



# The Leawood Rotarian

The Newsletter of the Leawood Rotary Club

Celebrating Over 30 Years!

[leawoodrotary.org](http://leawoodrotary.org)

April 2, 2026

## April 2: Mark Hulet/Kansas City YMCA



YMCA OF  
GREATER KANSAS CITY

Mark Hulet is the new President and CEO of the YMCA of Greater Kansas City. Mark will provide updates of the organization.

## Invoker: Stephen Powell

### April Greeters:

Gary Bussing, Andrew Catherwood, Gillian Chapman  
Adam Dinkel, Jonathan Freiden, Phil Gibbs



Click link below to launch Zoom

[Launch Meeting - Zoom](#)

Meeting ID: 813 1042 7816

Passcode: Rotary

## April Meetings & Socials:

**April 9** – City of Fountains Foundation

**April 16** – Jim Arnett/The Plus in Polio Plus

**April 23** – Board Meeting

**April 30** – Social at Discover O.P.

# Upcoming Events – Save the Dates!

April 7:

Tuesday, April 7, 2026  
6-8 pm

## Dine & Drink to benefit Polio Plus



Chicken N Pickle  
5901 W 135<sup>th</sup> St.  
Overland Park, KS 66223

April 11:

## Gathering for Good Event - Lawrence, KS

6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Doubletree Hotel – 200 McDonald Drive

You're invited *Back to the 60's* at Gathering for Good, a themed evening benefiting The Rotary Foundation!

### Event Highlights:

- Live & silent auction (proceeds benefit The Rotary Foundation and are credited to the winning member)
- Wine & Liquor Pull
- Trivia game
- Open bar with themed drinks
- 60's attire encouraged

Tickets are \$75 per person (covers event costs, no donation to the Foundation is included in ticket price).



Visit the [Event Site](#) to get your tickets today!

# Service Project April 14

We have scheduled a Service Day at Project Cure for Tuesday, April 14th from 1 -3:30pm.

We will meet at 12:30pm in the parking lot just east of the old/new UMB bank site at I-435 and State Line for those who wish to carpool. This is another great chance to do good and have some fun with your Rotarian friends.

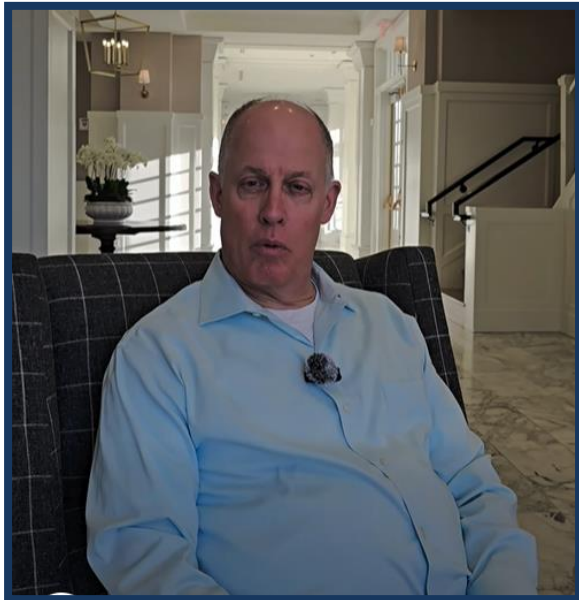


Please email Rick Robinson know if you plan to attend:

[rickrobinson.kc@gmail.com](mailto:rickrobinson.kc@gmail.com)

---

## Member Moment



In our seventh installment of "Rotary Member Moment," we feature Past President, Steve Black.

You can watch Steve's video on Facebook by clicking on the link below:

[\(4\) Facebook](#)

---

## Guess This Rotarian

In our fourth installment, we bring you this future history buff. When he's not enlightening area residents and visitors, this dapper guy is producing stellar newsletter for Leawood Rotary. Can you name this crooner?



# Upcoming Events – Save the Dates!

**April 30:**

**Fifth Thursday Social Event - Discover O.P.**

5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

8001 Santa Fe Dr., Overland Park, KS

## *Save the Date!*

*Leawood Rotary Social Event*

*Thursday, April 30, 2026 – 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.*

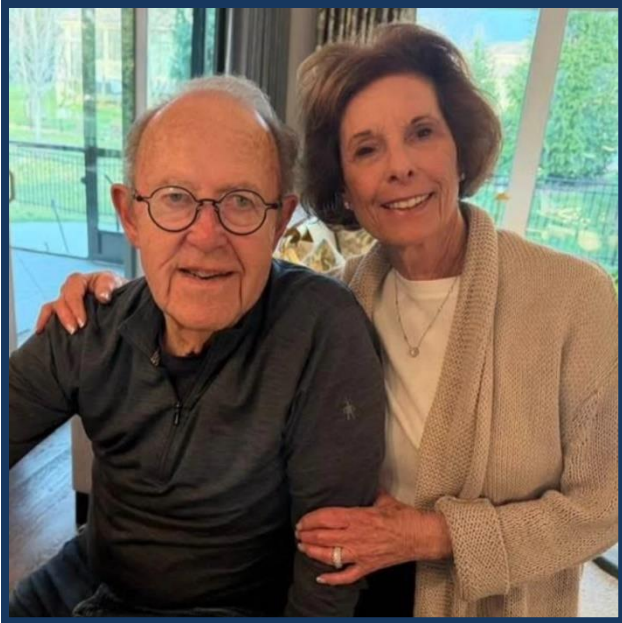


- *Food & Beverages provided!*
- *See the newest attraction in Downtown O.P.!*
- *Details to come.*

***Discover O.P. - 8001 Santa Fe Drive, Overland Park, KS***

# We Make Pour Choices

Hosts Ed & Arlene Ladegaard chose Sauvignon Blancs as the varietal for the “We Make Pour Choices” wine tasting event in their home. Thank you Ed and Arlene for hosting!



# Leawood Rotary Partners with BVEF to Expand Excellence in Education Grants



Pictured Left to Right:  
Dr. Sonya Evans,  
BVEF Board President  
Emily West, BVEF  
Executive Director  
Susan Tideman, and  
Chuck Udell

At the March board meeting, the Blue Valley Educational Foundation (BVEF) announced a new four-year partnership with the Rotary Club of Leawood that will expand support for innovative learning opportunities across the Blue Valley School District.

Through this partnership, Rotary members have committed a \$100,000 investment to help fund Excellence in Education Grants to support creative classroom projects and district-wide initiatives. To amplify the impact of this generous commitment, BVEF will match the Rotary Club's annual gift of \$25,000, contributing an additional \$25,000 and effectively doubling the funds available for educator grants each year.

In addition to their financial support, Rotary members will participate in BVEF's annual Surprise Squad, helping present classroom grants to educators across the district, serve as ambassadors at the Foundation's annual Community Breakfast, and support career exploration activities at Blue Valley middle schools, high schools, and through the district's CAPS program.

"The Rotary Club of Leawood has a long tradition of service and community leadership," said Susan Tideman, BVEF Executive Director. "Their investment in BVEF represents the largest annual gift we have received from a service organization. This partnership will ensure the number of innovative grants we can annually fund and connects our students with community leaders who are eager to support their learning and future career exploration."

BVEF is grateful for the Rotary Club's commitment to strengthening public education and helping ensure Blue Valley educators have the resources they need to inspire students and bring new ideas to the classroom.

# Stephanie Wing Meyer Receives Service Above Self Award



From Stephanie's Facebook page:

There are moments in your life that, even when you're in them, you know it will be permanently imprinted and serve as a longtime touchstone. Last night, March 27, 2026, was one of those moments for me.

I was humbled, honored, exceptionally proud to receive Rotary's Service Above Self Award - the highest award a Rotarian can receive in pursuit of a better world. Impossibly meaningful on its own, it was made even more so to receive it in Wichita, my hometown, and a place that poured into me when it was most needed and shaped the woman I am today. Further, receiving it from Chuck Udell, my friend and current District Governor from the Leawood Rotary Club - a community I get to pour into professionally every day...and in the presence of our International President-Elect Nominee, Kansas Citian, Larry Lunsford, was serendipitous, to say the very least.

I am so continually grateful to have found this incredible organization fourteen years ago, for every friend in the audience last night, and my worldwide Rotary family. I'll continue to work to make you all proud!

## Leawood Rotary Receives EREY Recognition

Our club once again received the "Every Rotarian, Every Year" recognition at the President Elect Training Seminar (PETS) in Wichita this weekend. This recognition is given to clubs that have 100%-member participation in the Rotary Foundation, with a per capita giving of at least \$100. Our club has received this recognition for the past several years. Shout out to our fabulous Foundation Co-Chairs, Ken Selzer & Dr. Sonya Evans!



# Leawood History: Leawood vs. O.P. - The Great Annexation Battle of 1988/1989 (Part 2)

*Kansas City Star - February 10, 1988*

## Annexation is about planning, not politicking

By Marcia Rinehart

**A**nneXation by the city of Leawood! These very words may evoke either feelings of anger and frustration in those who are directly affected or attitudes of boredom in those who are not.

Leawood's process of looking at the question of annexation has been similar to a buggy ride in unknown territory when alarmed onlookers have scared the horses, the driver has lost the reins and the horses have run until someone could grab back the reins and yell "whoa."

Let's start the story with the "buggy ride"—the city of Leawood and its exploring the question of whether or not to annex land and, if so, to what extent.

Last fall the City Council approved an ad hoc committee to look at the possibility of annexation as part of a renewed effort in long-range planning. The broad scope of the study, set up by the ad hoc committee itself, was an effort to assess the effects that neighboring incorporated and unincorporated entities would have on Leawood. The committee recommended that Leawood explore "scenarios" south of Leawood's current borders, bounded by State Line Road on the east and Nall Avenue on the west. The council, by vote, so directed the staff. Staff brought back costs of providing fire, police and street maintenance services that would be comparable to what the county presently provides. Those costs, narrowed further and more specifically only as far south as the Blue River, were within the financial parameters that the city could justify. Potential land use was discussed. It was acknowledged by all present that Leawood is open to a wide range of land-use possibilities, including the current county zoning of light industrial and commercial in appropriate areas.

**Guest  
editorial**

And, believe it or not, it was always the intention of the city to meet with the landowners in the proposed area to discuss potential land use and other mutual concerns before the city would make any final decision regarding annexation.

Enter some of the press, which wrote in an inflammatory manner about the ad hoc committee's study area west of Nall



**Marcia  
Rinehart**  
... wants  
Leawood  
option consid-  
ered

and de-emphasized the actual recommendation to continue a comprehensive study with Nall as the western boundary. At this point, some observers leaped to the conclusion that Leawood was going to annex immediately. (And thus begins the "scaring the horses" in our analogy.)

Interested parties became jumpy—the Overland Park City Council, which feared encroachment on "its territory," and the landowners who just wanted to be left alone. (And the reactions and actions of these groups move the "horses and buggy" faster and cause the "reins" to be loosened from Leawood's hands. Now the "buggy ride" gets really bumpy.)

**Continued...**

# Leawood History: Leawood vs. O.P. - The Great Annexation Battle of 1988/1989 (Part 2)

*Kansas City Star - February 10, 1988*

The landowners took petitions for annexation to Overland Park, and that city reviewed the petitions. Leawood, having abided by the spirit and the letter of the new Kansas annexation law, was stymied. Leawood could not take action on land that is in "prior jurisdiction," that is, land that is before Overland Park for annexation. (The horses are running away now.) More and more petitions arrived at Overland Park from landowners who still said they really want to be in no city.

Meanwhile, almost everyone (including commentators in the press) made suggestions to Leawood about how to "slow the horses." Example (from Steve Nicely of *The Johnson County Star*): Widen 95th Street. Response: First of all, 95th Street has no relevance to annexation discussions. Secondly, engineers are in the process of making a drainage impact study in that area. The study will be completed by April, and at that time, appropriately, the council will make a final determination.

Example: Merge with Overland Park. Response: Absolutely not! Leawood is proud to be celebrating its 40th birthday of incorporation this year.

Example: Fix the bridge on Nall near 151st Street. Response: Leawood is working with Overland Park on plans for a two-lane bridge. The plans that were rejected previously were for a four-lane bridge that could not be justified by its present usage.

Final example: Improve Leawood's economic condition. Response: Leawood is fiscally solvent (required by state law, plus common sense) and is planning to broaden its economic base with commercial and office space, principally along 135th Street.

So where is this "runaway buggy" now? Overland Park is ready to vote on the annexation petitions from the landowners. And Leawood is relatively powerless to intervene. But—wait a minute! (Leawood is getting the reins again, trying to slow the horses. Whoa!) How about a rest, a timeout? If the landowners withdraw their petitions, and if Leawood gives its word not to annex unilaterally (without landowners' requests) for five years, would this make everyone content? Could we all go back to the beginning to a peaceful coexistence with plenty of time to discuss mutual concerns?

If the landowners are sincere in desiring to remain in the unincorporated area, I urge consideration of Leawood's suggestion to withdraw petitions, to take several years to explore land-use possibilities and to discuss the future. Let's go back to the beginning, away from heated political decision-making and towards rational planning.

*Rinehart is the mayor of Leawood.*