

BIG SKY NEWS

Sandy Wong, Governor | District 5390 | Montana, USA



Zone Institute energizes leaders

RI President-Elect Holger Knaack, of the Rotary Club of Herzogtum Lauenburg-Molln, Germany, and his wife Susanne (*pictured right*) were among the guest speakers at the Zone 26-27 Institute held September 5-8 in Denver. The annual Institute offers Rotary leaders, both current and future, a chance to gather for training, fellowship and connecting. This year, all Rotary members were invited to attend.

District Governors-Elect were each formally introduced at the event. PDG Rick Moore (*below left*) escorted DG-Elect Sandy Carlson as she was introduced on stage. DG Sandy Wong (*below right*) and her husband Scott Wilm appeared dapper at the 1920s-themed gala event.



ONLY ONE DUCK FATALITY REPORTED!

Rotary Duck Race raises \$7,500 for kids & club



As they neared the turn for home, a blue, plastic duck went to the inside and left the others in her dust (or should we say wake). She shot to the front and won by ten lengths. The winner was Dianne Miller, wife of Butte Rotarian Bob Miller and my next door neighbor. As a former District Governor, I can assure you the four steps of Rotary were upheld, there was no hanky-panky.

The Rotary Club of Butte has been looking for a fund-raiser to replace some others and this Duck Derby filled the bill. We raised \$7,500 and the proceeds were split between the Butte Club and the "Friends of

Stodden Park," a group that helps pay for children who cannot afford some of the activities at the Park. The Friends of Stodden Park received a check for \$3,750.

Thanks to all of you who invested in a Duck. Thanks to all who sold tickets and to everyone who helped us in other ways. You are all first-rate.

We did have one casualty — the day after the derby, the staff found a dead duck at the bottom of the pool. It was one of Bob Henry's; he was refunded \$20.

— Joe McBride, Rotary Club of Butte



How did your club support End Polio Now?

Rotary Clubs around Montana and the world celebrated World Polio Day October 24 and throughout the month as part of Rotary International's END POLIO NOW campaign. Many clubs hosted local activities, including fellowship, fundraising and community awareness events.

From a bike riding event in Winnipeg, Canada, to a *Cornholio for Polio* tournament in Lewiston, Idaho, to a 5K run and walk sponsored by the Rotary Club of North Jackson, Mississippi, Rotary members everywhere were creative in their fundraising.

In Montana, members of the Rotary Club of Great Falls offered paper shredding services as a way to raise funds for polio eradication. The club sponsored a huge shredding truck on October 22 to provide two hours of shredding at its meeting location. All proceeds supported the Polio Plus fund.

The Rotary Club of Big Sky teamed up with Beehive Basin Brewery and hosted a Chili and Cornbread fundraiser that included short presentations about End Polio Now and Rotary, offering fun facts and raffles about Polio and local ski trails.

In the western part of the state, the Rotary Club of Missoula hosted November 9 an advance screening of a documentary about the life of fellow Rotarian and musician/composer/engineer Don Lewis of the Rotary Club of Pleasanton,

CA. The film was produced by Ned Augustenborg and will show in theaters next year.

POLIO WORLDWIDE

Throughout the world, Rotary members elsewhere made sure their communities are educated about the need to eradicate polio.

Our northern neighbors in Winnipeg, Canada, hosted a bike riding event.

Two Rotary clubs offered *Pints for Polio* events in both Fort McMurray, Oilsands, Canada and in West Seneca, NY. The Rotary Club of Emmett, Idaho, offered *Pins for Polio* — bowling pins, that is — at its bowling tournament.

The Rotary Club of Tempe, Arizona, partnered with the Thirsty Lion Tempe Marketplace to offer 20 percent of all food and drink sales on World Polio

Day going to END POLIO NOW. Other Rotary clubs offered a “Purple Pinky” for donations made to polio on October 24.

Even Interact members did some creative fundraising. The Osbourn High School Interact Club in Manassas, VA, held a face painting event October 5 for donations to polio and collected \$155. The Interact is sponsored by the Rotary Club of Bull Run, Manassas, VA.

For more ideas for your club's 2020 World Polio Day activities, visit www.endpolio.org/world-polio-day#findEvent.



Bookstore alliance with Bozeman Sunrise Rotary allows for nearly 2,500 books to kids

Bozeman second graders will be smiling next year, thanks to the generosity of the members of the Rotary Club of Bozeman Sunrise and The Country Bookshelf, a Bozeman bookstore.

As part of its commitment to literacy, the Rotary Club has distributed books to second grade students in Bozeman for many years.

Initially, the project involved giving two books to each second grader in the Bozeman Public School District. After its initial years, the project was expanded to include students at area private schools, as well. In 2020, Bozeman Sunrise Rotarians will provide nearly 2,500 books to more than 1,200 students.

The project is made possible due to an alliance the Club initiated with a local bookstore, The Country Bookshelf, which provides books at a deeply discounted rate.

Working with the bookstore, school teachers, and the school library staff, the Club will develop a preliminary list of 50 titles. In 2020, club members anticipate ordering 55 copies of each title. At the end of the project, any excess copies will be donated to school libraries.

In March, Rotary and Rotaract members along with other volunteers will adhere stickers and sort the books into collections for each school. Book distribution will follow.

Last year, nearly 90 Rotary members, family and friends participated in the book distribution. Once students select their books, a Rotary member will write each student's name on the book's sticker.

While the project requires both financial support and lots of volunteer time, the excitement and joy that Rotarians see on the kids' faces when they receive their books is heartwarming. Additionally, Rotary members believe that this project affords them an opportunity to serve a need in their local community.

—Robb Miller, Chair, Vocational Educational Committee, Rotary Club of Bozeman Sunrise

Reprinted from District 5390 Vocational Services Update Newsletter.



Sustainable Global Coalition expands

Update from George Gerard on Coalition News – Hamilton Club joins Coalition; Kalispell to raise \$350K; Toys for kids in El Progreso, Guatemala

Now that we are already into winter and our ‘all too short’ summer and colorful fall have come and gone, I thought it would be an appropriate time to provide everyone with an update on our water projects along with other Coalition news.

Linda and I, together with our son-in-law Josh Erickson, were in Guatemala October 3-7. While in country, we visited the communities of El Progreso and Pasac and also met with a delegation from La Vega at the offices of Fundazucar in Mazatenango. The purpose of these meetings was different for each community.

El Progreso: The El Progreso project is basically completed. We were there to determine the remaining steps that need to be done in order to finish the final report for The Rotary Foundation (TRF) and close out the project. I was pleased to discover that our partner club had the report 95 percent completed. The only issue to be resolved was to determine the best use of the \$800 remaining in the budget. After some discussion, it was decided to use the funds to purchase fencing to surround the pump house and elevated tank to better protect it from vandalism. This should be completed in the next couple of weeks and the project can be closed out. Because El Progreso had an Engineers Without Borders (EWB) component, we needed to delineate which expenses related to that phase of the project so Mark Rohweder could complete the EWB report.

We took a suitcase of small toys for the young children and with help from our partner Rotarians, Linda was able to provide each child with at least one toy.

Pasac: Pasac is a spring-fed project with a concrete holding tank and distribution system and we are in the final stage of receiving approval from TRF. One of the items our reviewer wanted, in addition to all the documentation already submitted, was a list of hygiene goals from the community. At the meeting, the community was represented by all the involved committees, as well as their COCODE (community council) and other interested individuals. After many introductions and translation into both Spanish and Quiché, I explained what was needed and they promised that I would receive the requested information within ten days. The meeting was followed by lunch and a typical rainy season thunderstorm that lasted about 30 minutes. As was the case in El Progreso, it was nice to see our good friends once again. Mick Shea has been working diligently on all the grant requirements and I am optimistic we will secure TRF approval within two months. This is a \$91,000 project.

La Vega: La Vega is a huge project and I greatly admire and respect the two Kalispell clubs for taking the lead on this. Not only is this project large and involved, but raising over \$315,000 to fund it is an enormous challenge.

The project involves a well 350-400 feet deep, at least a minimum ten HP pump, a large elevated, steel holding tank and a distribution system.

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COALITION from page 5

At our initial meeting with the community, and much to their dismay, I told them it would probably take about four years to raise the funds and get project approval, and that estimate is turning out to be fairly accurate. Fortunately, on this project we will be working with an in-country non-profit called Fundazucar who will provide technical advice and assist with training requirements. My purpose on this trip was to bring back some documents required by TRF so District International Chair Terri Smiley could continue with the Global Grant application process. Since we were meeting at the offices of Fundazucar in Mazatenango, I was surprised to find eight community members in attendance, four from the COCODE and four from the water committee. I was also pleased to see two women represented, a point of emphasis we had been making with the COCODE. Although I had hoped to obtain information from Fundazucar regarding the qualification of their personnel to conduct hygiene training, I felt inhibited from doing so due to the presence of the community members, but I was able to accomplish most of what I was tasked to do.

History

I believe it has been thirteen years since I first began working with the Guatemalan people and I want to reflect on a couple of positive changes I've seen.

Our base of operation for the first five or six years was in the town of Santo Tomas La Union, a community of about 12,000, located in the

highlands about 20 miles north of Mazatenango. The Pasac project is close to Santo Tomas. The road from Mazatenango to Santo Tomas was so bad that it would take about an hour to make the 20-mile journey. With the road now completely rebuilt, that one-hour trip has been cut in half!

Another significant change relates to crime in the area. Not many years ago, most gas stations and all the better restaurants had guards armed with sawed-off shotguns or automatic weapons. These are all gone now. Certainly, parts of Guatemala remain dangerous; but it is encouraging to see the progress that has been made in this part of the country.

As a final thought, I would like to formally welcome the Rotary Club of Hamilton to our Sustainable Global Coalition. There is truly strength in numbers and strength in collaboration... strength enough to have the audacity to undertake a \$315,000 project. We are now eleven clubs representing the far western part of the state and over 25 percent of the clubs in District 5390. The final piece of the puzzle will be getting more participation in the planning and implementation of the projects, as well as financial participation. I'm excited about the January trip being organized by Terri Smiley and Sandy Carlson and anticipate it will generate a renewed enthusiasm for international service.

— *George Gerard, Rotary Club of Kootenai Valley, past District Chair, International Service*

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Rotary is good at connecting people that you never thought you'd be friends with."

Aiden, RYLA participant

Perspective on International Service

“I would have made a pretty good engineer” — George Gerard

I would have made a pretty good engineer. My brother was an engineer. My father, with only a third-grade education, was the most talented and intelligent person I ever met.

But unlike my brother, who was highly motivated and studious, I was quite the opposite until about my third year in college. By that time, I had burned too many ‘engineering bridges’ and chose other fields in education and counseling. So while my DNA is in the sciences, my training is in the humanities. As it turned out, this weird dichotomy actually prepared me for international service.

For example, look at Global Grants from two perspectives: The writing and implementation (engineering) of the grant and the sustainability (humanities) of the grant.

Those of you with a little silver in your hair and a few unwanted wrinkles may remember a TV show called ‘Dragnet’ in which the main character, a detective named Joe Friday, was noted for saying during his investigations, “The facts, ma’am, just the facts.” This is exactly what is needed for grant writing and implementation. The process is challenging enough without clouding it with superfluous information, and that is where the engineering mind comes into play. As American Rotarians, we are quite skilled at grant writing and project implementation.

But then there is project sustainability, a whole new challenge that we and The Rotary Foundation are struggling to conceptualize. This is where I believe the humanities side of the equation comes into play.

Consider one of the project communities from its perspective. The communities have been

mistreated and lied to by their own governments; non-profits have made and broken promises; and they have little formal education and virtually no experience managing infrastructure or money. Ultimately, their preferred outcome would be for Rotarians to provide them with a water system and then leave, and yes, this is the model Rotary followed for years. Unfortunately, this model often ended in failure.

The Rotary Foundation needed a new approach, one that would lead to lasting change. The approach they chose was an increased emphasis on education, primarily in governance and hygiene. Will this be enough to insure sustainability? I hope so, but I have my doubts. I do think it will help.

You might remember that required class you took years ago that seemed totally unrelated to your major; that same class in which years later you wished you had been more attentive. Perhaps you were fortunate enough to have had an instructor in that class that inspired you to a new way of thinking. The subject matter was the same, but a dynamic instructor made all the difference. This is our current challenge. We need to be that dynamic instructor.

So as I try to get my head around the whole issue of sustainability, an entirely new issue comes into play: the issue of culture. America is the most individualistic culture in the world. Latin cultures are far more communal, and it is within the framework of that culture that we must somehow integrate an ideal of sustainability.

— *George Gerard is a member of the Rotary Club of Kootenai Valley, past International Service Chair for District 5390, and instigator of the Clean Water Coalition Project in Guatemala for Montana Rotary clubs.*

District 5390 Calendar

High Country PETS, Feb. 28-March 1, Renaissance Denver Stapleton Hotel

April 17-18, District Conference, Fairmont Hot Springs, MT. RI Director-Elect Virpi Honkala, from Finland, will join us.

June 6-10, 2020: Rotary Intl. Conference, Honolulu, HI

Special Month

December is Disease Prevention & Treatment Month. End Polio Now!

Big Sky News

Big Sky News is published monthly by Rotary District 5390, Montana, USA.

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Come Celebrate! Rotary Club of Kalispell is turning 100 years old and we're throwing a party!

When
Saturday, February 1, 2020
5 pm - 9 pm MST

Where
Snowline Acres Event Center
3315 U.S. Hwy. 93 S
Kalispell, MT 59901

Cost
Tickets are \$50 per person at eventbrite.com (search for Rotary

Club of Kalispell's 100-Year Anniversary Party).

The public is invited to celebrate everything our club has done to change lives for the better in the Flathead Valley and beyond. Dinner, no-host bar, a live band, dancing and a lot of your favorite people! We hope to see fellow Rotarians from all over the state!



EXTRA EXTRA! Read all about it!

ROTARY CLUB NEWS EDITORS:

The next DEADLINE for stories in BIG SKY NEWS is **January 5, 2020**, for the January issue. I'm a little behind in publishing due to the holidays, so please accept my apologies. Send photos in .jpg format and stories in Word or Text to: Editor at district5390.newsletter@gmail.com. Please rename each photo submitted to indicate club name and subject, for example: GreatFallsFundraiser. Thank you!