

Rotary This Week!



Utica, NY, USA

June 24, 2024

It's a Wrap! Linda Iannone Signs Off as President



By Joe Abraham

Utica Rotarians gathered at Mid-York Library on Thursday afternoon (June 20) as Linda Iannone ran the meeting as president for the last time. Club leadership transitions to President-Elect Travis Rabbers on July 1.

“Before we get started, I want to once again thank you all for your support,” she said. “It has been a fun and rewarding year. I know that I am passing the gavel to a very competent and able leader. Good luck, Travis, and I am available to help whenever and however I can.”

Rabbers’ first official meeting as president will be on July 18, as there will be no club business taking place on the Fourth of July.

With the start of the 2024-2025 Rotary year, the new RI theme is *“The Magic of Rotary.”*

Thursday’s guest speakers were Raquel Tavarez, president of the Dominican Cultural Association, and Christiana Cabaral, association secretary. Raquel noted that the Dominican population was growing in Utica, with many families having relocated from Boston and New York City, and purchasing homes in the Mohawk Valley.

The organization is looking

to build more programs for local youth and the community – and is in search of a central location as it continues to grow. The group is always looking for volunteers, especially younger people to assist with its website.

We appreciate the time they spent with our club, and we look forward to checking out some of their events in the future!

(Meeting recap continues on Page 2.)



Deadline for next newsletter (7/1) is Saturday, June 28 at 3 p.m.; submit to news@uticarotaryclub.org.

Editor Robert Stronach

World Refugee Day Plus Club News & Notes

June 20 was World Refugee Day, putting a spotlight on many who have fled war, persecution and/or violence.

“There are studies suggesting that refugees actually contribute more to the economy than the value of the services provided to them,” says Quentin Wodon, chair of the Rotary Action Group for Refugees, Forced Displacement, and Migration. Wodon, a member of the Rotary Club of Washington Global, Washington, D.C., notes: “Refugees often have amazing skills. They’re often very driven. And they can be assets for a country as opposed to liabilities.”

The greater Utica community has been blessed with wonderful new citizens who have added so much to the flavor of our city and its surroundings, said President Linda. Our club had the pleasure of hearing from several of these groups this year.

The City of Utica celebrated World Refugee Day on June 8th. Many cultures came together to showcase their food, their heritage and their arts.

“This city is a small melting pot,” said President Lin-



President Linda Iannone

da, “and we are fortunate that we can share what they have contributed to this area.”

NEWS AND NOTES

OUR MONTHLY club social outing will take place at the Beer Hub on June 27! Here’s to hoping for good weather, and maybe slightly less hu-

mid temperatures, so we can enjoy a cold one together outdoors.

SPEAKING of warm weather, hydration is important! Our club will once again be staffing a water station at the Parkway Rec Center during the Boilermaker 15K Race on July 14. Clyde Vanderpool will have shirts for all volunteers on the big day.

OUR CLUB was delighted that one of this year’s ‘Service Above Self’ Award recipients, Felix LaBella, was in attendance at Thursday’s meeting. Felix was honored at our annual Gala. More details on the Gala will be shared soon!

AS THE MEETING drew to a close, President Linda recited the vision statement one last time, saying, “Together, we see a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change across the globe, in our communities and in ourselves,” all before ringing the bell, which signaled the end of an awesome year.

We thank Linda for her dedication and passion for our club, and know she’ll continue to be very involved as immediate past president.

June’s Club Social: 5:30 pm, June 27, at the Beer Hub, 2643 Genesee St, Utica

Rabbers Ready to Roll as Club President

By Joe Abraham

There aren't many volunteer efforts within the Rotary Club of Utica, and quite frankly in the Mohawk Valley, that Travis Rabbers isn't involved in. And come July 1, he is ready to take on the role of leading Utica Rotary.

Travis was born and raised in a small, yet beautiful town in southwest Michigan just a few minutes away from Lake Michigan. He attended college at Central Michigan University, majoring in broadcast and cinematic arts, and minoring in journalism.

In January 2019, he moved from Michigan to New York and began working in the sales department at the Delta Hotel in downtown Utica. At the end of 2021, he began working as the branch manager for M&T Bank in Whitesboro.

"My focus at the bank is assisting business and retail customers with their financial needs," he said.

"I always loved playing sports, exercising and hiking. If I'm not working or volunteering, I'm most likely at the gym or playing a game."

In addition to Rotary, he said, "I'm currently involved with... United Way of the Mohawk Valley, Chamber of Commerce, Alzheimer's Association and BNI (Busi-

ness Networking International)."

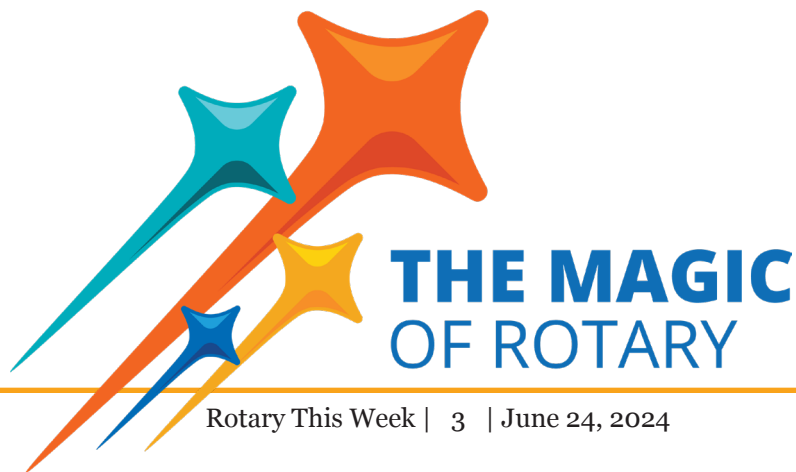
Travis first got involved with Rotary back in high school when he was a part of the Rotaract club. He became a member of the local Rotary club in his hometown after graduating college, and participated in some of their volunteer events and was part of the membership committee.

"I even took some of the club's events and brought them to the Rotary Club of Utica, like the holiday gift auction," he added.

Travis's goals for the upcoming Rotary year are to continue growing and expanding the membership of the club.

"I would like to increase the participation of our members to keep them involved with our different committees, events and activities," he said. "I would also like to continue highlighting our members in the newsletter and show recognition for celebrations or work being done in the community. Lastly, I want to find presenters representing important local businesses who can tell us more at our meetings."

We are certainly glad Travis made the jump in 2019 to move to the Mohawk Valley, and look forward to the many great memories that will occur in his Rotary year.



New Member Proposed: Rondi Stronach

The board proposes Rondi Stronach for membership to the Rotary Club of Utica. Per bylaws, club members have five days to submit a written objection to Treasurer Jill Koch.

Rondi L.V. Stronach has been involved in the community wherever her marketing-centered career took her – from Utica to Syracuse to Rochester and back.

For example, while a senior marketing coordinator with the Utica Observer-Dispatch, and later, she was involved with Home Ownership Center board, Leadership Mohawk Valley marketing committee, Utica Salvation Army advisory board, United Way, Genesis Young Professionals and Mohawk Valley Young Professionals.

While the inpatient marketing and development specialist with Syracuse Behavioral Healthcare, Rondi was involved with Syracuse Young Professional. Similarly she got involved with Rochester Young Professionals and Discover Rochester when she jumped into the world of “*Diamonds Are a Girl’s Best Friend*” as a diamond broker (maintaining over 400 accounts worldwide).

After several years of enjoying expensive sparkling crystals, she returned to marketing and design for a Syracuse design and web app firm, and finally came home to the Utica area, where now she is a member of the senior leadership team at Highlander Communications (which focuses on providing translation services and preparing interpreters for the healthcare, legal and immigration environments).

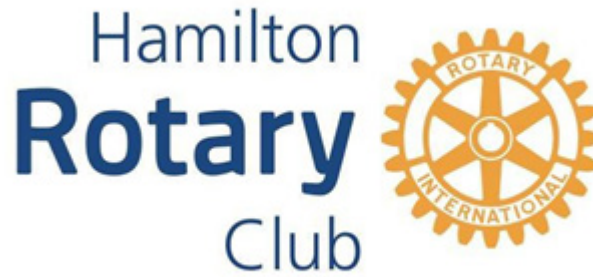
She studied media marketing and management, and advertising design at MVCC; consumer marketing at Syracuse Universi-



ty, and technical communications at then-SUNY Institute of Technology.

In her spare time Rondi enjoys ancient cultures, science, traveling, following the Buffalo Bills and Syracuse Orange, and watching “nerd-worthy” movies. She enjoys her dogs and cats, and even an occasional adventure, such as skydiving.

She is not unfamiliar with Rotary. Her father, Bob, is a member of Utica Rotary and her mother, Mary, is a past district youth exchange chair. She attended the last two “Service Above Self” Galas (limping at the most recent one because of a booted broken foot).



Utica Rotarians Invited to Play Golf

The Hamilton Rotary Club is inviting Utica Rotary golfers to play in its annual tournament, which takes place Thursday, Aug. 22 at Seven Oaks Golf Course in Hamilton.

With a shotgun start at 11:30 a.m., the tourney features 18 holes with a cart, hot dog at check-in, and buffet dinner at Seven Oaks Clubhouse. There also will be premium prizes at all Par 3 holes as well as a putting contest.

Early registration is recommended as only the first 28 teams will be accepted. For more information, including a registration form, contact Hamilton Rotary's Anastasia Wells at anastasiawells@gmail.com or 765-655-4847.

Calendar of Events

6/26	Board Meeting noon Stanley Theatre lobby	7/18	Meeting Margaret Reilly and Jennifer Geiger from Wild Ones Mohawk Valley noon Mid-York Library
6/27	Club Social Beer Hub 5:30 pm	7/25	Club Social 7 Hamlets 5:30 pm
7/4	No Meeting <i>Happy 4th of July</i>	8/18	Rotary Charity Golf Outing Hidden Valley, Whitesboro
7/14	Service <i>Boilermaker Water Station</i>		
7/17	Board Meeting noon Greater Utica Chamber		