

Make a dream come true!

Rotary
District 5280



ROTARY:
MAKING A
DIFFERENCE

AUGUST 2017



With District support, Rob DeCou (Playa Vista Sunrise), left, will run to raise funds for Polio Plus. (Pages 3–7.)



Rotary Exchange Students in Boston on July 4 during their month-long tour of the U.S. (Pages 15–18.)

Make a Dream Come True!

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“Let’s celebrate and collaborate to truly make a difference.”

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DISTRICT CALENDAR

August

- 1 District grant application window closes
- 5–7 “Rob’s Run” to End Polio Now (Pgs. 3–7)
- 19 President’s Brunch
- 26 District Beach Party & Cardboard Boat Race (Pg. 11)

September

- 9 PRLS (Potential Rotary Leaders Seminar)
- 12 Literacy Breakfast
- 16 PRLS (Potential Rotary Leaders Seminar)

October

- 24 World Polio Day!
- 28 Service trip to Camp Pendleton
- 28 Million Dollar Dinner (Foundation Celebration)

November

- 7 District Breakfast

Photo: Why did this French exchange student gave blood during his Train Tour of the U.S.? Answer on page 18.



“We have until October 1 to reach our \$250,000 goal
for END POLIO NOW.”



YOUR CONTINUING GENEROSITY WILL HELP END POLIO NOW!

By Cozette Vergari, District Governor

GREETINGS DISTRICT 5280 ROTARIANS, family and friends.

I am very excited as we enter the month of August, and **Rob's Run To End Polio** has been embraced with such enthusiasm by the Rotarians of District 5280. We have already raised, or have committed, almost \$60,000 toward our goal of \$83,333.34. With the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation matching funds, we now have approximately \$180,000 toward our goal of a quarter of a million dollars for END POLIO NOW. We have until October 1 to reach that goal. I am confident we will make it because of your wonderful and generous spirit.

Additionally, we have five clubs that are sponsoring locations throughout the District on the evening of

August 7, so that Rotarians may gather together to watch Rob DeCou (Playa Venice Sunrise) cross the finish line at the portal of Mt. Whitney. Join in the fun and wear your End Polio Now T-shirts and wrist bands (see [page 7](#)).

THANK YOU ROB AND ROTARIANS OF DISTRICT 5280 FOR YOUR GENEROSITY OF SPIRIT IN HELPING TO BRING THIS TERRIBLE DISEASE TO AN END, ONCE AND FOR ALL.

WE WILL REVEAL OUR FUNDRAISING RESULTS at our annual Rotary Foundation Celebration: Centennial II Million Dollar Dinner at the JW Marriott LA Live on October 28. Fritz Coleman will be our master of ceremonies. We will be hearing from Dr. Peter Salk,

—continues



“I am honored to be serving as your district governor.

“Remember to make a dream come true in your own individual way.”

—Cozette Vergari

—continues

son of Jonas Salk, who developed the first safe and effective polio vaccine. It will be a night to remember with dining, dancing, and dollars raised. Seats are available through your club and/or the District. Make your reservations ASAP. Raffle tickets have been distributed to your clubs as well. Purchase your book of tickets for a chance to win \$3,000.

PLEASE CHECK THE DISTRICT CALENDAR for the many, many activities and opportunities coming up in District 5280, including the first Presidents’ Brunch at CBS Studios on August 19 and our annual District Picnic and Cardboard Boat Race on August 26. Come join the fun!!!

On behalf of RI President Riseley: *The best time to plant a tree is twenty years ago. The second best time is now.* ★



The
Rotary
Foundation

MILLION DOLLAR
Dinner

FOUNDATION CELEBRATION
CENTENNIAL II



Featuring Emcee
Fritz Coleman
NBC Weatherman and Comedian



Keynote Speaker
Dr. Peter Salk
*Director and President of the
Jonas Salk Legacy Foundation*

OCTOBER 28, 2017

Black Tie Optional

\$135 / person • Self Parking \$10 • Valet Parking \$20

JW MARRIOTT LOS ANGELES L.A. LIVE





ROB DECOU: THE MINDSET OF AN ULTRAMARATHON ATHLETE

By Michael Turner (Woodland Hills)
SAG Communications

Rob DeCou will run in the
Badwater Ultramarathon August 5–7
to support Rotary's fight against polio,
which many compare to an endurance race.

PLAY VENICE SUNRISE ROTARIAN ROB DECOU will embark on the Badwater Ultramarathon from Death Valley to the Mount Whitney Portal on August 5. The three-day run will cover 135 miles from the sweltering desert of the lowest place in the United States (-282 feet) to the mountainous Mount Whitney Portal (8,360 feet)—a gain of 8,642 feet.

Proceeds from the marathon will support Rotary's fight against polio, which many compare to an endurance race. To prepare for this grueling marathon, Rob said he had to grow his mindset. "Where we are in life doesn't mean we have to remain there. You can achieve remarkable feats in your life with the right mindset." Polio can be placed in the same category, because since the mid-1980s Rotary has been fighting the battle to eradicate this debilitating disease.

According to an article in the January 13, 2016 *Harvard Business Review*, "Individuals who believe their talents can be developed (through hard work, good strategies, and input from others) have a growth mindset. They tend to achieve more than those with a more fixed mindset (those who believe their talents are innate gifts). This is because they worry less about looking smart and they put more energy into learning."

—continues





Rob DeCou, as he biked across America to support brain cancer research.

Individual Rotarians
can support Rob's race
by contributing \$18.60, and
clubs can use their resources
to donate to this cause.

—continues

Jenny Susser, a clinical health psychologist specializing in sports psychology at the Women's Sports Medicine Center in New York, said that such traits as "persistence, endless curiosity, a lack of fear when it comes to failure, and a sense of boldness," are part of the psyche of endurance athletes.

PERSISTENCE IS PARTICULARLY CRUCIAL in helping Rob and others maintain a robust training schedule. These athletes also know they must persevere even when they are suffering from excruciating pain. Roger Little, a triathlete, said, "You get into the sport and you talk about it so much that you end up having an image you've created that you have to live up to. You can't just say, 'I've had a bad day.'"

In addition to mindset, Rob said there are two other elements that must be embraced to achieve endurance status: connection with the community and spiritually. "A runner needs to build a deep well of strength, fortitude, and trust with the community," said Rob. "This is accomplished through inspiration from the community." The community offers critical support, resources, and cheering from the sidelines. "My faith also helps get me through the darker aspects of the racing life, including stresses, mental fatigue, and anxiety," commented Rob.

This is not the first time that Rob has taken on an endurance race for charity. Last year he completed the Bike Ride Across America to raise fund to support brain cancer research. Rob's interest in Rotary began 15 years ago when he was a Rotary Exchange Student to India. There he met a man who participated in marathon aerobics, which was an all-day event. From that experience Rob began his journey to become an ultramarathon athlete and to use his races to support Rotary and other charities.

ROTARIANS CAN SUPPORT ROB'S RACE by contributing \$18.60. In addition, clubs can use their resources to donate to this cause. At the recent District Breakfast, it was announced that Playa Vista Sunrise Club raised \$1,060, half of which came from the club's foundation.

You can cheer Rob at the Starting Line Pajama Party on Saturday, August 5 and at the finish on August 7 at five locations across the District. For more information, contact Gail Goldstein, 310-420-4870 or gail.goldstein@avisonyoung.com. ★



STARTING LINE PAJAMA PARTY

Saturday, Aug. 5 from 9–11 a.m.

LAX Coastal Chamber of
Commerce

9100 Sepulveda Blvd., #210, Westchester

RSVP: Gail Goldstein at 310.420.4870 or
gail.goldstein@avisonyoung.com

LOCATIONS FOR ROB-GO-ROB EVENTS

- Saint Felix, 1602 N. Cahuenga Blvd.,
Hollywood
- Hollywood Yorkshire Brewery,
1109 Van Ness Ave.
- Tony P's Dockside Grill,
4445 Admiralty Way, Marina del Rey
- Sagebrush Cantina,
23527 Calabasas Rd., Calabasas



END POLIO NOW



Rob's Run to End Polio

Death Valley to Mt. Whitney Portal - Aug. 5 – 7, 2017



Cheer Rob on at the Finish Line on August 7
at these locations from 5 – 7 p.m.





CHRIS REYES: DISTRICT ROTARACT REPRESENTATIVE

By Sarah Furie (San Fernando Valley Rotaract)
District Rotaract Executive Aide



Chris Reyes and RYLA student Liam Cotton

IF YOU ARE A ROTARIAN who has gone to any District event in recent years, you know this year's District Rotaract Representative (DRR) is Chris Hernandez Reyes. After a full year of being executive aide and having outstanding attendance at district Rotary and Rotaract events, Chris is more than ready to start his year as DRR. His mission is simple: He wants to strengthen the connection between Rotary, Rotaract, and Interact. He said, "My vision is to provide a smooth transition for members to move from one level to the next, while staying committed to who they are. I want to push for more representation of youth and demonstrate the hidden potential they have." Bottom line: Chris wants better cohesion between Rotary programs.

One of his main goals is to support youth programs, and he looks forward to working closely with DG Cozette Vergari. "Cozette is an excellent Rotarian who embodies both 'Service Above Self' and empowerment of youth," commented

Chris. "I thank her for showing so much support for the Interactors and Rotaractors. She is a role model I want to follow when I become a Rotarian!" The more support we have from Rotarians, the more we can bridge the gap between Rotary's youth programs and Rotary.

CHRIS IS A SENIOR AT UCLA studying psychology. After thriving in Interact for three years, he joined Rotaract and has been going above and beyond ever since, holding leadership positions in his UCLA Rotaract club, being a RYLA counselor, visiting Rotaract clubs all over L.A., networking with Rotarians, speaking at District events, assisting previous District representatives, going on District humanitarian trips, and participating in numerous service events. He encourages anyone who wants to learn more about Rotaract to come to one of their monthly meetings. You can find out more information at rotaractla.org/ or find them on Facebook. ★



Promoting PEACE
is one of Rotary's
six areas of focus.



DISTRICT PEACE INITIATIVES

THE PEACE COMMITTEE HAS SEVERAL ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS planned for its "Rotary Making a Difference" Year!

★ **QUARTERLY PEACE WEBINARS**

6:30–7:30 p.m. on Tuesdays August 22, November 28, February 27, and May 22

Contact Peace Chair PDG Vicki Radel to be notified of the zoom link to participate.

DrVictoriaRadel@cs.com

★ **PEACE CONVERSATION FACILITATOR CERTIFICATION TRAINING**

Saturdays September 30 and November 4
9 a.m.–3:30 p.m., lunch included
110 S. La Brea Ave., Inglewood, 90301

Two days of training for peace chairs and Rotarians. In one-on-one and group sessions, learn from the pros how to better handle difficult topics such as human sex trafficking and sensitive law enforcement encounters.

DG Cozette will award certificates at the conclusion of the second day of training.

★ **PEACE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION THROUGH THE LENS OF TECHNOLOGY**

Saturday October 14, Noon–3p.m.

CSULA Campus lab
5151 State University Dr.
Los Angeles, 90032

A hands-on workshop offered by Professor Manisha Javeri.

OTHER WAYS TO PROMOTE PEACE

Clubs are encouraged to consider sponsoring a "Rotary Peace Bench" in a local school or park. In our District we want to help end conflict at an early age by helping students develop the power of inclusion, kindness, apology, and forgiveness.

Our District also has peace topic speakers, a Peace Project Grants database, and a Distinct Peace Projects Calendar.

For information, contact Peace Committee Chair PDG Vicki Radel at DrVictoriaRadel@cs.com. ★



*Always have
a plan, and
believe in it.*

*Nothing
happens
by accident.*

—Chuck Knox



What is your club's plan to add new members?



MEMBERSHIP NOOK

By Kathleen Terry (Manhattan Beach), SAG Membership

DO YOU HAVE A MEMBERSHIP PLAN FOR YOUR CLUB? If not, why not? Success is built on planning. We all know how important it is to have a plan for our business and life, but how many of your clubs have a written membership plan for the year on what you will specifically do to increase and retain your members?

A membership plan is a document that outlines your club's objectives and strategies for retention and recruitment. This document will serve as a guide while you work toward your membership goals and will also allow you to track your club's progress. It is important to create a plan and actively engage your club members in its

implementation to ensure your club's strength and vitality.

The District membership committee is here to help you develop this plan. Contact Kathleen Terry, SAG Membership, at 310.545.4046 or terrymanna2@gmail.com. ★



Rotary



District 5280 Beach Party & Cardboard Boat Race

Saturday, August 26, 2017

5:00 to 9:00 pm

Seaside Lagoon

200 Portofino Way

Redondo Beach

Fabulous food!
Chili Competition!
Music!
Karaoke Contest!
Beer & Wine available for purchase!

Register online between July 1 & August 25
Ages 17 & Under \$1.00 (day of event \$2.00)
Ages 18 –30 \$4.00 (day of event \$5.00)
Ages 31 & Over \$8.00 (day of event \$10.00)

Make a Dream Come True!



AUGUST 2017

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Rotary
District 5280





Jan Howell
(President, Crenshaw Watts)



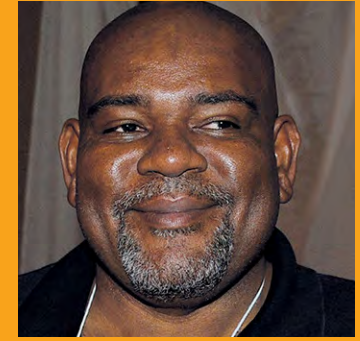
Tom Larmore
(President, Santa Monica)



Paul Gross
(President, Woodland Hills)



Peter Molker
(President, San Pedro)



Jonathan Harman
(President, Latinos Unidos)

A Panel of Five District 5280 Delegates Expound on What Was Best About the 2017 RI Convention in Atlanta

A TREASURE TROVE OF NEW IDEAS TO GROW OUR CLUBS

By Lorine Parks (Downey), Senior Correspondent

"WE HAVE THE TOOLS AND THE ABILITY TO ACCOMPLISH ANYTHING WE WANT IN THE AREA OF COMMUNITY SERVICE. WE JUST NEED TO PUT THEM TO WORK!"

Jan Howell, immediate past president of Crenshaw Watts Rotary, spoke these enthusiastic words about the Atlanta International Conference. Jan previously participated in one international meeting, in Lisbon, and she came back from this one to tell her club what she had learned: "The importance of leading people where they want to go!"

Learning best practices from successful projects is a major purpose of the conference. Jane said that workshops and breakout sessions were important to her, and that was echoed by other District participants as well.

"I learned about myriad projects other clubs are doing," said **Tom Larmore**, president of the Santa Monica Club. "The most useful breakout session was about doing mini-projects at a meeting. We're definitely planning to adopt that idea."

"The break-out sessions were so popular," added Tom.

"Those rooms were too small to accommodate the number of people who wanted to attend. At other conventions you could move from session to session if the one you chose initially wasn't what you expected. Here, there was no chance to move to another session because the room would be full."

"I did have opportunities to meet with local Rotarians in informal settings and meet a few new presidents in Atlanta. We had the chance to compare notes" said Tom. "I thought the general session speakers were excellent, particularly Bill Gates."

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“Rotary is truly dedicated to an image change,” said Jan, “and to the importance of joining the tech revolution.”

WHAT ABOUT ATLANTA AS A CHOICE OF VENUE?

“The mayor of Atlanta was the most impressive speaker,” said Jane.

“I liked Atlanta,” chimed in **Paul Gross**, president of the Woodland Hills club. “I went to the MLK Center and enjoyed that very much. It was quite moving.”

“I really ‘got’ the magnitude of RI’s worldwide scope,” said Paul. “It’s hard to comprehend fully until you see 35,000 Rotarians from all around the world.”

“I thought the presentation of the flags from 200 countries was the most memorable moment of the week,” said **Pete Mokler**, president of the San Pedro Club, who was attending his first international conference. “People came, many in traditional or ceremonial dress from their cultures, to cheer as one for each other.”

“I loved the House of Friendship,” added Paul. “The House of Friendship was this huge convention hall with hundreds of booths that ranged from vendors selling Rotary pins, shirts, hats, etc., to booths that were project-specific and staffed by Rotarians or volunteers from those projects.”

“It was fun and informative walking the convention hall and meeting Rotarians from all around the world,” Paul said.

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Jonathan Harmon (Club Rotario de Latinos Unidos) is flanked by Austin Ogbah, left, and Gabriel Nzeogwu, both from the Markudi Bay Club in Nigeria District 9125.

“I really ‘got’ the magnitude of RI’s worldwide scope.”
It’s hard to comprehend fully until you see
35,000 Rotarians from all around the world.”
—Paul Gross (Woodland Hills)



PANELISTS' MOST LASTING IMPRESSIONS OF CONVENTION?

TOM: "That Rotary is truly an amazing organization."

JAN: "The impressive commitment at the highest levels to make Rotary more relevant to younger people and more accessible to those with less income."

PAUL: "What was important to me was hearing how clubs grew themselves in these changing times; how change is necessary to grow; and how we must do a better job relaying the Rotary mission."

PETE: "The rich trove of Rotary lore will be useful for me in planning a meaningful year for our members as president of my club. Communication and storytelling can convey the heart of Rotary to members and guests."

JONATHAN: "Being presented a homemade dashiki made to my size by my wonderful friend Austin Ogbah, from the Markudi Bay Rotary Club in Nigeria District 9125."

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"The variety and availability of food on the site was great, too," said Jane.

AN AIM OF THE CONVENTION IS TO BE IMMERSSED IN DIVERSE CULTURES. For developing rich relationships, we turn to **Jonathan Harmon**, president of Club Rotario de Latinos Unidos. Jonathan's first conference was in Seoul, South Korea, where he said the best experience was "making new friends from all around the world. This year in Atlanta I reconnected with those friends."

Of the sessions and speakers, Jonathan was most impressed with former Atlanta mayor Andrew Young.

"He's fascinating. He's been a minister, UN diplomat, and mayor of Atlanta, and it was a very memorable experience. Also a great experience was hearing Bill Gates reaffirm his support for Rotary and the fight against polio."

"I got great information on global grants and building membership through breakout sessions," Jonathan said. "It was discouraging to miss out on popular breakout sessions because of limited space. Otherwise I found the convention very meaningful."

"The break-out sessions were very informative. More break-out sessions," urged Paul. ★



RI Convention General Session #3, July 13, 2017.



TRAINS, TEENS, AND NO AUTOMOBILES

By Diane Davis (Downey), 2017 Train Tour Chaperone

IMAGINE, 47 TEENAGERS FROM 18 COUNTRIES with six chaperones visiting 13 cities, nine states, and Washington, D.C. in 33 days on a train. This is not a Saturday night sitcom. It's the SCANEX (So Cal, Arizona, Nevada, Utah, and Hawaii) Rotary Youth Exchange (RYE) USA Train Tour. To make things even more exciting, this is the 20th anniversary of the tour, originated and hosted by DGN Melody (Hollywood) and Paul (LA5) St. John.

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Mathis Bergay from France donated his blood at the American Red Cross headquarters in Washington, D.C.

... if students experience different cultures and meet people from all around the world, they will be more understanding of people from different countries.

—continues

"We had a great year in 1997 with our first exchange student, Fredrico "Fede" Zuntini, from Argentina," Melody explained, "but we realized that he had only experienced California. It's a big country with so much to see, and Paul devised a way to show Fede the rest of the country." With 47 eager Rotary Exchange Students in tow, Paul and Melody made their first trek across the U.S. via Amtrak. "The trip has evolved over the years," Paul said. "It hasn't been without its challenges." The train tour groups have weathered hurricanes, flooded train tracks, and even a dislocated shoulder for Paul. But they keep coming back for more.

MELODY AND PAUL HAVE EMBRACED Rotary International's goal of promoting peace around the world through the Rotary Youth Exchange program. The rationale follows the logic that if students experience different cultures and meet people from all around the world, they will be more understanding of people from different countries. Rotary expects that this understanding will lead to a more interconnected and peaceful world.

Serving as a chaperone this year was Jonas Mueller from Switzerland. Jonas was in the same train seat in 2008 when he was an exchange student —continues



The Train Tour made a stop in Evanston, Ill., where students and chaperones visited Rotary's international headquarters. Pictured from the left are Melody (Hollywood) and Paul St. John (LA5), Diane Davis (Downey), Joe Harding, and former exchange student Jonas Muller, from Switzerland.

When asked to describe a favorite moment or favorite tourist attraction, the students always commented about the cultural and human exchanges they experienced.

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in Arizona. He pursued a career as a pharmacist and had not been able to fulfill his dream to return to the train tour until this year. "Being responsible for the safety and well-being of the students allowed me to view the tour from a different perspective," he said. "Of course, being the last one to go to bed and the first one to get up was not as relaxing as simply enjoying the tour as a student, but it was worth it."

While the RYE students were treated to many beautiful sights around the U.S., they were also challenged with communal living, long train rides (12 to 48 hours), and hot, humid weather. Despite the long days of sightseeing, many of the students rose early to take a morning run with chaperone Joe Harding. "They had to wait for me a lot, because I didn't run as fast, but I am so glad I went to see the sights with no crowds there," explained Louise Wagenaar from Belgium.

WHEN ASKED TO DESCRIBE A FAVORITE MOMENT OR FAVORITE TOURIST ATTRACTION, the students always commented about the cultural and human exchanges they experienced. "I had to get all my hugs in during the train tour," said Uzma Hussain from India. "Hugging is such an American thing, and I love it."

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“The train tour gave me unforgettable memories,” commented Elisa Selis from Italy. It is important to note here that Elisa met Bea Sanna on the train tour. The girls had both spent their exchange year in California, but Bea was in Northern California and Elisa in Southern California. They became fast friends on the train. Imagine their surprise when they came to realize that they live only 10 minutes away from each other in Sardinia, Italy.

WITH TRAIN TOUR TRADITIONS like river rafting in Montana’s Glacier National Park followed by a volleyball match with the guides, visiting RI headquarters and meeting Past President John Germ and **President** Ian Riseley, or face painting on the Charles River in Boston on the Fourth of July before the spectacular fireworks show, it is hard to choose just one place or moment that was the most memorable.

Florian Schickel from Germany described the train tour this way, “It is a magical way of seeing the best of the U.S. in a little more than a month. If I could do it again, I would.”

It is possible that a new train tour tradition was started this year by Mathis Bergay from France. Motivated by Rotary’s volunteer spirit, Mat arranged to donate his blood at the American Red Cross headquarters in Washington, D.C. “It’s something I’ve wanted to do this entire year,” he said. Mat went on to say, “I didn’t want to donate at home. I wanted to donate in the U.S.” Perhaps this was a way of giving thanks or leaving a little of himself behind. When asked about the experience, Mat said simply, “It was fun.”

After 20 Train Tours, Melody and Paul
have inspired 917 students,
clocked 291.4 million steps, and
created thousands of beautiful memories.



Rotary Exchange Students in Boston July 4 during their month-long tour of the U.S.

Fede, Melody and Paul’s first exchange student, is now an award-winning architect in Argentina. Is it possible that being exposed to the beautiful architecture in Chicago inspired his creativity?

AFTER 20 TRAIN TOURS, Melody and Paul have inspired 917 students, clocked 291.4 million steps, and created thousands of beautiful memories. In a note to her friends on the train, Laura Balaguer from Spain summed the trip up like this, “This was amazing, and I will never forget it. Every place we’ve been to, all the people we’ve met along the way, all the hours spent on the train sleeping, talking, playing, or trying to figure out “Black Magic,” all these moments are going to be with me as well as you guys. Thank you for everything. We did it. It was for us, and we did our best to create a family. And you know what? We are a family now. I love you. I wish all of you a safe trip home and a life full of happiness.” ★



Young Alex with his dad, Downey Rotarian Raul Lopez. Circa 1985.



FATHER AND SON TAKE TURNS STEERING THE DOWNEY CLUB

By Lorine Parks (Downey), Senior Correspondent

WITH THE INAUGURATION OF ALEX LOPEZ as club president in June, Downey has its first father-son presidents: Raul (1994–95) and now Alex (2017–18).

What makes this combination different? The son had every auspicious omen working for him, almost from conception, while his father's story is one of hardship and incredible determination.

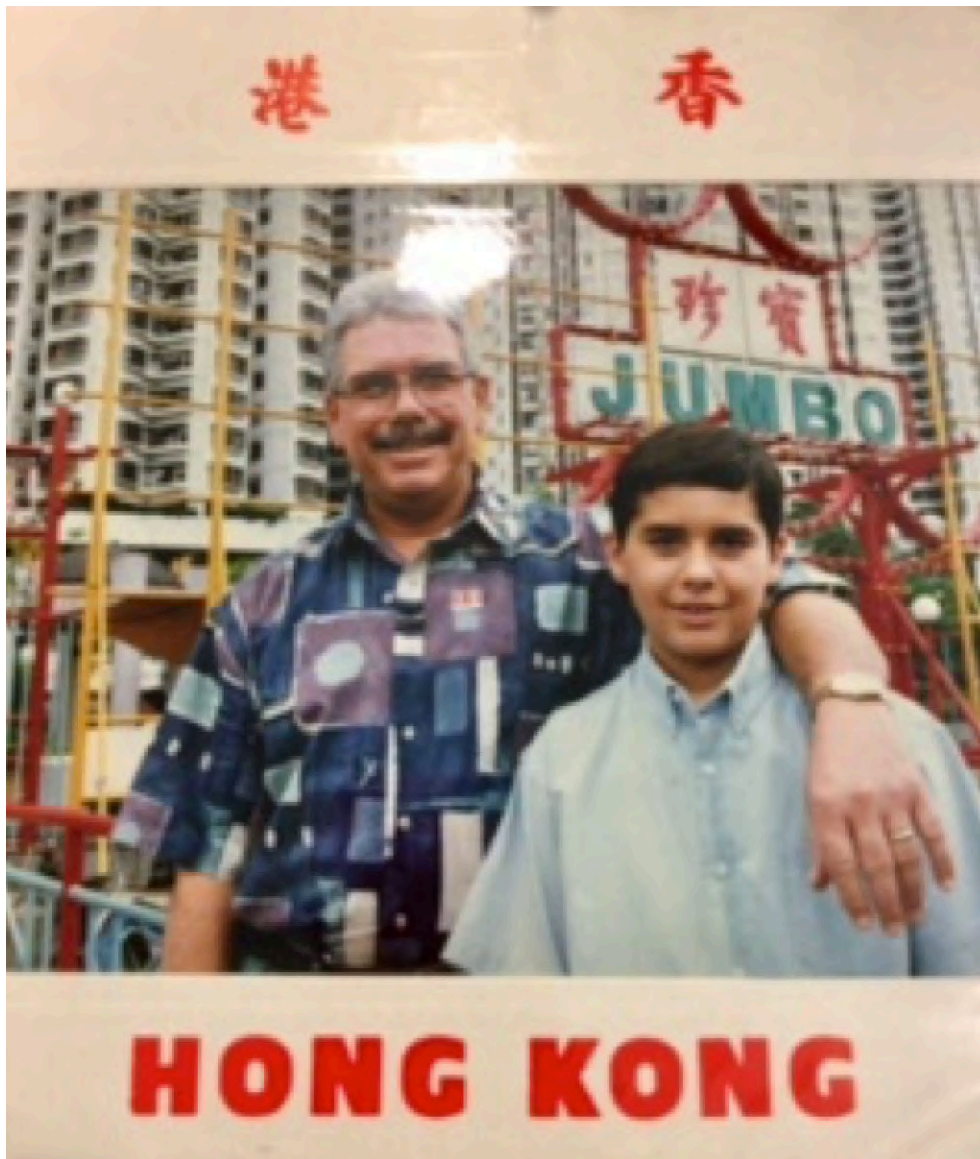
Back in 1983, when future DG Bill Bowermaster was president of the Downey Club, his wife, Greta, held a tea for new members' wives, then called Rotary Anns. (Women were not allowed to be Rotarians until 1987.)

Arlene Lopez's husband, Raul, had just joined the club, and Greta greeted Arlene with, "How nice that you're pregnant. We haven't had a pregnant Rotary Ann for a long time." The baby Greta Bowermaster was welcoming was the yet-to-be-born Alex.

But to get to this charmed moment, Raul Lopez, a native of Havana, had determined to make a better life for himself than what was possible in Cuba under Fidel Castro. In 1971 he fled his native country, immigrating to Spain, where he worked in the fields cutting sugar cane with a machete, a skill he learned in the lush fields around Havana.

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As an 11-year old, Alex attended his first Rotary convention in 1993 in Taipei. He is pictured here in Hong Kong during a post-convention trip with his dad, Raul, whose hair turned gray in the service of Rotary. Today it is white.

Alex was born the year Raul joined Downey Rotary.
A short time later Raul began taking Alex to Rotary meetings.
When it came time to introduce guests at luncheon,
Raul stood Alex on a chair, and Alex would wave to the members.

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Two years later Raul immigrated to the United States, and when he arrived in California he set two goals: to go into the insurance field and sell a one million dollar policy, and to wed a beautiful woman. He succeeded on both counts, becoming a successful insurance professional and marrying Arlene, a widow, a native of Santiago de Cuba, and a Los Angeles-area CPA. And that is how Arlene happened to go to that Rotary tea and meet the Rotary Anns who would welcome baby Alex. Raul and Arlene live in Downey, where Arlene is a member and past president of the Soroptimist Club.

ALEX WAS BORN THE YEAR RAUL JOINED THE DOWNEY ROTARY, and it was only a short time later that Raul began bringing Alex to Rotary meetings. “I remember eating the ice cream,” Alex says. When it came time to introduce guests at luncheon, Raul would stand Alex on a chair, and Alex would wave to the members.

In less than 10 years, Raul became the club’s president. And because of the untimely resignation of the president-elect in 1993, Raul had to leapfrog into the presidency without the usual PETS training. However, he and his family were able to go to the international convention in Taipei. So at age 11, Alex attended his first Rotary convention.

Raul recounts that during a post-convention train trip from Hong Kong into mainland China the family went to a farmer’s market. Alex saw animals in the

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stalls and wanted to go in because he thought it was a pet shop. In they went, but Alex soon learned that these “pets” were there to be slaughtered for someone’s meal.

Raul had been married when he lived in Cuba and had four daughters. So, as he said, “I am sensitive to the cause of women. And I think they have contributed great quality to Rotary since they have joined.” Having a boy opened up a whole new world for Raul.

ALEX CONTINUED TO MAKE VISITS TO THE CLUB, and the members watched him grow up. From an early age Alex has known older members, like the legendary Art Morris, who lived well into his 90s. The club has shared memories of expected and unexpected deaths as well as the introduction of vibrant new members and seeing members fade into Alzheimer’s. Alex has been on hand to see members bring their children, and over the years Raul’s hair has turned from dark brown to gray to a snowy white to frame his still-youthful face.

The Downey Club is a tight-knit one, and like other clubs, is always planning ways to have fun while doing good, such as staging a Fishing Derby at Downey’s Wilderness Park Lake, which Alex and Raul would attend, for the enjoyment of clients of the ARC.

Active Rotarians played a part in Alex’s education, too. He went to pre-school and early elementary grades at Kirkwood Christian School, owned by club member Bill Kirkwood. Rotarian Ed Sussman, superintendent of the Downey Unified School District, teased Alex, saying that by knowing him Alex would get a “free pass” at Sussman Middle School, when Downey’s South Middle School was named for Ed. Alas, Alex soon learned that in life there are no free passes.

AS ALEX GREW OLDER HIS BURNING AMBITION WAS TO BECOME A ROTARIAN, TOO. After graduating from UCLA, he began his professional life with Wescom, Raul’s company. But Wescom would only pay for one Rotary member per club. Alex would have to join a different club if the company were to sponsor him, too.

—continues



Alex and his twin chances for Downey’s future club presidents.

This father and son enjoyed participating
in the Fishing Derby, sponsored by
Downey Rotarians for the enjoyment
of the clients of the ARC.



Alex achieved his greatest wish
when he was installed as 93rd president of
the Rotary Club of Downey in June this year.
At 33, he is also one the youngest presidents.

—continues

So Raul took Alex to several clubs to try them out. Matt Kinley, former president of the Downey Club, had moved to Long Beach, where he'd become a member and then president of the Long Beach Club in District 5320. Matt was willing and ready to sponsor Alex into his club, but Alex said, "You know what, Dad, this doesn't feel right. I want to be a Downey Rotarian." The family reorganized its priorities, and Wescom sponsored Alex.

So in 2009, Alex had his wish and joined the Downey Club as a full member, not

in a special category like Young Professional, although that is what he is. He has diligently worked in numerous ways, like organizing the Christmas cookie sale drive, planning the club Christmas party, and staging Movie Night, a fun-raiser that also pays its way. Alex and friends took responsibility for running a Rotary booth to sell firecrackers (legal in Downey), and he worked enthusiastically as youth liaison with the two local high school Interact clubs. He also staged several of the Club's signature 10K Winners' Nights, which his father introduced 22 years earlier to raise money for local projects.

Alex has moved on professionally, first into car sales and then back to insurance with an independent company. He married Jenette, a nurse who bought a car from him and who is also a Rotarian. And guess what club she belongs to.

ALEX ACHIEVED HIS GREATEST WISH when he was installed as 93rd president of the Rotary Club of Downey in June this year. At 33, he is also one the youngest presidents. Are there little Lopezes coming who might carry on the family tradition? Alex and Jenette have not one but two: identical twin boys, Nathaniel and Benjamin. Grandpa Raul and Grandma Arlene are proud! They may have to take turns, but they seem destined to be future presidents of the Rotary Club of Downey. ★

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Rotary
District 5280



Make a Dream Come True!



AUGUST 2017

01 02 03 04 05 06 07 08 09 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29





PDG Jay Saltzman and his wife, Ferne, celebrated their 59th wedding anniversary and the 4th of July at the Bowl.

Honoring the Red, White, and Blue

CELEBRATING THE FOURTH OF JULY WITH FELLOW ROTARIANS

By Bette Hall (Calabasas), SAG Youth

IT'S BECOME A TRADITION to celebrate the Fourth of July at the Hollywood Bowl with Rotarians from across the District. Red, white, and blue were definitely the colors of choice that evening, which was sponsored by the Calabasas Club. PDG Jay Saltzman sported a full-blown patriotic shirt. He was joined by his lovely wife, Ferne, as they celebrated their 59th—yes, folks!—their 59th wedding anniversary. We were so honored that they chose to spend the evening with us, and we wished them many more anniversaries.

As the sun dropped, much to the relief of all, the night grew cooler, and the program began! The US Air Force Band of the Golden West kept us applauding and cheering as they played tributes to each service branch. In keeping with tradition, military members of the audience were asked to stand and be recognized for their service to our country when their particular service branch was announced. It was so stirring and moving as these brave men and women received the applause they so deserve!

On to the program and the headliner, Pentatonix, that joined the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra under the

Bowl's canopy. The group serenaded us with a variety of songs, most performed with the orchestra, some *a cappella*. Who can forget their amazing rendition of *Hallelujah*, which gave us goosebumps! Those who attended the event sang the praises of Pentatonix.

THEN CAME THE HIGHLIGHT OF THE EVENING: THE FIREWORKS! The Air Force Band joined the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra to present a musical backdrop to the spectacular fireworks display! The consensus was that the Hollywood Bowl outdid itself this year, as we all "oohed" and "aahed" watching the amazing spectacle! All too soon, the evening was over and we all wended our way back to our buses, feeling full of pride in our country, our heads full of patriotic songs, and already looking forward to July 3, 2018!

So many folks were looking for tickets after we were sold out. So plan on joining us next year as we celebrate our country's birthday with fun, fellowship, and food.

Thank you to Calabasas' Past President Sally Goya for chairing the event. ★

Military members
of the audience
were recognized for their
service to our country.
It was stirring and moving
as these brave
men and women
received the applause
they so deserve!





Imaginative Club Project

TEXAS HOLD'EM SENDS STUDENTS TO COLLEGE

By Lorine Parks (Downey), Senior Correspondent



ON JUNE 17, THE PARAMOUNT CLUB WELCOMED THE COMMUNITY to its annual "Dollars for Scholars" Poker Tournament. The evening's proceeds are used to support students from the Paramount United School District who want to go to college.

Past President John Berg originated the, event, which offers fun, food, and fellowship, all for a good cause.

Gus's Deli BBQ and Grill served up their famous barbecue tri-tip and pulled-pork sandwiches. Owner Gus was a great host as well as a pretty good poker player.

Festivities kicked off with a Happy Hour Poker Lesson before the serious dealing started at 6:30. Drawings were held throughout the evening, and at 11:30 the top 15 players walked away with prizes in hand.

"Hopefully," said President Niranjan "Nick" Pardasani, "we will do even better this coming year."

Paramount Rotary Club, which celebrated 62 years on July 1 this year, shows another example of Rotarians having fun while doing good for their community. ★

Businesses that donated prizes included:

Ace Auto	J. Valentine
Alondra Hot Wings	Lindsey Lumber Co.
Apple Care	Los Cerritos YMCA
Break Zone	Marukan
Corleone Italian Cuisine	Napa Auto Parts, Paramount
CS Dash Covers, Inc.	Paramount Furniture
Ed Janik, Farmers Insurance	Paramount Skating Rink
HD Supply	Iceland

Make a Dream Come True! ★ AUGUST 2017



SAVE THE DATE

LAX Community Relations Aviation Career Day



The Sky's the Limit! Aviation Career Day provides local students the opportunity to learn about the exciting and challenging career paths in the aviation and aerospace industries. The event will feature interactive aviation and aerospace-related exhibits, and military and civilian displays. It is a great opportunity for students to get a real hands-on look into the aviation industry and network with many individuals.

Join us November 8, 2017 | 9:00 a.m. to 12 p.m.



ENGAGING IN COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS





CLUB 62

News from District 5280 Clubs



Rotarians give back in many ways, including volunteering at the new Wallis Annenberg Pet Space in Playa Vista. Picured are Nora MacLellan (Westchester) and Jeff J. Kim (Playa Venice Sunrise).



—continues



New Rotary Opportunity to Network, Socialize, and Help Our Communities

The “South Bay Friends of Rotary” is forming to give Rotarians an opportunity to meet monthly at a brewery or wine tasting room to network and socialize. We are inviting members of all District clubs to join us. Every evening will have a purpose, such as assembling bag lunches for the homeless.

In addition, there will be an opportunity to hear about the activities of the South Bay clubs. Maybe you want to steal an idea for your club?

FIRST SOCIAL

Sunday, September 21 from 6:30–8:30 p.m.
Strand Brewery, 2201 Dominguez St., Torrance



Club Rotario De Latinos Unidos held its 12th annual Mariachi USA Fundraiser on July 1. The event featured a pre-party with food, drinks, music, and raffles before guests headed via charter buses to the Hollywood Bowl for a night of Mariachi music and fireworks! Proceeds will fund scholarships for high school students. ★

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OTHER DISTRICT NEWS



Rotarians participated in the "Peace Walk for Life." Saturday, July 15, was a fine day for a parade in honor of PCI (People for Community Improvement). The event represented the 8th consecutive year that District Rotary clubs participated in the "Peace Walk for Life" to support PCI's efforts to respect life and reduce violence via gang intervention/suppression, job re-entry, youth programs, anti-human trafficking, and food distribution to the hungry. The District came out in full force, with about 50 walking for Greater Peace in District 5280! Photo: People for Community Improvement Parade

Tops in Polio Plus Giving

It has been a great Rotary Foundation Year in Zone 26. Congratulations on your efforts to come on strong at the end of the year.

Top 3 in Polio Plus Giving:

1. **District 5280: \$431,678**
(#2 District in the Rotary World!)
2. District 5340: \$180,684
3. District 5320: \$153,155

Our Zone 26 is #6 in the Rotary World in Total Contributions: \$8,294,084. Something to be proud of!!

Let's keep up the good work in 2017–18 and show the world that Rotary is Making a Difference. ★

