

# ROTARY CLUB OF YORK – EAST

District 7390 – Meetings: Tuesdays @ 7:30 a.m.

## June 2022 Newsletter

Editor: Friedel Liebe-Elser

[www.clubrunner.ca/york-east](http://www.clubrunner.ca/york-east)



Rotary Opens Opportunities

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### Rotary Membership Anniversaries

*Thank you  
for your continued service above self*

Wurster, Charles	28 years Jun 01 1994
Pollick, Kris	8 years Jun 03 2014
Kondor, Cher	22 years Jun 06 2000
Wolf, Elizabeth	18 years Jun 10 2004
Spark, Connie	26 years Jun 18 1996
Molinaro, Tony	10 years Jun 19 2012
Jamison, Steve	35 years Jun 24 1987
Kern, Greg	11 years Jun 28 2011

### York East Board of Directors 2021/22

President:	Sandra Graham
President-Elect:	Karen Comery
Treasurer:	Diane Yocum
Secretary:	Friedel Liebe-Elser & Bob Elser
Past President:	Kyle King
Sargeant at Arms:	

#### At-large Members & Committee Chairs:

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  
Kris Pollick  
Hunter Mink

### Happy Birthday to you...

Ansell, Blair	Jun 11
Lutz, Pete	Jun 11
Izzo, Chris	Jun 15
Walters, Jim	Jun 16
Disney, Becky	Jun 17
Dick, Roger	Jun 27
Meighen, Jin Jou	Jun 29

#### CONGRATULATIONS for your GOLDEN WEDDING

Morrie & Mary Ann Hooper, on Jun 21 1972

\*If your birthday is not listed, please contact

Bob Elser at [navman9@comcast.net](mailto:navman9@comcast.net) or

Friedel Liebe-Elser at [friedel.liebe@gmail.com](mailto:friedel.liebe@gmail.com)

### Programs for this month

**June 7.** Marking the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary our own Cher Kondor shares with us her reason to create the Gold Star Peace & Healing Garden. - *Hybrid*

**June 14.** Mike Kinney, administrator at the Milton Hershey School & President of Hershey Rotary Club, will give an overview of the school and raise awareness of the opportunities available to children of low/moderate income families - *Hybrid*

**June 21.** Springettsbury Township in 2022  
Presented by two of our own members & Township Manager Charles Wurster, RCYE, Member, Board of Supervisors  
Chief Todd King, RCYE, Chief of Police  
Mark Hodgkinson, Township Manager - *Hybrid*

**June 28.** Passing the gavel and recognition of those receiving Paul Harris awards. *In Person – outside at Heritage Hills*

**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 Thursday, June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022

7:30 a.m. via ZOOM Virtual Platform only

# HAPPY



I would be grateful if  
**once you have pledged your HAPPY DOLLARS**  
PLEASE send an email to  
[friedel.liebe@gmail.com](mailto: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  
at any time!

## Bob Straw – Happy Dollars

Deb & I are so proud of our oldest Granddaughter, **Lily Richwine** on her graduation from Pitt-Johnstown with Summa Cum Laude Honors and a Degree in Biology. Lily maintained a 4.0 + Average every semester throughout her college years. She actually entered College from High School with College Credits to her name thanks to Central York's Advanced Programs.



She wants to work with animals so she is doing a hands-on internship with West Shore Wildlife Animal Rescue in Etters, PA for the summer.. She is currently working with baby possums who have lost their momma. She is nursing them in captivity preparing them for a release into the wild in the future. She just released three squirrels back into the wild last week and they are happy to be climbing in trees where they belong.



Bob and Deb as proud grandparents  
with Lily who graduated Summa Cum Laude Honors  
and a Degree in Biology

She is planning to go back to school in the fall to work on her Masters Degree.

## Bob and Friedel Elser share their Happy Dollars on behalf of their two granddaughters, Chase and Wynne Elser.

We are extremely proud of them and of the success they have had growing up in Virginia Beach.



Bob & little Chase



Bob's son Pete & little Wynne

Although they had a special place in Bob's heart since they were born, Friedel has known them only as adolescents and young women since meeting them in 2009.



Bob and his late wife, Kay, often took them under their wings until Kay's untimely death in 2007. Sadly, she didn't have the opportunity to see them become the beautiful, compassionate young women that they are today.



**Chase** graduated from the University of Georgia with a Bachelor's Degree in public relations from the Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communications. She will continue her studies at the university as she pursues a graduate degree in Emerging Media from the New Media Institute at the University of Georgia. She hopes to work in the technology field with an emphasis in user-experience design. In her free time, Chase commissions acrylic paintings and other forms of visual art.



**Wynne** has graduated from Mercersburg Academy with Honors and high regards from her faculty advisors. She plans to attend Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore, Maryland where she will study Visual Arts with a minor in Product Design. Prior to leaving for college, Wynne will return to her job as a Sales Associate and Merchandiser at a women's retail boutique in her hometown of Virginia Beach. In her free time, Wynne runs a side business where she sells her own original embroidered clothing and other forms of visual art.

#### From Newsletter Editor Friedel

Our Rotarian Elizabeth after being featured in the May 2022 issue

**elizabeth.wolf@wellsfargoadvisors.** Wed, 4 May, 10:41 To Friedel

You did a great job – I'd like to meet this woman!

**CHERRINEY KONDOR** –  
affectionately known to us as **CHER**

'MOTHER' OF THE GOLD STAR HEALING AND PEACE GARDEN

**Celebrating the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the GOLD STAR HEALING AND PEACE GARDEN on June 9<sup>th</sup> 2022**

*American Gold Star Mother*

*Member of the American Gold Star Mothers and Thank Blue York, PA*

*Recipient of the Legion of Honor's Humanitarian Award from the Chapel of the Four Chaplains in 2014 and again in 2022.*

These are only some of the titles that have been bestowed on her

Whenever I meet Cher, her serenity reminds me of a quote by the Roman Poet Virgil in the Aeneid, *Being acquainted with suffering I am learning to help those who suffer* (– a modern translation of *Non ignaramali, miserissuccurrere disco.*)

Yet in June of 2000, when Cher joined the Rotary Club of York East, none of the above would have ever been attached to her name, because Cher Kondor was, at that time, happy to be the mother of two teenagers, who were easy going, the kind of kids any parents would hope to have. Hence Cher and her husband Mike were able to concentrate on improving their little family's life. For Cher this meant trying her hand in utilizing her studies of Fine Art and Education in creating *Kondor Media*, by now a well-known and very successful company. Cher is mostly retired she spends two days a week at helping with appraisals and social media at JinJou's Gem Boutique, one of York's finest Jewelry Stores. This once again shows just how intimately interwoven the lives of the members of our club are.

On occasion, her company will produce industrial videos. Its services extend to advertising including Television, radio, social media, and print. Her company promises:

### **OUR MISSION IS TO ADVANCE CIVILIZATION THROUGH COMMUNICATION**

...a promise that is kept in more ways than one.

Kondor Media seems capable of performing miracles when it comes to getting a message across, creating an emotional response to the facts that are conveyed, presenting their work in the most sophisticated style with that unique touch of depth and class.

Apart from the usual everyday trials and tribulations, life was so good that Mike and Cher were filled with gratitude. Both doting on their young and both being dedicated to improving the lives of those who are not as well off. Thanks to their philanthropic nature they shared whatever they could. That meant Cher was a Rotarian by nature even before she received the badge as a member of our club.



At that time Martin was 17 – and what a joy to have around



with the promise of a whole exciting life ahead of him.

For everyone who knows about Cher's loss, it is incomprehensible to imagine a mother walking into her dining room in late April 2004 looking into the eyes of two Army officers knowing within the next few seconds her life will be changed forever. Yet hoping against all hope to see if her son might be right behind them. "Casualty Officers always park in the neighbor's drive when they come to deliver the news that shatters your life because they don't want you to know before they can deliver the information", Cher remembers. And although from that moment on everything had become a blur, she still felt her heart beating faster than ever before, - and so loud that it drowned out every word these officers said. Everything began a slow spin around her, and it appeared as if she were watching a bad movie in slow motion.

All she could see was this photo she had just received from Martin in action under a deceptively peaceful crystal blue sky



Of course, Cher knew then that nothing would ever be the same again. She did not have to wait for the official statement to be read out to her and her husband Mike as they tried to hold on to each other, because by this time everything around them had faded.

The words "SPC Martin Kondor had been killed in action", did not even reach them. Mike and Cher's hearts were already broken into a thousand pieces.

Cher can barely remember the days, weeks, and months that followed, but whenever she watches the footage taken of her

walking through the chapel during Martin's memorial service, she sees a woman who seems like a stranger to her.

Not only did she change on that fateful day in April 2004, since then she has touched and changed uncountable lives by giving all those who have lost their loved ones a place to remember, to grieve, to cry, to pray, to seek solace, a place to be proud, and a place where they can feel close to those they have loved and lost.

How does a family deal with the shattered dreams they had cherished while bringing up their sons? After all Mike's son Trevor, her 'ready-made bonus-son' had successfully completed his service in the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne in 1991.

Martin, Cher's first-born, and her second-born Joe, being so close in age, were inseparable, - the crowning of a romance that had started at Penn State's Middletown Campus. Cher was teaching a media class there while working full time in the news department at WHTM-TV 27 in Harrisburg. There in the front row was a totally bald young man, and his equally bald female friend. Knowing that baldness was not *en vogue* in the Pennsylvania of the late 70s, Cher was intrigued. She soon learned that those two friends weren't two crazies, showing off some ill-conceived desire to be different. No, they happened to be members of the cast playing their roles in a movie about the Holocaust with Vanessa Redgrave called "Playing for Time". This young man proved he had an impressive command of the English language and an innate talent for using media to convey a story. This young man whose baldness would soon give way to a full shock of black hair, interned with WHTM and was immediately hired in the news room. Their mutual respect and admiration grew, adding to his already remarkable attractions which she discovered with every passing day – simply by listening to those butterflies in her stomach. Needless to say, the same type of butterflies had invaded Mike's stomach, flapping just as madly.

And the rest is history, as they say, so on March 12<sup>th</sup>, 1983, they tied the knot. By that time Cher had long left her family home near Lewistown, where she, the second of three daughters, followed by two younger brothers, had enjoyed a happy, carefree childhood. She had graduated from Edinboro State College with a degree in Fine Arts only to pursue an additional Masters of Education in media at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Within a year of Cher opening this new chapter in her life by becoming Mrs. Mike Kondor, Martin was born. "I was no spring chicken anymore, so starting a family was at the top of my list", she confesses.



Little Martin adored by his great grand parents

## Harry & Helen Wilson

In Mike, Cher had not only found her soul mate but the perfect man for all seasons. Being born into and brought up among the well-known Kondor Lumber business, Mike's genes ensured that, from a very early age, he knew how to fix things, - no matter what it was.



Happy Family Life with  
Martin – Cher – Trevor – Mike – Joe  
Please note that Mike has changed his hairstyle,  
replacing his baldness with a full shock of hair

And luckily their two sons carried the same genes. Martin felt destined to be an engineer, already living out his passion for any type of engine by rebuilding or fixing motor bikes while he was still a teenager.

But that was not his only passion because he loved music, playing his guitar at a very early age. Many parents would sympathize with Mike and Cher when Martin announced his band was going to practice in the garage. And so, *THE GARAGE BAND* was born (with Martin in the middle).



THE GARAGE BAND

Just like Mike's oldest son Trevor, Martin's younger brother Joe's genetically predestined passion for 'fixing things' is legendary. At Guardian CSE in Wrightsville, He fixes recirculating water systems in large companies like Johns Hopkins Hospital. The word is: If your hot tub is leaking, call Joe. If you want a classic motorcycle, call Joe. If you have any kind of technical problem, Joe is the friend you would ask to come around, knowing that he will know exactly what to do. And he found just the perfect wife with whom to present Cher and Mike with the one gift Martin never could: two lovely grandchildren. Their grandson Jaiden Martin – named in honor

of the uncle he never knew – is only 15 years old. But as a true Kondor, he already shows his heritage by being an expert welder, with just as much interest in anything that needs fixing as his granddad, dad and his uncle once did. The baby of the family, little Andrew Michael, is only 4 years old, giving his grandparents the chance to catch up with the babysitting skills they so crave.

Knowing Cher's love for children, it is not surprising that in the poignant speech she delivered on May 30<sup>th</sup> 2018 during a ceremony when Representative Gillespie dedicated a bridge on the portion of State Route 1008 crossing the Codorus Creek in East Manchester Township and Hellam Township in York County to honor Cher and Mike's son, naming it the *SPC Martin Wilson Kondor Memorial Bridge* that Cher reduced her audience to tears when she shared her sentiments: "Children are a gift, but they are also our best teachers just by being born. They teach patience, kindness, endurance, humility, and strength. And most of all they teach unconditional love. Children are the future and are to be cherished."

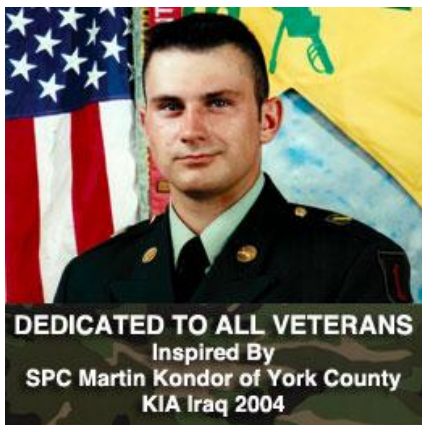


The gift of Martin at 3 months

It was especially touching that the Eastern York H.S. Choir of Martin's school sang at this special ceremony of dedication, knowing that his former classmates and teachers are always finding new ways of honoring him.

The closing scene of the ceremony held at the Codorus Furnace on that gloriously sunny day would have made Martin smile from up there when his dad wrapped his arms around his mum, pulling her into an embrace so close, it looked as he would never want to let her go. And all the while the audience gave her a much-deserved standing ovation.





Wrapped in the stripes of the flag  
 Rolling onward  
 Into infinity – the Great Beyond  
 The silver chord chasing  
 Becoming earth bound in red and white  
 The honor and the blood  
 Flowing ever thus from one increment of time  
 To the next nonexistent increment.  
 — Cherrington B. W. Kondor

Cher describes Martin as a quiet, observant young boy, who loved to fish – and it is no coincidence that the bridge that now carries his name spans the part of the Codorus Creek where he loved to fish as a young boy. Despite his closeness to his younger brother, he saw his time at the creek as his own quiet haven. Many who saw him there all those years ago remember this young boy, holding his fishing rod, with great fondness but even more so with overwhelming sadness, only too aware that this is the place where Martin should be now, being in his late 30s, sharing his joy of fishing with his own son.

But God had other plans and on 9/11, after watching the attacks on the Twin Towers in Eastern High School, when he returned home, Martin told his mother “We have been attacked on our sovereign soil and I am going to do something about it.” Even before he graduated, he enlisted so that the moment he celebrated his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, just two months after the attack, he joined the Army. In 2002, after graduating, Martin Wilson Kondor went to Fort Knox to be an MIAI Tank Crewman, living in the Red Lion Barracks. He became a member of the Big Red One Alpha Company 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion 63<sup>rd</sup> Armored Division and was subsequently stationed at Vilseck in Germany. From there he volunteered for a Brigade Commander’s personal security detachment to be deployed to Iraq during Operation Freedom 2. There he was assigned to 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade Operation Base Combat Team at Forward Operating Base Camp Warhorse in Ba’Qubah, Iraq where he was named ‘Soldier of the month’. His exemplary courage and his ability to make split-second decisions saved the lives of several of the entire PSD when they were attacked in a crossfire ambush. His was the only gun firing back as the RPG’s flew so close you could read their serial numbers. This included exploding a fast-approaching car from the rear filled with explosives before it could hit their 3-car convoy.

This act of bravery, which earned him the *Bronze Star with “V” Device*, denoting *Valor and heroism in the line of duty*, took place on Good Friday, April 9<sup>th</sup> in 2004. How could Martin have known that he only had 20 days to live...

No words can describe the devastation his death has caused in his family and, indeed, among all those who knew him. But while Cher and Mike’s unfathomable pain made them almost oblivious to ‘the whole world’ seemingly rallying around them, some unexpected solace came from Martin’s comrades, who had been close to him during his final deployment.

One of the first to visit Martin’s parents was his Commanding Officer, then General Dana Pittard, in command of Fort Bliss, Texas. His visit provided some comfort to both sides: to General Pittard as much as to Cher, Mike. Martin’s Commanding Officer shared with them all those details they were craving for, up to a last-minute account of their son’s life – and his death. Yet he could not express enough Martin’s impressive bravery and the respect and gratitude he enjoyed from his comrades, especially those whose lives he had saved.

Martin’s comrades dedicated the **Martin Wilson Kondor Education Center** in Ba’Qubah, Iraq. In honor of their fallen friend and comrade



During his visit Cher and Mike gave General Pittard the glimpse of Martin’s life he was looking for, taking him to Martin’s grave, giving him a tour of the town where Martin grew up. He was deeply touched by the tree that had been planted by the teachers and students in Martin’s honor at Kreutz Creek Elementary School

When he asked to visit their son’s grave, they gave him some time alone. Yet when they saw from a distance that his Commanding Officer quietly saluted his fallen soldier who was also his friend, they couldn’t hold back their tears.

To try and harness her grief Cher decided the only way forward was to share her experience with others who have lost their loved ones while continuing Martin’s mission. When Martin’s personal effects came back from Iraq, among them were notebooks where he was writing the core values over and over. Words such as courage, duty, and honor. Cher knew that he was trying to understand these core values and wanted to embody them as his PSD went about its mission of winning the hearts and minds of Iraqi Leaders. Cher found that translating these core values into living colors, plants in a garden, would allow people of any culture or any generation to be able to experience the core values to be the best they can be. The garden had to be

in a circle for unity. That is how America was born and how it will continue into the future.

And the Veterans Memorial Gold Star Healing and Peace Garden was born, a place to find peace and healing the ultimate reason behind wars. *Gold Star Healing and Peace Garden* names the Pennsylvanians fallen in the Global War on Terror. In addition, the first wall names the York County Fallen from the time of American Gold Star Mothers formation during WW1 until today. Yet this garden is not just unique to Pennsylvania or even to America. It is a place like no other in the world.

Here Cher's artistic talents, combined with Martin's desire of understanding the core values evolved into the Gold Star Garden. Along the middle walk in the garden, the Walk of the Intrepid, a series of garden rooms or beds represent the core values as follows:

RED	COURAGE
ORANGE	DUTY & SERVICE
YELLOW	REMEMBRANCE
GREEN	HEALING
BLUE	FIDELITY & LOYALTY
PURPLE	VALOR

These 'rooms' with their meditative effect are all centered around an Honor fountain planted in white that symbolizes cleansing, joy, renewal, and the hope of ever-flowing life.

The GOLD STAR HEALING & PEACE GARDEN truly is synonymous for managing loss and grief, which it has done for hundreds of visitors during the past decade. Cher is the first to point out that the garden belongs to the people. It came into being with the help of many hands: the dedicated board, the City of York providing the location and waiving many fees for its installation, many construction and landscaping companies, as well as countless volunteers. Donations came in to build the garden ranging from a nickel to grants of \$100,000. Stebbins and Company maintain the garden. It is a living memorial but will always need a guiding hand to keep it growing into the future. Jeff Hines and Patti Stirk hold an annual 5K fundraiser on Memorial Day. The garden also sells bricks, where bereaved families and friends can have the names of their loved ones memorized. This is another way to raise money for repairs and maintenance. Cher is grateful for them all, including the continued support of the Rotary Club of York East.

For the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary on June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022, Cher, through her company Kondor Media has produced a deeply moving half-hour documentary with the incomparable Ron Martin as Host and Narrator. Many of our own Rotarians, such as Cindy, Connie, Tim, JinJou, and Vicky are featured here, every one of them praising the garden and its unique merits, while trying to explain just how much it means to them all to be part of this special place.

"Some people come and walk around, reading the names, often taking imprints from the marble."

"You will often see someone sitting on one of those marble benches, quietly sobbing, consumed by seemingly immeasurable pain."

"Suddenly you hear the joyous sounds of children's laughter as they run around, spreading happiness around the garden, while their granny explains that this is the place where they can remember their daddy in heaven."

And once you watch the above documentary you actually feel that, as the camera gently takes you up-up and away into the sky right above the beautiful Honor Fountain at the center of the Gold Star, you are getting ever closer to those who are remembered here. The feeling is almost surreal, yet it is – for one brief moment – as if the dream of seeing your loved ones one more time has been granted. The magic of his garden is beyond words.

Right from the start, our club has supported Cher when her original idea first emerged, and as such this project is very much our club's 'own baby'. We all feel responsible for the annual cleanups, we all feel this is 'our garden'. And we are all proud to call the brave, the incredible, the amazing mother of Martin Kondor not only our own Fellow Rotarian but our friend.

#### **Some 10 Year Anniversary Events include:**

Tuesday June 14, 5:30 PM The York Elks Flag Day Ceremony,  
Saturday October 1, beginning at 9 AM, Creative York Plein  
Air painting day in the Garden; along with reading of all the  
names on the wall, volunteers are welcome to read.  
Sat Nov 12 Veterans Breakfast, vets vote their favorite art work  
of the garden to be shown at Creative York  
Sat December 17, 2:30 PM Wreathes Across America  
Ceremony

#### **10 Year Anniversary of the Gold Star Healing & Peace Garden**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FhqbYLT5NjQ>

#### **The Gold Star Healing & Peace Garden**

<https://goldstargarden.com/>

There are too many interesting websites to be mentioned here  
So, this is only one of those noteworthy sites to visit:

#### **Veterans Memorial Gold Star Healing & Peace Garden Dedicated June 9th, 2012**

On the HISTORICAL MARKER DATA BASE

<https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=108566>

Among Cher's countless contributions are the documentary evidence she has created when she participated in the Rotary International Medical Mission Trips organized by our incredible PDG Connie Spark.

	<a href="#"><u>Rotary International District 7390 - Peru</u></a>
	<a href="#"><u>Rotary International District 7390 - Brazil</u></a>
	<a href="#"><u>Rotary International District 7390 - Ethiopia</u></a>
	<a href="#"><u>Rotary International District 7390 - Ghana</u></a>
	<a href="#"><u>Rotary International District 7390 - Salute to Humanitarian Volunteers</u></a>

Uganda 5 minute Video <https://youtu.be/soRpNp3l1lw>

<https://goldstargarden.com/>

Gold Star Garden – 10th anniversary on June 9<sup>th</sup> 2022



Great Egrets at Kiwanis Lake in York  
Interview & Photos by Friedel in May 2022  
Here is our Egret's story – Part 2

*You see, when you last visited me, I told you I'd find the perfect wife – and I did: Here she is. But she now has no time to even groom herself since she so enjoys being the mum of our 5 beautiful chicks*

