

ROTARY CLUB OF YORK – EAST

District 7390 – Meetings: Tuesdays @ 7:30 a.m. (please refer to website for changes/updates)

August 2022 Newsletter

Editor: Friedel Liebe-Elser - text & photos

www.clubrunner.ca/york-east



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Rotary Membership Anniversaries

Thank you

for your continued Service above Self

Ansell, Blair	29 years	Aug 17 1993
Pokopec, Tom	14 years	Aug 21 2008
Mink, Hunter	7 years	Aug 26 2015

Programs for this month

August 2. OFF SITE MEETING at the **HOLLYWOOD CASINO**
By invitation & curtesy of Nick Smolko – buffet breakfast included
2899 Whiteford Road, 'Galleria Mall' – York
7 am - in person **ONLY** – no zoom

August 9. Grant presentations-Chris Izzo. – *Hybrid*

August 16. Phil Wenger, Lancaster Conservancy President, and Fritz Schroeder, VP of community impact, will discuss their land conservation efforts in York County
In person presentation – *Hybrid*

August 23. Annual address by 2022-2023 District Governor Juliet Atenburg. This will be joint meeting with North York and Southern York at Heritage Hills
In person presentation - *Hybrid*

August 30. Jennifer Klinedinst Tracy (Deb's daughter) is employed in the television industry and will discuss what she does and how she reached this point in her career. She is VP of Talent Attraction and Acquisition for Charter Communications which operates under the Spectrum Brand. She will explain the methods and resources utilized to recruit and employ talent for Spectrum. She lives in Atlanta and will appear via Zoom. - *Hybrid*

For ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING: Instructions on how to join the virtual meeting will still be sent to members - or guests upon request - via the email meeting reminder each Monday.

The in-person meetings are held at Heritage Hills Hotels with the venue – location advertised on a sign outside - opening at 7 am.

YORK EAST ROTARY CLUB BOARD MEETING

Board Meeting on Wednesday, August 10th, 2022

7:30 a.m. Hybrid – In person at Brewery Products

York East Board of Directors 2022/23

President: Karen Comery
President-Elect:
Treasurer: Diane Yocum
Secretary: Friedel Liebe-Elser & Bob Elser
Past President: Sandra Graham
Sargeant at Arms:
Committee Chairs & Members-at-large
Becky Disney – Fundraising & Giving
William Gierasch – Club Administration
Elizabeth Wolf – Rotary Foundation
Deb Klinedienst – Membership
Chris Izzo – Grant Committee
Greg Kern– Community Service
Tim Koller – Public Relations
Bob Straw – Vocational Service
Kris Pollick
Hunter Mink

Happy Birthday to you...

Kondor, Cher	Aug 08
King, Kyle	Aug 10
Craft, Jim	Aug 14
Kurl, Todd	Aug 22
Kile, Jeff	Aug 28

*If your birthday is not listed, please contact
Bob Elser at navman9@comcast.net or
Friedel Liebe-Elser at friedel.liebe@gmail.com

Introducing

Karen Comery

our Madam President 2022-23

ROTARY PRESENTATION JULY 19, 2022 SNAPSHOT:

WHO I AM

- TWO PARENT FAMILY, OLDEST OF TWO CHILDREN (DAVID), FATHER IS 88 YO, MOTHER DIED OF CANCER ON JAN 14, 2021. ADULT DAUGHTER; KIERA COMERY. RAISED HER AS A SINGLE PARENT W THE HELP OF BOTH SETS OF PARENTS AND A WONDERFUL STEP MOTHER. MARRIED FOR 5 YEARS. LIVE IN SBURY/PENN OAKS WITH H, DAD, 4 DOGS, 1 CAT AND TWO PARAKEETS.
- SCHOOL: CENTRAL/PLANETARIUM, CENTRAL PENN, YORK, WIDENER: WORKED FT/THREE NIGHTS A WEEK FOR 4 YEARS.
- PRACTICING YOGA SINCE 2012. 200 HOUR RYT. HOT YOGA IS MY FAVORITE. TEACHING AT YFL SINCE 2012 AND AT THE JCC SINCE 2021.
- YORK COUNTY GOVT. 1996-2012: EI CM, CYS, ADULT PROB/PAROLE, 2001 DA REBERT: PSI 2003: ADA
DA'S OFFICE: QRT/PRIMARY LEGAL DTF
PRIVATE PRACTICE 2012-2018
DHS/ICE: 2018-PRESENT
- LOVE/HATE RELATIONSHIP WITH POLITICS; INVOLVED WITH MULTIPLE LOCAL CAMPAIGNS: HAVE POLITICALLY INVOLVED FRIENDS WITH BOTH MAJOR PARTIES
- LOTS OF STORIES FROM CAREER: CJ SYSTEM SINCE 1999
ONES THAT STAND OUT
- CAREER HAS BEEN IN PUBLIC SERVICE. COURT APPOINTED CRIMINAL PANEL, COURT APPOINTED DEPENDENCY CASES, COURT APPOINTED ORPHAN'S COURT CASES VOLUNTEERED AS A GUARDIAN MONITOR
- AFFECTION FOR CAUSES INVOLVING ANIMALS, CHILDREN, AND OLDER PEOPLE

WHY I BECAME INVOLVED WITH ROTARY

- RAISED BY TWO PARENTS WHO GAVE BACK TO THEIR COMMUNITY: MARRIED 5_ YEARS WHEN MY MOTHER DIED ON JANUARY 14, 2021

-CHURCH: BREAKING IN WITH BOBBY PIN STORY
-TALL CEDARS -MASONS -SHRINERS

- THOUGHT ABOUT ROTARY FOR A FEW YEARS. ASKED BY A FEW DIFFERENT PEOPLE; ROGER DICK, CHARLES WURSTER, TOM KELLEY. FINALLY ABLE TO MAKE THE TIME IN MY SCHEDULE TO ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE.
- FEEL IT IS IMPORTANT TO GIVE BACK "SERVICE ABOVE SELF"
- OVER THE YEARS BEEN INVOLVED WITH:
-TEACHING SS, VBS,
RACE AGAINST RACISM,
WILLS FOR HEROES,
MEMBER OF VARIOUS BOARDS
STILL ON CENTRAL PENN LEGAL ADVISORY BOARD
MEMBER OF THE COROLLA WILD HORSE FUND,
CONTRIBUTE TO ARI, HEAVENLY PAWS, NEW LIFE FOR PAWS.
- BIG SISTER W BBBS FOR 4.5 YEARS.

MY GOALS 2022-2023 YEAR

1. MEMBERSHIP/SOCIAL
-2018-2019: 21 FEMALE/47 MALES: 68
-CURRENT YEAR: 16 FEMALE/36 MALE 52

-GOAL: 8 NEW MEMBERS
-WANT EVERYONE TO THINK OF 5 PEOPLE YOU CAN ASK TO JOIN; KEEP ASKING

-ROTARY ALT. MEETING: ONE EVENING MONTH/SEPT

-BRING BACK SOCIAL EVENTS: GOAL 6
2. PROJECTS
DREAM BIG: 35TH ANNIVERSARY PROJECT (LOCAL)
INTERNATIONAL PROJECT (UKRAINE MISSION TRIP)
COLLABORATING WITH ANOTHER LOCAL ROTARY CLUB FOR A FUNDRAISER IN THE SPRING

PINTS FOR POLIO
3. MISC: BYLAW REVISION, ADDITIONAL FUNDRAISERS, BOOST THE FOUNDATIONS, MEETINGS

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS/CONCERNS; PLEASE FEEL FREE TO REACH OUT TO ME. THIS IS YOUR CLUB AND SHOULD BE SHAPED HOW THE MEMBERS WANT IT TO BE SHAPED.

GREAT BOARD. TRULY DEDICATED INDIVIDUALS. VERY HELPFUL TO ME AND YORK EAST IS LUCKY TO HAVE. REMEMBER WHY YOU FIRST GOT INVOLVED WITH ROTARY. BRING BACK THAT PASSION. GET ENERGIZED, GET RE INVOLVED AND HAVE A GREAT 2022-2023 ROTARY YEAR!

HAPPY



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I would be grateful if
once you have pledged your HAPPY DOLLARS
PLEASE send an email to
friedel.liebe@gmail.com

asap with the amount, your story and if possible, a photo.
Since it is impossible to get any of the above details during
hybrid meetings, your help is very much appreciated.

THANK YOU

Your backdated Happy Dollar Stories are always welcome
Aat any time!

Karen for the graduation of her nephew
HUNTER BARNHARDT who took his Oath of
Office July 22nd 2022. He was flying out of
Albany to start Basic Training at Lackland Air
Force Base. He will then be going to specialized
school through the Ar Force to learn how to fix
airplanes.

Connie for Elizabeth, Bob Elser and Friedel for
the informative program they put together on
July 26th

Friedel was happy to see the faces of Jim and
Cher during the July 26th zoom meeting - after
they both seem to be recovering well from their
recent health problems

*We are very sad to report that our newest member, **David
Tompson**, has resigned because of health reasons.*

*However, upon receiving the best wishes for a speedy
recovery from his Fellow Rotarians at the RC York East
he promised to consider rejoining once his current health
crisis is over.*

*Meanwhile we are sending our most heartfelt wishes to
Dave and his wife Karen as they are celebrating their 54th
wedding anniversary on August 3rd and to Karen Happy
Birthday wishes on August 12th.*



SAVE THE DATE

Reminder

August 6th at 4 pm

Once again Elizabeth and her husband Steve
have graciously invited us all to their by now
traditional summer picnic at their
magnificent home.



CORRECTION:



*In our July Newsletter we passed on the info from what appered
to be a 'reliable source' that the building at on 2525 Eastern
Boulevard, 'until recently the headquarters of Bob Yost's
successor, Berkshire Hathaway Homesale Realty, the largest
real estate office in the York area, is being sold at the time of
writing.' – We later learned that the sale was still pending. We
apologize for this error.*

**Just Another HOT Summer's Day
But Remember in 5 months it'll be Christmas**

Weather website: WUNDERGROUND.COM

96 YORK HOSPITAL AREA STATION|

4:03 PM EDT on July 24, 2022 (GMT -4)

96 °F

FEELS LIKE 118°

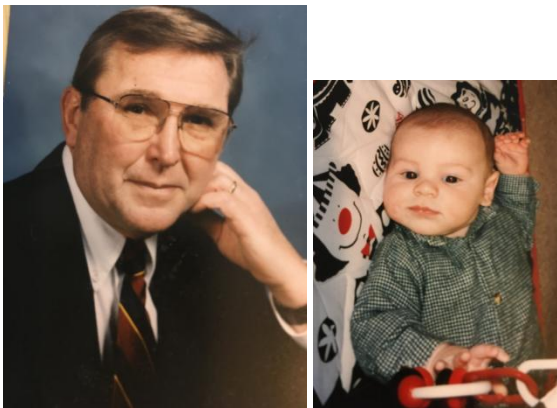
**OUR CLUB APPROACHES ITS 35TH ANNIVERSARY –
AND WE CONTINUE OUR
WALK DOWN MEMORY LANE...**

The deeper you dive into our Club's history the more endearing are the stories of those who have helped to shape the Rotary Club of York East.

There is Charlie Stein Jr. – one of our founder members, who instilled the spirit of Rotary into his son, Dr. Charlie Stein III, as well as into his daughter Carol, so much that they both joined his club, albeit Carol only became a Rotarian in February 1995, a year after her father's death. Still, she knew how to make him proud - while watching her from above – when she followed in his footsteps by becoming the 21st President in 2008-09, twenty years after her father had served as the First President of the Rotary Club York East. But while Carol S. Gottschalk, nee Stein, eventually resigned when her professional duties prevented her from attending, her brother Charlie is still a much-revered active member, whose presence at most meetings brings a smile onto many faces.

Another family legacy, where a son would make his father proud, was Michael Barley, who had joined his father, Marlin Barley at the RC York East and went on to serve as President in 1997-1998, an honor Marlin watched with great joy. *(for more details see our Newsletter July 2022)*

And here is a little 'teaser': we may soon be able to welcome the daughter of one of our Charter Members – so please *watch this space*.

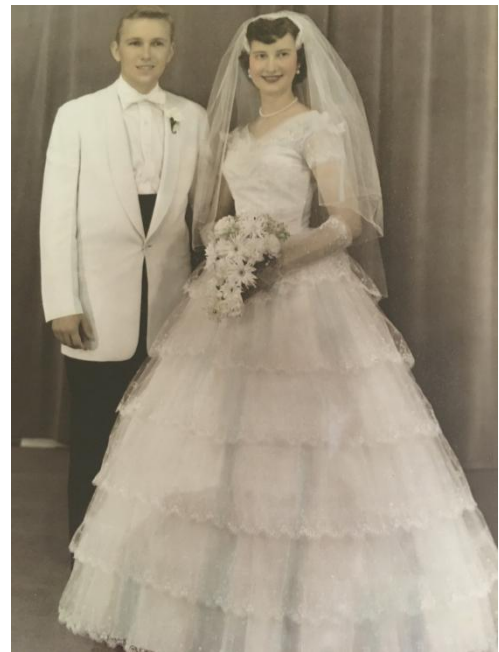


Granddad Jim & Grandson Nick SMOLKO

Yet this year has already provided us all with an entirely new reason to rejoice over unique Rotary family dynamics when Nicholas Smolko, the grandson of our much-loved late member Dr. Jim Smolko, joined his granddad's club.

Although sadly Jim died on March 19th 2017, almost exactly 5 years to the day before his grandson Nick joined, the memory of Jim's smiling face, his infectious sense of humor, his riveting stories, which he narrated with an amazing talent, are still very much alive in everyone's mind. Everyone means those of us lucky enough to have heard him unravel for us parts of his fascinating life from his coal-mining ancestors to the family's Italian blood that pulsed as strong as ever in his veins, from his own breathtaking experiences while serving as a doctor in the Vietnam war to his endearing tales of his beloved wife Helen and their large family"

For Jim and Helen to fall in love at first sight was a plan destiny (or maybe their English teacher?) needed to fulfill. Growing up within a stone's throw of each other, they went to school together. And no, they were not just childhood sweethearts, they were in love ever since they could remember. At one time their English teacher asked them what they would want to do when they grew up. Jim, without a moment's hesitation, said: "I am going to marry Helen!" Being a boy (not yet a man!) of his word, so he did. A few years later....



Jim and Helen on their wedding Day 1958

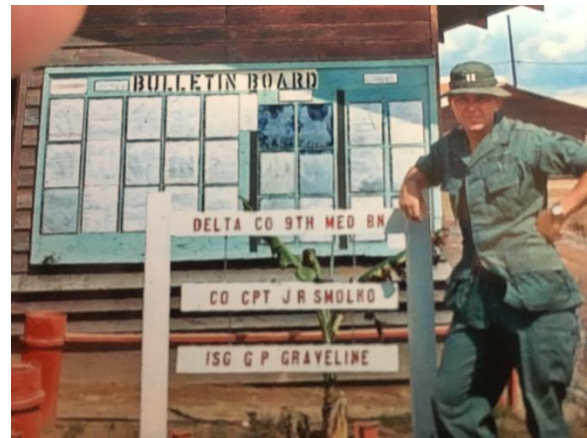
And looking at their beautiful wedding photo – indeed at any other photo of them taken throughout their blissfully happy marriage of 59 years, their love for each other is there for all to see.

Yet like for most couples, their marriage was anything but a bed of roses. With the war in Vietnam spiraling out of control, many a young couple had to face the prospect of separation, not to mention the horrific fear of losing their husbands, the father of their children.

Among millions of other young men, Dr. James Regis Smolko, who was born on May 17th 1935, shared the prospect of being ‘called up’. So was his special friend from Pittsburgh with whom he had gone through Medical School at Pitt, Dr. Thaddeus Lekawa, known to us as Ted. With both men hailing from similar backgrounds, their friendship, based on mutual trust and respect, had grown into a lifelong companionship that would, one day, see them being interns together at York Hospital before going into practice together and even joining the same Rotary Club.

Although Ted, who was also married with three children at that time, was expecting his draft number to come up any day since they were both in the same recruitment group, ultimately it was only Jim who was sent to San Antonio first and then on to Albuquerque to complete a year’s training for the military. This meant the young family needed to be packed up and moved there with him. Although as a father of three he had every right to opt out of the draft process, Jim always being true to himself, told Helen, “It’s my country, right or wrong. So I have to go.”

Once his superior officers deemed him fit to face the enemy, in 1967 Jim finally landed in Vietnam while both of them knew their how dangerous this assignment was. From the moment he landed in the war zone, Jim, who had been a practicing physician since 1962, would never look at life the same way.



Jim's Field Hospital in Vietnam

How does a young couple, torn apart by a war that took one of them to a country at the other side of the globe, deal with the fear, the heartache, the sleepless nights, and the burning desire to hold each other and live together in peace and harmony? Jim and Helen, each of them brought up to stand on their own two feet, knew they had to find a way to survive this madness. And they did find it, - by writing to each other. No, not like other couples, a letter once in a while – no: they wrote a letter every day – Every Day! Each of them – to each other. Today this box of letters is the most precious heirloom that, one day, their children will cherish above all else.

So while Helen, looking after their three adorable toddlers, young Jim, Laura, and John (Nick's father) told her husband about every new baby step as they were exploring their world, in his letters Jim would talk about anything but the horrors of the war raging around him, about the horrific injuries that landed on his operating table, or about the dismay of losing the soldiers he so desperately tried to save. Young men, like himself, with families and loved ones waiting for their return. Yet in his letters he shared with his wife the excitement of making new friends, of exploring the fauna of a land so far away that everything seemed like a world apart. And he went into raptures about sunrises and sunsets. Theirs were love letters, sharing experiences with each other that made life sound and feel (almost) normal. And each of them kept every single letter the other ever wrote, the tokens of love, - a love like theirs that conquers all.



After Vietnam – back in York

In 1968, after spending a year in Vietnam, saving countless lives and spreading his optimism and infectious sense of humor throughout the whole camp, Jim returned. He was now officially a Veteran of the US Army, with the Bronze Star, the Combat Medical Badge, Army Commendation Medal, and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry awarded to him. He soon packed up his family and returned to York to pick up where they had left off more than two years ago.

But the war in Vietnam had changed Jim's outlook on life and he decided to leave his family practice to begin an anesthesiology residency at the University of Maryland before joining the Anesthesia Associates of York where he worked until he retired.

He would eventually become the Chairman of the Department of Anesthesiology at York Hospital and the President of the Medical Staff at York Hospital, as well as a member and later president of the York County Medical Society and a member of the Pennsylvania Medical Society.

Yet none of the many duties Jim fulfilled throughout his career and, indeed, his life, would ever get in the way of his unbridled devotion to his first, his one and only love, Helen and the family they created together.



They both took no end of trouble to discover some 'Roads Less Travelled' to show how much they loved each and every one of their children, and subsequently all their offspring, who will forever cherish the memories of this smiling, affectionate, compassionate gentleman with his tender touch and his boundless, engaging stories.

One such extraordinary display of affection, made even more precious by the fact that it happened to be the last time all of them would be together, was a cruise to which Helen and Jim invited their whole family – sixteen in all – for a cruise. At Christmas 2016 they embarked at Baltimore and sailed into the sun to start the New Year - 2017.



Their last year together

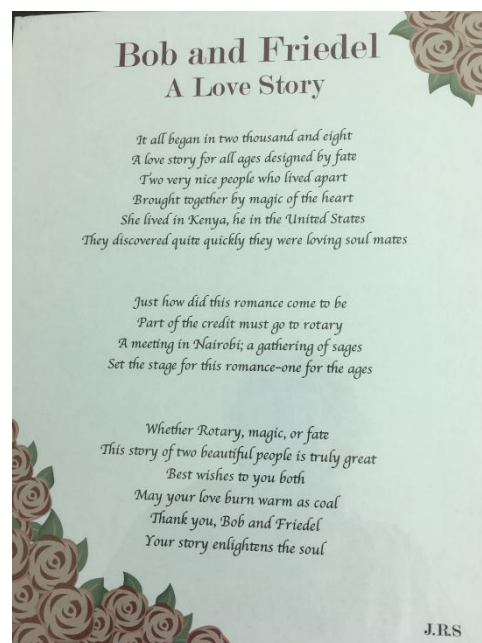
One of the most vivid - and hilarious – memories, not only for the Smolko family but for everyone on this cruise – was the 'newlyweds game' the onboard

entertainment team played out in front of the large audience. The hosts asked some selected couples a number of questions, which had to be answered independently. For good measure they also chose a not so young couple who had an almost 59-year record of ‘happily ever after’.

And since Jim had shared this story with many of us, I trust it is safe to repeat it here for those who have yet to get a dose of his sense of humor: Helen and Jim were already well ahead of all the other couples when they were asked: “If you would get \$1,000 for every time you made love during this cruise, how much money, if any, would you have made by now?” The answer from each of them – individually! without even seeing each other – was: “We could have paid for this cruise!”

With so much to give and his abundance of knowledge and experience in many fields, it was inevitable that Jim also became an active member of OLLI, the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute in York, where his lectures were much sought after and as such sold out as soon as they were published. On one occasion, he even joined forces with another colleague, the well-known orthopedic surgeon, Dr. Joe Danyo, as they both highlighted the treacherous lives of their ancestors who had come to America to work in the coal mines.

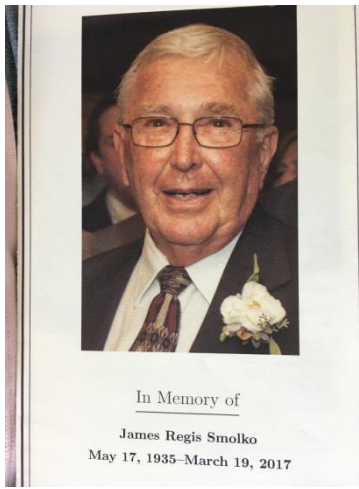
In addition to Jim’s amazing talent to tell the best stories, he occasionally also put his hand or rather his mind to writing a poem. And those of us lucky enough to receive one of his creations, the privilege and the joy they spread is priceless. My husband Bob and I will be forever grateful for the one that occupies a place of pride in our home, which is much more than his and Helen’s wedding present for us – it is an inspiration for everyone who reads it.



Our cherished wedding present - Jim's Poem

On the evening of March 17th 2017, the Country Club of York celebrated Leprechaun Day with an event that had become a tradition, whereby an elaborate miniature golf course is set up throughout the entire clubhouse. With tees in the most unlikely places, players have to watch their golf balls bounce down some stairs or even from a balcony, to (hopefully) finish up in a hole that is so impossible to access that only luck can determine a winner.

Helen and Bob, and Jim and I were a tried and tested team which had navigated this fun course several times before. Yet on that night, Jim did not appear his usual self. He had lost his sister only two weeks earlier but still insisted that our plans should not be changed as she would want Jim and Helen to get on with enjoying their lives. We will be forever grateful neither of us had any inkling that our time together at the Country Club would be the last evening of Jim’s life as he knew it. Less than 24 hours later he was in the ICU at York Hospital where he died on Sunday morning, March 19th, two months shy of his 82nd birthday.



His stories will never die

Yet while sharing endearing stories during his last dinner he said he only wished that his sister had recorded her memoirs as she had repeatedly promised she would. “Now I have to try and remember all the events she had wanted to write about...”

As so often when talking about his amazing life, Jim’s grandmother featured as the epitome of the most lovable Italian Mama, who would pinch little Jim’s cheek, telling him “You are such a gooda boya!” And every time Jim quoted her, the unmistakable Italian accent shone through while he pinched his own cheek on her behalf, revealing the endless love this Italian Mama had instilled in all of her more than a dozen grandchildren. And as soon as she discovered something a little unusual on any of them, like funny shirt, crazy hairstyle, or silly new-age accessory they had not worn before, she would, instead of chastising them, smile benevolently and tell them: “If you lika – I lika.” – No matter how weird they looked.

All of Jim’s stories were beautiful and heartwarming, filling the atmosphere with Mediterranean sunshine, the scent of olive oil, garlic, and pasta sauce, happy children’s laughter, and unconditional love.

No wonder Helen and Jim managed to make this fairytale-like family ambience their own when it came to bringing up their four children, ... until the four of them added their own spouses to this picture of bliss and sunshine. Just how many mothers can proudly look at their daughters like Helen did, as they are walked down the aisle to marry the man they love, wearing the dress their beautiful mother wore on her own wedding day. The amazing wedding

photos of both their daughters show Laura and Jennifer looking every bit as stunning as their mom did when she married their dad more than two decades earlier.

It is thanks to this aura of love and devotion which Helen and Jim instilled in their little ones from an early age that happiness is an integral part of the Smolko family. And it is this close-knit family unit with by now eleven grandchildren and three great grandchildren that keeps the amazing sparkles in Helen’s eyes.

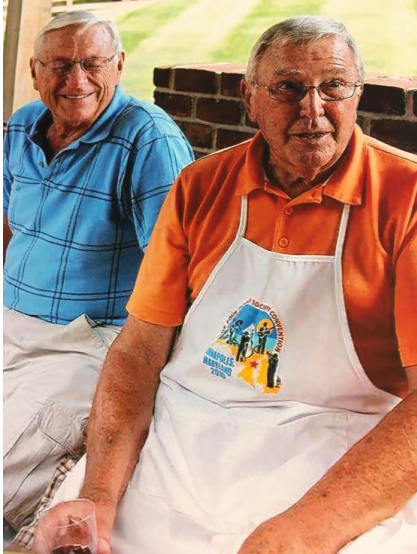
And carrying on the true Italian tradition of ‘Family First’, Helen admirably fulfills her role as their Matriarch. This includes her cooking a delicious family dinner every Thursday night. No invitations needed. No RSVPs expected. “They just come when they can, knowing there is always enough food to go round.”

Needless to say, the family adores their Matriarch – therefore Helen never feels alone. But equally important, whatever problem she may have, be it that her swimming pool needs cleaning, her shrubs are waiting for a pair of scissors putting them back into shape, her car wants some tuning done, her front door has started to squeak, or her computer is having a bad day, there is always someone in her family who breezes into the house, giving her a hug and a smile, and won’t leave until the job is done or the problem is fixed.

Albeit Helen doesn’t look much different than when she was 50 years young, this amazing, warm-hearted, and still stunningly beautiful lady is only three years away from becoming a nonagenarian. The sparkle in her eyes has never dimmed – not even when the love of her life left her without a warning because she shows the world that ‘Love Never Dies’.

Jim will always be missed by his family, friends, and those closest to him at our club. Sadly it only really became evident just how much he had done for all of us as well as for those in need. For years he looked after the ‘Students of the Month’ and he was always the first to sign up when our members were helping to serve meals at ‘Our Daily Bread’ or at the ‘Catholic Food Harvest’. He would head the volunteers to package and distribute meals for Thanksgiving. In fact, for anything that needed to be done, Jim was there, offering not only a capable pair of hands but spreading his delightful sense of humor around any venue, irrespective of its size.

There, like in most of the ‘service duties’ mentioned above, he would link up with his old friend from Medical School, Ted Lekawa. Seeing Jim and Ted handing out meals, joking, and laughing together, while spreading kindness and humanity among those who expect it the least, had become a familiar sight throughout the years – one that will be sadly missed just as at Elizabeth and Steve Wolf’s summer picnics.



Ted & Jim – friends for life

To best describe Jim’s commitment to Service above Self is, that as soon as he retired from his extremely strenuous work as an anesthesiologist at York Hospital, in February of 2000, he joined the RC YE, devoting as much of himself as possible to being a Rotarian. One measure of how much he is still remembered by his fellow Rotarians is the sign that goes up during every one of our annual Golf Outings for a special donation made in his name, marked “Friends of Dr. Jim Smolko”

Jim certainly fulfilled one of his life’s mottos, taken from the Nat King Cole song ‘Nature Boy’ - ”The greatest thing you’ll ever learn is just to love and be loved in return”

With Jim emulating his grandmother by making everyone feel like they are the most important person in his life, - and at that very moment in time they really were! – he was a God-send, to his family, his friends, people who worked for him or depended on him, and especially to his patients. What better, reassuring feeling than to know for the one doctor who looks after your wellbeing during your surgery, you are the only patient in the world he will concentrate on throughout your surgery.

That kind of constant reassurance also created the most extraordinary relationships with his children and grandchildren, one of them being Nick, whom we were lucky enough to welcome as our new member earlier this year. And although true to Jim’s character, every one of them had a special place in his heart, it seemed to be Nick whose ‘special place’ was edged into his granddad’s heart in capital letters as he talked about him often and never without the biggest smile to accompany the story.

From the moment Nick showed any interest in the life around him, Jim discovered that “This boy is interested in absolutely everything!” Although a quiet youngster, he never ceased to question what he saw or fiddle with something that had stopped working until he had fixed it. And judging by the way Nick – no, he does not read books, he *devours* them – Jim, with a broad smile, shared his suspicion that Nick was born with a How-To-Encyclopedia in one hand and a screwdriver in the other.



Proving his granddad right, it turns out that Nick can wear any hat that is handed to him, as once he is given a problem to solve, solve it he will. He is often asked how he does it when he is not even trained in that particular field, Nick simply shrugs because it all seems so easy to him.

One of the countless endearing tales from ‘life with Nick’ which his granddad shared with our club will be remembered by all who heard it: “Our toilet had stopped working so we called a plumber, who never came. When young Nick popped round one day, I told him about our problem, He looked at the offending commode, got my toolbox, and before I could watch what he was doing, he had fixed it. I was stunned: ‘How did you do it?’ Without missing a

beat, he let me into his secret: ‘You only have to be smarter than the toilet, granddad.’ – And that thing has worked perfectly ever since.”



*Nick’s adorable impish smile confirms
“I am smarter than the toilet!”*

No wonder Nick has chosen such an extraordinary zigzagging career path because he can put his hand to anything – absolutely anything. He says: “Around fifteen, I joined the Goodwill Fire Company #1 of Jacobus. Becoming involved in the fire service was a gateway to helping others in terrible times of need – and I loved it. I fully immersed myself in public service. Hundreds of hours spent training, responding to calls, and gaining my first dose of what it meant to be a leader.”

Nick continues: “After graduating from Dallastown Area High School in 2015, I started working for Hartenstein Funeral & Cremation, Inc. in New Freedom. During my almost four-year tenure, I held a variety of different roles: Assisting with embalming and cremations, removal of decedents from their place of death, and facilitating funeral services.”

In 2018, I accepted a position as a Network & Telecommunications Engineer in the County of York’s Information Technology Department. In that role I supported the infrastructure needs of 2,000 employees, 44 County-owned buildings, the York County Prison, and the York County Department of Emergency Services. While not IT-related, I was also heavily involved with the Election & Voter Registration Office, which I thoroughly enjoyed.”



He recently joined the Leadership Staff at Hollywood Casino York as the Head of their Information Technology Services Department although he admits: “I was somewhat anxious about leaving the Public Sector, but it has been a wonderful transition to the Entertainment and Hospitality industry.” Why are we not surprised that Nick also serves as the Eastern York County Emergency Management Section Planning Chief.

At the prime of his youth Nick is not only our youngest ever member in Rotary terms but at 25 he has the world at his fingertips. Therefore picturing him hiking some treacherous trails deep inside the Appalachians, steering his kayak through troubled waters,



trying for a Hole in One



or riding his or riding his 2017 Victory Vegas motorcycle



only enhances the picture perfect image we so enjoy in our younger generation, especially when we know the about the other side of the coin.

And there we see this extraordinary young man who cares deeply about helping people in their greatest times of need – no matter what their problem or the damage to their bodies and souls might be..

Thanks to his impressive experience anyone who collapses on a sidewalk, threatens to be sucked in by an outgoing tide, or caught up in an accident on a mountain trail could only hope that Nick catches sight of him – or her! Because he will jump into action – without wasting a moment on thinking about any danger to himself.

So, should you, by any chance, be stranded on a Desert Island, the one person you want to find swept up there alongside you would be Nicholas J. Smolko. Even though his infinite technical skills, which include the knack of fixing his granddad's toilet may not come in quite so handy, he may simply construct a bush toilet for you, - one that will be guaranteed to work. As for food, he will probably catch any fish for dinner with some rod he fashioned connected to a piece of string from his pocket – or even just using his bare hands. Any injury you may have sustained will be expertly attended to by your fellow ship-wreckers, thanks to his hundreds of hours of training for the fire service. And following his tried and tested motto *be prepared* he probably won't even wait to be rescued as, with the help of his pocket knife, he is already chipping away at some tree trunk, with the detailed blueprint of how to construct the get-away boat outlined in his head. And - who knows? – on such an occasion you may even discover that Nick, although usually the more quiet of Helen and Jim's grandchildren, has inherited some of the genes that made his granddad such a enchanting narrator.

Apart from having already practiced the Rotary Motto: *Service above Self* from the time when he was knee-high to a grasshopper (according to his granddad), Nick has used his years since then to perfect his admirable skills. We are more than grateful for his decision to follow our unforgettable Fellow Rotarian, Dr. Jim Smolko, as Nick will, no doubt, enrich our club not just with his seemingly boundless energy and his youthful vigor, but by instilling some fresh ideas that will pave the way into a brighter, post-pandemic future.



In fact Nick has already started that future by inviting the whole club to the Hollywood Casino on Tuesday morning at seven, where he plans to take us all on a specially organized tour that includes the most innovative behind-the-scenes equipment. As his generous treat for us includes a buffet breakfast, all you need to bring are a few dollars to purchase some chips – and a handful of luck!

All Photo credits – except for the Poem: Love Story – go to the Family of Dr. Jim Smolko

Farewell to our Egrets



What a privilege to have watched them grow



But now it's time for them to go



"Look out there, the sky's the limit"



"You can do it! Just keep flapping!"



"Spread your wings like this!"



Come fly with me come fly and fly away



*Good bye! Have a wonderful life!
And thank you for the joy you gave to us*

