

BIG SKY NEWS

Mike Mayott, Governor | District 5390 | Montana, USA

Celebrations abound at District Conference

Through rain, snow and wind they came.

Rotarians from District 5390 drove from the four corners of a very large Montana to be together at the 2022 District Conference held May 6-7 at Fairmont Hot Springs.

Friday's meeting began at 1 pm with District Governor Mike Mayott's call to order, followed by his introduction of the so-called "DG Lineup" --

DG, PDG, DGE, DGN, DGND — followed by AG introductions. If you didn't quite understand all those acronyms, just know that the letters represent a whole bunch of people who do good things for our Rotary district and its nearly 50 clubs.

Past District Governor (PDG) Sandy Wong (2019-20), whose DG year was challenged by a pandemic and a district business meeting held via Zoom, mentioned the \$25,000 in COVID-19 grants that benefitted club projects that year. "We



Above: DG Mike Mayott and DGE Barrie Matthews celebrate the peaceful transition of leadership.

had 20 clubs write a grant to be involved in strengthening the community's needs," Sandy reported. "Even Rotaract clubs got involved. Hats off to our youth! You did a lot of good work."

PDG Sandy Carlson (2020-21) of Kalispell Daybreak thanked Mike for a wonderful year and said she missed visiting clubs as DG. She praised and thanked Rotarians for their volunteerism and said, "We just sat back and

watched you work." Sandy also thanked District COO Shawna Secker. "Without her good work, none of us would be here."

District Governor-Elect (DGE) Barrie Matthews (2022-23) announced that the 2023 conference will be held in May in his hometown of Miles City. The planned Kentucky Derby theme for the conference promises to be fun, he said, with horse races, golf, wine tasting and more. Barrie says he will even offer mint juleps. Bring your fancy hats,

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ladies and gentlemen! Barrie also said that District 5390 Assembly will be held August 5-6 at Fairmont Hot Springs. He announced that he was able to meet many presidents-elect at PETS and has his club visit schedule planned for the coming year. "I am so impressed," he said with a broad smile. "I think the future looks good for Montana Rotary."

District Governor Nominee (DGN) Rick Powers (2023-24) of Anaconda quipped, "About a year ago, I didn't know what a DGN was!" He admitted that his year as DG still seems like "a long way away, but it's really not." He looks forward to his leadership service.

District Governor Nominee Designee (DGND) Shawna Secker (2024-25) of Livingston said she was just happy to meet again in person. "It's been so long since we could all get together." She said she is already planning for her year as DG. "There will be some fun things happening, so it's going to be a fun year."

Each of the Area/Assistant Governors (AG) who were present -- Lucy Smith of Kalispell - Area 1; Victoria Emmons Bouzina - Area 2; Nikki Powers of Anaconda - Area 4; Jeff Langlinais of Townsend - Area 5; Bob Wiersma of Bozeman Sunrise - Area 6; and Jerry Jimison of Glendive - Areas 7 & 8 -



Above: Rotary Youth Exchange outbound students tell about themselves and the countries to which they will travel for study next year. Below: DGND Shawna Secker with banner.



spoke about the clubs in their areas and how well each had done, even those clubs that faced challenges. Well, we all faced the pandemic challenge!

"It's not about me, it's about the district," said DG Mike. "It's about the boots on the ground. We are here to support clubs." Those words were repeated all year long as Mike visited clubs throughout the district. He reported that membership numbers in the district have increased over the past year, as have giving totals.

DG Mike also honored Rotarians who died this year by reading their names ... some had only a year as Rotarians and others were members for 58 years.

A variety of presentations during the Friday session offered a wealth of information for

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attendees, who gathered both in person and via Zoom.

Presentation on Peace

Betsy Mulligan-Dague of Missoula Sunrise and district chair of the Peace-building and Conflict Prevention Committee invited Rotarians to join her committee. She explained that the most important function for the district and RI is to recruit, prepare, and recommend applicants for the Peace Centers. Each year, 130 Peace Fellows are selected – 50 in a Master's program and 80 in certificate programs.

“Peace is the original and, I think, the most important focus that Rotary has,” Betsy said. The Rotary Foundation was established in 1917 and peacemaking was incorporated into Rotary's Constitution in 1921, she explained. The first Peace Park was established in 1932 on the USA Montana/Canada border, with Rotary Peace Centers established in 1999. “Peace through Service” was established as a theme in 2012, along with establishment of a Rotary Action Group for Peace the same year. This year's RI conference theme is “Serve to Bring Peace” and the Zones 26/27 theme is “Trails to Peace.”

“If you're paying attention to what's happening in Europe,” said Betsy, “It makes me feel proud to know all the things around the world Rotary is doing to promote peace.”

Betsy asked clubs to consider supporting the peace poles project. In 1977, a Hiroshima survivor started the peace poles which read “May Peace Prevail on Earth” in multiple languages. The poles are placed in various locations in communities around the world. Peace poles cost \$150-\$200 each, depending on the number of languages represented on the pole. Betsy ended her presentation with two quotes from RI founder Paul Harris.

Club Accounting Options

Chris Wright, treasurer of the Townsend club, presented a possibly more efficient solution for clubs in need of making purchases and reimbursing members. He pointed out that the club treasurer's role is: (1) to ensure that spending conforms with the club's approved budget; (2) to be a financial historian; and (3) to protect the club's tax-exempt status as a 501(c)4 organization. Chris introduced a prepaid debit card that clubs can give to members for expenses. He said that a partnership between two companies – Aplos and PEX – created the card program at no cost, but a club must use the Aplos accounting program at a cost of \$40-\$50 per month to take advantage of the no-cost debit card function.



Above: RI Director Vicki Puliz inspires conference attendees.

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“If it’s free, it’s me,” said Chris. Benefits to the club treasurer are fewer reimbursement checks to be written; less time tracking down receipts; increased control on project funding; empowering teams to make approved purchases; implementing funding requests immediately; tracking transaction details as soon as a purchase is made; and syncing transactions with accounting software. For more information, contact Treasurer.TownsendRotary@gmail.com.

Report from the Rotary Council on Legislation

PDG Roy Beekman represented District 5390 at RI’s Council on Legislation held April 10-14 in Chicago. The Council meets every three years. The 2022 session was held both in person and online with 522 districts of 523 districts worldwide participating and 324 people attending in person with 198 online.

“Imagine 200 people on a Zoom meeting and every one of them has an opinion,” Roy reported. “The logistics was quite an undertaking with people in Japan and Chicago, lots of people talking without unmuting themselves, some people wanting to show how well they could speak English.”

Roy referred Rotarians to MyRotary.org to see the Council on Legislation pages listing all votes taken, who voted for what, what passed and what failed.

“There are a lot of frivolous things people talk about,” Roy said, citing examples such as amending satellite club names, raising the age to 40 to be a Rotaract member, or the time frame for minutes to be distributed. He mentioned two proposals of those that passed, including adding DEI to the bylaws and a new pilot program for a governing structure in Britain, Australia, Ireland,

and New Zealand. He said RI’s financial report was “not pretty” given a decline worldwide in membership, much of that due to the pandemic. Additionally, RI’s investments have not been as plentiful, thus creating a dismal outlook. The Council approved dues increase to \$82 that will be implemented over the next four years, he said.

“In an effort to control costs, RI has gone to Zoom meetings,” said Roy. He also said that while five standing committees were proposed, none was approved, nor was a proposal for Rotary magazine to shift to an all-online publication.

“The most moving moment of the whole session was when RI President [Shekhar Mehta] introduced the delegate from the Ukrainian town of Kyiv,” said Roy. “He got two standing ovations.” To date, according to *Rotary* magazine, the Rotary Foundation has given over \$10 million to the Ukrainian refugee effort.

“When [PDG and COL Representative] Malinda [Schafman, Evergreen] asked me to represent the district since she could not go,” said Roy, “My initial thought was no. There’s a lot of material to read, a process to familiarize yourself with, and travel plans to make. But it was the best thing to get me refocused on Rotary.”

Other Friday Reports

Polio Plus: PDG Bill Spath, polio plus chair, discussed the “Polio Global Eradication Initiative” report published April 27. While there have been record low cases of wild polio virus (WPV) throughout 2021, on May 1, a second case of WPV1 occurred in Pakistan. Bill said that “complacency will continue to hinder efforts.”

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RYLA: DG Mike reported on behalf of Levi Merkel that RYLA is scheduled to take place in Luccock Park July 12-16. There was discussion about publicizing the camp and the challenges of communicating with students given the absence of Youth Exchange the past couple of years. Mike asked that Rotarians planning to attend RYLA should contact Levi.

District Grants: DG Mike will continue as coordinator for district grants in FY 22-23. He listed the clubs that received grants and the amount of each. Mike explained how to access the newly refined grants application online. “We’ve made the process much simpler,” said Mike. He explained that when someone donates to the RI SHARE account, every dollar is invested. Three years later, half of that dollar is applied to the Global Fund while the other half is returned to the district designated funds (DDF) and is granted in the form of block grants. “Global grant funds never go away,” said Mike. “They are always there even if not used right away. Block grants are only good for one year.” He reminded attendees that all initial first steps to apply for a grant should be taken by the end of February. District grants are capped at no more than half of a project’s total cost.

District in Top 50 in Rotary Foundation per capita giving: Foundation Chair Dick King reported that District 5390 became one of the

top 50 in the world in per capita giving to the Rotary Foundation. Of the 34 zones in Rotary worldwide, he said that Zone 9 raised the most at \$11.3 million. Zones 26/27, which includes Canada, California, Colorado, Idaho, Oregon and Montana, ranked second in the world at \$10.4 million. Dick also reported that Rotary Foundation has set up an official channel for Ukrainian refugee relief and that more than \$3.5 million has been contributed to the fund to date. “All around the world, Rotary is raising money to help people,” said Dick.

Strategic Planning: DGN Rick Powers explained that a draft of a Strategic Plan for

District 5390 was started in November while in Tucson, Arizona with a leadership team including DG Mike, DGE Barrie Matthews, DGN Rick Powers, DGND Shawna Secker, and PDG Sandy Carlson. He said a SWOT analysis was conducted to identify the district’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Rick outlined

the goals and statements created by the planning group, including: an assessment of each club in the district by June 30; develop/implement a membership growth and retention plan to increase membership to 2,000 by 2027; and develop/implement a plan to promote the Rotary Foundation and international service.



Above: DG Mike and RI Director Vicki Puliz presented many awards at conference, including this one to PDG Roy Beekman for serving as the district alternate representative at the RI Council on Legislation.

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Recognition, Fundraising and Fun

Friday night's dinner event offered a fellowship opportunity for all. With lots of recognition, fundraising and fun, the group was charged up. Rotarians were generous, as always, with one table donating to be first in line at the buffet, while members and guests bid on a wide range of auction items. Special thanks to all the clubs that donated auction items, as well as the many Rotarians who bid on those items, and to PDG Sandy Carlson for organizing the auction.

Outbound Rotary Youth Exchange students shared about themselves in the language of the country in which they will be living next year. An impressive array of Montana youth will be representing our state abroad.

DG Mike, assisted by Rotary International Director Vicki Puliz of Nevada, presented awards to countless district leaders and club presidents. Vicki inspired with her special words to the audience about the value of Rotary.

Post-dinner entertainment followed on the patio as guitarists/singers Kathy Schulte, Missoula, and PE Royce Engstrom, Missoula, played and sang for those who braved the chilly evening.

Snowy golf and a brewery tour in Philipsburg

Neither rain nor snow can stop dedicated golfers. While a few bowed out of a planned

Rotary golf extravaganza on the Fairmont course Friday afternoon, a mighty five golfers braved the chilly, windy day — once the snow stopped — to complete 18 holes. Well, two stopped at nine holes of play. The rest of the conference attendees drove to Philipsburg where local Rotarians hosted fellow Rotarians for drinks.

A Charged-up Saturday

PDG Sandy Wong got Saturday's session off on a great start with an inspirational analogy to batteries — when they run down, you replace or recharge — just as we must do as volunteer Rotarians. Sandy also reminded club presidents and PEs to enter their club goals on rotary.org.

Annual Business Meeting

A variety of brief reports were presented at the Annual Business Meeting. District Treasurer Jim Oates reported on the financial statements. Minutes from last year's business meeting were approved.

DG Mike announced the RI Manual of Procedures is complicated, but “our own manual is easier to read now.” He explained that district governor selection process is determined according to RI rules.

Club representatives voted to take nominations from the floor for district governor 2025-26 candidates.



Above: Kathy Schulte and Royce Engstrom, both of Missoula, entertain at District Conference after hours.

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Two candidates were nominated from the floor, including Lucy Smith nominated by Rotary Club of Kalispell Noon, and Kathy Schulte nominated by Rotary Club of Missoula. Lucy was deemed the winner and will serve as DG in four years.



Above: DG candidates Kathy Schulte and Lucy Smith

International Update

District International Chair Terri Smiley presented the international theme of “working together” as she explained that each of our projects has a partner in another country. She said that international service is comprised of Rotary Youth Exchange, vocational exchange, friendship exchange, Peace Park, district grants, and global grants. Terri mentioned a few of this year’s district clubs’ projects, including the Billings club funding of new desks in the Republic of the Congo, a water well in Liberia and a greenhouse in Mexico. She said Bozeman Sunrise club offered teacher training in Nepal at Melamchi Ghyang School. The Western Montana Coalition of clubs supported Tippy Tap hand washing stations, community bio and water filters, well drilling and a rebuilt water system, all located in Guatemalan villages. The Hamilton club donated four shelter boxes for Ukrainian refugees. Terri asked, “What more can we accomplish together?” She suggested a global grant in Montana supporting Native American tribes.

Mark Dvarishkis, Missoula Centennial, presented his club’s recent partnership with the Rotary Club of Zamosc, Poland, to bring support for Ukrainian refugees, primarily women and children. “We chose it [Zamosc] because it’s where people are getting off the train [from

Ukraine],” he said. The Zamosc club has raised \$75,000 locally throughout the European Union and wants to use those funds to help with shelters. Many Polish Rotarians are already housing refugees in their homes, Mark said. “They asked that we look into finding [mostly medical] supplies to send that they can’t get there.” The Centennial club has a district grant pending, as well as approved grants through Missoula Rotary Foundation, Rotary and other clubs, and the Missoula community totaling \$17,000. Contributions may be sent to Missoula Rotary Foundation, he said.

Ready for a 100-mile bike ride?

AG Lucy Smith, Kalispell Noon, invited fellow Rotarians to join her in a 100-mile bicycle ride in Colorado this fall. The Rotary WooHoomanie Bike-A-Thon is a fundraiser held in September to support The Rotary Foundation. Lucy is recruiting not only bikers, but also donors, both Rotarians and friends. Contact Lucy for more information.

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Read: /red/ verb -- look at and comprehend the meaning

Missoula Sunrise Rotarians delight children with new dictionaries

For the past 20 years, Rotarians in Missoula have been handing out dictionaries to schoolchildren. As a sponsor of The Dictionary Project, a nationwide effort to reduce literacy, the local effort is part of Rotary Club of Missoula Sunrise's commitment to literacy.

The Dictionary Project was started in 1992 when Annie Plummer of Savannah, Georgia, gifted 50 dictionaries to children at a school near her home. Each year, she gifted more and more dictionaries and then began raising funds to spread the wealth. In her lifetime, Annie raised enough to give 17,000 dictionaries. As others caught the dictionary gifting bug, Mary and Arno French in 1995 formed a 501(c)(3) based in Charleston, SC, to raise serious funds to assure that each third grader in America would own a dictionary. The Dictionary Project was born. Clubs like Rotary and other service clubs joined the effort over the years as sponsors.

"We started doing the Dictionary Project when the [Missoula] Noon club did," explained member David Bardwick. "The Noon club took half the schools [in Missoula] and we took the other half."

After a story about The Dictionary Project appeared in *The Wall Street Journal* in 2002, the program began to garner national support.

Today, Missoula Sunrise Rotary members donate a dictionary to each third grader in selected schools in Missoula, Lolo and Bonner. Educators describe third grade as the time when a student transitions from learning to read to

reading to learn. Third grade is the age when dictionary skills are usually taught. *

Rotarians order books in the fall, then deliver them in person to each school. Prior to delivery, members gather to add copies of the Rotary Four-Way Test to dictionaries and a label indicating the dictionary is a gift of Rotary Club of Missoula Sunrise. In addition, each student's name is written in the book, making it a very personal gift. At least two Rotarians visit each classroom to present the books, talk about Rotary, and help the kids learn about dictionaries. The Braille section always gets the kids' attention, as does the longest word, according to members, some of whom have been handing out dictionaries for years. Rotarians also ask students to look up and read the meanings of some of the words contained in the Rotary Four-Way Test.

"The teachers have said to us that they use the book all year long for lessons," said Lisa Holcomb, former service chair for the club. "I think it is awesome that teachers start asking us when we are coming so they can get their lesson plans done."

Years later, as some students present to the Missoula Sunrise club members at their meetings, they are always asked if they remember the dictionary. Most faces light up as they say, "Yes!" Sunrise Rotarian Chris Warden still has his book.

Thanks to the generosity of Rotarians throughout the state, a grant from the Rotary District 5390 Foundation helped support this year's dictionary distribution.

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Dictionaries, from page 8



Rotarians from the Rotary Club of Missoula Sunrise gather for cookies, fellowship, and to label dictionaries to present to local third graders as part of The Dictionary Project, supported in part by a grant from the District 5390 Foundation.

“We are extremely pleased to have this grant,” said Lisa. “We have struggled to have fruitful fundraising events. Some of us have personally stepped up to fund any shortages to make sure this project continues. Covid was hard on us. We could only deliver boxes of labeled books to the schools. Jim Clark produced a video for teachers to play instead of our usual face-to-face

presentations. I was a service chair for several years and this is one project that I always had more than enough volunteers.”

—Lisa Holcomb, Rotary Club of Missoula Sunrise

**TheDictionaryProject.org*

Missoula Centennial Rotary forges partnership with Polish club to offer support to Ukrainian refugees

After watching the heart wrenching television coverage of the millions of Ukrainian refugees getting off trains in Poland to escape the war with Russia, members of the Rotary Club of Missoula Centennial decided to make a Rotary difference.

Rather than just sending money to the Rotary International Disaster Relief fund, the club wanted to make it more personal and reached out to the Rotary Club of Zamosc in Poland, located 40 miles from Ukraine's southeast border and one of the main points of entry for many Ukrainian refugees. Given that no one in the Zamosc club speaks English and no one in the Centennial club speaks Polish, communications were a challenge. It took some time and Microsoft Translator to work out a solution.

Working with translators on both sides of the Atlantic, members from the two clubs met via Zoom on April 19 to discuss their collaboration to provide much needed relief for Ukrainian refugees, mostly women and small children. The Zamosc club, many of whose members are housing Ukrainian refugees, indicated a need for shelter, personal items, clothing, medical and surgical supplies as the most urgent focus. The Missoula Centennial club has already begun to raise funds for this joint effort, having already raised \$18,000, including a \$10,000 grant from the Missoula Rotary Foundation through the Missoula Centennial's designated fund. The club is also applying for relief grants in the US and



Above: Missoula Centennial Rotarians meet online with members of the Rotary Club of Zamosc, Poland, to forge a partnership to support Ukrainian refugees.

helping the Zamosc Club secure some products they are unable to obtain in Poland or western Europe. Both clubs acknowledge that their partnership will be a long-term effort. Even after the conflict ends, the process of rebuilding Ukraine will take years.

Tax deductible contributions for the project may be made online to the Missoula Rotary Foundation at <https://missoularotaryfoundation.org> by clicking on any donation button and in the memo section type "Ukraine", or by mailing a check payable to the Missoula Rotary Foundation, P.O. Box 7113, Missoula, MT 59807-7113 and indicating it is for The MCRC Ukrainian relief project.

—Bob Minto, Rotary Club of Missoula Centennial

Rotary sparks “chevalier” award to war hero

How one Rotarian pursued and achieved a top honor from France for his father

Not many people are honored with the distinction of “chevalier”, or knight, of the Légion d’Honneur, France’s highest award. Clark Maser, 96, father of Rotarian Minot Maser, Rotary Club of Missoula, was the fortunate recipient of such award in April at a special ceremony in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The elder Maser’s long journey to finally receive the award came about thanks to the Rotary Club of Missoula and a son’s determination to honor his father.

A year and a half ago, Laurence Markarian of Hamilton, MT, was invited to speak to the Missoula Rotary. Appointed by the Consul Général de France in San Francisco, Markarian is the Consul Honoraire for France in Montana. Among other duties, part of her role is ceremonial. After World War II, France wanted to honor the many U.S. veterans who helped liberate their country from the Nazis. They began to seek out and honor U.S. veterans around the country. Markarian has presented 17 veterans from Montana the Medal of Legion of Honor for their service in helping to liberate France from Nazi oppression.

Born and raised in France, Laurence lives in the Bitterroot. Her presentation at Missoula Rotary was well received and garnered many questions. She spoke about the importance of etiquette

and understanding French culture. She also mentioned the Legion of Honor awards.

Minot Maser was in attendance that day and brought up the fact that his father Clark was one of those veterans who helped liberate France. Thus began Minot’s quest to honor his elderly father.

Laurence explained to Minot that since his father lived in Vermont, he would need to work with the Consul Général in that part of the

country. Not long after, Minot relocated to the northeast himself to care for his father who had spent most of his career as a successful attorney in San Francisco. The Maser family had long owned a seasonal home in Greensboro, Vermont, nearby where his father preferred to

relocate. Clark Maser now lives in Littleton, New Hampshire.

From the Rotary presentation, Minot followed up with the French contact on the east coast and finally, this spring, his father was honored at a private ceremony at the official residence of Arnaud Mentré, France’s consul general, in Cambridge, Massachusetts.



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CHEVALIER, from page 11

“You are a true hero for the United States, but you are also a hero for us, the French people,” said Arnaud, according to a story in the Boston Globe. “It was one of the darkest hours of my country.”

In 1945, a then 19-year-old Clark lay fighting for his life on a cold battlefield in France. His legs had three wounds and he was waiting for his life to end.

“I’m going to die,” he thought, as German mortar shells exploded all around him. “And I’ve never kissed a girl before.”

The memories of those experiences remain indelible for Minot’s father, who ended up on a transport ship home and was discharged as 60 percent disabled as a result, according to Minot. The elder Maser survived, unlike many of his comrades in the Army’s 103rd Infantry Division.

Born into poverty in a Chicago boarding house, Minot’s father went on to attend Harvard Law School on the GI Bill. He represented companies such as US Steel, UPS, and even famous child actress Shirley Temple Black, according to Minot. Throughout his father’s very long and full life in both professional and community endeavors, Minot says the one and a half months his father spent in France remains the most impactful.

“It was a good time to serve one’s country,” said Clark, who enlisted as a private first class on his 18th birthday. “I never realized I would end up here.”

The elder Maser became his company’s interpreter in France when he indicated on a questionnaire in fall 1944 that he knew a little

French. He had only studied the language in seventh and eighth grades. Once in France, he was asked to inquire in each village when the enemy had last passed through and where good encampments could be found. He also admitted he had his first taste of alcohol in France, drinking the red wine offered by grateful townspeople to American troops.

In addition to his father’s interpreter duties, Minot said his dad became a company messenger because he had run the quarter mile in high school. When his unit came under intense mortar fire in Itterswiller, a village in Alsace, the 160 men in his unit were nearly wiped out. On his father’s final dash as a courier, Minot said that shrapnel struck his father in both legs, one wound coming within an inch of the femoral artery.

“It was akin to being rammed by a telephone pole,” Minot said.

Despite damage to his legs, Minot’s father eventually played tennis for University of California, Berkeley, where he received his undergraduate degree thanks to the GI Bill. Minot said his father also became engaged in social justice causes, organizing a student protest and boycott of a local bowling alley where Black people were only allowed to set pins, not to play. The rules were changed. In his later years, the elder Maser led an environmental effort to keep jet-skis off Caspian Lake in Greensboro.

Vermont’s governor, Phil Scott, expressed thanks for Maser’s “selfless and heroic” wartime service in a tribute read by Lise Veronneau, France’s honorary consul in Vermont.

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Speed Dating with Club Presidents

Not exactly what you'd think, the conference's new "Speed Dating" segment brought one club president after another before the crowd to brag about their club's accomplishments for the year. Each president was given three minutes and a very large screen for digital viewing to strut their stuff. Too numerous to list here, the projects would fill a small library.



Above: The DG lineup from immediate past to present to four years in the future. Below: The table with the winning bid to be first in the buffet line helped support Polio Plus.



RYLA, scholarships, helping homeless high schoolers, Ukrainian refugee relief, a Rotary Dig, peace poles, highway cleanups, library funding, dictionaries for kids, senior citizen center upgrades, car shows, music festivals, parades and much more were completed. The impact Rotary clubs in District 5390 have on their communities is overwhelming. Who'd have thought that back in the early 20th century, that very first Rotary club in Montana would spawn such a wave of good will and better friendships?

District Conference 2023 will be held in DGE Barrie's hometown of Miles City. Watch for more information about it.

--Victoria Emmons Bouzina, Editor, Big Sky News

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Minot said that his father remains very interested in world affairs and follows the war in Ukraine daily.

All those in attendance at the small ceremony honoring Clark Maser lifted their glasses of champagne to toast him as he humbly accepted their praise.

"I was lucky," the honoree said. "Now, I'm just trying to live out my life the best I can."

Rotary Club of Missoula's speaker program lit the spark for an American WWII hero to finally receive recognition from a grateful France. The story was featured in the April 13, 2022 issue of the *Boston Globe*.

--Victoria Emmons, Editor, Big Sky News

Source: *Boston Globe*, April 13, 2022

Missoula Sunrise offers kids monthly activities

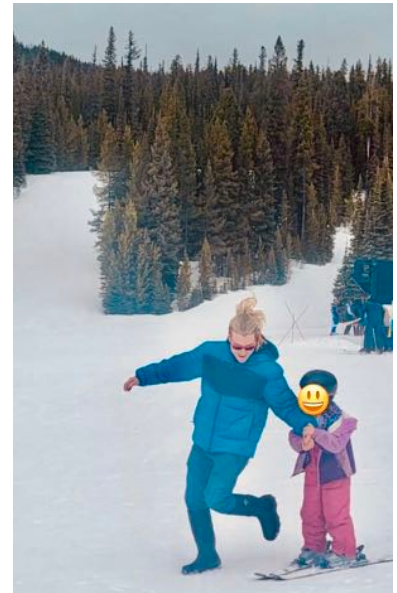
Members of the Rotary Club of Missoula

Sunrise had a very busy winter 2022. With the club's devotion to Gallagher and Sunrise youth homes in Missoula, the service committee creates a monthly activity for the twelve kiddos. The staff cares quite well for the kids; but Missoula Sunrise club's involvement gives them an opportunity to have fun adventures like their other classmates, and to have a positive experience with adults other than staff.

The pandemic posed some challenges, requiring limited contact with the kids.

January's Griz basketball game had to be canceled due to Covid-19; but in February, they were able to bring heart-shaped pizzas and cookies as a treat on that special day.

March arrived and Discovery Ski area helped out with special pricing so Rotarians could take the kids and their counselors skiing for the day. They were able to rent skis, pay for lessons, buy lunch and have a fabulous day skiing with the kids. While Rotarians may have never gotten off the "Gold Bug" trail that day, smiles from the kids made it all worth it. Watching these children face a challenge and win is enough to make anyone smile. Sometimes, just getting down the bunny hill is a win.



"Due to our continued workforce shortage, we haven't had as many opportunities as we would like to take the kids on adventures," said Barbara Cowan, operations director for Partnership for Children,

the organization Rotary partners with to benefit the kids. "Time and time again, the awesome members of that Rotary Club remind us that there are people in our community that care enough to not only provide wonderful opportunities but are excited to participate in the activities with our kids. It is empowering for both our children and staff!"

Missoula Sunrise club thanks Barbara for those kind words. Many of the Missoula Sunrise Rotarians joined Rotary because of this avenue of service. It is instantly gratifying to see the smiles and hear the laughter of their adopted PFC kids.

--Lisa Holcomb, Rotary Club of Missoula Sunrise

Bigfork Rotarians promote literacy through book sales to support liberate and tree branches for town beautification

After two busy Saturdays in March selling used books to hundreds of people of all ages, the Rotary Club of Bigfork raised \$4,500 to donate to the capital campaign for the new Imagine IF Bigfork Library. In addition, there were gifts of rare collectible books that the club will sell online. Held at the Ark Building behind Bethany Lutheran Church in Bigfork, the club sold nearly all the donated books for \$1.50/inch.

“The library book sale was one of our most widely attended events ever,” said Serena Keller, club president. “It was not too taxing a project and easy to do.”

In addition to selling used books, the club also took on a more challenging project earlier in the year that required some muscle. Members spent a day cutting down tree branches which were donated for the town’s annual wreath making project during

the holidays. One of the club’s members donates her property for the activity.

--Victoria Emmons Bouzina, Editor, Big Sky News



Above: Bigfork Rotarians gather to cut branches for wreaths to adorn downtown Bigfork. Below: No task is too tough for these Rotarians!



Land to Hand delivers two tons of food with help from Rotary

Members of the Rotary Club of Columbia Falls, together with staff and volunteers of Land to Hand Montana, delivered in March more than 300 15-pound bags of groceries to four schools to help provide food for children who would miss their free lunches during spring break.

Eight Rotary volunteers helped load the bags into vans and trucks for delivery to four Columbia Falls Schools: Glacier Gateway and Ruder Elementary Schools, and Columbia Falls Junior and Senior High Schools. The bags, packed by Land to Hand staff and volunteers, provided food to children served by the schools' free lunch programs and are an extension of Land to Hand's Weekend Backpack Program, which supplements children's food requirements on weekends.

Almost half of the bags went to Glacier Gateway; 61 to Ruder; 50 to the high school; and 28 to the junior high school. Similar deliveries occur before Thanksgiving and Christmas breaks.

"We're always looking for ways to either help financially, or with our members' time, and in some cases muscle, to help with needs in Columbia Falls. That's the Rotary mission," said club President Doug Davidson. "Our help goes much farther in the community when we can team with other non-profit service organizations, such as Land to Hand."



Above: Members of the Rotary Club of Columbia Falls pose in the entrance to Glacier Gateway Elementary School after unloading 160 bags of groceries at the school for kids to take home. Pictured (l-r) back row: President Doug Davidson, President-Elect Roger Hopkins, Doug Karper, Erick Robbins, Mick Holm, Dave Peterson. Front row: Secretary-Treasurer Roger Elliot, Cliff Seiler.

Land to Hand has been active in the valley for several years, first known as Farm Hands – Nourish the Flathead. In addition to the Weekend Backpack Program, the organization runs "Food for All" programs that connect community members with locally grown food, primarily at farmers' markets in Columbia Falls, Whitefish and Kalispell; "Free the Seeds" with classes and workshops along with collection and distribution of open-pollinated seeds; and "Farm to School" education programs in the Columbia Falls school district with summer camps and the Wildcat Garden at the junior high school.

For more information about Land to Hand, visit www.landtohandmt.org. For the latest about Columbia Falls Rotary visit www.facebook.com/CFallsRotary.

— Roger Hopkins, Rotary Club of Columbia Falls

Missoula Rotarians honor youth leaders

Every month during the school year, members of the Rotary Club of Missoula attend a special meeting at two local middle schools to honor students who have demonstrated leadership qualities.

Teachers at C.S. Porter Middle School and Meadow Hill Middle School in Missoula select each month outstanding sixth, seventh and eighth graders who demonstrate certain leadership qualities. Rotary donates a pizza party for the students and their parents as the monthly awards are announced. Rotarians take time to speak about what Rotary is and why we honor our youth.

At the end of the year, teachers select Student of the Year awards in each grade. These students were honored May 18 at the Missoula Rotary club meeting held at Missoula Country Club.

A roomful of Rotarians, parents, students and their siblings applauded the honored students, whose teachers crafted marvelous praise about each of them.

C.S. Porter Principal Ty Solberg read what teachers had to say about their students, himself at times breaking down in tears at their accomplishments, indicating his own pride in these outstanding kids who give us all hope for the future leadership of Montana.

—Victoria Emmons Bouzina, Rotary Club of Missoula



Above: The annual youth leaders of the year awards attracted a large crowd at the May 18 meeting of the Rotary Club of Missoula.

Electric City's Tardi Gras supports safe play spaces

Focused on building "safe play spaces for all," the Rotary Club of Electric City (Great Falls) hosted its inaugural "Tardi Gras" event in March to benefit Alliance for Youth.

The club's Tardi Gras featured a Mardi Gras theme and raised over \$40,000 to be used to modernize and furnish the Alliance for Youth's rec room. With input from the kids who use the room, the newly renovated space will feature comfortable workspaces, areas to play games, a video game area, space for music and more. The remodel should be completed by the end of summer 2022.

See TARDI GRAS, page 18

Missoula Rotaract and Rotary members support local refugees



Above: Austin Parson, president of Missoula Rotaract, with items donated to support refugees.

The list went out on Facebook Messenger to all Rotaract members in Missoula. Sign up for items to add to the kits. Club members wanted to support new immigrants relocating to Missoula — often relocating from war, oppression, or refugee camps. A local organization called Soft Landing helps support refugees now living in Missoula, helps them adjust to new surroundings, a new culture, a strange language, and new friends. The kits with donated items make that adjustment easier. Rotaract and Rotary Club of Missoula members alike shopped for shampoo, deodorant, paper towels, razors, bed linens, blankets, toothpaste, tooth brushes, soap, kitchen appliances, and all sorts of other household items needed to move into a new home. Most refugees come with very little in personal belongings and must start from scratch to build a new life in a new country. Many refugees in Missoula have relocated from the Congo and Eritria in East Africa.

—Victoria Emmons Bouzina, Rotary Club of Missoula

Tardi Gras, from page 17

“For a first-time event, we are really excited about the amount raised to help Alliance for Youth,” said Rob Rezek, club president. “Not only did our club members step up to make the event so much fun, but our community came together to support the project. We cannot thank our sponsors and everyone who attended enough.”

Many companies supported the club’s inaugural event, including top event supporters D.A. Davidson, LPW Architecture, Mohawk Group, IRIS Software, Kelley Connect, Blackwell Rentals, Detailed Construction, Embark Credit Union, Exchange Club of Great Falls, General Distributing Company, Great Falls Clinic and Stifel.

Tardi Gras was designed to be hosted annually and will benefit future organizations focused on safe play spaces. Save the date for Tardi Gras 2023 scheduled for February 24, 2023 at The Newberry. Organizations are encouraged to reserve a table now by contacting Rotary Electric at clubofficers@rotaryelectric.org. More information to follow.

Rotary Club of Electric City (Great Falls) was established November 2020 and its mission is to build an inclusive, engaged community through service, fun, and leadership. To learn more, visit www.rotaryelectric.org

—Rob Reek, Rotary Club of Electric City (Great Falls)

Presidents-Elect in High Country “Imagine Rotary”

The air was surprisingly warm when our United flight touched down in Denver in early March. I had packed for winter and a surge of spring weather greeted us instead. District Trainer Lori Cummings, president of the Rotary Club of Hamilton, and I were on the same flight, and we shared an Uber ride to the Westin Westminster where PETS 2022 was to be held. For those who don't know, PETS stands for Presidents-Elect Training Seminar. Rotarians elected to lead their clubs as president beginning July 1 come to learn all about their new role.

I have attended several PETS over my 30-year Rotary lifetime, having served as a club president in 1996 in California and again in Montana in 2020, year of the pandemic. Rotary requires that presidents-elect attend PETS. They encourage president-elect nominees to attend, as well, acknowledging that it's helpful to work together as club leaders plan their year.

The first time I attended PETS long ago, I had to learn all the acronyms that Rotary hurls at you, beginning with the acronym PETS. As a new member back then, it was hard to absorb all the Rotary jargon. I heard references to PEs, PENs, AGs, AGEs, DGs, DGEs, DGNs and more. We really need a Rotary dictionary of terms! One likely exists and I just don't know about it. Today you can search most anything online and find out what it means, but a cheat sheet on Rotary acronyms would be helpful.



Above: PETS attendees wore beautiful ribbons with the Ukrainian colors in solidarity with the country now at war with Russia. Thanks to Lucy Smith for making the ribbons. The Rotary Foundation has a special fund to assist refugees in Ukraine and many clubs have special funding projects.



Above: District Trainer and co-chair of PETS Lori Cummings of Hamilton, presents Megan Bittinger of Bozeman, district Rotaract chair and co-chair of PETS, with a Paul Harris Fellow.

See PETS page 20

PETS, from page 19

PETS is primarily for PEs (presidents-elect); but there was also training for AGs (assistant governors) like me. We started our training on Thursday, a day prior to the PEs. *[Got that? Presidents-Elect.]* I was named AG for District 5390's Area 2 in September and I'm still learning the job. My role is to help the Rotary club leadership in my area, which includes three Rotary clubs and a Rotaract club in Missoula, a Rotary in Bigfork and one in Polson. Consider an AG to be a kind of consultant to the club presidents, PEs and PENs. *[Too many acronyms? Have I lost you yet?]* AGs also support the DG (district governor).

Rotary International is made up of two separate entities: The Rotary Foundation, which has its own Board of Trustees to govern its philanthropic activities, and Rotary International (RI)

with its Board of Directors. RI is divided into clubs, districts and zones. There are 35,000 different clubs, 529 districts, and 34 zones worldwide. By grouping clubs into districts, it makes local administration easier. In addition to club presidents, each Rotary district has a district governor and assistant governors, as well as key district officers and committee chairs. Each zone is grouped in pairs for ease of governance and support, and each zone has its

own leadership. For example, my club -- the Rotary Club of Missoula -- is in District 5390, which is part of Zones 26/27, which is part of RI.

Rotary clubs are the bedrock of Rotary International and the good work we all do. Each district in the world is numbered and ours is 5390, and includes the entire State of Montana. Some states are chopped up into various districts, but thus far Montana's district has been able to retain our culture, one that mirrors the state.

PETS has its own organizational structure, too,

and our district is part of what is called High Country PETS. Each PETS around the world seems to have its own moniker. To take advantage of economies



Above: The cool presidents-elect from District 5390 with DGE Barrie Matthews

of scale, some districts have come together to share in PETS training. In addition to District 5390 (Montana), High Country PETS volunteers serve District 5420 (Utah); District 5440 (Wyoming, Northern Colorado, Driggs, Idaho, and Scottsbluff/Gering & Morrill, Nebraska); District 5450 (Denver Metro Area and surrounding counties); District 5470 (Southern 2/3 of Colorado); and District 5630 (Western 3/4 Nebraska).

See PETS, page 21

PETS, from page 20

Training in Denver took place March 3-6 with special district-specific sessions where attendees learned from their own district leadership, and broader sessions attended by participants from all districts, often specific to PEs, PENs or AGs, and sometimes divided up by club size. Sessions were offered on teamwork, leadership, public speaking, creating change, club management, how to run a meeting, strategic planning, goal setting and more.

Rotarians were fortunate to hear from several Rotary VIPs whose speeches inspired the crowd, including RI President-Nominee 2023-24 R. Gordon R. McInally, of Rotary Club of South Queensferry, Scotland, along with his wife Heather, past president of the Rotary Clubs of Linlithgow Grange and Kelso; RI Director 2020-2022 Suzi Howe of Rotary Club of Space Center, Houston, Texas; RI Director 2021-2023 Vicki Puliz of Rotary Club of Sparks, Nevada; RI President-Elect Jennifer Jones (via



Above: RI President-Nominee 2023-24 R. Gordon R. McInally of Scotland speaks to District attendees. Below: DGE Barrie Matthews with new theme logo.



satellite) of Rotary Club of Windsor-Roseland, Ontario, Canada, and RI's first female board president; and former hotel industry executive André Hall who lost his eyesight quite suddenly in 2011 and began a new career as a professional speaker on motivation, change management and staff development.

Each day of the conference, a different district governor led the group breakfast, lunch or dinner sessions, and each DG introduced his/her district's PEs in a fun manner. The last morning session on Sunday was led by our District 5390 Governor-Elect Barrie Matthews, Rotary Club of Miles City. Barrie, decked out in sunglasses and biker clothing, invited all the District's PEs to join him on the stage for recognition. Each PE wore sunglasses and, boy, did they all look cool!

DG Mike Mayott helped with IT at PETS, answering questions and offering support.

Throughout the week, participants networked with others, shared ideas and projects, met with vendors like Shelter Box, Polio Plus, and Russell Hampton, which sells Rotary paraphernalia.

Each year, the incoming RI president selects a theme for the upcoming year. In RI PE Jennifer Jones' speech, she announced her new Rotary theme for 2022-2023: *Imagine Rotary* in a colorful logo bearing a violet and grass green color scheme.

See PETS, page 22

PETS, from page 21

“I enjoyed PETS and the opportunity to get to know the other people who are PEs and PENs, especially in our district,” said Royce Engstrom, PE, Missoula. “And I enjoyed hearing from the national and international leaders. I can understand the huge amount of time people put into making it a helpful conference.”

--Victoria Emmons Bouzina, AG, Area 2



Clockwise from top left: PE Brooke Duty, Polson; Rob Miller, Bozeman Sunrise with Lori Cummings, president, Hamilton, and District Trainer; RI President-Elect Jennifer Jones, Canada, via satellite; PEN Andy Nelson and PE Marion Alley, both of Missoula Sunrise; AG Area 5 Jeff Langlinais, Townsend.

District Resources

District Governor: Michael Mayott (Billings)

Immediate Past DG: Sandy Carlson (KalisPELL Daybreak)

DGE: Barrie Mathews (Miles City)

DGN: Rick Powers (Anaconda)

DGND & District COO: Shawna Secker (Livingston)

Treasurer: James Oates (Polson)

Foundation: Dick King (Missoula Sunrise)

Vice Governor: Joseph McBride (Butte)

District Trainer: Lori Cummings (Hamilton)

Council on Legislation Representative: Malinda Shafman (Evergreen)

Youth Exchange: Tracy McNew (Kootenai Valley)

Youth Exchange Inbound: Chad Kriskovich (Billings West)

Membership: Steve Fredericksen (RL)

Protection Officer: Mike Mayott

District Assembly Chair: Shawna Secker

District Conference Chair: Shawna Secker

Public Image: Patrick Plantenberg (Townsend)

RYLA: Levi Merkel (Livingston)

Literary Project: PDG Roy Beekman (KalisPELL)

Newsletter: Victoria Emmons Bouzina (Missoula)

Rotaract: Megan Bittinger (Bozeman Sunrise)

Interact: Marilyn Morris (Hamilton)

International Service: Terri Smiley (KalisPELL Daybreak)

Polio Plus: PDG Bill Spath (Butte)

PETS Co-Chairs: Lori Cummings (Hamilton) & Megan Bittinger (Bozeman Sunrise)

Assistant Governors

Area 1: Lucy Smith (KalisPELL)

Area 2: Victoria Emmons Bouzina (Missoula)

Area 3: Megan Bleck (Livingston)

Area 4: Nikki Powers (Anaconda)

Area 5: Jeff Langlains (Townsend)

Area 6: Bob Wiersma (Bozeman Sunrise)

Areas 7 & 8: Jerry Jimison (Glendive)

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Five things in Common

Rotary International Director Vicki Puliz of Nevada spoke at the 2022 PETS in Denver and shared a number of valuable tidbits.

Did you know that Rotary clubs in North America that are *successful* share five things in common?

- Leadership
- Goals, maybe even multi-year goals
- Meaningful service
- Awareness in the community
- International engagement

Does your club include all five things? In Montana, we all share being in this beautiful Big Sky Country of ours. Make sure your

club also includes those five things that other successful Rotary clubs have in common.

—Victoria Emmons Bouzina, Editor, Big Sky News



Topic Seminars

Vicki Puliz mentioned at PETS that several cause-based topic seminars will soon be offered to Rotarians, including: Green Transportation, September 10, San Jose, CA; Soils, Ft. Collins, CO; Stop Human Trafficking, October 1, San Diego.

District 5390 Calendar

August 4-6, 2022: District 5390 Assembly, Fairmont Hot Springs

March 3-5: PETS 2023, Denver, CO

May 5-6, 2023: District 5390 Conference, Miles City

May 27-31, 2023: RI Convention. Melbourne, Australia

Special Monthly Themes

June	Rotary Fellowships
July	Transition Month
August	Membership and Extension
Sept.	Basic Education/Literacy
Oct.	Economic and Community Development
Nov.	The Rotary Foundation
Dec.	Disease Prevention and Treatment

To ROTARY CLUB NEWS EDITORS: The next DEADLINE for stories in BIG SKY NEWS is **July 15, 2022**, for the Summer issue. Send photos in .jpg format and stories in Word to newsletter@montanarotary.org.

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