



156th Edition

Inside this issue:

President's Message	1
Club Schedule & Celebrations	2
Welcome New Member	3
Foundation Moment	3
A Little History	4
Six Sprouts	4
Reflections of Nicaragua	5, 6
Rambling on Rotary	7
Avon Rotary Open House	8
Youth Exchange	9
RI President 25-26	9
District Grant Project	10
Polio Update & More	11



Board of Directors

Karen Vanderbilt, President
 Rob Lupisella, President Elect
 Katie DeGraff, Senior Director
 Tom Honan, Director
 Collin Hayes, Member at Large
 Mike Ford, Past President
 Jaime Lovullo, Secretary
 Hans Koomen, Treasurer

President's Message



At our most recent meeting, Tom and Rob reminded us while reviewing the results of the survey that we are better together.

The sentiment "We are better together" is a powerful one, especially for Avon

Rotary. It speaks to the strength derived from collaboration, diverse perspectives, and shared goals. Expanding on this idea, we can explore the different aspects that make this togetherness so valuable:

Our shared strengths. "Better together" highlights the idea that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. When we combine our individual talents, skills, and experiences, we achieve more than we ever could alone. A diverse group brings a wider range of resources and problem-solving approaches to the table, leading to more innovative and effective solutions.

Our open conversations and constructive feedback. A healthy group fosters an environment where members feel comfortable sharing both positive feedback and constructive criticism. This open dialogue allows for growth and improvement. It's about respecting differing opinions while working towards a shared vision. These "hard conversations" aren't about conflict, but about a shared commitment to being better.

Our continuous improvement. The acknowledgment that "there is always room to improve" is crucial. It demonstrates a growth mindset and a commitment to striving for excellence. This applies to all aspects of Avon Rotary, from its projects and initiatives

to its internal organization and member engagement. Embracing this principle ensures the club remains dynamic and relevant.

Our shared ownership and responsibility. When members feel valued and heard, they are more likely to take ownership of our club's successes and challenges. This shared responsibility fosters a sense of community and encourages active participation. Everyone feels invested in the club's well-being and is motivated to contribute to its growth.

A stronger community impact. Ultimately, a united and collaborative club has a greater impact on the community it serves. By working together, we can pool our resources, amplify our efforts, and address community needs more effectively. The "better together" philosophy translates into tangible benefits for those we aim to help.

Personal growth and fulfillment. Being part of a collaborative group also benefits individual members. It provides opportunities for personal growth, leadership development, and building meaningful connections with others. The sense of belonging and shared purpose contributes to a greater sense of fulfillment.

Essentially, "We are better together" is more than just a slogan. It's a guiding principle that shapes the culture and activities of Avon Rotary. It fosters a sense of community, encourages open communication, and empowers members to achieve more than they could alone, ultimately leading to a greater positive impact on our community and the world.

Yours in Rotary Service, Karen

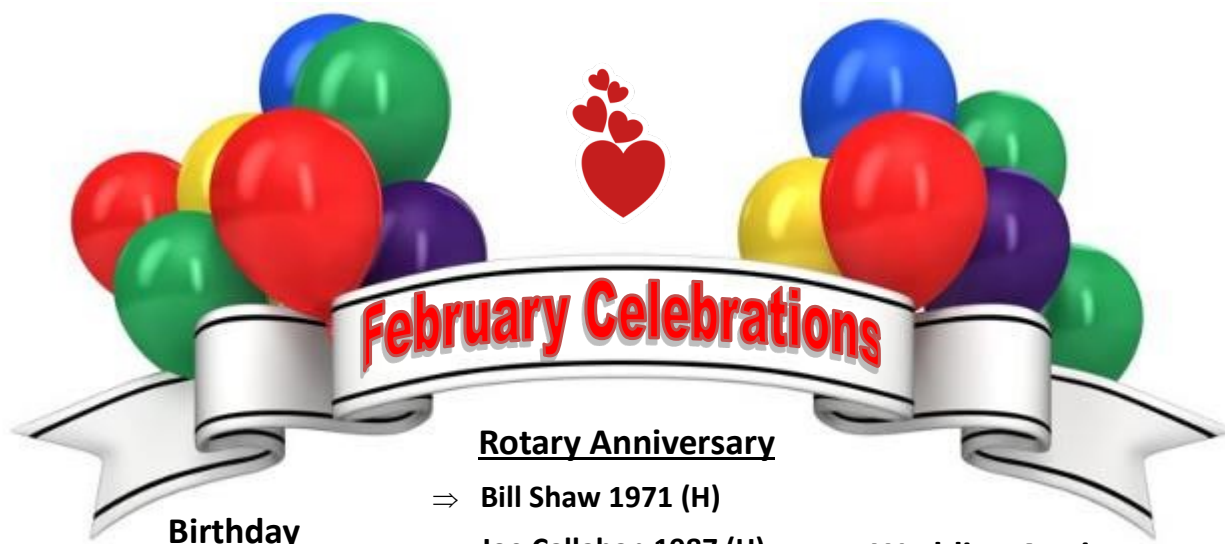
Avon Rotary Club meets Tuesdays at 6:30 pm



AVON ROTARY MEETING SCHEDULE

*For more meeting details,
go to avonrotary.org*

- Mon. Feb 3 Board of Directors Meeting, 6:00 pm at Circlevue Conference Room
- Tues. Feb 4 Regular Mtg 6:00 pm at Village Hall, New Member Induction, Corn Fest Kick Off Mtg
- Tues. Feb 11 Love for Rotary Open House 6:00-7:00, Dessert Auction 7:00-7:30 @ Avon Inn
- Tues. Feb 18 Regular Mtg 6:00 pm @ Avon Inn, Program Director of Avon Free Library Grace Frenzel
- Tues. Feb 25 Regular Mtg 6:00 pm, TBD



Birthday

- ⇒ Hans Koomen
- ⇒ Steve Stephenson
- ⇒ Karen Vanderbilt

Rotary Anniversary

- ⇒ Bill Shaw 1971 (H)
- ⇒ Joe Callahan 1987 (H)
- ⇒ Barb Herman 1999
- ⇒ Karl Sawicki 2007
- ⇒ David LeFeber 2019
- ⇒ Richelle Ford 2024

Wedding Anniversary

- ⇒ No wedding anniversaries this month.

KINDNESS NEVER GOES OUT OF



style

WELCOME NEW MEMBER LIESL!



January 7: The Avon Rotary Club is excited to welcome Liesl Schoonraad to our Rotary family! Originally from South Africa, Liesl's remarkable story is one of resilience, strength, and a deep passion for helping others.

After years of running her own architectural firm, Liesl experienced a life-changing moment when she completed a long-distance sea swim on her 40th birthday. This accomplishment sparked a new chapter in her life, one focused on making a difference for those who have lost hope. She pursued studies in Counseling and Sport Psychology, became a motivational speaker, and worked closely with the South African Police Services to support individuals in crisis.

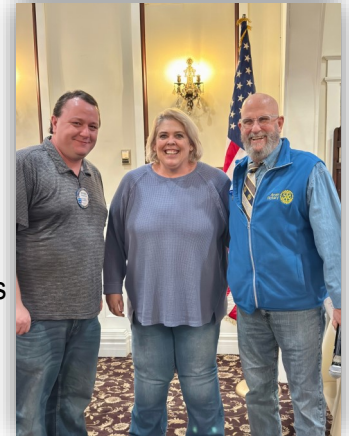
Liesl's accomplishments in physical strength are just as impressive—she has broken South African and world records, competed in South Africa's Strongest Woman contests, and even pulled trucks and aircraft. But her greatest strength lies in her ability to inspire and uplift others as a motivational speaker and mental health advocate.

After gaining notoriety in South Africa, Liesl moved to the United States on a person with extraordinary abilities visa. Since then, Liesl has dedicated herself to working in mental health and supporting individuals with developmental disabilities. In her current role as a Mental Health First Aid Trainer with

Western New York Rural AHEC, she travels to schools all over Western NY, helping teens develop the tools they need to navigate mental health challenges.

We're thrilled to have Liesl on board and can't wait to see the incredible contributions she will bring to our club, our community, and beyond. Please join us in welcoming Liesl Schoonraad to the Avon Rotary Club!

Submitted by Mike Ford via social media



FOUNDATION MOMENT



At our January 14 meeting several Rotarians were presented with their Paul Harris Fellow plus pins for their continued giving to the Rotary Foundation. Congratulations to each of them for their achievements!

L-R: Helen Zamboni, Janis McMindes, Jeff Herberger, Jim Varner, Ed Kime



Doing Good In The World



A LITTLE AVON ROTARY HISTORY...



In the mid-1970s, Jimmy Carter made an unforgettable visit to the Avon Rotary Club. At the time, he was quietly exploring the possibility of running for president, and during a regular meeting, he attended as a guest alongside that meeting's speaker, Midge Costanza, who was campaigning for a seat in Congress.

Carter introduced himself to one of our Rotarians with a warm, "Hello, I'm Jimmy Carter, former Governor of Georgia." The Rotarian, thinking it might be a playful exchange from a visiting Rotary club member, responded with, "I'm Clark Kent, but my real identity is Superman." Little did he know that he was speaking to a man who would soon make history on the national stage.

Later during the meeting, our club secretary—known for having a bit of trouble with names—asked Carter to write his name on a napkin to assist with introductions. Carter graciously obliged, and that napkin became a cherished keepsake for the secretary for many years.

Years later, our late Rotarian and presidential historian, Mark Evans, had the chance for a face-to-face meeting with President Carter during one of his annual trips to the Plains Peanut Festival in Carter's hometown of Plains, Georgia. Mark reminded Carter of the humorous "Superman" exchange, and Carter, with a smile, recalled, "I got that a lot in those days."

Looking back, it's incredible to think that just a short time after this visit, Governor Carter would announce his candidacy for president, ultimately becoming the 39th President of the United States. The Avon Rotary Club had the honor of hosting a man who would go on to shape the course of American history—and we remember that special day with great fondness.

After his presidency, Carter continued to live his life with the values of service and selflessness that embody the Rotary spirit. His work with Habitat for Humanity, his commitment to global peace, and his lifelong dedication to humanitarian causes reflect the ideals of "Service Above Self" that we, as Rotarians, hold dear. As we remember his visit to our club, we also honor the incredible legacy he leaves behind.

May he rest in peace.

Submitted by Mike Ford via social media



A MESSAGE FROM SIX SPROUTS



We want to thank the Avon Rotary for meeting here last night (January 21) and for the wonderful shelf donation to hold all of the books in our lending library!

If you have any books lying around but you want to read something new, stop in and check out our current book selection here! Feel free to swap them with books you no longer want.

#SixSproutsCoffee #SpecialtyCoffee #CoffeeLovers #SupportLocalNY
#sixsproutsfarmmarket #groweastavon #booklover #readersgonnaread
#readmorebooks

From Betsy & Jordan via social media

REFLECTIONS OF NICARAGUA - MAGGIE VANDERBILT



By Maggie Vanderbilt

By the age of 19, I have been lucky enough to travel to many places around the world and consider myself a well-traveled person. One destination, specifically, holds a special place in my heart. Nicaragua has given me experiences like no other. As of the new year, I have gone with Linking Hands for Learning twice and already cannot wait to go back. What's unique about my experience is that there was a decade between each trip.

My first time traveling to Nicaragua was in the fourth grade and I had never been outside the U.S. It was quite an experience for a 9-year-old, and at that age, I didn't understand or digest many of the things I saw there. Some memories that stuck with me from the first trip are smoothies after the worksite, the celebration at the past school build, our day spent in Ocotal, Franklin's driving skills, and many more. Although these are very fond memories, I am so glad I had the opportunity to travel back to El Sauce a decade later to see everything through a new lens.

Memories came flooding back as soon as we arrived in El Sauce, I remembered most of it, but certain aspects were different. One that stuck out to me was the increased number of vehicles. The first time there, there were not as many vehicles on the streets as there were this year, and I'm unsure if that is a positive or negatively changed aspect of El Sauce. Going off that, in recent years their trips to Ocotal (the mountains) look a little different. Ocotal is still incredibly beautiful and an amazing experience being able to learn about the different life-



styles. I was excited to have another crack at making corn tortillas and let me tell you, they were delicious. I also found the coffee tour very interesting since this time around I actually paid attention. I am not a fan of hot black coffee, but it tasted very good, and I

was able to appreciate it more. Once we reached the top of the mountain, I was stunned by 180 degrees of incredible views. However, I immediately noticed it was not the same place I went to the first time, unfortunately, the other location has become occupied by miners and is no longer a beautiful lookout. Compared to the first trip the building process is not hugely different. I vividly remember doing many of the same jobs I did on this trip, although as a 9-year-old, I cut a lot of wire. Let's just say, I did that job for about one day this time around. Another thing to point out



is that the building process goes a lot faster when you are using cinder blocks instead of small bricks. Although the goodbyes were difficult, the community celebration on the last day was amazing, and this time I could value the kids' smiling faces a little bit more.



I have been to Nicaragua twice now, and each trip has been uniquely different, but the admiration I have gained for El Sauce after this recent trip is insurmountable. Each trip came with different experiences but the way I can understand and value them now will have a life-long impact on me.

REFLECTIONS OF NICARAGUA - TOM VONGLIS



By Tom Vonglis

I recently returned from another successful trip to Nicaragua. This was my sixth trip with a team of Linking Hands for Learning volunteers. We had an excellent group to begin the school construction in Las Lagunetas. We arrived on January 2nd in Managua and made our way immediately to El Sauce to join our host families. This was different from years past as we would have arrived much later and spent our first night in Managua. Our ability to arrive early afternoon allowed us the time to get to El Sauce and settle in for what would be a busy week of construction and exploring the country. It was wonderful to see my host family once again. Along with my brothers Bill and Peter and another volunteer Adam, we said hello to Sonia and Romero. I've now stayed with this family four times and they are such a pleasure.

Throughout my six trips, I have been very fortunate to travel with family; My son, my daughter, my wife, brothers, and sisters. Each trip holds a special meaning for me with each unique group of volunteers. This would be Peter's third trip and Bill's first. Both being extremely hard workers, certainly helps as we begin the digging and block laying activities. We spent five days at work and were able to accomplish a great deal on this school.



On the weekend we were able to return to last years school build in EL Borboyon and see the finished building along with enjoying a visit with students and teachers. We also made another trip to Ocotal where we were able to visit coffee farms and see how they grow and make the coffee. We also had the opportunity to learn how to make tortillas, which was so much fun doing this in our small groups. Riding horses in the region made for a great day as we continued on up the mountain to a beautiful spot hosted by Katrina who's family owns the property. Here we enjoyed a fine meal and relaxed with the beautiful scenery around us.

As our week came to a close on Friday, our celebration with the community of Las Lagunetas was a special day. To see all the children that you now know will be able to use the school that we have worked hard to build is a very rewarding experience. As I watched the kids enjoy the piñata and ice cream, I can't help finding myself very emotional as I know it is time for us to leave.



The relationships I have been able to build over my six years of doing this trip includes Enrique, Sergio, host families and workers that we see each time we return. After we said goodbye to our friends in El Sauce we finished our trip in Leon before heading home. Here we had fun Volcano boarding, the only place in the world you can experience this activity. We had so much fun! While I look forward to my return each year to El Sauce it is always good to come back home and gain further appreciation for all we have here in the USA. As a board member of Linking Hands for Learning I continue to be so proud of what the organization has done for the people of Nicaragua to help with the education of their children in the mountain regions. My sincere gratitude to Rob and Jeanine Lupisella for beginning this opportunity for so many to experience. I would certainly encourage anyone to try it. Until next year El Sauce, Nicaragua!



Rambling On Rotary—February



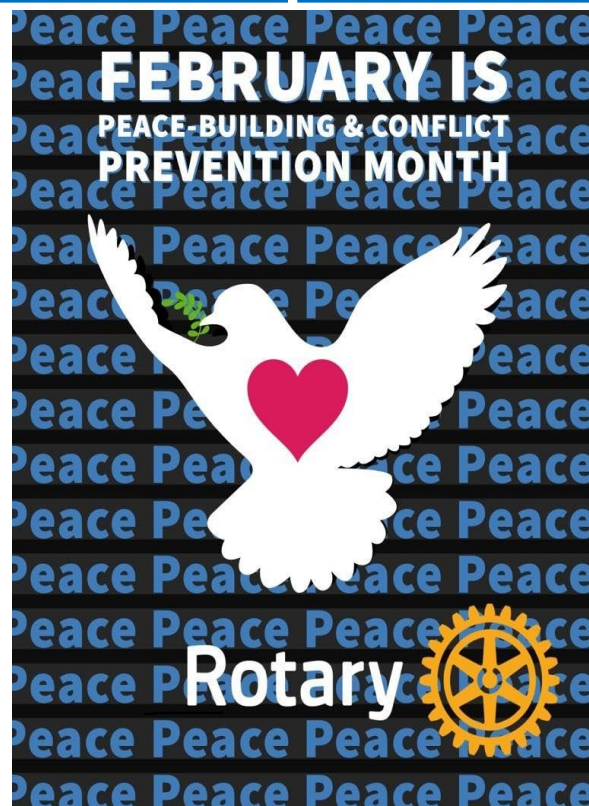
By Bruce Amey

February is Rotary Peace Building and Conflict Prevention/Resolution Month. Promoting peace is one of Rotary's seven areas of focus, the other areas include: fighting disease, providing clean water, sanitation, and hygiene, saving mothers and children, supporting education, growing local economies, and protecting the environment.

As I write this article, we have been immersed in the cold of winter for several days with temperatures near zero or below. I enjoy seeing photos of some members enjoying the winter season in the Adirondacks, but I am content to stay warm in the house. From my perspective, the cold our area and my home that has heat is better than trying to weather the fires that have ravaged California, the hurricanes that devastated the Carolinas and southern states, or tornados that waste the Midwest each year. I hear others often complain about living in New York, but I am thrilled to not have to deal with those disasters of nature while being able to enjoy the beauty of the farm land, mountains, lush parks, camping areas and waterways within our state. I love our State.

In the February edition of the Rotary Magazine, RI President Urchick's message regarding Rotary Peace Fellow-

ships and Peace Centers feels very appropriate given this month's Rotary theme. Regarding the Peace Centers, she said, "these centers cultivate expertise in fields like conflict resolution, sustainable development, and peacebuilding, preparing fellows to tackle some of the world's most pressing challenges. This program exemplifies how Rotary turns vision into action, creating a ripple effect of hope and change." Rotarians are people of Action and having visions turn into action is an exciting part of being in our club and organization. As President Urchick continues, "The Magic of Rotary – the transformative power of connecting people, sharing resources, and uniting for a common purpose." I have said it before that when I see our club members supporting the "Linking Hands For Learning" school builds in Nicaragua both physically and financially, I am seeing Rob's and Jeanine's vision becoming actionable, and what is being created in those villages is truly magic. I believe these projects can, "together, amplify our impact, inspire new generations of leaders, and build a brighter, more peaceful future." I believe our activities do have a ripple effect of hope and change for those residents and I see it each week as our Interact members attend our meetings while envision what they will do in service in the years to come. And, as usual, I have rambled on long enough.



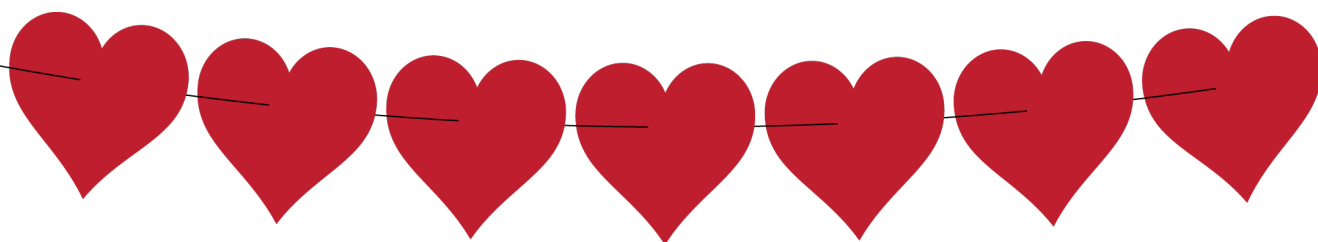
Please Join Us and Bring a Friend!

AVON ROTARY OPEN HOUSE

FEBRUARY 11TH 6-7PM AVON INN
INTERACT DESSERT AUCTION BEGINS 7PM

We love Avon Rotary! Join us on Tuesday February 11th at the Avon Inn from 6 to 7 pm so we can show you why. Then stay to bid on delicious desserts from our High School's Interact Club, just in time for Valentine's Day.

Avon Rotary supports; Genesee Valley Rotary Camp, Rotary Foundation, Linking Hands for Learning, Avon Food Pantry, Avon Free Library, Red Cross, Youth Programs; Interact and Youth Exchange and much, much more.



YOUTH EXCHANGE



Rotary youth exchange brings the world together, but there's just as much going on behind the scenes in our own little town. Avon's Rotary is very active, and its members remain highly dedicated to the Rotary mission. Members Karen Vanderbilt and Ed Kime went above and beyond, orchestrating a fun pact weekend for the district's 2024-2025 inbounds and 2025-2026 outbound of the exchange program.

The schedule included bowling, volleyball, and basketball at Avon High School, a sleepover in Avon's Village Hall, and a morning brunch in Victor (thanks to their Rotary). The weekend took place 1/18-1/19 and kept the kids very busy. The interaction between inbounds and future outbounds was crucial. Future exchange students got to practice speaking their target languages with fluent speakers and hear stories of their future home.

All exchange students, Rotex, and other guests greatly appreciated the time put into the weekend. The weekend proved beneficial. Kids could be seen opening up significantly more from start to end. By Sunday afternoon, all participants were well acquainted and considered one another friends. Coline, an inbound from Belgium said, "I had so much fun! It was so nice to meet the outbound exchange students." All attendees would like to put out big a thank you to Ed and Karen for the lovely experience.

Submitted by: Abigail Schutz



INTRODUCING OUR 25-26 ROTARY INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT

Mário César Martins de Camargo, a member of the Rotary Club of Santo André, Brazil, has been selected as president of Rotary International for 2025-26. He will be the fourth Brazilian to hold the office and the first since Paulo V.C. Costa in 1990-91.

De Camargo was president of the printing company Gráfica Bandeirantes and has been a consultant to the print industry in Brazil. He has also served as president and chair of several printing and graphics trade associations, including the Brazilian Association of Graphic Technology and the Brazilian Printing Industry Association. He has served on the board of Casa da Esperança (House of Hope), a medical center in Santo André sponsored by his Rotary club that serves more than 200,000 patients every year.



De Camargo studied in the U.S. and Germany and holds degrees from São Bernardo do Campo Law School and the Getulio Vargas Foundation's São Paulo School of Business Administration. He attended a high school in Minnesota in 1974-75 through Rotary Youth Exchange, which inspired a lifelong commitment to the program.

A Rotarian since 1980, de Camargo served as his club's Youth Exchange officer in 1981, at age 24, and its president in 1992-93. He was governor of District 4420 (part of Brazil's São Paulo state) in 1999-2000, Rotary Foundation trustee in 2015-19, and Rotary International director in 2019-21. He has also served Rotary as an RI learning facilitator, committee member and chair, and task force member. De Camargo and his wife, Denise, also a Rotarian, are Major Donors and Benefactors of The Rotary Foundation.

ATTENTION:

HANDS ON VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY!

JOIN US & HELP COMPLETE OUR DISTRICT GRANT PROJECT



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

MARCH
29
9 AM - 12 NOON

Join the **Rotary Clubs of Avon, Penfield and Rochester SW** as we partner with **Sleep in Heavenly Peace - Rochester** to build beds for children in our community who are in need of a safe and comfortable place to sleep.

- + Registration link to follow
- + Volunteers must be at least 12 years old
- + Email Collin Hayes for more information: collinhayes0@gmail.com



2060 O'Neill Road
Macedon, NY



Donate bedding to SHP:
bit.ly/SHP-NY-ROC-Amazon



**NO KID SLEEPS
ON THE FLOOR
IN OUR TOWN!**

Rotary





**END
POLIO
NOW**

2025 Wild Polio Case Counts as of January 29, 2025

<u>Country</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2025</u>
Afghanistan	6	25	0
Pakistan	6	73	3
Total	12	98	3



For more information go to: <https://polioeradication.org/>

"No act of kindness,
no matter how small
is ever wasted."

—Aesop



AVON FOOD PANTRY

- ⇒ Grocery items needed in February will be sent to us soon.
- ⇒ Watch for an email from David Kilgore.
- ⇒ Place in the bin at our meeting.
- ⇒ Thank you!



Is a fellow Rotarian ill or in need?

Please contact the club
Sunshine Liaison

Barbara Herman
226-6735

