

"Rotary- neighbors, friends, and problem-solvers who come together to make positive, lasting change in communities at home and abroad."



Moccasin Flower

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VITAL STATISTICS

ROCHESTER ROTARY RISERS: Bill Wiktor, John Woodruff

GREATER ROCHESTER ROTARY: none reported

ROTARY eCLUB ONE: none reported

OTHER CLUBS: Tank Sholem

NEW MEMBERS: Jill Cordes, Liz Davies, Brianne Hightshoe, Nicole Nasser



"Joining Rotary was one of the best decisions I ever made!" People around the world express this opinion every day. Explore the "Why" of Rotary in a conversation at (one of) this year's District 5960 **One Rotary Summit(s)**. Sessions will be held **Thursday, September 13** at Vanelli's in Forest Lake and **Tuesday, September 18** at United Methodist Church in Northfield. This session is designed for new and experienced Rotarians to come together and share in the discussion about, Rotary's Public Image, Membership, and Foundation opportunities.

As a participant, you will...

1. Be prepared to answer the question, "Why Rotary?"
2. Be inspired to build membership, enhance public image, and do humanitarian service through The Rotary Foundation
3. Understand the value of being a Rotarian
4. Be inspired to be a part of Rotary's Public Image campaign, *People of Action*
5. *Be the Inspiration*, living out Rotary's theme for the 2018-19 Rotary year
6. Take home a One Rotary Toolkit for use in your club

[More information](#)

[September 13 Registration in Forest Lake](#)

[September 18 Registration in Northfield](#)

Ed Marek, District 5960 Governor 2020-21

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

<u>Name</u>	<u>Birthday</u>	<u>Birthplace</u>
August 1	Chris Colby	Scottsbluff, NE
August 3	Rick Lien	Carthage, MO
August 3	Lance Thorkelson	Rochester, MN
August 7	Jennifer Driesch	Rochester, MN
August 8	Christine Bakke	St. Paul, MN
August 17	Nick Kolas	Patra, Greece
August 19	Kim Gordon	Washington, D.C.
August 22	Mark Kotschevar	St. Cloud, MN
August 23	Sue Dripps	Rochester, MN
August 23	Joanne Martin	Philadelphia, PA
August 27	Merlin Ricklefs	Fort Dodge, IA
August 27	Melanie Tschida	Rochester, MN
August 29	Ray Johnson	Harrisburg, IL

If we have misprinted or missed your birthday, please contact the Rotary office.



Rotarian volunteers **Josef Chlachula**, **Mike Mahrer**, and **Brianne Hightshoe**, provided community service at White Oaks Park in July

AUGUST Weekly Meetings

- August 1** **Three Club Meeting, Visit with DG Mike Becker**, 125 Live, 11:30 am – 1:00 pm
- August 9** **Traditional Meeting**, "2017-18 Outbound Youth Exchange Students Ian Anderson & Alyssa Cordes," Mayo Civic Center, 11:30 am–1:00 pm
- August 16** **1905 Meetings**, Charter House, Express Employment Professionals, Trinity Lutheran Church, 11:30 am–1:00 pm
- August 23** **Traditional Meeting**, "The One Hour Activist" presented by Sheila Kiscaden, Mayo Civic Center, 11:30 am – 1:00 pm
- August 30** **Rotation Day**, Various Rotarians' places of vocation, 11:30 am – 1:00 pm

To All My Rotary Friends,

Thank you so much for your prayers, visits, cards and beautiful well wishes. They are greatly appreciated and so helpful with my new journey.

*Sincerely,
Lorrie Swancutt*

August Rotary Anniversaries

Suzie Christenson	1 year
Elizabeth Karsell	1 year
Steve Nyhus	1 year +
Joel Haak	4 years
Amy Holtz	4 years
Jon Ewing	11 years
Ray Johnson	13 years
Stacey Vanden Heuvel	17 years
Kerwin Englehart	20 years
Mark Murch	21 years
Jane Belau	28 years



Other Meetings & Events

- August 6** **Channel One Service**, Channel One Building (131 35 St SW), 6:00-8:00 pm
- August 7** **Rotary Club of Rochester Board**, OMC Conference Room (102 Elton Hills Dr. Suite 150) 7:00 am
- August 8** **SE World Community Service** meeting, Ronald McDonald House (850 2nd St. SW), 7:00-8:30 am
- August 10** **Rotary Ethics Program Committee** meeting, OMC Conference Room (102 Elton Hills Dr., Ste 150, 7:30-8:30 am
- August 13** **Salvation Army Dinner Service**, Salvation Army Community Center (20 NE 1 Ave), 5:30-7:00 pm
- August 15** **Rotary Information Meeting**, Location TBD, 12:00-1:00 pm
- August 15** **White Oaks Park Cleanup**, White Oaks Park (4597 55th St. NW), 6:00-7:00 pm
- August 17** **Holiday Classic Steering Committee** meeting, Rochester Area Foundation Board Room (12 Elton Hills Dr), 11:30 am –12:30 pm
- August 20** **Youth Exchange Committee Meeting**, People's Food Co-op (519 1st Ave SW), 6:00-7:00 pm
- August 22** **Wine Down Wednesday**, location TBD, 4:30 pm



Thanks to all who helped with the July meetings:
Greeters: Bari Amadio, Suzanne Dinusson, Kay Hocker; **Cashier:** Donna Greason, Phil Karsell; **Sergeant-at-Arms:** John Woodruff; **Visitors Desk:** Christine Bakke, Danae Gaio; **Music:** Maury Hagen, Jim Sloan, Mark Neville; **Reflections:** Jeanine Gangeness, Sara Gilliland, Janice Domke?; **Four Way Test:** Dana Funk, Judith O'Fallon, LJ Johnson; **Introduction of Visitors:** Phil Karsell, Karel Weigel; **Presenters:** Michael Jurens, Claudia Egelhoff

MEET 2018-19 ROTARY CLUB OF ROCHESTER PRESIDENT SARA GILLILAND

By Sara Gilliland

Thank you for the tremendous honor of serving as your President for the 2018-19 Rotary year. I've been a proud member of this club since 1988, among the first 10 women in the club. I had the distinction of becoming the first Rotarian in Rochester to have a baby. Our son, Alex, was born in 1989. During my soon-to-be 30 years in Rotary, I've valued the friendships and connections to the community that I've made in Rotary. Outside of work and family responsibilities, Rotary provided the way to widen my circle of contacts and get involved in the community.



I served our club in the past as Treasurer and coordinator of the Honoring our Graduates celebration for students. Early on, the End Polio Now campaign was important to me. One of my former bosses had polio as a child and I saw the impact it had on his life. Over the years I've enjoyed ringing bells for the Salvation Army – there's nothing like facing into a bracing north wind and blizzard outside at Walmart North in December and seeing the generosity of families who'll make a contribution because someone is standing at the kettle with a holiday greeting and a smile. I've also enjoyed serving at the Holiday Classic, Quarry Hill Fall Festival, STRIVE, Channel One, and Salvation Army Dinners. When I accepted the nomination as your President-Elect Nominee, I set a goal for myself to participate in every Rotary Community Service opportunity prior to becoming

president. I finally fulfilled that goal in July by serving for the first time at White Oaks Park. All of the community service opportunities are fun, easy and rewarding.

I enjoyed a 30-year career at Mayo Clinic, retiring in 2014 as Senior Director for Support Services for Mayo Clinic Global Business Solutions. In that role, I managed the functional areas of business research and analysis, digital analytics, healthcare analytics, internal controls, and project management. I began my career at Mayo Clinic as a communications specialist, writing, editing and producing patient education materials, and writing for internal and external publications. I was the founding managing editor for Mayo Clinic Nutrition Letter, and I became the managing editor, and later, the editorial director for multiple newsletters, books and websites. In all my professional life, I've used the Rotary 4-Way Test as a guidepost.

I grew up on a farm close to Lawrence, Kansas. I earned my B.S. and M.S. from Kansas State University. Later I completed the Stanford Professional Publishing Course in Palo Alto, California. 4-H was one of the biggest influences in my life. It taught me not only subject matter expertise, but experience with leadership, public speaking, teamwork, recordkeeping, and winning and losing. My family was honored as the Kansas 4-H Family of the Year, and one of my first professional jobs after college was as editor of the Kansas 4-H Journal.

In my second career, I'm carrying on the family tradition of farming. My siblings and I have decided to keep the family farm in Kansas that my great grandparents established. We're in the process of renovating the 1886 farmhouse, which should be done this fall. It's been a 3-year labor of love, and lots of sweat! I'm thankful that we have a crop farmer and pasture renter who were working with my parents, and we've continued those valuable relationships.

My husband, Don, is retired from his job as an electromagnetic compatibility (EMC) engineer at IBM. Throughout our 40 years of married life, we've always enjoyed travel. We've been fortunate to enjoy sailing in the Caribbean, family trips to national parks, Hawaii, and Europe.

MY SCRIP CARD STORY

By Janice Domke



Way back when, several years ago when the Kwik Trip Scrip program was rolled out by then-Rotarian Brian Welke, I'll admit – I didn't get it! In fact, for probably close to two years, I didn't get it. I would buy a \$100 card to keep as a "rainy day" card for when money was tight, and I needed gas.

It never occurred to me that this was a way to pre-pay for my gas each month while helping Rotary do good things at the same time. With little or no effort on my part, frankly!

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Wanted: Host Families

Would you consider opening your home and your heart to a Rotary Youth Exchange student?

Our incoming 2018-19 Rotary Youth Exchange Student: Host families:

- Maria is from Brazil
- Loves sports, traveling and making new friends
- Wants to study chemistry in college
- Is empathetic, sociable and driven
- Will attend Lourdes High School

- Do not need to be members of Rotary
- Do not need to have school age children
- Do not need to live near Lourdes High School

We need three host families:

- ~~August through November~~ - **FILLED!**
- ~~December through March~~ - **FILLED!**
- **April through July**

**Time frames can be flexible to suit your family's need*

Rotarians are happy to:

- Help with student transportation
- Include the student in various events
- Support you as a host family
- Provide the student a monthly stipend and fund school lunches and extracurricular activities



Contact the Rotary office at 507-252-0085
or romnrotary@gmail.com
for more information or visit
www.northstaryouthexchange.com

The Rotary Club of Rochester 2018-19 Club Progress Towards Goals

CATEGORY	2018-19 GOALS	As of July 31, 2018
Membership	185	159
Rotary International Foundation Annual Program Fund	\$10,000	\$1,105 (11% of goal)
Every Rotarian Every Year (EREY)	100%	7 members
PolioPlus	\$2,500	\$0 (0% of goal)
District 5960 Fast for Hope Project	\$1,000	\$0 (0% of goal)
Rotary Club of Rochester Foundation	\$10,000	\$0 (0% of goal)

Welcome new members



New Rotarian Nicole Nasser with sponsor Sara Gilliland



New Rotarian Brianne Hightshoe with sponsor Kathy Lessard



Sponsor Kristine Ihrke with transferring Rotarian Jill Cordes



Sponsor Sara Gilliland with new Rotarian Liz Davies



CAMP RYLA REFLECTION

Shared by Mary Laudon at our July 26, 2018 Traditional Meeting

When I was nominated for Camp RYLA, I had no idea what to expect. We had a meeting, all the Rochester campers, about what to expect and what to bring. A previous camper, Maddie, told us, "There's nothing quite like Camp RYLA." Dana (Funk) and Maddie made Camp RYLA seem magical, telling us that we would cry when it was over and be changed. I left that meeting more skeptical and puzzled than I had walked in.

As it turns out, Dana and Maddie were right...but not completely. Camp RYLA was even better than they let on.

Upon arriving at camp, we were handed a nametag and a colored shirt and before you know it, I'm in a circle throwing a ball around and playing a name game. Then, dinner – the most awkward 30 minutes of my life to date. After dinner, more awkwardness occurred as me and 13 people I had just met attempted to build a carriage for an egg. The last thing we did that night was have our first color group meeting. I was in a small room with 13 other people in purple shirts, and it was this moment when I thought, "I don't know if this is going to work." It's ironic that in that same room I would go on to solve challenges and form deep bonds with those people in purple shirts.



In 5 days at Camp RYLA, I'll admit that I experienced some of the most challenging and emotionally raw moments in my life. I struggled the most with RYLA High, a fictional private high school with seemingly endless issues. The objective was to balance the budget, which was practically impossible, and devise a plan to improve all aspects of the school to be presented to the board as well as potential donors. After many hours in that small room, we emerged with a plan and ended up getting second place. The hardest part for me with RYLA High, and at Camp RYLA in general, was learning how to ask for help and approach the problem from multiple perspectives.

I learned how to do this after we listened to a speaker, named Mary Badar, teach us about the 4 different personalities/energies, represented by the colors red, yellow, green, and blue. After taking a personality quiz, we identified our color energies and acknowledged our strengths and weaknesses. We did the same for each color and it is from her how I learned to truly effectively and efficiently work with those who have different of opposite qualities than I do. I have been thinking about different personalities quite frequently lately as I returned to school and as I have been assigned end of year projects. Camp

RYLA taught me that a group of people with different color personalities, strengths, and weaknesses will be successful, so I have branched out and begun working with others.

Another speaker by the name of John Crudele had a profound impact on the way I see the world and those around me. He spoke about receiving others and their personalities like a gift, wholly and openly. At the end of his presentation, campers had the opportunity to go up and share their story, or personal struggle they overcome, into the microphone. The result was amazing; after someone shared their story, campers and counselors alike stop up to join in a group embrace surrounding the speaker. These people had felt comfortable sharing their story – that some had never told before – in a room full of people they had known for 2 days. And that right there is why "there's nothing quite like Camp RYLA."

Camp RYLA gave me so much. It gave me a space and time to be myself, to disconnect from the outside world and live in a perfect little bubble for 5 days. Camp RYLA gave me the confidence and tools to go into my school and address real and relevant issues. Camp RYLA gave me endless memories. Camp RYLA gave me 13 friends in purple shirts.

Everything I gained and learned from Camp RYLA was possible because of you all here today. I cannot express how grateful I am for the opportunity to attend Camp RYLA. Thank you so much for everything you do in our community. Most of all, thank you for making me a better person and leader.



MY SCRIP CARD STORY *continued from page 3*

Then one day, Elizabeth Karsell and I were talking about the program, she said, “You know, every time you buy a card, Rotary gets 5% right off the top. And another 5% if you buy something in the store.” Or something along those lines.



And the light bulb clicked on!

Since then, I’ve been purchasing \$150 to \$250 of Kwik Trip cards every month. I give half to my husband for his Kwik Trip gas and other purchases – remember, we get another 5% on in-store purchases!

So, get this – I buy \$200 worth of Kwik Trip cards at the beginning of the month. Rotary gets \$10 right off the top – Rotary pays \$190 for \$200 of value. Then, when one of us goes into Kwik Trip to buy bananas or donuts or other treats for the day, Rotary gets *another* 5%! If we use half of our Kwik Trip money for gas and the other half for in-store goods, Rotary gets \$15 from those \$200 of cards.

Then, let’s say *you* buy \$100 worth of cards and do the same thing – that’s another \$10 – that didn’t cost you a thing!! You say you don’t go into the store? Well, swipe your card at the pump and Rotary still receives \$5 for your \$100 purchase! Money you were likely going to spend there anyway.

Win-win – you win, Rotary wins! And the world wins since Rotary helps the world!

If half the club – that’s about 80 people – bought just \$50 of Kwik Trip cards each month that would be \$200 to the club with the potential for more on in-store purchases. Per month! That’s \$1,200 per year! For buying gifts cards and shopping somewhere you likely shop already.

The really good news? **WE’RE EXPANDING THE PROGRAM!!!** That’s Right! We are adding Menards, Apollo Liquor and hopefully, Target (this one is in the works).

With Menards, it will work much the same as Kwik Trip – the Club purchases cards at a discount (we earn 4% with Menards) and sells them for full face value. Planning on doing some home repairs or remodeling? Know someone who is? Pre-pay for your Menards’ purchases with gift cards and help the club. Tell your friends and neighbors how they can help Rotary by doing the same thing.



Apollo will work just a little differently. You will be able to purchase \$10 gift certificates (no cash value so no change) to use for purchasing beverages at any Apollo Liquor in Rochester. Planning a party and need some wine or spirits? Buy a few \$10 gift certificates and help the Club. We earn 5% with Apollo.

As mentioned above, we are still in negotiations with Target to bring you the option to purchase their cards. We will let you know when this is ready to roll out.

Are you a local business owner? Do you offer rewards or other incentives to employees or customers? Buy your Kwik Trip cards from Rotary! We have several businesses that are already doing this – you can join them!

Gift Cards Make Great Gifts!

Need some **great gifts**? Kwik Trip cards make great Christmas stocking stuffers and Graduation gifts! Or imagine giving a new home owner a Menards gift card as a housewarming present! You and I both know that owning a house makes Menards one of your favorite places to shop! (And if you’re a realtor, what better way to say Thank You than with a Menard’s card that you bought from Rotary!)

One important thing to note – due to the cost of credit card processing, this is a **cash or check-only** program. As a Club, we pay 2.75% for each credit card transaction so with such small margins, we are not able to offer credit card purchasing with this program. (And that 2.75% is something to keep in mind with anything you do with the Club and use your credit or debit card . . . just saying.)

So, grab your checkbook (if you have one) or get some cash from the closest ATM (Kwik Trip has fee-free ATMs!) and buy some gift cards – Kwik Trip for your gas and other in-store items, Menards for your home improvement needs and Apollo for your next party! I know I’ll be buying some Apollo gift certificates and Menards cards! Hope you will, too!

NOMINATIONS BEING ACCEPTED FOR DISTRICT GOVERNOR

All suggestions for District Governor must be received no later than Monday, October 8, 2018, to be considered.

The suggestion for District Governor must be submitted in the form of a resolution (Click Here) for Rotary Governor Nominee Data Sheet) adopted at a regular meeting of the club, naming the suggested candidate. The club secretary shall certify the resolution. A club may suggest only one of its own members as a candidate for governor-nominee.

The selection of a governor-nominee must be conducted in a dignified, responsible manner in harmony with the principles of Rotary. (RCP 19.030.1) Section 10.050 of the RI Bylaws provides that any candidate who becomes aware of campaigning, canvassing or electioneering for elective office in RI, must express their disapproval to those so engaged and shall instruct them to terminate such activity.



Rotary International Bylaws Article 15.080 state, "a governor at the time of taking office must have attended the International Assembly for its full duration, been a member of one or more Rotary clubs for at least seven years and must continue to possess the qualifications in section 15.070.

- A member in good standing of a club in the District. (RIB 15.070.1)
- The Rotarian must have full qualification for such membership in the strict application of the provisions thereof, and the integrity of the Rotarian's classification must be without question. (RIB 15.070.2)
- The Rotarian must be a member in a functioning club in good standing which has no outstanding indebtedness to RI or to the district as of the close of the year preceding that in which the Rotarian is proposed as a candidate for the nomination for governor. (RIB 15.070.3)
- The Rotarian must have served as president of a club for a full term or be a charter president of a club having served the full term from the date of charter to 30 June, provided that this period is at least six months. (RIB 15.070.4)
- The Rotarian must demonstrate willingness, commitment, and ability, physically and otherwise, to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of the office of governor as provided in section 15.090, "Duties of a Governor." (RIB 15.070.5)
- The Rotarian must demonstrate knowledge of the qualifications, duties, and responsibilities of governor as prescribed in the bylaws and submit to RI, through its general secretary, a signed statement that the Rotarian understands clearly such qualifications, duties, and responsibilities. Such statement shall also confirm that the Rotarian is qualified for the office of governor and willing and able to assume the duties and responsibilities of that office and to perform them faithfully. (RIB 15.070.6)

A member of the District Nominating Committee will make a personal contact with those nominees qualified to serve. Any questions related to the duties, obligations or rewards of serving as a District Governor should be directed to PDG Kyle Haugen: jkylehaugen@gmail.com or cell: 612-382-3168.

Interviews for the District Governor Nominee, who would serve as District Governor during the Rotary year, 1 July 2021- 30 June 2022, will take place:

Date: Saturday, October 13, 2018

Place: Family Means 1875 Northwestern Ave
Stillwater, MN 55082

Youth Exchange STEP



Youth Exchange STEP (Short Term Exchange Program) students Karl Betcher (son of Rotarian Audrey Betcher) and Antonio Nikull visited our July 12 Rotary meeting to share about their United States / Finland exchange experience.

Rotary's new president Barry Rassin, strikes a perfect balance between Bahamian bonhomie and decisive leadership

By *Diana Schoberg* Photos by *Alyce Henson*

Several miles off the shoreline of Nassau, Barry Rassin, the 2018-19 president of Rotary International, balances in the bow of the bobbing *Rat Bat*. There are no colossal cruise ships out here, no noisy Jet Skis, only the occasional passing pleasure boat and the sound of water lapping against the hull. In the turquoise sea below, giant turtles glide across the ocean floor.

"To me," Rassin says, "the sea is freedom, it's peacefulness. When I'm out on the water, everything fades away. You feel like you're at one with the world and nothing could go wrong."

Late in the afternoon of 12 January 2010, Rassin and his wife, Esther, were at home in Nassau, the capital of the Bahamas, when a magnitude 7.0 earthquake rocked Haiti, 550 miles away. Shortly thereafter, Rassin got a call from Errol Alberga in Jamaica. At the time, Alberga was the governor of District 7020, which encompasses the Bahamas, Jamaica, and Haiti, as well as several other island nations in the West Indies.

Alberga told Rassin – a former governor of the district and president of the renowned Doctors Hospital in Nassau – about the earthquake and asked him to lead Rotary's relief efforts. Rassin spent the rest of the evening pacing around his living room as he called other Rotary leaders in the region. In a corner of the room, a television broadcast images of Haiti in ruins – and then, scrolling across the bottom of the screen, came the emergency warning that caught Rassin's eye: A tsunami might be headed for the Bahamas, a seismic sea wave so formidable it had the potential to wash over the entire country.

Rassin and his wife walked out onto their second-floor balcony and waited. "At night, if you look out toward the ocean, all you see is lights, stretching down to the edge of the water, and then everything turns black," Rassin recalled in a powerful speech he delivered in January at the International Assembly in San Diego. "I looked at where the lights ended and the black began, and I waited for the blackness to come toward us and swallow the light."

Fortunately, the tsunami failed to materialize, and Rassin got back to work. Over the next few days and weeks, as Richard McCombe, another past district governor, headed Rotary's day-to-day response, Rassin coordinated long-



Barry Rassin enjoys some time on the water with his good friends Felix Stubbs, left, and Wade Christie.

term recovery efforts funded by donations from Rotarians around the world to The Rotary Foundation. He created a 132-page spreadsheet to track each detail: how much money was available, how much had been spent, which Rotary club was in charge of which initiative. "At the district conference the year after the earthquake, Barry went through the dollars for every single project," says Lindsey Cancino, past president of the Rotary Club of East Nassau, Rassin's club. "It matched to the penny what was in the [disaster recovery] account. I was mesmerized."

In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, Rassin worked with Claude Surena, a Haitian doctor and Rotarian who had turned his home



With his wife, Esther, Rassin mingles with fellow members of the Rotary Club of East Nassau.

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Rotary's new president Barry Rassin *continued from page 9*

hospital. There, Surena provided care for more than 100 displaced people. Elsewhere on the island, tens of thousands were dead and tens of thousands more injured. In nightly calls to Rassin and his team, Surena – who, at the behest of René Préval, then president of Haiti, would later oversee the recovery of the nation's private and public health sectors – detailed the medicine and other supplies he urgently needed. And then, each morning, a private plane flew from Nassau packed with the necessary goods.

Rassin decided to tag along on one flight. On the four-hour journey, flying low over the ocean, he gazed out at the limitless blue of the sky and an azure sea dotted with green tropical islands. "It just looked like paradise," Rassin said in his speech. "And then we came in over Haiti."

On the ground below, he saw buckled roads, collapsed houses, and entire neighborhoods turned to rubble. Unable to land in Port-au-Prince, the plane touched down on a grassy strip outside the capital. After unloading its cargo, the plane headed for home. "In a couple of minutes, we were out over the water," Rassin recalled in his speech, "looking down on that same gorgeous view. Haiti disappeared behind us, the Bahamas lay in front of us, and there we were, in between."



The East Nassau club recently helped clean up a community center for teenagers with HIV/AIDS.

"And looking down at that water, out at that horizon, I realized that there was no line, no boundary between there and here, between them and us, between the suffering we had escaped and someone else hadn't. It could just as easily have been the Bahamas. It could just as easily have been us."

Barry Rassin always felt he was supposed to go into medicine. It was his heritage. His father, Meyer, a notoriously brusque orthopedic surgeon, had arrived in the Bahamas from England during World War II to oversee the medical care of the Royal Air Force troops there. Except for some submarine activity, the Bahamas was outside the theater of war. Nassau's Oakes and Windsor fields provided flight training for would-be RAF pilots destined to return to the fighting over Europe.

With little in the way of military medicine to occupy him, Dr. Rassin spent time ministering to local residents, including treating people with leprosy who had been exiled from society. This work endeared him to the populace. After the war, he returned to England, but in 1947, a few weeks after the birth of his son Barry, Rassin père returned with his family to Nassau to work in the government hospital. In 1955, he and his wife, Rosetta, a surgical nurse, opened Rassin Hospital to better serve their patients.

Barry was 10 when his father had him watch his first cesarean section. ("That kind of freaked me out," he says today.) This was his introduction to the family profession. His older brother, David, would earn a PhD, specializing in pharmacology, and devote himself to researching the properties of breast milk.

As for Barry, he enrolled as a pre-med student at Long Island University outside New York City – and flunked out after two years. "I don't know whether it was too hard for me or I just had no interest," he explains. "I was never a good academic. Teachers always said I never applied myself."

Rassin returned to Nassau and worked menial jobs at the British Colonial Hotel. He started at the front desk – "That was not me" – but was soon relegated to microfilming and delivering office supplies. After a year, Rassin realized he had to make a decision: He could either spend the rest of his life working at the hotel and living at home with his parents, or he could go back to school.

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Rotary's new president Barry Rassin *continued from page 10*

In 1967, he moved to Miami, enrolled in community college, and took whatever classes struck his fancy. He wanted to figure out what suited him best. "Two days in accounting and I said, 'This is me,'" he recalls. "It was just so easy. It came to me."

He transitioned into a business program, improved his grades, and transferred to the University of Miami, where he earned a degree in accounting – with honors. Later, he received his MBA in health and hospital administration from the University of Florida.

Back in the Bahamas, following several prosperous decades, Rassin Hospital had undergone a decline. After the Bahamas won its independence in 1973, a lot of British expats, including many of the hospital's patients, left the country. That's when Rassin, with several years of health administration under his belt (primarily at Miami's Mount Sinai Medical Center), returned to Nassau once again, with his first wife and their kids, Pascale, Michele, and Anthony. His goal was to bring the best in modern medicine to the country – and he planned to do it at a transformed Rassin Hospital.

Charles Diggiss, today the president of Doctors Hospital (as the reinvented facility came to be known), covered emergency room shifts there in the late 1980s, when he was a surgical resident at the public hospital. "Barry was running a hospital that was one block away from the public hospital," Diggiss says. "He had the courage to take that on. There was no promise of success, but every guarantee that this was going to be frustrating, every guarantee that the physicians were going to be skeptical."

Looking back, Rassin recounts the challenges he confronted: "It was a battle with my parents. It was a battle with the doctors. It was a battle with my wife." All that pressure caused the demise of his first marriage, he says. But the friends he made through Rotary steeled his resolve to persevere. "It gave me the support from a group of citizens of the Bahamas who said there was really a need to do this."

Several years earlier, Rassin was working for American Mediacorp in Hollywood, Florida, when a doctor asked him to join Rotary. Rassin declined. "In my mind, he was at least 70," he explains. "I was 30. People say new members aren't joining because we don't ask. It's not just the ask. I was asked. I didn't want to join."

He changed his mind about Rotary when he moved to Nassau and met John Robertson at a fundraiser for the East Nassau club. Robertson was helping out, and Rassin's daughters, Pascale and Michele, were participating. The two men chatted, and at the end of the conversation, Rassin accepted Robertson's invitation to lunch at Rotary. Seven years later, in 1987, he was the club's president. Michele, the club's first female member, would take the helm in 2009.

Rassin's rise through the ranks of Rotary coincided with the culmination of his plan to transform Rassin Hospital. In 1986, he worked with a consortium of doctors to buy the hospital from Meyer Rassin and create the newly christened Doctors Hospital. In 1993, under Rassin's direction, it completed an \$8.5 million expansion, and today it's considered one of the Caribbean's leading hospitals.

As all this transpired, Rassin's personal life changed as well when he met and, in 1990, married Esther Knowles. A successful banker, Esther dived into her husband's life at Rotary. When he was district governor in 1991-92, she accompanied him on a six-month odyssey to every club in every country in the district. Their mutual respect and partnership are evident when you see them together. "Esther has always kept me grounded," Rassin says. "As soon as she thinks that my ego is kicking in, she makes sure she kicks it back out. After any speech, if Esther was there, I always ask her how it was. She's the only one who I know will tell me the truth."



Barry Rassin helps Rotarians and Rotaractors plant mangrove trees at Bonefish Pond National Park on the southern coast of New Providence Island in the Bahamas. [Learn more.](#)

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Rotary's new president Barry Rassin *continued from page 11*

Rassin retired as the hospital's president in 2016, though he continues to serve on its board of directors. In retrospect, the long struggle to make his dream a reality was worth it. "You've got to take risks in this life," he insists. "That's what we're here to do: not to follow the same old path, but to take out your machete, cut away the bush, and create a new way. People here weren't getting good health care. They needed it badly."

"One of the most appreciable things about his journey is watching how he committed himself wholly and fully to Doctors Hospital while maintaining his involvement in Rotary," says Charles Sealy, who met Rassin through Rotary and succeeded him as the hospital's CEO. "To see how someone can balance the two – except I don't think the word is 'balance,' because he was wholly committed to each of them."

At the hospital, as in Rotary, people recognize Rassin as both a visionary and a detail-oriented administrator. They also salute him as a valuable mentor. "He's good at identifying leadership talent," says Felix Stubbs, a board member at Doctors who credits Rassin with creating the opportunities that led to Stubbs' own stint as District 7020 governor. "When he sees someone with skills that he thinks could be advantageous to Rotary, he makes sure to pull that person along. That's exactly what he did at Doctors Hospital. He identified good young leaders and pulled them up – and then he was able to retire and dedicate his time to Rotary."

As befits an island organization, the Rotary Club of East Nassau meets inside a wood-paneled room at a yacht club. Pictures of sailboats bedeck the walls. Sir Durward Knowles, who, until his death in February, reigned as the world's oldest living Olympian (bronze and gold medals in sailing in 1956 and 1964, respectively), was an active member.



Barry Rassin converses with Charles Diggiss, who took over as hospital president when Rassin retired.

In many ways, it's the ideal 21st-century Rotary club: Sixty percent of its members are younger than 50, and one member is a dual Rotarian/Rotaractor. At a meeting in October, there were so many women in leadership positions that a man didn't come to the lectern for the first half-hour. One order of business: handing out attendance awards. Rassin receives one for 30 years of perfect attendance. Since joining in 1980, he has missed only one meeting.

Though Rotary has been central to Rassin's life for nearly 40 years, it was never his goal to become president of Rotary International. He was loath to even put his name up for consideration. But, he explains, "the Bahamas and the Caribbean have never had a president, and Rotarians there felt I should put my name in and represent them. I realized that they want to feel part of Rotary, and I was in a position where it was possible. So for them, I thought I should do it."

Sam F. Owori, a member of the Rotary Club of Kampala, Uganda, was nominated in 2016 to serve as Rotary's 2018-19 president. After he died unexpectedly of complications from surgery in July 2017, Rassin was selected to take his place.

Among the first people Rassin called was John Smarge, a past Rotary International director from Florida who had served as Owori's aide. Rassin asked Smarge to serve as his aide too. "One of his first sentences was, 'I want Sam's

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Rotary's new president Barry Rassin *continued from page 12*

memory to continue, and I want you to help me do that,'" Smarge recalls. "Barry was uniquely qualified to come in at this time. He will allow Sam's memory to shine brightly."

Smarge and Rassin have known each other for two decades. They're from the same Rotary zone and served as district governors around the same time. They worked together closely after the earthquake in Haiti and served as account holders of the Haiti Earthquake Relief Fund, a donor advised fund established through the Foundation that supported projects totaling \$6.5 million. "Barry Rassin is a rock star in Haiti – there's no other way to say it," Smarge says. "He's a rock star because they know what he's done for that country."



Esther and Barry Rassin with Caribbean flamingos at Ardastra Gardens.

Rassin may be a Rotary rock star and the pride of the Caribbean, but he shuns the limelight, says his friend Felix Stubbs, and considers himself a regular guy. Back when he ran Doctors Hospital, it was not uncommon to see him roaming the halls in shorts and flip-flops. When he visited recently, this time smartly dressed, everyone – from the staff at the front desk to the doctors and nurses – stopped to say hello. One woman rushed up and gave him a big hug. Another smiled and shouted, "Looking good, Barry!"

No disrespect there – just following company policy. In the early 1990s, Rassin (that is, Barry) asked everyone at the hospital to address their colleagues by their first names. He recalls that "one housekeeper walked up to me and asked, 'Can I really call you Barry?' I said she could. 'Well,' she replied, 'I'll just whisper it because I don't feel comfortable.'"

"We're all on the same level," Rassin continues. "We just wear different hats. I happen to wear the president's hat this year, but Rotarians all wear the Rotarian hat, and I have that hat too. We're all in this game together. We've all got to work together no matter what hat we wear."

The Bahamas is famous for its swimming pigs (Google it, it's true), but Barry and Esther Rassin wish another creature would get more attention. The country is home to the world's largest breeding population of Caribbean flamingos, a species hunted to near extinction in the mid-20th century. At Ardastra Gardens, a zoo and conservation center in Nassau, the birds parade around a ring several times a day, stopping for photo ops with delighted visitors who perch on one leg to mimic their new friends. Rassin came here as a child, and he has returned many times with his children and grandchildren.

It's the last show of the day, and Barry and Esther stay afterward for a photo shoot alongside the flamingos. When that's done, they are shaking hands with the birds' "drill sergeant" – the gardens' operations manager, who is also a Rotarian – when Esther remembers something: They didn't get to stand on one leg like everybody else.

She and her husband, now Rotary's distinguished president, dash back into the ring. The squawking, coral-colored birds gather round. Barry and Esther thrust out their arms and lift one leg off the ground. Their eyes lock, they can't stop laughing, and it looks as if they could remain perched there, perfectly balanced, forever.

ROCHESTER ROTARY CLUB

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ROTARY CLUB OF ROCHESTER

Rochester, Minnesota

Organized June 12, 1925

Club No. 2164

District No. 5960

THE FOUR-WAY TEST

- Is it the truth?
- Is it fair to all concerned?
- Will it build good will and better friendships?
- Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

THE MOCCASIN FLOWER

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF
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