. Though I gained more confidence in leadership skills, I also gained self-awareness in my own ability to interact with new acquaintances and create a positive experience. The staff there are nice and understanding which helps create a great learning atmosphere.

While attending this conference you would also get the opportunity to listen to various speakers that give participants more insight and good points. One of my favorite speakers would have to be Molly Kennedy, who

is also a staff member. She talks about more personal things regarding her life and herself. This opened up space which allowed various other people to connect, and even share their own experiences which I thought was special. All of the speakers really have knowledge that you should listen to, as it left a lasting impression on me.

Being a part of an LLC really can teach you a lot of skills and tools to use in the real world. Today because of LLC, socializing and expressing myself has become easier than before. For the future, LLC taught me how to be a successful leader in places like a workplace environment. It also gave me tips on how I can approach difficult situations. I never really thought too much into this before, but now know how important it is to actively listen, the importance of looking at all perspectives on things, and that it is appropriate and necessary sometimes to get help from someone else.

As to what could be improved upon, to me, everything was as good as I think it should be. It really was a great experience that I know others would definitely enjoy. The dorms are a little lackluster though.

Jakob Price, Muskegon High School, Muskegon Rotary Club



When I first arrived at the Life Leadership Conference, I thought I was going to a place where we just sit down and listen to people talk about how you need to be a leader. I thought the adults were going to be serious people that just were boring. But as I walked in

that room, I could tell that it was going to be nothing like that. It was like the atmosphere in the room was full of passion, fun, and just loving, and I was right. Me being a shy and introverted person, I just thought I was going to stay to myself and just do my crossword puzzles to keep the time moving, but as soon as I got there people were already trying to talk and make conversations with me. Now, I'm still friends with a lot of them and for Rotary I'm thankful for that.

A lot of the messages I heard there were all great but the "Flip your 20" presentation by Molly Kennedy hit me a little harder because of the things I have going on in my life. It has helped me do a lot of things better so that I become a better person. In turn, I'm turning into a better leader and becoming a little bit easier on myself. Participating in our leadership element skit helped me come out of a shell that I'm still kind of in because I have a hard time talking in front of people. That just made me feel better and happier knowing I was in front of people I knew weren't going to ridicule me.

When Howard Oesterling came in with the poem about "It Couldn't Be Done", that poem made me look at my life and think, man, I can accomplish most anything, I just have to be willing to deal with the challenges that come with it to get there.

Everything I learned at the conference I'm going to use in a way to be more positive and more patient when it comes to people learning new things on the team. Just trying to help better their lives the best that I can, because we just need more positive people in the world. I believe that will make this world a better place and more leaders will emerge.

I believe that I can still be a more extroverted person, even though I still dislike talking and being around people. But, I know I can conquer that because of this conference and I'm so thankful that I was picked for it. I wish I could do it all over again.
