

school layout was more complicated than the setup at other vaccine locations.

### Vaccination strategy

Finland's ministry of health sets the country's vaccination strategy. The Pfizer vaccine, the first that became available in Finland, has to be kept at around  $-70^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $-94^{\circ}\text{F}$ ), so a cold chain must be maintained for doses to remain effective.

Vaccine doses are packed in large containers filled with dry ice and flown from a pharmaceutical factory to Helsinki, Finland's capital. The doses are then distributed to regions according to their population and their needs. Each region's medical director and nursing staff schedule vaccination appointments as doses become available, and university hospitals distribute vaccine batches to municipalities. The vaccines for the Raahe region come from a university hospital about 75 km (47 miles) away.

In early January, the Honkalas were vaccinating mostly front-line health care workers. Then in February, they assisted with vaccinations in nursing homes and retirement communities. As supplies increased, the Honkalas began providing vaccinations several days a week, including at the hospital in Raahe and at smaller clinics in the two neighboring towns.

"At first we had only shorter days," Virpi says. "The nurses in charge of scheduling set up one appointment every 10 minutes. I think they thought because of our age, we would be slow. I have never spent so much time walking corridors! Then, they realized we could do more and increased the pace to two every five minutes."

Virpi says the vaccination effort has been a welcome relief from the isolation of the pandemic.

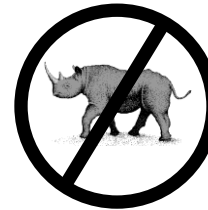
"We are seeing and meeting our neighbors, our work colleagues, and former patients as they come in for their vaccinations," she says. "It's really amazing. As a surgeon, I never saw people much after their operations — only if something went wrong. Now, I am seeing people who remember that I operated on them as many as 30 years ago, sharing how well they have been doing since."

# THE EARLY RISER

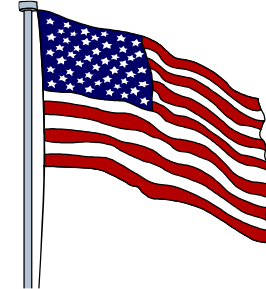
EVERY ROTARIAN  
US \$100  
EVERY YEAR



9 July, 2021  
Volume 39, Number 2



DON'T BE A R.I.N.O.  
(Rotarian In Name Only!)



#### ROTARY PRAYER

Oh Lord, and giver of all good, we  
thank Thee for our daily food.

May Rotary friends and Rotary  
ways, help to serve Thee all of our  
days.

## THE ROTARY CLUB OF WICHITA FALLS NORTH



SERVE TO CHANGE LIVES

2021-22 R.I. Officers - D5790

President of Rotary International: Shekhar Mehta

District Governor: Kayla Christianson

OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS – 2021-22

President: Clint Wood ~ President Elect:

Secretary: Tom Sheriff ~ Treasurer: Ann Lucas

Executive Secretary: Jeani Secord ~ Sgt. at Arms: Larry Gunnell

Directors: Clint Wood – Phil Waggoner ~ Gary Southard ~ Mike Crocker

Tom Cale ~ Tom Sheriff & Troy Secord (PDG Ex-Officios)

Website: [www.wichitafallsnorthrotaryclub.org](http://www.wichitafallsnorthrotaryclub.org)

***FUTURE PROGRAM ASSIGNMENTS***

July 9-----	Gary Southard
July 16-----	Phil Waggoner
July 23-----	Tom Cale
July 30-----	David Collins
August 6-----	Mike Crocker
August 13-----	Larry Gunnell
August 20-----	Ajay Kumar
August 27-----	Ann Lucas
September 3-----	Bill Neale
September 10-----	Tom Boscovich
September 17-----	Jeani Secord
September 24-----	Rob Noble

***NEWS FROM OUR LAST CLUB MEETING AT THE VANTAGE POINT CONDOMENIA:***

President Clint led the club in the Rotary Prayer and Mike led us in the Pledges.

Special guest were Linda Sheriff, Autumn Rhodes, Wamika Kumar and Richard Brown.

The brag bucket was well fed by Linda Sheriff (5), Autumn Pepper, Richard, Clint, Wamika Kumar (2), Ajay (2) And Mike.

Tom S. introduced Michael Gorton as our presenter of the day. Michael is and author and business man. Michael talked to us about his latest project called Back to Space near Jacksboro. Fantastic.

The raffle raised \$24.00. Tom O. had the winning ticket. Tom drew the 10 of diamonds for a \$10.00 prize. If this week’s winner draws the ace of spades they will win \$206.00 + ½ of what is raised today.

***NEWS FROM ROTARY INTERNATIONAL:***

***RETIRED DOCTORS IN FINLAND VACCINATE THOUSANDS AGAINST COVID-19***

As news began circulating in Finland in early January that COVID-19 vaccines could soon be approved, the nation’s health authorities cautioned

an excited public that it would take time to distribute the vaccine supply and train enough people to administer them.

Retired doctors Matti and Virpi Honkala learned about the potential shortage of vaccinators and contacted their region’s medical director to volunteer their services in Raahe and the surrounding area.

“There was such a buzz and everyone wanted to get going right way,” says Virpi, a Rotary International director and member of the Rotary Club of Raahe who previously worked as a surgeon and medical director. Her husband, Matti, Rotary’s PolioPlus national advocacy adviser for Finland and a member of the Rotary club of Pietari Brahe, had been a chief of internal medicine. Both are still licensed to practice medicine.

“We knew that if they had a shortage of vaccinators, they would have to pull people from their other duties, and then those services would be put on hold,” Virpi says. “We knew we could step in wherever needed.”

Both Virpi and Matti have experience managing vaccination campaigns. During the 2009 outbreak of H1N1 (also known as swine flu), they oversaw the inoculation of nearly 1,000 health care workers prior to the mass vaccination of the general population.

“We have been retired for some years, but we still know how to vaccinate people,” says Virpi.

***Eager vaccinators***

By the end of April, the Honkalas had vaccinated more than 5,000 people in Raahe and two smaller municipalities nearby — accounting for about half of the vaccinations in their region, by Virpi’s estimate.

In these three communities, about a quarter of the people, including almost all of those 75 and older, have received a first dose of the vaccine. People 60 and older were able to make appointments as of May.

“Two eager vaccinators can do quite a lot,” Matti says.

People have been excited and feel relieved about the vaccine rollout. “They are happy,” Virpi says. “And they are so grateful.”

Virpi was keen to get their Rotary clubs involved in the effort, and Matti wanted to promote the importance of vaccines.

“We said, this could be our Rotary project, and our project for our community,” Virpi says. “We know how eager Rotary members are to promote vaccinations, whether it’s against COVID-19 or polio.”

Members of both Rotary clubs volunteered to act as ushers and park cars at vaccination sites. Rotary club members played a crucial role directing people in and out of a closed school that was converted to a vaccination center. Virpi says staff members were thrilled to have the help, because the