



CREATE LASTING IMPACT

173rd Edition

Inside this issue:

President's Message	1,2
Message from Karl	2
Volunteer for Red Wings	2
Blood Drive Information	3
July Calendar & Celebrations	4
June Reflections	5,6,7
Change of Officers Highlights	7,8,9
Rambling on Rotary	10
Polio Update & More	11



**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



As we begin a new Rotary year under the theme "Create Lasting Impact," I'd like us to pause for just a moment—not to look ahead, but to look back.

Because before we can appreciate where we're going, we have to remember the people who brought us here. As Avon Rotary approaches its 100th anniversary, we aren't just celebrating the age of a club. We're celebrating nearly a century of neighbors helping neighbors, leaders serving quietly, and ordinary people choosing to leave this community better than they found it. Impact isn't always immediate. Sometimes it's measured in generations.

Think about the people who chartered this club nearly a century ago. They couldn't have imagined the world we live in today. They never would have pictured video calls across the globe or service projects coordinated with people thousands of miles away. Yet they understood something timeless—that bringing together people of goodwill could change lives. And they were right. Rotary has always been built on one simple idea: that service above self creates stronger communities and a more peaceful world. That kind of change isn't always easy. Real impact requires courage. It requires people willing to challenge what has always been, while honoring the traditions worth preserving. I recognize that when I was born, I would never have been considered a future Rotarian.

It took courageous women who believed

they belonged at the table to make that possible. Women who didn't seek recognition—they sought opportunity to serve. They were creating lasting impact before those words ever became this year's theme. But that story isn't complete without recognizing the men who built this club. Your leadership, friendships, wisdom, and willingness to welcome new ideas while preserving Rotary's values created the foundation we stand on today. Because lasting impact doesn't erase tradition. It builds upon it.

When I hear this year's theme, I don't think of something Avon Rotary needs to start doing. I think of something we've been doing for nearly 100 years. I've been fortunate enough to witness it during my nine years as a member, but I know it began decades before I arrived. You see it in our support of Scouting that began in 1935. You see it in helping establish the Avon Lions Ambulance. You see it in decades of hosting exchange students who carry pieces of Avon back to their home countries. You see it every year at the Corn Festival, where generations gather because Rotarians believed community matters. You see it in Linking Hands for Learning, in scholarships, in food insecurity initiatives, and in every project where we ask not, "What can we do today?" but "What difference will this still be making ten years from now?"

And beyond Avon, our impact stretches around the world. Every contribution to The Rotary Foundation helps build clean water systems, respond to disasters, promote peace, strengthen education, and continue Rotary's promise to eradicate polio forever.

President's Message continued

That is what lasting impact looks like.
Not just solving today's problem. Creating tomorrow's opportunity.

When I think about Rotary, though, my favorite stories aren't just about projects. They're about the people and the memories made through fellowship the conversations after meetings, the laughter, the friendships we've built over meals and service projects... Those created lasting impact. Because sometimes our greatest impact isn't measured by dollars raised or projects completed. Sometimes it's measured by the people who inspire us to keep serving.

This year, our District Grant reminded me exactly what lasting impact means. When we visited the Avon Food Pantry, we saw more than crowded shelves and limited storage. We saw opportunity. Yes, we could provide additional shelving and a commercial freezer. But as we listened, we realized something bigger. Many families weren't choosing convenience foods because they wanted to. They were choosing them because they didn't know how to prepare larger, healthier, more economical meals. So our project evolved. Instead of simply giving food, we'll also give knowledge. We'll teach crockpot cooking, provide every participant with a crockpot, utensils, and storage containers, and create a cookbook filled with recipes from every Rotarian in this room. Because our goal isn't simply to feed someone today. Our goal is to help families gather around a table tomorrow...

row... and next week... and next year.

That's the difference between relief and resilience. That's the difference between charity and lasting impact.

As we begin this Rotary year, I challenge each of us to ask one simple question: What seed am I planting today that someone else will benefit from tomorrow? The members who founded Avon Rotary almost 100 years ago planted seeds they would never see fully grow. Today, we are living in the shade of those trees. Now it's our turn to plant for the next generation.

My goal as we enter our 100th year is to collectively as a club complete 100 Acts of Service! Through actions like our blood drive, food pantry collection, roadside cleanups, party in a bag, veterans outreach, Marthas kitchen and so much more. It takes all of us! Let's continue building partnerships and growing leaders. Let's continue serving our neighbors and creating peace. Let's continue inspiring young people. And together, let's ensure that when Avon Rotary celebrates its second century, those members will look back and say that we didn't simply preserve this club. We strengthened it. We grew it. And together...We created lasting impact.

Katie



Fellow Rotarians:

Our 25th blood drive with the Red Cross is scheduled for July 14th. 12:30 to 5:00 at the Avon Inn.

As always, if anyone has questions or would appreciate some assistance in scheduling their donor time, please reach out to me. Summer months are tough for collecting units because of conflicts and other obligations.

The Red Cross has challenged our club to collect 24 donor units during our drive. If we succeed in meeting that goal, the club will receive a \$100.00 Amazon Gift Card! I'm here to help. Lets get to the goal line!

Your Blood Driver, Karl



**American
Red Cross**



HOMEPLATE VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

2 DATES LEFT>>>> July 28th Aug. 25th

SignUp Genius is waiting for your name to be added!

Questions? Contact Karen Vanderbilt



**American
Red Cross**

JOIN US!
GIVE BLOOD.

Blood Drive Avon Rotary

Ballroom
55 E Main St
Avon, NY 14414

**Tuesday, July 14, 2026
12:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.**

Please call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2787) or visit RedCrossBlood.org and enter: avonrotary to schedule an appointment.

Maximize your blood donation. Help more patients.
If you are an eligible type O-, B- or A- donor, consider making a Power Red donation.
Red blood cells are the most commonly transfused blood component.

Streamline your donation experience and save up to 15 minutes by visiting RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass to complete your pre-donation reading and health history questions on the day of your appointment.

SOS: Save Our Summer! Give Life and Gas Up!
All those who come to donate at a WNY Red Cross blood drive in July-August 2026 will be automatically entered to win a \$100 GAS gift card.
Multiple winners will be selected weekly, email address required.



2201 N. 1st St. #101
Tucson, AZ 85712

Give blood July 13 to 31 for a Fandango Movie Reward
by email to see a movie on us! rcblood.org/July



3. **Excluded:**

1-800-RED CROSS | 1-800-733-2767 | RedCrossBlood.org | Download the Blood Donor App

© 2002 Blackwell Science Ltd *Journal of Internal Medicine* 252: 111–118

 $\Delta H_{\text{f}}^{\circ}(\text{s}) = -890 \text{ kJ mol}^{-1}$, $\Delta G_{\text{f}}^{\circ}(\text{s}) = -768 \text{ kJ mol}^{-1}$; K_p at 25°C = 1.6 × 10⁻².



AVON ROTARY MEETING SCHEDULE

For more meeting details, go to avonrotary.org

July 2026: Maternal and Child Health Month

Upcoming Events		Highlights
Tues July 7	No Meeting	Holiday
Mon. July 13	Board of Directors Meeting 6 pm	Action Plan Recap and year ahead, budget additions/approval
Tues. July 14	Regular Meeting 6:30 pm	American Red Cross Blood Drive - Avon Inn 12:30-5:30 Corn Fest Mtg to follow
Tues. July 21	Regular Meeting 6:30 pm	GVRC Service Project Linda Kime presentation- Maria Geary
Tues. July 28	No Regular Meeting	Social Event: Attend Game or Volunteer Concessions at Rochester Red Wings



Birthday

- ⇒ Joe Callahan (H)
- ⇒ Karl Sawicki

Wedding Anniversary

- ⇒ Greg & Jean Antkowiak
- ⇒ Mike Giso
- ⇒ Tim Hayes
- ⇒ Ryan Pacatte
- ⇒ Jim Ryan
- ⇒ Ernie Wiard

Rotary Anniversary

- ⇒ Steve Stevenson 1963 (H)

Rotarians at Work- Garden Bed Clean Up

June 2: In the spring of 2022 under President Tom Vonglis's leadership, we applied for a district simplified grant and build raised garden beds along side the Avon Elementary school. As we all know how fast time goes by, it's already been 4 years and the same garden area was in need of some TLC. So, again, Tom led a group of about 20 volunteers for a service project on a Tuesday afternoon; weeding, sanding, repairing and sealing. Within 4 hours, the project was complete and the before and after was remarkable! Many thanks to all the volunteers that pitched in to assist this mighty cleanup.

By: Laurie Vonglis



Rotarians at Work- Roadside Clean Up



June 6: While most people were looking for a dry place to spend a rainy Saturday morning, four dedicated Avon Rotarians grabbed their gloves, safety vests, and a healthy dose of determination to tackle our roadside cleanup along Route 39.

The weather wasn't exactly cooperating, but neither was the litter. Through steady rain and soggy conditions, our hardworking volunteers helped keep Avon looking its best, proving once again that "Service Above Self" doesn't depend on sunshine.

A sincere thank you to our four cleanup champions for braving the elements and representing Avon Rotary with pride. The roadsides are cleaner, the community benefits, and perhaps a few raindrops can now proudly call themselves Rotarians too!

Well done, team! *By: Laurie Vonglis*

A Year in Review—Exchange & Budget

June 9: We had a very special presentation from Juan M., our 2025-2026 inbound exchange student from Spain. Juan shared some highlights from his year in Avon and his many adventures in the US. We wish Juan the best of luck as he returns to Spain next month!



We also got an overview of the Club's finances from Hans Koomen, who will step down as Club Treasurer at the end of this month after three years of dutiful service. Thanks Hans!

By: Collin Hayes



Many thanks to this year's host families, Christine & Steve Devito and Kirk & Karen Vanderbilt. They provided Juan supportive, loving homes for his student exchange experience.

More Red Wings Fun



June 16: This team rocked the Homeplate concession and endured a later night due to a rain delay. Fun and fellowship went hand in hand with providing outstanding customer service to the ball crowd. Thanks Volunteers!

We have two more opportunities to serve. Please sign up for either date... July 28th or August 25th.



Reflections on Volunteering



June 23: We had an opportunity to celebrate Avon Rotary's long-standing support for Linking Hands For Learning. Whether it's monetary support or supplying a long list of volunteers, Avon Rotary is proud of the work that gets done in Nicaragua in the name of basic education and literacy. On this occasion we got to hear about the personal experiences of 2 first-time volunteers who traveled to Nicaragua in April. Both Katie DeGraff and Jeff Herberger shared their experi-

ence, have fallen victim to beauty of the Nicaraguan people and landscape and are ready to plan their next trip!



Change of Officers Celebration



The Avon Rotary Club gathered for a memorable Change of Officers Celebration at the beautiful Wells Estate under the arches, celebrating a year of accomplishments, friendship, and the spirit of "Service Above Self." It was a wonderful evening filled with gratitude, laughter, recognition, and excitement for the year ahead.

Guests arrived and enjoyed a relaxing cocktail hour on the back patio, where we gathered in the shade with delicious appetizers and great conversation. Thankfully, as we moved under the arches for dinner, the shade had stretched across the seating area just in time, providing some much-needed relief from the sweltering summer heat. The meal, generously provided by Partyman Catering, was absolutely delicious and added to the enjoyment of the evening.

The celebration included a warm welcome to our guests, plenty of Rotary camaraderie, and even a special birthday tribute as we sang "Happy Birthday" to Bruce's twin brother — wherever he may be! Seriously, Happy Birthday Bruce!

Following dinner, the evening turned to recognition and celebration. Collin presented the Rotarian of the Year Award to Hans Koomen, honoring his diligent dedication, countless contributions, and true commitment to living out the Rotary motto of "Service Above Self." Hans' willingness to share his talents, support club initiatives, and step up whenever needed makes him a deserving recipient of this honor.

Paul Harris Fellow Plus pins were presented to Rob Lupisella and Karen Vanderbilt by Laurie and Katie, recognizing their outstanding commitment and contributions to Rotary. Both have demonstrated incredible leadership, passion, and dedication throughout the year, helping make this a truly remarkable year for the Avon Rotary Club.

Rob then reflected on his year as president, sharing highlights of a year filled with meaningful programs, service projects, fellowship opportunities, and accomplishments. His thoughtful leadership, energy, and commitment helped guide the club through an exceptional year of growth and engagement.

The evening also marked the official induction of our new Board of Directors. Incoming President Katie shared her vision and excitement for the year ahead, inspiring members with her enthusiasm and commitment to continuing the great work of our club creating lasting impact.

It was a beautiful evening celebrating all that has been accomplished, recognizing those who have made a difference, and looking forward to the opportunities ahead. The Avon Rotary family has much to be proud of — and even more to look forward to as we continue serving our community and beyond. By: Laurie Vonglis

Congratulations!



**PAUL HARRIS FELLOW
RECOGNITION**
Karen Vanderbilt & Rob Lupisella
Missing: Steve Csapo



ROTARIAN OF THE YEAR
Hans Koomen



2026-2027 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Sgt at Arms: Paul Warren, Director: Tom Vonglis, Sr. Director: Jaime Lovullo,
PE: Kirk Vanderbilt, Pres: Katie DeGraff, Treasurer: Mike Giso, Secretary: Laurie Vonglis,
Members at Large: Helen Zamboni, Jean Antkowiak, Josh Tonra, Past Prez: Rob Lupisella**



Change of Officers Highlights



Rambling On Rotary—July



By Bruce Amey
July is Rotary International's Installations Month. Our club installed its new club officers for the 2026-2027 Rotary year on June 30th after I am writing this month's missive. I am very proud of our club's accomplishments under Rob's and our Board's leadership this past year. I have felt a sense of camaraderie of our members

working and serving together. I am looking forward to Katie's presidential year for our club. Rotary International has a new president, as well. He was installed at the RI Conference in Taipei during the first week of June. His name is Olayinka Babalola from Nigeria, he goes by Yinka for short.

In the July Rotary magazine, he has an excellent initial message to all Rotary members; the theme for his Rotary year is Create Lasting Impact. He states "It surprises you when a small project in one neighborhood ripples outward in ways you never imagined. And it may surprise you when you realize that the person Rotary has changed the most ... is you." As I read this I could reflect on is the presentation Katie and Jeff did on their Linking Hands For Learning journey at the June 23rd meeting. Talk about a small project that ripples outward impacting communities and even nations and our club has an impact in this. President Yinka continues, "Change is only the beginning. IMPACT is what endures. We must think of the long-term impact of every project. ... How can a classroom be part of a wider strategy to improve education in the area? This is the sort of thinking we need." "Don't just tell people about the projects you have run or the funds you have raised. Tell them how Rotary has shaped who you are. Those personal stories open

doors, inspire new members, and remind all of us why we are here." Jeff and Katie both indicated how the project has inspired them and helped shape who they are.

The June magazine also has an excellent article (pages 56-57) regarding a survey conducted in 2025. The article entitled "What Would-be Members want". When we consider trying to encourage new persons to join our club, the survey offered some interesting things. "Respondents were more interested in work and friendship, more interested in what's happening in their communities, and more trustful of other persons. ... People are looking for organizations with opportunities for skill development, professional networking, and meaningful community contributions. It's not that we've made a mistake emphasizing service. It is just that we need to show more of what makes Rotary membership worth it." Again, I reflect on Katie's and Jeff's Linking Hands presentation ... clearly their involvement in that project was WORTH it... I am looking forward to Katie's project this year working with the Avon Food Pantry, I believe for all of us who choose to be involved, the service above self in that project will be worth it.

The July Rotary Magazine also has an excellent article (pages 8-9) on the power of Youth Exchange. I am very grateful for our club's efforts with Interact and supporting youth exchange programs. Thank you Karen and Ed for ALL your efforts and the support of our Board of Directors supporting the youth in our community. As you can tell from my article missives, I learn a lot about Rotary by reading the monthly magazine. I encourage every member to avail themselves of this opportunity. It is part of what our dues pays for. And, as usual I have rambled on long enough. Looking forward to our club creating lasting impact every day and throughout this year.





2026 Wild Polio Case Counts as of June 30, 2026

Country	2024	2025	2026
Afghanistan	25	9	6
Pakistan	73	30	3
Total	98	39	9



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

CLUB ATTENDANCE

Date	Description	Rate
6/2	Garden Project	43.9%
6/9	Regular Meeting	68.9%
6/23	Regular Meeting	73%
6/30	Change Of Officers	80%

June Meeting Attendance Rate = 66.5%

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 July!

Thank you,
David Kilgore



IT'S TIME!

Corn Festival is 5 weeks away!

Time to get your gear ordered!

Time to volunteer to help!

Watch your email for sign-up information.

Is a fellow Rotarian ill or in need?

Please contact the
club
Sunshine Liaison

Barbara Herman
226-6735

