

# Rotary Club of Arlington



# Hubcap

The Official Weekly Publication of the Rotary Club of Arlington

July 1, 2021

*In this edition: The Year That Almost Wasn't, Installation of Board, New Members, & more...*

## Kurt's Korner

By Kurt Bartley



New Year Greetings! July 1<sup>st</sup> is our new Rotary Year, 2021-22.

Let me begin with a story. Each new Rotary year we plan to grow our membership. In order to do so we each need to remember HOW we joined Rotary. Someone invited us. A good friend, Michael, invited me to a breakfast meeting in 2004. He also invited me to a service project, a Christmas party for low-income families. I was hooked and joined.

Who invited you? If they hadn't, would you be enjoying the benefits of being a Rotarian today? Who will you invite this year to show them what they're missing in the great Rotary Club of Arlington?

THANK YOU to Susie McAlister and her team for an exceptional year in one that almost wasn't. Now we continue building the Rotary Club of Arlington in our 99<sup>th</sup> year. Join me and my team as we ramp into our Centennial year 2022-23!

Our theme this year is "Serve to Change Lives." Rotary International President, Shekhar Mehta, is "urges Rotarians to become more involved doing service projects. Caring for and serving others is the best way to live because it changes not only other people's lives, but also our own." You are

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## THIS WEEK AT ROTARY Mary German, ED and Cynthia Will

**"40 Futures Initiative"**

**COMING SOON**

July 8

Bud Kennedy

Eats Beat

## IT HAPPENED LAST THURSDAY

By Lynn Stavinoha

The June 24, 2021 Rotary meeting is more aptly titled Rotary Celebration. We gathered at the Rolling Hills Country Club in the evening and everyone was delighted to be 'gathered' in person. The room was filled with joyful Rotarians. At approximately 6:35pm, President Susie McAlister called the celebration to Order with the ringing of the bell. President Susie invited Victoria Farrar-Myers to come forward to lead us in the prayer. While Victoria made her way to the microphone, President Susie reminded us to keep our fellow Rotarians whom we lost in the past year in our thoughts- Tom Whitman, Bill Hinds and Hugh Ross. Victoria led us in prayer and the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. Donna Mack lead us in the singing of "God Bless America"

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Rotary  
PEOPLE OF ACTION

The Rotary Club of Arlington  
PO Box 121045 Arlington, Texas 76012 – [www.ArlingtonRotary.com](http://www.ArlingtonRotary.com)  
Founded May 29, 1923 – Charter Number 1493 – Issued June 11, 1923 – District 5790 – Club 1763  
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invited to engage in, invite someone to, and suggest ideas for Community Service (Derrick Kinney) and International Service (Scott Hendricks).

***Kurt Bartley,***  
**President, 2021-22**



**99 people attended the Installation Dinner and a good time was had by all.**



**Derrick Kinney receives his well-deserved Distinguished Rotarian award.**

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after Walter Virden gave us the 'intro and key'.

President Susie had all of our guests stand to be recognized. In a room full of Rotarians and friends, it was difficult to tell who was a guest because everyone looked like family. There were close to 100 persons present in the room.

President Susie called Peter Scott, past District Governor and current Club Membership Chair, to come forward for a special induction of three (3) new Rotarians. Peter told only a snippet about each new proposed member and promised there would be more to come as each of them will give a classification talk at an upcoming meeting in the new year of Rotary. (We have a LOT of reasons to look forward to a new year in Rotary!) The three new proposed members include: Kailey Broussard a reporter for the Fort Worth Star-Telegram and a true rising star in Arlington; Dr. Nathaniel Hearne, an educator, motivational speaker, and founder of MINDSMADEUP.org.; and Barry Bondurant, (we already thought he was a member of our Club as he visited so often) a retired fire fighter. Peter inducted the new members and they received their badges, pins and packets. It is official the Rotary Club of Arlington has three new members.

Dan Blumberg was recognized and he presented "The Year that Almost Wasn't". This was the eighth time that Dan has taken the time, effort and love to write a recap of the Rotary Year. Dan's recap is a very fitting tribute to President Susie and all Rotarians within the Arlington Rotary Club on our perseverance and adaptability. A standing ovation was giving to President Susie during Dan's presentation as we all recognized Susie was the right Rotarian for times such as these. This reporter hopes (hint, hint) that the full written recap from Dan is printed in a future Hubcap. Dan concluded by 'confessing' that he shares the writing of the yearly recaps with the person whom he shares his life- his wife Charna.

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### ZOOM LINK FOR OUR NEXT MEETING

Click This Link to Join Our Zoom Meeting

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88294278772?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88294278772?pwd=QytrelQ3bitINVFEed2xKVFlaNiNtQT09)

[pwd=QytrelQ3bitINVFEed2xKVFlaNiNtQT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88294278772?pwd=QytrelQ3bitINVFEed2xKVFlaNiNtQT09)

Meeting ID: 882 9427 8772

Passcode: 1923

One tap mobile

+13462487799,,88294278772#,,,,,0#,,1923# US (Houston

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President Susie presented the two annual Rotary awards. She presented the Rotarian of the Year award to someone who is always smiling, cheerful and willing to get things done- Sally Hopper. As has become a 'custom' this year, Sally was unable to be with us in person; however, President Susie called Sally and presented the award via teleconference. Sally was able to hear us cheer and we were able to enjoy her joyful voice. The Distinguished Rotarian Award was presented to a person who represents all of the best ideas of Rotary and lives them- Derrick Kinney. Wonderful Awards to two very deserving, wonderful Rotarians.

Finally, the moment President Susie was looking forward to—the passing of the gavel and the installation of new officers. President Susie in her true manner, first thanked her current Board for the year 2020-21 - it was a Vintage Year and with her maiden name being Wine, each board member received a bottle of wine as a gift from Susie. Past Rotary International Director, Don Mebus performed the installation ceremony for the incoming 2021-22 Officers and Directors of the Rotary Club of Arlington. Everyone said 'I will' .... Including all Rotarians present who confirmed with an 'I will' when asked if we would support the new officers and directors. So, again, it is official we have a new board and we will carry on the ideas of Rotary by supporting the board and serving others above ourselves.

Past-president Susie was presented an official, flown-in from Hawaii lei by president elect Victoria Farrar-Myers. She also received a beautiful, glass-blown rose made by the student artists at UTA and a gift certificate for a full day of pampering at the Sanford House Inn and Spa. Derrick Kinney and Mary Tom Curnutt reminded us how 'fun' and challenging the year had been by recreating a typical ZOOM meeting of Rotary. (This alone should be a reason for you to NEVER miss another life event of the Rotary Club of Arlington- some things cannot be written and believed...

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### CONGRATULATIONS!

Rotarians celebrating their club anniversary of "Service Above Self."

Walter Virden

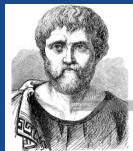
23 Years June 30, 1998



Past R.I. Director, Don Mebus, begins installing the 2021-2022 Officers and Directors.



“Every new beginning comes from some other beginnings end.”



Seneca



The Rotary Club of Arlington

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**Past Presidents Mary Tom and Derrick reenact the year just past. It was tons of fun.**

*Photo by April Pettitt*



**President Elect Victoria with Jason and Kyle.**

*Photo by April Pettitt.*

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they have to be seen to be believed!).

President Kurt Bartley gave us inspiring words for the upcoming year. God gave us an inspiring sun set off of the greens of Rolling Hills Country Club. And with the reciting of the Four Way Test, President Kurt adjourned the meeting. 🌻

## The Year That Almost Wasn't By Dan Blumberg

I must start this speech with a disclaimer. As we all know, both within the Rotary Club of Arlington and in the greater world, this has not been a funny year. I always try to make this presentation both entertaining and informative and enjoy making you laugh. Although I have made that same effort this year, it has been much more difficult. I thought of inserting some of the many puns that Tom Ware shared on Facebook during the year, but I figured you had already suffered enough. There was less to laugh about this year so, unfortunately, there will be less to laugh about as I present "That Was the Year That Almost Wasn't."

The prayer of every Rotary club president is: Please, Lord, don't let the club die on my watch. And I have proof. Our outgoing club president, Susie McAlister, liked that line so much that she put it in her last Hubcap column after I mentioned it to her when we spoke about the club's accomplishments of this Rotary year. Some club presidents worry about declining membership. Others are concerned about whether the weekly programs offered are sufficiently interesting to keep us coming to meetings. Still others hope that the club's service opportunities are adequate to keep us involved and that enough members will participate. But few ever consider the possible effects of a worldwide pandemic.

Initially, with the extent of the health effects of Covid-19 still unknown, the first obvious effects of the pandemic on us were economic. Many of our club members own and operate small businesses, which were most at risk as the shutdown and the subsequent restrictions on operations prevented customers and clients from even entering our places of business. Would those concerns turn our attention away from voluntary activities like Rotary, especially as we lost our ability to meet in person?

These factors made the demise of our Rotary club during its 97<sup>th</sup> year appear quite possible. We were faced with a lot of uncertainty and no clear answers. In the short term, would members continue their affiliation with our club if they couldn't come to meetings every Thursday? How long would this have to continue? And in the uncertain future when, hopefully, we would be able to meet in person again, would we have drifted so far apart that our bonds of fellowship had stretched to the breaking point? Would absence really make the heart grow fonder?

Happily, the answer is that it did, but only because of the hard

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work and ingenuity of our members and leaders. Our club's own district governor, Peter Scott, came forward with a bold idea: District 5790 would provide every Rotary club in the district with its own commercial Zoom account and every Rotary club president would take a crash course on how to use it, thus allowing our district's Rotary clubs to resume their weekly meetings remotely. This was a big idea that entailed significant expense and quite a number of risks. Would Rotarians be willing to attend remote meetings on their computers or cell phones that made them appear in small boxes on a screen, like unwitting cast members of *The Brady Bunch*? And even if we were willing, would those of you who, like me, are (to put it kindly) technically challenged, even be able to figure out how to join the meeting, turn on our cameras and make our mics work? Could our club presidents operate in this remote environment, and find speakers who would agree to address our clubs, in this brave new world?

And there was something more. It's no secret that two of the most attractive features of our club's weekly meetings are the opportunity to enjoy fellowship with our fellow Rotarians and to join them for a good lunch. And so the question was asked: Would Rotarians attend remote, online meetings at which neither of these things were possible? And would we keep attending these sorts of meetings for the indefinite future while the nations of the world struggled to find solutions to this worldwide pandemic?

Today we look back on these questions from a sixteen month remove and know the answers, at least as they relate to our club. But when Covid first struck the effects it would have on our society were unknown and raised real concerns. Our nation's economy quickly dipped into recession and unemployment rose to historic levels. In March 2020 attacks on Asians, who some blamed for what many called the "China virus," began in New York City and then spread across the country. In May, a cell phone recording showing a white Minneapolis police officer kneeling on the neck of a black man named George Floyd until he was dead went viral on social media, causing international protests and a renewed focus on racial justice. Locally, there were protests in Arlington, Fort Worth, Dallas and many other North Texas cities. Unfortunately, riots broke out in some of these cities and both the police and the National Guard were deployed. Political unrest quickly followed. On January 6<sup>th</sup> of this year a group of protestors forced their way into the United States Capital in hopes of disrupting the certification of the votes cast in the 2020 presidential election while others built a makeshift gallows they said they would use to hang the Vice President. To add insult to injury our congressman, Ron Wright, died of Covid on February 7. Our concerns were heightened as Covid tightened its grip and the racial and economic disparities in treatment and fatality rates became clear and increased fear and resentment.

I say all of this to make a point: No one could have predicted this Rotary year. Engineers speak of torture tests that put the greatest possible demands on man-made devices to see if they will continue to function. Bank regulators perform what they call "stress tests" on banks and banking systems. We and our Rotary club experienced our own "stress test" this Rotary year. *We passed the test.* But we have not merely survived. We have prospered and we have achieved. Let's look at the facts.

One might reasonably expect that in circumstances afflicted by so many social, economic and political dislocations, a club like ours would quickly lose a large percentage of its members. And

yes, depending on how you count, our club lost between nine and eleven members during the current Rotary year. But that's no more than the number of members we lose most Rotary years, generally due to retirements, work-related relocations and deaths. Despite this year's challenges, our club has actually grown by several members during this year. This is a tribute to our club and, particularly, to our Membership Chair, Peter Scott, and his assistant, Randy Hendricks. And so, when we talk about our club's achievements during this Rotary year that almost wasn't, the first is this: despite all the challenges I have described, amazingly, *the club did not die.* And the second, even more astonishing, is this: the club grew and we flourished. Which brings me to ask: how did this happen?

There are many possible explanations. In difficult times like these people reach out to others for support. Despite our physical isolation, our ability to interact with one another remained a vital link. Rotary helped us maintain contact with one another and helped us recognize and appreciate the value of these important connections. I believe this had something to do with our club's stubborn constancy and its inexplicable growth. And yet, while I don't doubt that these factors have helped us remain anchored as a club and as individuals, making those connections possible did not just happen spontaneously. Our club endured and, surprisingly, prospered, primarily because of a single factor: leadership. And for this we have many people to thank. But first and foremost, the person who deserves our most profound thanks is our outgoing president, Susie McAlister.

I want you to take a minute to think about the circumstances Susie confronted. Like all our Rotary club presidents, she started her long journey to this Rotary year about two and a half years ago, when she was chosen to serve as this Rotary year's club president. During the following 18 months Susie assisted our club president and president-elect, learned about Rotary and its leadership structure, attended our district's annual President-Elect training seminar and, two years ago, officially assumed her duties as President-Elect. But at no time during this training regimen was Susie taught anything about immunology, how to conduct Rotary meetings online, how to continue Rotary service projects while observing social distancing and mask requirements, how to handle speakers and programs who present to the club remotely, or about using technology to make those presentations possible. Said another way, this was not what Susie signed up for.

And yet, Susie rose and met the challenge. She conducted our Zoom meetings with grace and aplomb, even as the predictable technical difficulties afflicted them and us. She was ably assisted by Sergeant-at-Arms Steve Brooks, who handled the audio-visual aspects of our programs and eagerly stepped in and helped when things went wrong. Susie's husband, former club president Clete McAlister, drew on his experience to assist when assistance was needed. How many presidents can or should have pillow talk about these issues? And, as we would expect, many members of the club stepped forward spontaneously to help.

In fact, one of the most striking events of this Rotary year was completely unscripted. At our May 26 meeting—shortly after we began meeting in person again—Bud Kennedy, the well-known Fort Worth Star-Telegram columnist, was supposed to offer his periodic "Eats Beats" program on the newest restaurants that have opened in and around Arlington. We waited, but Bud failed to appear with no notice because, believe it or not, he forgot!

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Susie jokingly offered to dance if music were provided. And although we all would have enjoyed that immensely, she couldn't get Clete to escort her onto the dance floor.

Without missing a beat (pun intended) club member Donna Mack, who is blind, stepped up and presented an excellent program regarding her service dog, Wella, who became a member of our club and our club's unofficial mascot. Luckily, Wella is the only member of the club who would consider that an honor. Donna offered us an engaging account of Wella's birth, training and pairing with her as a service dog as well as the roads they have traveled together and the experiences they have shared. Additional Rotarians also stepped up and, given the quality of their presentations, I was left wondering if we should do this every week.

I have been a member of this club for 35 years and, while I have seen speakers arrive late, this is the first time I can recall seeing one fail to show up entirely. However, I am heartened by the fact that when this happened several members of this club risked embarrassment or worse by coming forward to help. This is truly service above self.

By the way, I would be remiss if I failed to mention that Donna ended her talk by telling us that there comes a time in every service dog's life when the dog can no longer perform her intended function. Yet, given all that Wella has walked through with her, Donna assured us, when that time comes for Wella she will keep her as a pet and will walk with her to the end. Later, Donna commented privately that, given her close relationship with Wella, it is clear that she has a significant other. But she's a real bitch.

Still, we also confronted the pandemic with something more than impromptu programs: we served as the host club for the largest global grant in our Rotary district's history, providing \$160,000 for Covid relief. The grant was championed by our own Past District Governor Peter Scott, who was assisted by our International Service Chair, Scott Hendricks. At Peter and Scott's urging, thirty clubs from our district contributed toward this effort. And the resulting funds went to three hospitals and three food banks in our district. Our club, meaning Scott, also wrote the disaster response grant application that resulted in the contribution of another \$25,000, which also went to three area food banks in our district. These hospitals and food banks covered 95 percent of our Rotary district. And thanks to the efforts of Scott, Peter and other Rotarians, we made a significant contribution toward the Covid relief efforts in the thousands of square miles that are Rotary District 5790.

All of which suggests to me that my father was right when he told me that, whatever happens, remain calm and consider your options. Well, that's kind of what he told me. No one would have blamed us, either as a club or as individuals, if we had panicked during Covid, stopped meeting and waited for the situation to improve. Instead, I am proud to say, we and our leaders stayed calm, considered our options, stepped up and asked the question Rotarians always ask: how can we help? And then, as Rotarians often do, we answered our own question. We became aware that our community needed medical care and food. Immediately, we partnered with those most able to provide these things and we made them happen. I am immensely proud of our club and our efforts in the throes of this worldwide emergency. It is often said that charity begins at home. If so, our home was well served.

But we didn't just attack Covid. If we had, Covid would have won. We continued with the programs we began years ago. Publisher Clete McAlister laid out and sent fifty editions of our club's weekly publication, *The Hubcap*, with my help as Managing Editor and the help of our Rotary Reporters, LeeAnn Chenoweth, Donna Mack, Malcom Chakery, Bonnie Harris, Carey Walker, Heather Kipker, Sally Hopper and Lynn Stavinoha. And speaking of Lynn, she served another year as Chair of our Arlington Rotary Foundation, which provided 59 Webb school graduates scholarships to universities and career training schools. And, taking a note from former club president Mary Tom Cravens Curnutt, we recognized that, as Mary Tom said, for kids that age, "it's all about the bling". And so, in addition to our scholarships, we have begun awarding medallions to our scholarship recipients and to graduating Webb sixth graders who are eligible for our scholarships. Like little Bee Gees from the disco era, they put them around their necks and wear them proudly.

But before we leave the foundation, it should be noted that Joe Way, who manages the foundation's investments, generated an astonishing 15.71 percent increase in the balance of our foundation's funds over last year, bringing the balance to \$2,098,732.82 as of June 16. Not bad for a little foundation that started investing in 2009 with the \$700,000 or so our members had raised. Lynn is hanging up her gavel as foundation chair after many years of service and will be serving the foundation in an advisory capacity, but Joe is soldiering on. We owe them both a large debt of gratitude for the extraordinary growth and success of the foundation and the seamless and transparent way in which it has operated for lo these many years.

Another of our club's achievements this year is that we obtained a Rotary district grant for the Arlington Life Shelter, a local homeless shelter which not only provides its occupants with a place to stay but which—as its name implies—also provides programs that help residents develop skills that will prevent future homelessness. We matched our district's contribution and the resulting \$8,400 was used to purchase audio-visual equipment that the shelter uses so its residents can watch videos that Community Service Chair Derrick Kinney and other members of our club recorded on such topics as job interview skills, dressing for success, parenting, how to buy a used car and dealing with loss. Our contribution also purchased durable equipment such as Ipads with locks and stands. Finally, these funds bought gas cards to pay for transportation to job interviews, job-related lunches and other transportation needs. As a former member of the shelter's board of directors, I can assure you that these things were badly needed and, unlike most programs intended for the homeless, will actually help the participants escape homelessness and avoid it in the future.

A number of our club's achievements this year were unintended consequences of our adopting Zoom. It became possible for us to have speakers from other states, and even from other continents, who could address the club remotely. Several did. In fact, one of our speakers, Paul Alexander, would have found it very difficult to have spoken to our club in person because he has been confined to an iron lung since the 1950s, when he contracted polio. Yet, he was able to address the club via Zoom, again with the help of Steve Brooks. Approximately fifty members of our club were so impressed with his presentation

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that they purchased his book, *Three Minutes For a Dog: My Life in an Iron Lung*. The fact that Paul had the perseverance to write the book over a period of eight years using a plastic stick and a pen to tap out his story or dictating to a friend was truly inspiring. And without saying anything about it, he showed us just how important is our Polio Plus program.

The technology our district provided also helped us maintain other important programs that are part of our regular Rotary year. Following interviews conducted via Zoom, we selected and sent four local high school students to RYLA, our district's Rotary Youth Leadership Award camp. We conducted the 4-Way Speech contest virtually and used Zoom to hold our annual holiday party. An extra benefit of this was that if some of our members had a little too much to drink, we didn't have to worry about them driving home. What's more, Rotarians who often cannot find time to make our meetings in-person were able to attend remotely. This helped us retain members as well as to add new ones. And I'm sure some of you attended Zoom Rotary meetings in clothes that you would never have worn in person. In fact, I have reason to believe that some of you attended our club meetings without wearing any clothes at all.

In addition, Youth Services Chair Esteban Blanco arranged for the remote presentation of Rotary awards, complete with engraved plaques, to at least one boy and one girl at 62 Arlington schools, providing this club's recognition to a total of 124 students. An experienced singer and performer, Esteban knows better than most that, whatever happens, the show must go on.

Luckily, the virus didn't interfere with some of our regular projects and we were able to proceed pretty much as normal. For instance, we provided about 500 e-books to the Webb Elementary School Library in addition to our weekly contributions of regular, printed books. As usual, many of these books were so popular among Webb's students that there were long waiting lists for them. We also provided \$11,000, which was matched by the Arlington Independent School District, to fund the Forty Futures Initiative, a vocational training program, at the Dan Dipert Career and Technical Center. We also participated in a virtual mentoring program for students at the Dan Dipert Center. And with the help of Sally Hopper, our Rotary International Foundation Chair, we met our foundation goals, contributing more than \$5,000 toward Polio Plus and an additional \$15,000 to the foundation's share fund, insuring that both the Rotary Foundation and our club will have funds for our projects for years to come.

Thanks to International Service Chair Scott Hendricks, we also met our club's goals throughout the world. We served as International Club Sponsor for a school reconstruction project in Nepal after a school there was badly damaged in an earthquake and, with the help of other Rotary clubs, provided a \$75,000 grant. Happily, we were able to observe the result of this contribution during a recent meeting when we watched a video exhibiting the completed school and its dedication.

But Scott wasn't done. Another unusual aspect of this year that affected our activities was the record hurricane season of 2020. It was the most active on record with thirty named storms that used up all the alphabetized names that had been selected and the first nine letters of the Greek alphabet. Two of these late season hurricanes, Eta and Iota, struck impoverished areas of Honduras during November and December. The storms affected more than four million people across the nation – nearly half the country's population—and leveled entire communities. The resulting floods and mudslides devastated Gracias Adios, where Norma Love operates her school for the area's children and where Scott has led our club's efforts to distribute clean water filters and Albendazole, a drug that kills water-borne diseases and parasites, for the last 17 years.

Covid and these emergency conditions prevented us from traveling to Honduras this year, but the Arlington Rotary Foundation contributed \$10,000 to Rotary-sponsored efforts to provide disaster relief. And Peter Scott and Scott Hendricks passed the hat and raised an additional \$4,000 for the Norma Love Foundation while the Arlington Rotary Foundation contributed an additional \$1,000. As others have observed, Rotarians, like love and Norma Love, always find a way.

We have also found creative ways to maintain club operations. Vera McKissic, our Community Relations Chair, conducted many new member Rotary orientations remotely and took the opportunity to rewrite our introductory booklet. And one of our club's most active newcomers, Malcom Chakery, worked with our Rotary district leadership to create a new website for our club and to update and improve our club's Facebook page.

Despite the challenges created by the pandemic, Rotarians also volunteered and participated in numerous in-person programs. Among them were the annual Arlington Field of Honor program, which our own Clete McAlister created a few years ago, and which erects thousands of American flags at Arlington's Veterans' Park to honor the city's veterans; the Red Kettle project, during which Rotarians stand outside retail areas ringing bells and accepting donations for Arlington's Salvation Army facility; our annual Angel Tree project, despite the fact that none of us are angels, which provides holiday gifts for children who would otherwise go without them; the staffing of Arlington Charities, which provides food and clothing to the poor in our community; and our annual Fish Creek clean-up, during which Rotarians assisted with the removal of trash and debris from an area waterway. Now if only we could get them to clean up after themselves following lunch.

And no recitation of our club's achievements this year would be complete without mention of our annual "Lisanne Peters Read With Rotary" event, which Community Service-Webb School Chair Joy Bates organized. Lisanne Peters was our club's first female president and spearheaded many of the club's projects that have become permanent parts of our Rotary year. One of Lisanne's favorites was the "Read With Rotary" program at Webb Elementary School, during which every child receives a free book, complete with their name written onto the first page and a

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little adult attention from a Rotarian to top it off. Shortly after Lisanne's death in 2018 her son, Kort, presented her bequest of \$50,000 to the Arlington Rotary Foundation to fund the program. The foundation has invested those funds and uses the proceeds to maintain the program year after year. This year twenty Rotarians showed up to hand out the books and to provide the much-coveted adult attention the Webb kids have come to expect. Naming this event in Lisanne's honor is the least we could do to recognize her enduring memory and her many contributions to our club.

This is also an appropriate time to mention the Rotarians we lost during the past year. A significant loss was our beloved Hugh Ross, who belonged to Rotary for 60 years and served as president of our club during the 1967-68 Rotary year and as district governor during the 1987-88 Rotary year. Hugh sang in the Rotary chorus, enthusiastically if not melodically, and participated in every Rotary program he could. I will never forget Hugh speaking to the club in 1988 regarding the district's programs and achievements during his tenure as district governor. Several times during his talk Hugh became so emotional about what Rotary had achieved and was achieving in the district that he broke down and cried. He was almost as proud of Rotary as Rotary was of him. In lieu of flowers Hugh's family asks that mourners contribute to Rotary International.

Bill Hines was a Marine for 23 years and a helicopter pilot, first during two tours in Vietnam and then ferrying big shots and their entourages around in the Middle East during peace negotiations. He was injured during many hard landings. He would tell you that he had been a Marine and that he was injured. But he would never tell you more. He was the most humble man I've known. Sadly, Covid took him on December 4, 2020. I still miss him.

Although he actually died at the very end of the previous Rotary year, we should also note the loss of our own Dr. Tom Wightman, who served as Scholarship Chair of the Arlington Rotary Foundation for several years. When former presidents John Adams and Thomas Jefferson both died on July 4, 1826, 50 years to the day from when this nation declared its independence, many commentators suggested that this was a sign of divine providence indicating that their work was done and that they could go to their rest peacefully and confidently. I would say the same of Tom, who was in a coma when Gloria Pena proudly presented his report to us last June 18. After Gloria gave his report, Tom's work was done and, like our Founding Fathers, he had completed his task and passed away without regret. We will miss him, though we will always remember with gratitude his contributions as a physician, as a military pilot and as a Rotarian. His work, and ours, will not stop. And as is always the case in Rotary, eager successors presented themselves and accepted the passed baton. Tommy Thompson immediately agreed to serve in Tom's place with the help of Gloria Pena. I have little doubt that Tom is looking down at us and that he is proud.

And all of us should be proud of surviving this Rotary year. We

mark the end of this year with relief and gratitude. We are alive, our day-to-day lives are getting back to normal, we are able to join together with our families and to cuddle the grandchildren and the other new additions we had only been able to meet virtually, and we can look forward to the future with greater optimism. The same is true of our Rotary family. Under the leadership of our incoming president, Kurt Bartley, we can look forward to getting back to whatever passes for normal with this group – weekly in-person meetings that allow us to renew our bonds of friendship and fellowship, to enjoy Sage's great lunches, to work side-by-side on our service projects, to attend board meetings, new member orientations and other small group activities where we can actually see each other's faces rather than worrying about if we appear on the screen as a cat, and again enjoying the wonderful social events expertly planned by our Director of Fun, Diane Patrick, who already planned and executed our first recent in-person social event at Urban Alchemy, which was a smashing success. I cannot wait!

But before I conclude, I have a confession to make and it involves my wife, Charna. This is my eighth year to write and present "That Was the Year That Was." As with other aspects of my life, Charna has played a significant part in writing many of them, particularly those presented in recent years. I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge her involvement in this activity and to thank her for her years of help to me in this and other matters and for her service to the club. Even after 38 years of marriage, I still find that saying "thank you" is important. So thank you, Charnala. I love you with all my heart.

So that was the year that almost wasn't. I hope that the coming Rotary year leaves no doubts about our club's survival as we near our hundred year milestone and that it is one that we can laugh about next June. Or, as I say most years, I hope that all of you enjoy the next one.



**Dan Blumberg reminded us that in spite of Covid 19 obstacles, we had a very good Year That Almost Wasn't.**