

BIG SKY NEWS

Sandy Carlson, Governor | District 5390 | Montana, USA

Help save lives with clean water via Tippy Taps

The heart of Central America is Guatemala, a small country that enjoys and offers spectacular flora and fauna, a rich Mayan history and welcoming citizens. It combines 21st century high-rise apartments and business centers, internet commerce and cultural activities with colorful native garb, 23 distinct indigenous languages, extraordinary Mayan ruins in Tikal and other sites, unique beaches and breathtaking volcanos that invite hikers to climb. Over 108, 889 square kilometers provide world class mountain biking, and the need for four-wheel drive vehicles for off-road adventures. And La Antigua, Guatemala is a cultural landmark, declared by UNESCO a World Heritage site.

The population of 17, 572, 053 persons (2019 census) is comprised of extremes; a small percentage of wealthy, a growing middle class, and even though the country itself is rich in agricultural goods, tourism and mining, 54% of the population lives below the poverty line. The public education system is insufficient. Many classrooms have noisy, hot/cold tin roofs and dirt floors; some areas are out of reach of any kind of schooling. Other public services are also lacking.

In a small area, not far away from La Antigua, in the town of San Andres Itzapa, three concerned



Above: Los Buenos Vecinos (The Good Neighbors) members Minor, Julia and Elmer designed and built this large-scale Tippy Tap for schools that have no dependable water.

citizens grouped together and formed Los Buenos Vecinos (LBV), The Good Neighbors. The main concern was hygiene; the water supply is intermittent, if not completely lacking. Worried about the frequency of intestinal illness due to lack of hygiene, team LBV decided to produce residential Tippy Taps, a silencer hand-wash facility first developed in Africa in 1985.

See TIPPY TAP, page 2

TIPPY TAP, continued from page 1

LBV donated Tippy Taps and taught correct hand-washing methods (WASH) to help eradicate diarrhea.

With the constant support of Dave Renfrow, who financially sustained this goal through creative fund raising, two villages and 300 families were attended to prior to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Through Rotary channels, and the Project Fair in Guatemala, Dave began to work with Diana Brown, 2019-2020 president of Club Rotario Guatemala Oeste.

Then COVID-19 hit, and the wash stations and hand-washing project became even more vital. To date, the group has completed two more communities and has now served about 4,050 people in 675 homes.

The group is now focused primarily on children returning to schools which frequently have no water. The students exist in the most precarious of situations — the third highest malnutrition in the world, caused by diarrhea from lack of water and sanitation health, and a pandemic, too! A



Above: Children in the Guatemalan village masked for protection against COVID-19 learn about hygiene. Below: Elmer teaches hand washing techniques to a group in barrio Villa Del Sol and installed a Tippy Tap for homes. Lower: Masked woman practices hand hygiene.



total of 50 large Tippy Taps are needed in the district's 26 schools. The group will race to complete as many as time and money allow by school opening date. Following completion, the work group will return to complete the home units in the remaining villages.

The project's \$22,000 budget provides for 50 school Tippy Taps, wash training, soap and towels for a year. This project is not funded through a district or global grant, but a partnership with LBV, Rotary Montana and Club Rotario Guatemala Oeste. Like their Rotary mentors and supporters, LBV members recite the Four-Way Test, practice good documentation, follow through the Rotary way, and believe in **Service Above Self.**

—Dave Renfrow

Jason Cronk named to replace Sue Carstens as District 5390 Rotary Foundation Chair

"Jason brings a wealth of non-profit fundraising and granting experience..."

Jason Cronk of Kalispell has been named District Rotary Foundation Chair (DRFC), according to Sue Cartens.

The DRFC leads our District in all things related to fundraising and grants, both district and global. The role works closely with the District Governor, District Grant Chairs and District Fundraising Officers.

"Jason is going to be a great DRFC!" said Sue, outgoing DRFC. "He brings a wealth of non-profit fundraising and granting experience to his new role. I have enjoyed working with him as District Stewardship Chair. Jason is a passionate Rotarian and good leader. I welcome him and fully support him as DRFC."

A fourth-generation Montanan, Jason was raised on his family's farm outside of Harlem, MT. He worked all over the world for many years before returning to Montana in 2013.

Jason first joined Rotary at the Rotary Club of Rochester in Rochester, MN, and subsequently joined the Rotary Club of Virginia Beach in Virginia Beach, VA. He joined the Kalispell Daybreak Rotary Club in 2013 and served as club president during the 2018-19 year. He is a past board member of his club, served as co-chair for the District Stewardship Committee, and enjoys the hands-on participation of club projects. During his year as club president, Kalispell Daybreak was the only club in our district to



be recognized with the Rotary Citation with Gold Distinction.

Professionally, Jason has been a senior executive of senior living

retirement communities for the past 30 years. He has opened large retirement communities in the U.S. mid-Atlantic and in mainland China where he served as the on-site representative to a Chinese retirement services company, guiding their company through all phases of opening three retirement communities across mainland China. He also provided consulting services in South Korea before returning home to Montana where he is president and CEO for Immanuel Lutheran Communities in Kalispell.

Jason has experience in starting and operating 501(c)3 foundations and charitable funds; he is well positioned to assume the role as DRFC.

Jason earned an undergraduate degree from Concordia College, Moorhead MN, and an MBA from the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, MN. He is a current board member of the Montana Hospital Association, as well as the Kalispell Chamber of Commerce.

Jason and his wife, Jenn, have two children, Colby, 15, and Camille, 13.

TRF approves global grant for La Vega

The Rotary NW Global Coalition received notification on October 27 from The Rotary Foundation (TRF) that the La Vega project global grant is approved! This is great news and in the realm of TRF global grants, done in near record time. I want to thank all of the Global Coalition members for their interest and financial support.

PASAC: If ever there was an example of Murphy's Law, the community of Pasac is that example. This truly is a model community that has done everything we've asked of them, yet we have experienced one delay after another. Beginning with a change in TRF regulations that set us back three years, to COVID-19, and now environmental issues, the project is still not quite started.

The project was fully approved and funded in January 2020 and completely shut down by COVID-19. When the country began to open up and we were able to have the Environmental Impact Study (EIS) done, it was discovered that the spring, which is actually owned by the community and located on Communal lands, and currently being used, is in a "protected" area and needs special approval by the State of Solola and the government of Guatemala.

The community has scheduled meetings in Guatemala City with our engineer to determine what steps they can take to speed up this required review and begin work on areas of the project not shut down by the new requirements. We hope the delay will be not more than a couple of months.

LA VEGA: The Grant is Approved! Now the real work begins. We will be contacting all the clubs and districts that have pledged funds and

have them send those funds either to the Coalition or TRF. Once funds are in place, we will transfer them to an account in Guatemala.

At close to \$320,000, this is by far the largest project our Coalition has undertaken. This phase consists of a deep well and distribution system to a community of 1,700 to 1,800 residents. Projects of this size undergo more stringent review by TRF and will require an on-site visit by a TRF cadre. The project was returned with compliments for how well it was written and with limited additional information being requested. One concern was what measures would be utilized in consideration of COVID-19. All of their questions were answered and information re-submitted which lead to a quick positive approval. We are waiting again for an EIS, but with this system being a well it should be easier and quicker.

We are instructing our engineer to start soliciting bids and pricing for materials and labor. We hope by the time he obtains that pricing, our money will be transferred and the project can start within a couple of months. As this project and the one in Pasac get underway, we are thinking about possible travel, all of which depends on the COVID-19 situation.

Lastly, I would like to thank everyone for their help in this process. I would start naming people, but would undoubtedly leave someone or some club out – so just a big THANKS TO EVERYONE!

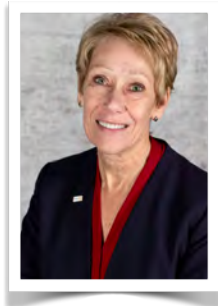
--Roy Beekman, NW Sustainable Global Coalition Chair, & George Gerard

From District Governor Sandy Carlson



Family, fundraising, & a new club

Almost 5 months ago, I would have started this letter with “My Fellow Rotarians.” However, because of all



of you, that is no longer fitting. I have visited 27 clubs so far, three via Zoom and the rest in person. No two visits were the same; yet they all had one thing in common. That common thread is the fact that I left each club feeling as

though I had just acquired a brand-new family. For that I will be forever grateful.

In these challenging and uncertain times, I have come to the conclusion that we all have more inner strength than we realize, especially when it comes to our dedication to Rotary and to service. I am amazed at the tenacity and determination our Rotarians display each and every day. Clubs are increasing their ability to adapt by their willingness to learn new ways, such as how to Zoom, for example. Yes, it is disappointing not to have our usual social events and fundraisers. However, that has not stopped District 5390. The fundraising events I’ve seen across the state are nothing short of fabulous.

Here are just a few examples: Bison Hunt Raffle in Havre; Virtual Holiday Dinner and Auction in Bozeman; Meat Basket Raffle in Glendive; Handmade Quilt Raffle by Kalispell Daybreak (quilt is made from Rotary flags from around the world); Online Fundraiser for the Flathead Valley Food Banks by Kalispell Rotary Club; Pies for Polio by Missoula Noon

Rotary and the list goes on. The support clubs show for one another’s fundraisers is heartwarming.

I would also like to express my gratitude for the generous donations to the Polio Plus fundraiser, Brunch with President Holger. We don’t have a final count yet because checks are still coming in. I will let you know soon what we raised and what it equates to with the 2-for-1 Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation match. Again, many thanks.

Lastly, I am so excited to announce that we have a brand, new club in Montana. Please join me in welcoming THE ROTARY CLUB OF ELECTRIC CITY, GREAT FALLS, MT to District 5390. They begin their exciting Rotary journey with 26 charter members. Who would have thought that in the middle of a pandemic District 5390 would acquire a new club? CONGRATULATIONS, ROTARY CLUB OF ELECTRIC CITY!!

In closing, as we enter into the holiday season, I reflect once again how honored and humbled I am to serve as your District Governor. I hope that you all know that I am here to help in whatever way I can to keep us all connected and engaged both at a district level and even more importantly, at the club level.

I wish you all the Happiest Thanksgiving and the most joyous holiday season and Merriest Christmas ever. A pandemic cannot take those feelings away from us.

*Yours in Rotary and Your Friend,
DG Sandy C. and as always, be kind, stay well,
be safe....*

District Governor Transitions: from Montana to North Carolina

Rick Moore chronicles his move to a new Rotary club across the country.

Last winter, Sylvia and I began thinking about making a move. Although we loved our five acres south of Helena, keeping that much forested land “fire safe” was beginning to wear on us. We were thinking about downsizing – but to where? Our daughter Jessie, an “only,” has lived in North Carolina for 16 years, which is a long way from Montana! With our busy schedules, it had been hard to carve out time to make the trip to be together. So, we decided to check out North Carolina as a possible place to live.

In February, we squeezed in a trip to North Carolina between our visit to the Montana Rotary Global Coalition’s water projects in Guatemala and one of my business trips to California. I expected this to be a “reconnaissance trip” to scope out the area and the local housing market near where Jessie lives. Well, that did not go as I expected! We found a beautiful home in Whitsett, halfway between Greensboro and Burlington, only 15 minutes from Jessie’s home in Elon. We made an offer, which was accepted.

—See RICK, page 7.



Above: Past DG Rick Moore with his dog Scout in the backyard of their new North Carolina home.

–RICK, from page 6.

Back in Montana, our home went on the market. We began packing and I began thinking about Rotary Clubs in North Carolina. I seriously considered staying in Montana Rotary District 5390 by transferring to the E-Club; but I remembered the reason I joined Rotary in the first place. Twelve years ago, we moved to Helena for Sylvia's job. Since I work from home, I found it difficult to make connections in our new community. And I had not found an opportunity for service, which has always been a passion of mine. I joined Rotary at the invitation of Gary Davis, the husband of one of Sylvia's colleagues. He told me that it would be a good way to meet people. He was so right! It was a distinct honor to eventually serve as District Governor of Montana Rotary's District 5390. It was also a rewarding experience that I will never forget. I met many, many Rotarians throughout Montana that I now consider as dear friends -- movers and shakers that I never would have met had it not been for Rotary.

I made the decision to join a Rotary club in North Carolina. There are five clubs within 20 minutes of our home! Small clubs, medium-sized clubs, large clubs. Successful clubs and struggling clubs. I looked forward to visiting these clubs, meeting Rotarians, and finding the "right fit" for me. In late March, we loaded up and headed out for our new home – just as the initial lockdowns for the pandemic started! It was surreal, traveling across the country with so few cars on the highways, and no one really knowing what lay ahead. We arrived safely at our new home, got moved in and began to settle.

Because of the pandemic, I was able to Zoom in on meetings of my Rotary Club in Helena. But I knew I needed to find my new club. I went to www.rotary.org, clicked on "join," and said I wanted to join a Rotary club near my new home. Almost immediately, I received a call from the District Membership Chair welcoming me to the District and asking me if I needed any information about Rotary clubs in the area. I also received calls from the president of one Rotary club and the membership chair of another one. Both were welcoming and told me about their clubs. Since I started this search for a new club through Rotary's website, these people had access to my Rotary history, and saw that I was a past District Governor. I was soon welcomed into the District's Council of Past District Governors! I decided to join the Rotary Club of Alamance. I have enjoyed the Rotarians that I have met and am beginning to establish new friendships here. We now have two face-to-face meetings each month and Zoom in on the rest.

I have not, however, forgotten my Montana Rotary friends. I touted the Waterton/Glacier Peace Park Assembly in my new District and attended the virtual Hands Across the Border ceremony this year.

We traded views of the Elk Horn Mountains for the Ninth Fairway at Stoney Creek Golf Course.

–See RICK, page 10

DG Sandy jaunts across the state making friends



Top left, clockwise: DG Sandy with Bill Spath, Rotary Club of Butte; President Katie Madison of Bozeman Sunrise at Rotary Centennial Pavilion dedication; Sarah Skofield and Andy Turner, co-presidents of Rotary Club of Livingston; Awarding Talia Hansen, daughter of past DG Darryl Hansen, a Paul Harris Fellow; Jesse McHugh and Megan Connors of Rotary Club of Great Falls.

"I left each club feeling like I had just acquired a brand-new family." DG Sandy



Upper left clockwise: DG Sandy on the golf course with Past DG Joe McBride; President-elect Kristy Buckley of Bozeman Noon Rotary at Pavilion dedication; Townsend Rotarians receive Rotary Veteran pins; Whitefish Rotary Acting President AJ Spear, and DG Sandy present Sue Carstens a Paul Harris Fellow +6 from the District; Visit with Rotary Club of Miles City members.



District 5390 Calendar

Nov. 26 - THANKSGIVING

Dec. 5 - The Salvation Army Bell Ringing, Rotary Clubs in Missoula

Dec. 10 - Bozeman Sunrise Rotary Online Holiday Auction

Feb. 26-28 - President-Elect Training Seminar (PETS), Denver Renaissance Stapleton, Denver, CO

Special Theme Months

Nov. – The Rotary Foundation

Dec. – Disease Prevention & Treatment

Jan. – Vocational Service Month

Big Sky News

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A simple pair of red shoes can say so much and deliver such hope.

–RICK, from page 7

My dog Scout loves his new back yard, complete with the “stream.” We are blessed to be close to our daughter, particularly during these difficult times. There are many Daddy-do projects on my “to do” list, but also many enjoyable evenings spent together.

I have kept my Rotary email address: DG5390.2018@gmail.com. If you would like to keep in touch, you can still reach me that way. Thanks for all of the wonderful Montana Rotary memories. And remember the Four Way Test, and Is It Fun?

--Rick Moore, Rotary Club of Alamance, NC; District 5390 Governor 2018-19

To ROTARY CLUB NEWS EDITORS: The next DEADLINE for stories in BIG SKY NEWS is **December 15, 2020**, for the Winter issue. Submit photos in .jpg and stories in Word to: Big Sky Editor at district5390.newsletter@gmail.com.