



### CREATE LASTING IMPACT

#### 174th Edition

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**Avon Rotary Club meets  
Tuesdays at 6:00 pm**

#### Board of Directors

Katie DeGraff, President  
Kirk Vanderbilt, President Elect  
Jaime Lovullo, Senior Director  
Tom Vonglis, Director  
Jean Antkowiak, Member at Large  
Josh Tonra, Member at Large  
Helen Zamboni, Member at Large  
Rob Lupisella, Past President  
Laurie Vonglis, Secretary  
Mike Giso, Treasurer

### President's Message



Time sure does fly by, they say, and as I reflect on July, it is easy to see why. We are already one month into our Rotary year, and even with a week off and a Red Wings game in place of a regular meeting, we still accomplished a great deal as Rotarians. July was a month of transition, new leadership, and renewed energy—an opportunity to begin the year with purpose and to put our commitment to service into action.

We kicked things off with another successful Red Cross Blood Drive. Thanks to Karl Sawicki's leadership, this was our most successful drive yet, with 38 units donated and our first service project of the year complete. Since we began this project in 2018, our club has helped collect more than 700 units of blood for the American Red Cross. I will admit, I felt a little weak, nervous, and excited at the same time for my first official meeting after my donation, but with our incredible fellowship; we sang, celebrated, laughed, and got to work as productive Rotarians.

One of the most meaningful examples of service this month was our support of the Genesee Valley Rotary Camp. In keeping with Rotary's focus on child health and well-being, we prepared hygiene items and a few fun activities in drawstring bags for campers, helping ensure they had essential personal care supplies during their camp experience. It was a simple, thoughtful act of service that reflected the heart of Rotary: meeting practical needs, supporting young people, and showing care through action. Launching my 100 Acts of Service initiative for the year brought some questions around

what qualifies and maybe fears if it could be done, but looking at our July activity, I do not think we need to question whether we can meet the goal. In July alone, we participated in the blood drive, Martha's Kitchen, the GVRC service project, and Red Wings volunteering. July reminded us that service can take many forms, and each act, large or small, helps strengthen our club and our community.

As we move into August and Rotary's theme of membership, our challenge is to carry that same energy forward with strong attendance, active participation, and an intentional focus on inviting others into the Rotary experience. Membership growth begins with engagement: when our meetings are full, our service projects are well supported, and our fellowship is visible, prospective members can see the impact and connection that make Rotary meaningful.

That level of participation will be especially important as we look ahead to Corn Fest, our club's biggest fundraiser and one of our most visible opportunities to connect with the community. Corn Fest is more than a fundraiser; it is a reflection of the support our community gives back to us and the trust they place in Rotary to turn that support into service. Every member has a role to play—showing up, volunteering, inviting a guest, thanking a sponsor, and sharing the story of what our club does. If we want to attract new members, we need to give them opportunities to see Rotary in action, and Corn Fest is one of the best places to do just that.

As we close our first month of the Rotary year, I am grateful for the energy, fellowship, and commitment already on display. July gave us a strong start, a meaningful reminder of why we serve, and a glimpse of what is possible when we work together with

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE continued

purpose. I am excited for the year ahead and all that we will accomplish through our service, our partnerships, and our shared commitment to making a difference. Let's keep the momentum going, continue showing up for one another and our community, and make this Rotary year one filled with impact and growth, while remembering to incorporate the fun and fellowship along the way.

Yours in Rotary Service, Katie DeGraff, President



## AVON ROTARY MEETING SCHEDULE

*For more meeting details, go to [avonrotary.org](http://avonrotary.org)*

### August 2026: Membership & Extension Month

| Upcoming Events |                      | Highlights                                                                                   |
|-----------------|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Tues. Aug 4     | Regular Meeting 6:30 | @ Avon Inn: Weslowski Scholarship Award<br>Final Corn Fest meeting- last minute action items |
| Sat. Aug 8      | Corn Festival        | All Hands on Deck!                                                                           |
| Sun. Aug 9      | Post Corn Party      | Party at The Georges! 12pm start- food at 3pm Bring a dish to pass                           |
| Mon. Aug 10     | Board Meeting 6 pm   | @ Circleview Conference Room: Board of Director's Meeting                                    |
| Tues. Aug 11    | Field Trip           | @ GVRC 6:00                                                                                  |
| Tues. Aug 18    | Regular Meeting 6:30 | @ Avon Inn: Laura and Jasmine present on their year abroad.                                  |
| Tues. Aug 25    | Regular Meeting 6:30 | @Avon Inn Corn Festival De-Brief Meeting, Share Feedback Concerns/Areas for Improvement.     |



#### Birthday

- ⇒ Jeff Herberger
- ⇒ Bob Mellen
- ⇒ Bill Shaw (H)

#### Wedding Anniversary

- ⇒ Bob House
- ⇒ Wayne Warriner
- ⇒ Tom & Laurie Vonglis
- ⇒ Jake Ayers
- ⇒ Shawn Rice
- ⇒ Bob Mellen

#### Rotary Anniversary

- ⇒ Katie DeGraff 2017
- ⇒ Maddie Setter 2025

## Paul Harris Fellow Recognition

We were honored to recognize three outstanding Rotarians with the prestigious Paul Harris Fellowship award at our Change of Officers celebration on **June 30**.

A Paul Harris Fellowship recognizes an individual who contributes, or in whose name a contribution is made, a donation of \$1,000 or more to the Rotary Foundation. In this case, our Club made contributions to the Rotary Foundation in the name of three members who have demonstrated an enduring commitment to "Service Above Self."

Through their tireless efforts and exceptional service to our Club and community, they have advanced the mission of Avon Rotary, which calls us to take action that creates lasting impact.

Please join us in congratulating the following:



**Karen Vanderbilt** was recognized by Katie DeGraff. Karen served as our 2024-2025 Club President, during which time she oversaw several successful and innovative community outings and service projects. She also coordinates our volunteer efforts at Red Wings games, which has become a major fundraiser for our Club. Thank you Karen for your collaborative style, organizational skills and commitment to community engagement!

**Rob Lupisella** was recognized by Laurie Vonglis. Rob recently concluded his tenure as our 2025-2026 Club President. During his time as President, Rob focused on our Club's strategic direction and long-term vision, with an emphasis on member engagement. These efforts included updates to our Bylaws and the development of a Strategic Plan and Community Needs Assessment. Thank you to Rob for your leadership and commitment to the sustainability and future success of Avon Rotary!



**Steve Csapo** was recognized by Kirk Vanderbilt. In addition to serving as 2022-2023 Club President, Steve has held perhaps the most important role in our Club for several years as he coordinates the meal orders for our weekly meetings. This is no easy task. Managing the weekly meal orders is tremendous time commitment and, most impressively, it involves the ultimate test of patience: wrangling our members to actually submit their orders on time. Thank you Steve for keeping our Club running smoothly and for making sure we get fed!

*By: Collin Hayes*



## Rotarian of the Year



**June 30:** At our Change of Officers Dinner on June 30, we were thrilled to recognize Dr. Hans Koomen as our 2025-2026 Rotarian of the Year!

This award recognizes a Rotarian who exemplifies our mission of "Service Above Self." Since joining the Avon Rotary Club in 2002, Hans has distinguished himself through his exceptional service, community engagement and leadership. He consistently answers the call to service, going above and beyond what's asked of him to enable our Club to make a positive impact in our community and far beyond.



The award was presented by Collin Hayes, our Rotarian of the Year for 2024-2025.

Hans has been instrumental in developing and maintaining our Club website and online vendor registration system for Corn Festival. While managing digital infrastructure can often be a thankless, behind-the-scenes task, his countless hours of hard work have vastly improved our Club's efficiency and effectiveness.

Hans just concluded three years of service as our Club Treasurer. In this role, he was valued for his honesty, meticulous attention to detail and leadership in updating our bookkeeping to comply with best practices. His efforts have ensured our Club's long-term sustainability and future success.

Thank you, Hans, for your dedication over the past 24 years and for leading by example!

Please join us in congratulating him on this well-deserved honor!

*By: Collin Hayes*

## Martha's Kitchen

**July 11:** We had a crew of Rotarians who volunteered at Martha's Kitchen. The Kitchen is a service project of the Zion Church Avon that provides free meals to the community twice a month. Thank you Bob & Ruth Mellen, David & Mary Kiglore and Rob Lupisella.

*By: Collin Hayes*



### HOMEPLATE VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

1 DATE LEFT>>>> Aug. 25th

SignUp Genius is waiting for your name to be added!

Questions? Contact Karen Vanderbilt

## Blood Drive

Fellow Rotarians:

Our 25th blood drive with the Red Cross was conducted on **July 14th**. I invite you to read the email I received from our blood drive recruiter, Jeff Kistler following the blood drive. I'll only add that as this ongoing service project continues, we have collected 702 units of blood for the Cross. Thank you for your time and treasure. Our last drive of 2026 is on 11/24. Same time and place.

Your Blood Driver, Karl



*Good morning Karl,*

*What an amazing turnout you had at your blood drive! I looked back in our records and I believe this was your best drive ever. Over the course of the day, our staff welcomed 33 of you donors. There were a handful of deferrals which is always expected but we ended up collecting a total of 38 units of blood including 14 Power Red units which our Pediatric patients rely on.*

*Please share our sincere thanks with your donors and everyone at the Avon Rotary, as well as the Avon Inn management. Because of the generosity of your donors with their time and gift of life-saving blood, as many as 114 people in need will receive the blood product they desperately require.*

*Thank you for all of your assistance in preparing for and prooting this blood drive. If you have any feedback to share, please reach out to me. Since the goal was reached (and then some!), you qualify for the \$100 Amazon gift card via email. You should receive an email once this summer incentive is complete. I expect you should receive it around September 10th, and the subject line of the email will be something like "Congratulations Holiday Leader. Claim your gift card!". Please let me know if you have any questions about redeeming it once you receive it.*

*Have a great day and be proud of what you accomplished!*

*Jeff Kistler*



## Linda Kime Memorial Scholarship



At our Club meeting on **July 21**, we were honored to recognize Maria Geary as this year's recipient of the Linda Kime Memorial Scholarship!

Linda Kime exemplified what it means to be a Rotarian, embodying the principle of "Service Above Self" through her countless hours of coordinating activities for students, supporting exchange programs and serving as a liaison for the Interact Club. In her memory, the Avon Rotary Club awards this scholarship to a graduating senior who demonstrates service, honesty, perseverance through difficult circumstances and a humble spirit.

In her application essay, Maria shared her career goals and her aspiration to follow in Linda's footsteps:

"I want to better the lives of others by being the teacher who supports and advocates for special education students. I want to create a classroom where every child feels valued, understood, and capable of success...I hope to embody the positive impact Linda had with

her students in my career."

Maria has consistently demonstrated these qualities through her dedication to service, whether volunteering with the Avon PTA, coaching for Avon's Unified Basketball program, helping with the American Red Cross Blood Drive or serving as the Student Representative on the Board of Education.

She shared how her perseverance was put to the test after a season-ending cross-country injury her junior year. Through hard work and determination, she pushed through the setback and rediscovered her love for the sport.

Avon High School Principal Ryan Wagner spoke to Maria's exceptional in his letter of recommendation:

"She is a student who consistently demonstrates service above self, dedicating significant time to supporting others in both school and community settings...Her character, dedication to service, and humble leadership make her an outstanding recipient."

At our meeting, Dr. Ryan Pacatte, Superintendent of Schools and Avon Rotarian, applauded Maria for sharing her perspective and advocating for her peers in her role on the Board of Education.

This fall, Maria will be attending SUNY Geneseo to study elementary education, with a minor in special education, and will compete as a student-athlete on the cross country and track teams.

Please join us in celebrating Maria and wishing her the absolute best in her college journey and future teaching career!

By: Collin Hayes



## GVRC Service Project for Campers



**July 21:** At the end of our meeting, club members helped assemble over 100 gift bags for all the GVRC Campers attending camp in August. Items included personal hygiene supplies and activity toys. Many thanks to Karen, Collin and Katie for organizing the project.



## Rambling On Rotary—August



By Bruce Amey  
Every year we are looking to grow our club's membership. The desire is to invite new members who are service minded. Notice I said "INVITE". Do you know someone who likes to serve and help others? Invite them to visit a club meeting and a club activity, We each need to talk with others about our Rotary experiences.

Why did you join Rotary and why are you still a Rotarian? The proverbial "elevator" speech. I have found that when I wear Rotary apparel (such as a shirt or corn fest hat), it stimulates conversation. I was in a restaurant the other day wearing a Bills jacket and a Rotary hat and the table next to me jumped in on both topics. It turned out, 3 of the 4 at the table were members of the Perry Rotary club, which lent itself to common conversations.

I have shared with others some of the "birthday in a bag" projects we have done as a club and the response has been, "What a great idea." As PP Karen looks for volunteers to help at Red Wings games, invite a friend or neighbor to join you. Our Corn Festival is always looking for folks to help at various locations, many club members "encourage" family members to assist. Diane agreed to help many years, obviously that is no longer an option. INVITE someone to join us as we SERVE the community with the Corn Fest. If you invite a neighbor, family member or friend to join you working at the Corn Festival, they may come to better understand why you are a Rotarian and how satisfying it is to work to serve others.

As a club we need to continue to support and encourage our Interact club, they are our future Rotarians, and it will be a few more years until Madden DeGraf can become a full-fledged Rotarian (he just turned 11 on July 8). I look forward every week following a meeting or service event to see our club Facebook posts, when you see these repost them so your friends list see what is happening in our club, as well.

What I find exciting for this Rotary year is the challenge RI President Yinka has charged us with to "Create Lasting Impact". President Katie's District Grant project is not a "one-shot" project; it has been designed to help our community residents that may use the Food Pantry how to prepare meals in different ways with the products they procure from the food pantry. Among the areas of focus for Rotary include: fighting disease, supporting education, and improving maternal and child health. Clearly helping provide the food and helping teach pantry participants how to make nutritious meals in a variety of flavorful meals or snacks will help in each of these areas of focus. As like most of our District Grant projects have done, this project can clearly create a lasting impact.

I am very proud to be a member of this Rotary club, to be a Rotarian. I truly do not know how I could continue given my current circumstances without my Rotary family. Thank you family. Let us all work to create a lasting impact and invite others to join the journey with us. And, as usual, I have rambled on long enough.



**Great Job Homeplate Team! Check out these smiles on July 28.**

**Many thanks for volunteering at the Red Wings game to help raise funds for our club to operate.**

**You, are people of action!**



## 2026 Wild Polio Case Counts as of July 31, 2026

| Country      | 2024      | 2025      | 2026      |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Afghanistan  | 25        | 9         | 11        |
| Pakistan     | 73        | 30        | 3         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>98</b> | <b>39</b> | <b>14</b> |



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

## CLUB ATTENDANCE

| Date | Description | Rate  |
|------|-------------|-------|
| 7/14 | Regular Mtg | 58.1% |
| 7/21 | Regular Mtg | 76.2% |

July Meeting Attendance Rate = 67.2%

## AVON FOOD PANTRY

There is a "Pop Up Pantry" at the East Avon Fire Hall once a month on Fridays. They can use volunteers to help box food and place the boxes in the vehicles of people coming to receive food.

If you would like to volunteer, contact Hans Koomen for more information.

All you have to do to volunteer is show up. The Pantry folks appreciate any help you can offer.

Watch for an email soon regarding Food Pantry needs in August!

Thank you,  
David Kilgore



Vendors · Food · Live Music · Avon, NY · August 8

**2026**  
*Still Fresh*

**IT'S TIME!**

Corn Festival is 8 days away!  
Have you signed up to volunteer?  
It's not to late... Please help!

## Is a fellow Rotarian ill or in need?

Please contact the  
club  
Sunshine Liaison

**Barbara Herman**  
**226-6735**

