

BIG SKY NEWS

Rick Moore, Governor | District 5390 | Montana, USA

Rotary Discussion Groups make friends and solve problems

"I believe that more women in Rotary will mean a stronger and better organisation," wrote Winny Fonaka, a charter member of the Rotary Club of Abuja Maitama, Nigeria, and assistant governor for District 9125. Her comments appeared in a Rotary discussion group of Women Rotarians from around the world, connecting with one another to further the mission of Rotary. Fonaka helped to found a majority women Rotary Club, the only one like it in her district.

Another member of the group, Neenu Vij of the Rotary Club of Chandigarh, India, wrote, "Rotary has now become a part of me and I cannot imagine myself away from it."

Join Discussion Groups of all kinds at MyRotary.org.

Meet DG-Elect Sandy Wong

This summer, District Governor Rick Moore will turn over the reins of District 5390 to Sandy Wong, a member of the Rotary Club of Billings. A well deserved appointment, Sandy will lead the District in 2019-2020 as District Governor. But who is Sandy Wong?



Sandy joined the Rotary Club of Billings in 1998, she says, because she wanted to support the club's efforts in community projects and scholarships for high school seniors to attend college/trade schools. Her passion for finding a need and filling it has lead her to volunteer for a host of different organizations, including, the Montana State University-Billings Foundation, YWCA of Billings, Ronald McDonald House, Yellowstone AIDS Project, Billings Association of Realtors, and Billings Home Builders Association. In addition to her board service, she taught Sunday School pre-school classes for 27 years, coordinated a reading program in a Title 1 school for six years, and serves as a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) for children in the foster care system.

Sandy has received local and national awards for being a community volunteer/advocate; one such 'prize' was the opportunity to volunteer alongside NFL players on the rehabilitation of a community center for disabled adults in inner city Detroit in 2006, culminating with tickets to the Super Bowl

—See WONG page 8

From District Governor Rick Moore



How does your club support the next generation?

Someone asked me recently, “What is the difference between Avenues of Service and Areas of Focus?” In Rotary, we channel our commitment to service at home and abroad through five Avenues of Service, which are the foundation of club activity.

The Avenues of Service are:

- Club Service
- Vocational Service
- Community Service
- International Service
- Youth Service

When Clubs begin to plan a project in one of these Areas of Service, they are encouraged to concentrate on the Areas of Focus in order to maximize our collective impact.

The Areas of Focus are:

- Peace and Conflict Prevention/Resolution
- Disease Prevention and Treatment
- Water and Sanitation
- Maternal and Child Health
- Basic Education and Literacy
- Economic and Community Development

Youth Service

May is Youth Service Month! Youth Service recognizes the importance of empowering youth and young professionals through leadership development programs such as Rotaract, Interact, Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA) and Rotary Youth Exchange. Our District is active in

all these programs. And May is a particularly good time to focus on Youth Services.

During May, Rotary Clubs select campers to



attend RYLA, which is truly a life changing experience for the youth who attend camp each year. RYLA Campers learn leadership skills that will guide them and make them successful in years to come. Your Club should already be interviewing applicants for the RYLA camp this year. The deadline to enroll your campers is May 30. Make sure that you make your selections and have participants enroll prior to the deadline. I encourage all Rotarians to visit RYLA and provide a helping hand to the adult counselors. Camp will

—See YOUTH page 3

–YOUTH, from page 2

be held July 9–13 at Camp Luccock Park outside of Livingston.

Montana Rotary Youth Exchange is another program that Rotary Clubs should be working on during May. Our Youth Exchange provides scholarships to students to study abroad for one year, learning the language and culture of a foreign country. It promotes Peace, one Exchange at a Time! The deadline this year for applications to be submitted to Rotary Clubs is September 15. Therefore, if your Rotary Club wants to sponsor an exchange student for next year, you need to be recruiting students now in order to meet the deadline for application.

Many of our Rotary Clubs sponsor Interact Clubs, a Rotary program for middle school and high school students. We have some very active Interact Clubs in Montana. Interact Clubs from Big Fork, Big Sky and Columbia Falls traveled to Guatemala in April, and the Townsend

Interact Club will be there in June. These are International Service Projects to help Maya Pedal, a non-profit organization that builds sustainable projects to improve the economy, health and

environment of rural families. Interact Clubs throughout Montana have participated in many service projects locally, and provide assistance to their sponsoring Rotary Clubs. I encourage every Rotary Club that currently does not sponsor an Interact Club to do so. The reward you receive from working with these young men and women is incredible. One effective way to start an Interact Club is to have RYLA Campers help organize an Interact Club in their high school.

Want to get more involved in Youth Service Month, but not sure how to start? Here are some ideas:

1. Plan a joint service project with Rotarians and young leaders in your community.



DG Rick Moore with Interact students. Photo by Jen Lane.

2. Fundraise to support initiatives that develop young leaders.
3. Encourage your club to achieve this year's Presidential Citation.

RONAN-BIG SKY from page 4

—DG Rick Moore, Rotary Club of Helena Sunrise

Youth Exchange between Big Sky and Ronan

Who can't say: "Yup, been there. Done that!!?"

nearby Flathead Lake, or skiing and hiking at the

On a ski lift, in an elevator, on a plane ride, at a conference — you turn to another and ask benignly: Where are you from? What do you do? What are your goals from this? After a few moments, the conversation ends and is likely forgotten.

In the case of Seth Nelson and Miriam Schmidt at a Lutheran Pastors conference last spring in Chico, MT, the conversation went something like this:

Seth: "I wish our youth group could ski at a large resort that offers them more variety and in a different environment."

Miriam: "Our kids live in a huge ski area, but they don't have much exposure to cultures different than their own."

Instead of soon forgotten, this dialog spawned a cultural exchange to bridge differences of lifestyle and cultures, while kindling connections and friendships between teens of various backgrounds.

Iowa-native Seth has served for nearly five years as the pastor of Ronan's Faith Lutheran Church, located on the Flathead Indian Reservation, MT. The Reservation — comprised of some 28,000 residents — includes members of the Bitterroot Salish, Upper Pend d'Oreille and Kootenai Tribes. Seth was drawn to the region's natural beauty, including the Mission Mountains and the outdoor opportunities of fishing and boating on the



Ronan and Big Sky Interact students skied together.

nearby Blacktail and Whitefish ski areas.

Three years ago, New York native Miriam was named pastor/priest for the shared Ministry of the Episcopal and Lutheran (ELCA) Churches of All Saints in Big Sky. Two key initiatives of the parish during the next several years include: (1) seek ways to interact with the Big Sky Community and beyond (specifically youth and young adults); and (2) develop relationships that make a difference for residents of our county and state that represent different cultures and lifestyles.

This brief conversation between Seth and Miriam spawned the concept of a youth cultural exchange

—See RONAN-BIG SKY page 5

between the Ronan High School students and Lone Peak High School students. Over several days the students would share experiences, including sports, art, cooking and “hanging out” in order to learn from each other and develop an appreciation for each others’ lives and cultures.

Nine Ronan students and three chaperones arrived in Big Sky late in February and settled into a local family’s residence — their “home” for the next several days. Early the next morning, they booted up to try the “Biggest Skiing in America” sponsored by Big Sky Resort. The Resort generously provided equipment, lessons and lift tickets for the group, and Big Sky Rotarian Grant Hilton toured the group around the mountain.

Ronan and Big Sky Rotary Interact students merged for various workshops at Lone Peak High School, including:

- *Blanket Exercise*: a participatory educational experience that taught students about the human history of the North American continent. The lesson focused on the experience of Native American Tribes, aiming to build collective awareness of how the lives of Native peoples were profoundly altered as their nations were affected by disease, displacement, Native American boarding schools, and the Indian reservation system during European

settlement. Rotary Interact President Brooke described standing on blankets representing the continually-shrinking parcels of land which tribal nations inhabited. “Initially, we were really spread out,” said Brooke. “Then three of us stood on a space that could barely hold one. This ‘game’ showed us how dramatically the Native Americans’ territory shrank. It was very sad and moving for all of us.”



Ronan and Big Sky Interactors make friends during activities.

• Casey Ryan, an enrolled member of the Bitterroot Salish Tribe, joined the Ronan group as a chaperone and educator. He earned his Master of Science degree in Forestry at the University of Montana and now serves as the hydrologist for the Confederated Salish

and Kootenai Tribes’ Natural Resources Department where he works to conserve, protect and enhance Tribal water resources for future generations. He shared how Native Americans honor the sacred gifts of water, plants, animals and other natural resources by “caring for them, before passing them onto our children.” While focused on water, he shared the importance of story telling and passing on lessons to future generations. He also related that when approaching resource management on a reservation with both Tribal and non-Tribal people, it’s important to identify where there’s agreement. “Most can agree on 80 percent of a particular problem or situation; that leaves only

District 5390 Calendar

May 3-5: 2019 District Conference, Delta Hotels Helena Colonial, Helena, MT

June 1-5: Rotary International Convention, Hamburg, Germany

June 1: ChoffeeCon, Missoula

June 10: Montana Rotary Golf Championship, The Ranch Club, Missoula

September 5-8: Rotary Zone Institute 2019, Denver, CO

Special Month

May is Youth Service month. Have you selected your RYLA campers yet? Your Youth Exchange students? Started an Interact Club? Share Rotary with future generations!

Big Sky News

Big Sky News is a monthly publication of Rotary District 5390, Montana, USA.

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RONAN-BIG SKY from page 5

20 percent of the issue to discuss and to develop a solution,” he said.

- Beth Billington from Montana’s Search and Rescue Team taught the basics of emergency first-response, including how to locate beacons in snow, a skill engrained in Lone Peak students where avalanches are commonplace, but a novel lesson for some Ronan students with less personal experience in avalanche-prone terrain.

“The good news, though, is that struggles of the past do not define our future. We can form relationships beyond our differences.”
– Seth Nelson

- Rotarian Grant also involved the Big Sky Arts Council to sponsor Ben Peace, a Crow/Northern Cheyenne artist, who emphasizes education via creativity. Known for his culturally relevant style using historic photographic references while touching on current events and issues such as cultural appropriation, he helped the students create a montage mural using snippets of newspaper articles from both locales.

In less structured settings, Rotarians, students, and chaperones cooked and ate traditional, cultural favorites like Indian fry bread, and skied Lone Peak, the latter being a favorite of Ronan’s Brooklyn. “The Powder Bowl is huge and challenging, but so much fun!”

The final chapter of this exchange was a worship service at All Saints in Big Sky, in which Ronan students led the Prayers of the People. Pastor Seth’s sermon reflected on his studies in South Africa with the vestiges of apartheid. He was

–See RONAN-BIG SKY page 7

—RONAN-BIG SKY from page 6



Enduring friendships between Ronan and Big Sky kids.

called “Baas”—meaning “boss” or “master” as were all whites and Afrikaners or Dutch settlers — a racial epithet forced on them as the architects of apartheid. Seth wanted nothing to do with this term and its history of segregation and oppression of native Africans, separating families and the resultant violence. He felt conflicted over this moniker, and drew parallels with struggles on the Flathead Indian Reservation surrounding Ronan, where most residents stand on different sides of a shared history that forms different values, priorities and customs.

“This can create a tense living environment in which it’s hard to see a way forward,” said Seth. “The good news, though,

is that struggles of the past do not define our future. We can form relationships beyond our differences.”

Sound familiar, Rotarians?

Various Big Sky community folks — including Rotarians, the local high school, Art Council, the Big Sky Resort — welcomed the Ronan students into their hearts, minds and homes, which helped form relationships beyond historical differences of our communities. Rather than letting this exchange be a one-time experience, Pastors Miriam and Seth look forward to holding a counter-exchange with Big Sky students traveling to Ronan this summer to further enhance newly formed friendships and deepen understanding and appreciation of our cultural differences.

—Jane D. McCarthy, Rotary Club of Big Sky, has been a Rotarian since 1989, in Ojai, CA, where she was president in 2013-14 and now in Big Sky where she serves as club secretary.

Ronan, Big Sky & Montana Statistics

	Ronan	Big Sky	Montana
Median Household Income#	\$37,500	\$80,550	\$57,075
Median Home Value+	\$218,600	\$887,000	\$235,500
Population*	1,871	2,308	989,415
Ethnicity*	Caucasian 61% Hispanic 5% Native American 27%	Caucasian 95% Hispanic 3.4% Native American 0.3%	Caucasian 89% Hispanic 3% Native American 6.3%
Sources	# 2017 Kaiser Family Foundation, +Zillow December 2018, *2010 Census Data		

–WONG from page 1

Their blended family includes seven adult children, 17 grandchildren and three cats.

to watch the Pittsburg Steelers vs Seattle Seahawks.

The Rotary Club of Billings celebrated its centennial year during Sandy’s presidency in 2015-2016, and her Club earned the RI Presidential Citation for that year. Sandy coordinated three ‘Membership Matters’ workshops across the state of Montana while serving as District Membership Chair in 2016-2018. She recruited Rotarians to serve on the District Membership Committee in 2017-2018, and deepened her Rotary friendships as an Assistant Governor in Eastern Montana.

Sandy married her grade school sweetheart, Scott Wilm, in 2011. Scott works as a process plant operator at the Cenex Harvest States Refinery in Laurel, MT.



District Governor-Elect Sandy Wong at work helping others.

Sandy likes to help people build, buy or refinance their dream homes and she celebrated 33 years as a mortgage banker last fall. Scott and Sandy spend weekends going to farmers’ markets, outdoor concerts and sneaking away to their second home in the mountains of Red Lodge, MT.

Next time you bump into our soon-to-be District Governor, introduce yourself. This dynamic woman will bring all the

passion of her generous values and beliefs to her new Rotary role.



Missoula Sunrise Rotary engages members to chair weekly club meetings

Strategy helps further member recruitment and retention for the club

The Rotary Club of Missoula Sunrise works to engage all its members and is now exploring a new way to encourage participation. This year, one club member suggested that instead of having the club president chair every meeting throughout the year, club members could step up as “Guest Chairs.”

A sign-up sheet was developed and although there was some initial hesitation, a few members took the plunge and the club was off and running with its new meeting format. There are some tremendous and specific benefits to this volunteer opportunity.

First, it comes within a regularly scheduled meeting so there is no additional time commitment.

Finding easy volunteer opportunities when a club member can step in, help and be done is always a challenge. This particular volunteer opportunity fits every club member's time line by definition of being a club member.

Second, the president puts the agenda together for the Guest Chair, so any club member -- even new ones -- can easily step in while simply following the sequence of events.

Third, as part of the agenda, each Guest Chair takes a few minutes and updates club members about himself or herself. The club recognized that new members are given meeting time to talk about what they do and what is important to them; yet, years may elapse before that member gives an update. Learning what is new with each club member is rewarding for all concerned.

Fourth, every meeting now takes on a slightly different persona as each Guest Chair runs the meeting just a little bit differently. It's part of the fun -- what will the meeting be like this week?

Fifth, it gives members the opportunity to practice leading a meeting. The experience can bolster the confidence of some members who may have been hesitant to consider serving as a future club president.

“Members now sign up willingly to be a Guest Chair, furthering the club's goal of 100% member participation.”
 – Jennifer Straughn

Members now sign up willingly to be a Guest Chair, furthering the club's goal of 100% member participation. This change has been a very successful addition to Rotary Club of Missoula Sunrise, and there are undoubtedly many clubs that could adopt this idea for membership participation and retention.

—Jennifer Straughn, Rotary Club of Missoula Sunrise

Montana's first Coffee and Chocolate Festival to benefit Missoula Community

Chocolate lovers and coffee connoisseurs alike will gather in Missoula on Saturday, June 1 for Montana's first ever Choffee Con festival. The celebration featuring premium coffee and chocolate is designed to raise funds in support of local and global community benefit projects.

More than 14 of Montana's premier coffee companies and well-known chocolatiers will showcase their best products for sampling and purchase from 10 am to 4 pm the day of the festival, which takes place at the Doubletree by Hilton Hotel Missoula – Edgewater, 100 Madison Street, Missoula, MT.

The event is being hosted by the Missoula Rotary Foundation, a 501(c)3 non-profit collaborative of the three Rotary clubs in Missoula. Choffee Con sponsors include First Montana Bank, Martel Construction, Missoula Rotary Foundation and the Jeanette Rankin Peace Center.

General Admission tickets are \$14 per person, and VIP tickets are \$19 per person. VIP entry begins at 9 am and General Admission at 10 am. In addition to the early admission time, VIP ticket holders receive other perks. For tickets, visit Eventbrite on www.choffeecon.com.

The Jeanette Rankin Peace Center is sponsoring the Peace Café, a special area inside Choffee Con that brings attention to fair trade coffee, chocolate and sugar. Taste free, sample-size Americanos, free dark chocolate from Equal

Exchange, and coffee, chocolate and other items to purchase from the Peace Center's fair trade store, The Olive Branch.

Outreach Director Jenny Zaso said, "We are excited to how important fair trade is to the

coffee and chocolate industry, being products we can't grow in the US, and to show how fair trade promotes peace and economic empowerment around the world."

While the focus of Choffee Con is coffee

and chocolate, two Montana companies will add an alcoholic twist for attendees ages 21+. a

"Conflux Brewing is bringing its Java Oatmeal Stout," said Margaret Parson, chair of Choffee Con, "And Montana Distillery will offer a coffee vodka mixed drink."

The proceeds of the event will support projects that benefit mothers and children, assure clean drinking water, enhance health and wellness, and support a variety of other projects undertaken by the Rotary Clubs of Missoula, Missoula Sunrise and Missoula Centennial.

One of the beneficiaries of Choffee Con is Partnership for Children, an organization that supports children who have experienced early childhood trauma.

—See CHOFFEE CON page 11



The Service Project that created a club

Every year Rotary Club of Great Falls recognizes new Eagle Scouts in the area with a celebratory luncheon. It's appropriate that the club integrate the Boy Scouts of America into its traditions because it was the interest in supporting local Boy Scouts that led to the creation of Rotary Club of Great Falls.

Early in December 1915, Jefferson Forest Supervisor and future Great Falls

Rotarian Scott Leavitt worked with YMCA board chair I.W. Church, also a future Great Falls Rotarian, to locate a boys' camp in the Little Belt Mountains. The YMCA had an organization of boys and several adults who felt that the boys would enjoy a wilderness experience. They visited locations in the Little Belts for a camp. With the Forest Service promoting the camp, and with the YMCA having the clientele, they found a location. What they were missing was the manpower to develop the camp.

In late December of that year, businessmen in Great Falls gathered to create a Rotary club. From the very first they promoted typical Rotary goals, but with a concentration on a boys' camp. They made several trips to the Little Belts and located a site near the Wellwood railroad siding at the confluence of Belt and Rafferty Creeks, easily accessible by rail.

By June, the YMCA submitted a forest service application and it was approved by Scott Leavitt. The YMCA boys and later the Boy Scouts camped

there in summer 1916. Because hiking was a big part of the experience, the early camp was called "Camp Belt-hike"; however, by early 1919 the camp was referred to as Camp Rotary, and the YMCA permit was transferred to the Rotary Club in 1924.



The Rotary Club of Great Falls and the YMCA worked very closely with youth during this period. Rotary invited Boy Scouts to several meetings and gave solid support to the young men. In March, we

continued that tradition, marking over a century of mutual appreciation.

—Mary Moe, Rotary Club of Great Falls

—CHOFFEE CON from page 10

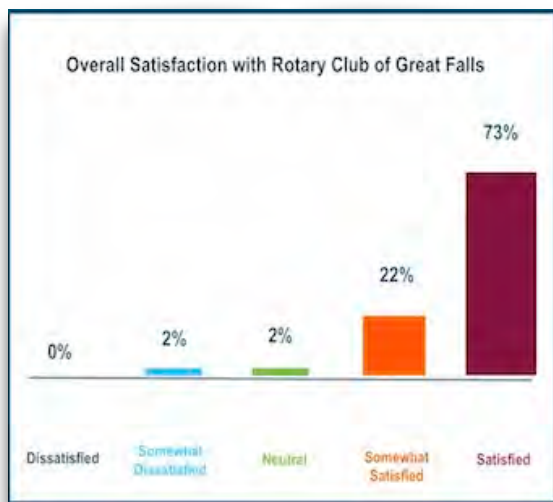
"We have enjoyed over 20 years of working with Missoula Sunrise Rotary," said Amy Young, development director at Partnership for Children. "It is the funds raised at events like Choffee Con that help us continue to give the children in our program some extras that our basic budget does not cover. So thank you to the event sponsors of Choffee Con for enriching our kid's lives."

For more information, contact Margaret Parson on Instagram @choffeecon, Facebook Event Choffee Con, or admin@choffeecon.com.

—Margaret Parson, Rotary Club of Missoula Sunrise

Great Falls Club Takes Membership Pulse

Healthy clubs take care to reach out to their members and address their concerns. Rotary Club of Great Falls is a healthy club. They recently surveyed members on their satisfaction with the club and will use the results to chart the club's future direction.



The results show overall satisfaction, with 95% of the respondents either somewhat satisfied or satisfied with the club and 73% giving their satisfaction the highest possible rating. A strong majority of respondents also agreed or somewhat agreed with the following statements:

- Club meetings are a good use of my time (96%).
- The club does a good job involving members (88%).
- Club members care about one another (98%).
- The club reflects the demographics of the community (88% - but 10% disagree).
- The club actively seeks to involve (95%).
- There is the right amount of fundraising activities (88%).

Comments in the survey were helpful in identifying areas where the club could be even more effective - for example, recruiting with the goal of greater diversity in membership, providing a broader range of service projects, and adding more professional networking activities.

Results will be used as the basis for a visioning session in the near future with some action initiatives to follow.

—Mary Moe, Rotary Club of Great Falls

ROTARY CLUB NEWS EDITORS:

The next DEADLINE for stories in BIG SKY NEWS is May 15, 2019, for the June issue. Please send photos in .jpg format and stories in Word or Text to Victoria Emmons, Editor, at district5390.newsletter@gmail.com. Please note that it is helpful if you rename each photo submitted to indicate club name and subject, for example: Ronan Interact or GreatFallsFundraiser. Thank you!

