The Leawood Rotarian

The Newsletter of the Leawood Rotary Club

Celebrating Over 32 Years! | **leawoodrotary.org** | November 12, 2026

This Week's Program:

Jean Wise, Former Leawood Mayor



Jean Wise moved to Leawood in 1971, when the city had a population of about 10,000 and only a small city hall on Lee Boulevard. She served as mayor during a period of growth and community development (1985-1987), and her tenure is remembered for her involvement in local projects, including the creation and preservation of Leawood City Park.

November Greeters:

Mad Chhatre, Phil Gibbs, Lisa Harrison, Mel Hawk (Captain 11/12), Mary Jo Holland (Captain 11/19), Del Karmeier

November Invocators:

November 5: Dave Anderson

November 12: Jim Arnett

November 19: Chris Armer

November Tech Team:

November 5 (Julia/Stephen), November 12 (Kirk), November 19 (Stephen)

November 2 Meeting Recap:

At the November 2 meeting the club welcomed Roger Aeschliman, Rotary Foundation Chairman for District 5710, to speak about the Rotary Foundation. Davis Harrison also presented the club with a banner he received from the Rotary Club of Saint Lucia in the West Indies.





BVEF Surprise Squad

On November 5, the Blue Valley Educational Foundation's 2026 Surprise Squad celebrated with a $439,000 day of grants, surprising teachers across the district after a record-setting annual giving event. The Surprise Squad is the Blue Valley Educational Foundation's signature annual event, paired with a pep rally at the district offices in Overland Park. It is designed to celebrate educators, recognize innovation, and provide funding for new ideas and opportunities in classrooms. After the rally, the Squad visited schools to personally present grant awards to teachers.

2026 Event Highlights

- Record applications: The foundation received 212 grant applications — a record high — and all 190 approved applications were funded.
- Total funding: Nearly $439,000 in grants were awarded this year.
- Impact: These grants support classroom innovations, student programs, and district-wide initiatives, helping teachers "bring new ideas and opportunities into their classrooms"
- Community support: All funding comes from donations and fundraising through the foundation, separate from the district's operating budget.

Leawood Rotary is happy to be a partner with BVEF, and several Rotarians were on-hand to participate in this exciting day!



BVEF Surprise Squad





BVEF Surprise Squad





Rotary Member Moment



In this installment of "Rotary Member Moment," we feature member Stephen Powell, who has been a member of our club for four years. Stephen is also the Assistant City Administrator for the City of Leawood.

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

(1) Facebook

November Rotarian Birthdays

Dr. Sonya Evans – Nov. 6
Stu Sharp – Nov. 7
Mel Hawk – Nov. 15
Chief Kirt Yoder – Nov. 18
Chris Sagovac – Nov. 30
Dick Wetzler – Nov. 30

Save the Date!

Johnson County Christmas Bureau
Saturday 12/5: 8:30-12:30
email Chuck Sipple

csipple@kc.rr.com

JOHNSON COUNTY CHRISTMAS BUREAU

Mahjong Affinity Group

Women Leading Women, a local non-profit, recently hosted a Mahjong night as a connection-night for 20 members. Doris Lippe & Linda Keith from our Leawood Rotary Mahjong Affinity Group joined Milca Aguirre to help teach/mentor the various tables of players. This was the 1st "service project" of our Mahjong Affinity Group!



BV Mentor Madness!





Winter Coat Drive



Jonn Wullschleger has generously volunteered to be your personal shopper for coats! If you prefer, just bring a check (made out to Jonn)/cash for your desired donation & Jonn will buy the coats on your behalf.

*Larger sized coats are in need (LARGE, X-LARGE, XXL, etc.)

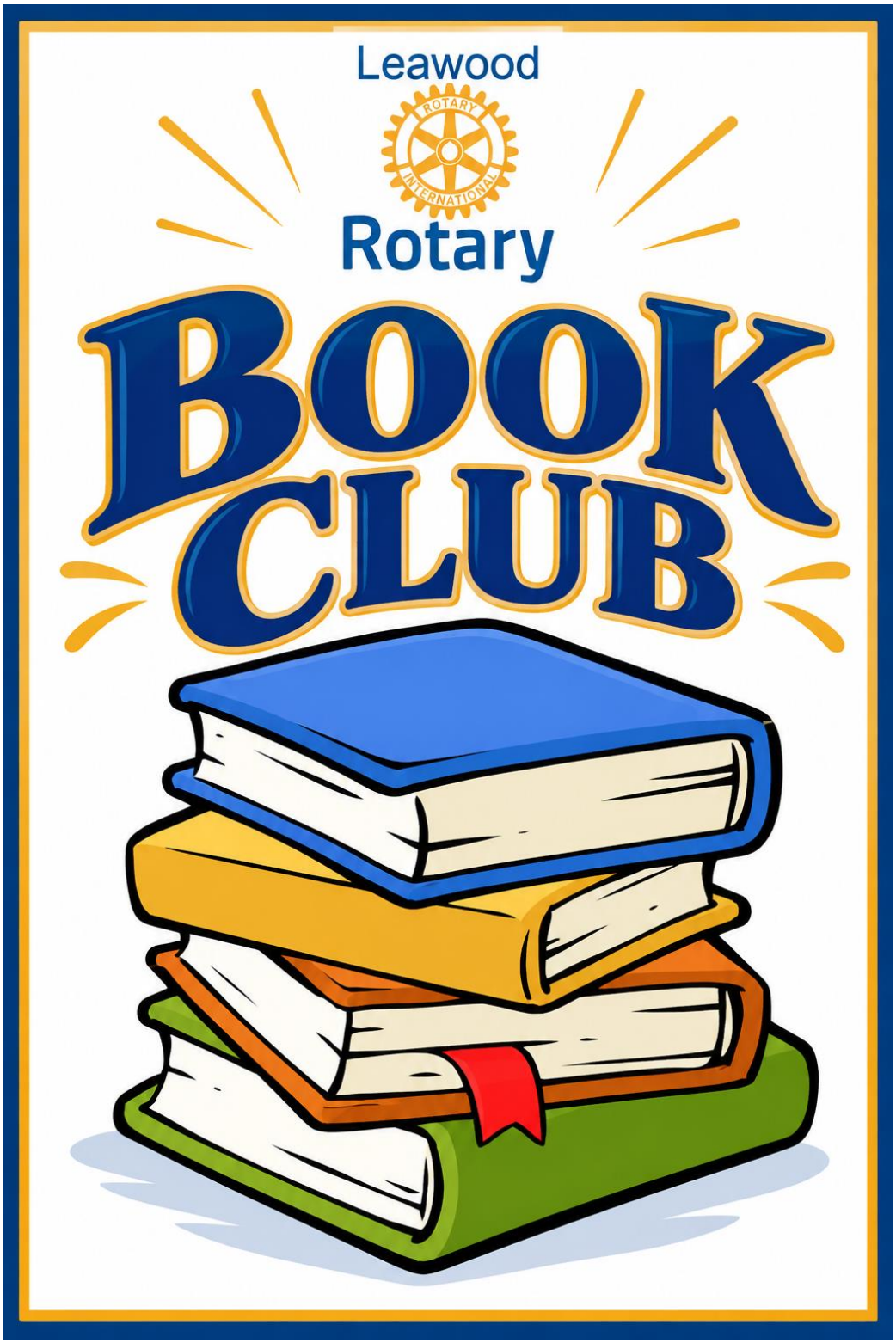
Hey, Charlie Brown…It's Coming!
Annual Christmas Auction
December 10th & 17th

Proceeds to: Ella Initiative / Purple Pals / Sammie's Toy Drive



Now Forming!

Email Diane Stoddard or Arlene Ladegaard



Leawood History:

Sun Newspaper – December 17, 1986

Real estate giant faces economic woes

By Rick Hellman

Despite cash-flow problems that apparently threaten the financial health of Kroh Brothers Development Company, the mayor of Leawood says she foresees no problem for the company's luxury Hallbrook development here.

Kroh Brothers last year announced its plans to develop Hallbrook, a 665-acre residential and commercial area based around a golf course, on the Joyce Hall family farm land southwest of Interstate Highway 435 and State Line. Company officials were talking with city planners just last week about final residential plan details, a city staffer said.

Many in the local real estate industry reacted with surprise, if not shock, to the reports of trouble at Kroh Brothers which surfaced last week. There was also concern about the fallout if the company were to take bankruptcy, an eventuality the company denied was imminent this week.

But Jean Wise, a realtor and the Leawood mayor, said she wasn't worried about what might happen in her city.

"They've got such prime property out here tha

somebody would take it over," she said. Kroh Brothers spokeswoman Kathleen Cooper, vice president for marketing, refused to comment on the future of Hallbrook or any other company matter on Tuesday.

In a statement hand-delivered to newsrooms around the city yesterday, the company said changes in the federal tax laws are primarily to blame for the financial difficulties it has been experiencing.

The 75-year-old pillar of the Kansas City real estate community has been shaken in the past week by rumors that it was about to file for bankruptcy. But in its statement, the company said that although it has been having difficulties, its lenders remain willing to work with it.

"Despite an exceptional year of leasing space and new acquisitions, Kroh Brothers has experienced difficulties during the second half of 1986 concerning raising equity capital for some properties," the news release stated. "The Company attributes the immediate situation in large part to the effects of the new Federal tax law on the commercial real estate development industry.

"Kroh Brothers met with its larger lenders on December 11, 1986, to discuss those difficulties. At the conclusion of the meeting, the banks in attendance indicated they are continuing to work with the Company and are addressing the situation. Kroh Brothers believes at this time the banks remain supportive of the Company. Further meetings with the banks have been scheduled in the near future. Pending completion of the Company's negotiations with the banks, no further statements will be issued."

Kroh Brothers was a suburban pioneer with the establishment in the late 1930s of the first homes in Leawood and later of the nearby Ward Parkway shopping center. But in the ensuing years, the company changed its focus from residential development to developing commercial properties like the Plaza West office building it recently leased to U.S. Sprint. Locally, its residential real estate brokerage division has remained a strong force, with about 200 agents.

The company says it presently controls more than 15 million square feet of shopping centers, commercial buildings and residential properties. It reports having holdings in Colorado, Texas, Nebraska, Illinois, Utah, Wyoming, Arizona and Florida as well as in the Kansas City area.

Leawood History:

Sun Newspaper – March 5, 1982

Prehistoric man may have been first Leawoodite

By Thomas McCormally

Leawood — The popularity of Leawood as a residential area is nothing new. In fact, thousands of years ago man is believed to have made his home on the banks of what is now Tomahawk Creek in the southern part of the city.

At least that's what archeologists for the Kansas State Historical Society suspect and they're coming to Leawood next month to investigate.

"Ultimately we hope to find an area for a dig because that is where we learn the most," said Randall M. Thies, archeologist for the historical society, by telephone from Topeka Thursday.

He wrote the city last month to inform them that "two prehistoric archeological sites are known to be present" within the boundaries that the city hopes to begin developing soon as the Tomahawk Creek Greenway for recreational purposes. The archeological survey will cover the entire greenway, which is flood plain and fringes from the city park to about 123rd Street and Roe.

Thies said there have been reports from other archeolgists of findings in two areas along the creek that indicate "people in prehistoric times lived along the creek."

"The area has never been tested to determine if an extensive study would be in order," he said.

The artifacts which have been discoverd date to the "early ceramic era" which commences about the time of the modern Christian era, Theis said. The artifacts include pieces of pottery, arrowheads and knife points.

The survey will commence in April. Theis said he will be looking for surface evidence that would indicate digging might be recommended.

He said the survey will also include close study of the banks of the creek. He said by noting the erosion along the creek, archeologists are able to determine if buried layers of earth might hold findings of prehistoric significance.

"We really don't want to just find places to dig up because believe me, there are plenty of those sites around the state," Theis said.

The entire survey will take no more than two weeks. The city of Leawood will have to pay for the survey, which will cost a maximum of $3,426.22. The survey is a requirement to receive the $411,000 federal grant to develop the greenway.

Theis said if significant sites are discovered, the State Historical Society might recommend altering the location of some parts of the development.

Dick Garofano, city administrator for Leawood, said plans call for developing bicycle, bridle and pedestrian paths along the creek as well as a number of ball fields for softball, soccer and baseball and pedestrian bridges across the creek.

Leawood History:

Sun Newspaper – March 27, 1985

Paid Political Advertisement



Make The Wise Choice!

Jean Wise FOR MAYOR

Twelve Years Of Leawood Leadership

- Leawood Council, 4 Terms
- Elected Council President
- Chairman, 7 Major City Committees
- Alumna, Wellesley College
- Member, Phi Beta Kappa
- 14-year Leawood Resident
- Chairman, Recreation Commission Led Drive for Recreation Complex Initiated Master Plan for Greenway

Leawood

Mayor

Harold Ellis	1,358
Roger Seigel	102
● Jean Wise	1,421