

Rotary International Conventions

By Neal Klabunde

The Rotary International (RI) Convention is held annually, usually in June. The purpose is to bring Rotarians together from all over the world to celebrate the past Rotary year and herald the new one.

The convention officially begins with the opening plenary session. This session features the stirring "Parade of Flags" where the flags of every nation in the world where Rotary is represented are presented. With more nations represented than at the Olympics, this event more than anything else, truly shows the international scope of RI.

During the convention there are various official activities such as meetings and plenary sessions where the business of Rotary is conducted. Other activities are available, some of which require that you register for them with your convention registration.

There are usually side-trips and events planned for spouses of Rotarians that are planned by the [host organizing committee \(HOC\)](#).

You can also-

- Gather materials at the information booth about local activities.
- Visit next year's convention booth, and register in advance.
- Enjoy the House of Friendship, including the Internet cafe, local entertainment, message board, and fine local cuisine.
- Visit Global Networking Group booths to find out more about the many vocational and recreational fellowships and action groups.
- Visit the Club and District Projects Exhibition to learn about what other clubs and districts are doing to serve others.
- Shop for Rotary items at RI-licensed vendor booths and purchase local products at the HOC's Business Expo.

The "House of Friendship" is an area where convention goers can relax, make new friendships and renew old ones.

The actual cost of the convention is under \$200.00 but there are various luncheons and banquets that you may want to register for at the same time. Once you register, you will receive information from the host committee about local events they have planned for visiting Rotarians. Additional costs are those normally associated with travel such as air fare, lodging and meals. Our club typically budgets for the President and spouse to attend the convention if they so desire.

The [Rotary Club of Hamden](#), Connecticut sponsors pre- and post- convention tours of the country hosting the convention. This is their big fundraiser, much like our Chili Open.

There is also the opportunity for visiting Rotarians to visit the homes of local Rotarians to sample and enjoy the local customs.

Due to the international nature of Rotary, the conventions are held in different cities around the world to give all Rotarians a chance to attend this inspiring event. The convention is typically held in North America every three years or so.

Cathy and I, along with the girls have had the privilege to attend three of these events in Calgary, Alberta Canada, Buenos Aires, Argentina, and Indianapolis, Indiana. We encourage you to make it to one of the upcoming conventions. You will come back with renewed enthusiasm and respect for our organization.