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Rotary Friends,

We hope that you all are staying warm as winter progresses. We had a couple of warm days last weekend, but winter returned today with wind and a bit of snow. Just a reminder that it is only February so don't get too excited for Spring yet.

Over the last couple of weeks Karoline and I finished our regularly scheduled club visits in Loveland, Ft Collins and Greeley. It was so great to visit our near neighbors and learn about all of the great things they are doing in their communities.

We especially enjoyed reading to students at Laurel Elementary School in Ft Collins with the Ft Collins Breakfast Rotarians, packing food backpacks with the Loveland Rotarians at Kidspack and packing snack bags with Ft Collins Foothills Rotarians at the Larimer County Food Bank. I also enjoyed visiting with the Rotarians in Ft Collins at their Purple Pins for Polio Bowling Fundraiser in which they raised over \$30,000 (with the Gates match) to eradicate polio.

This is just a small list of things our Rotarian family is doing in District 5440 to make our communities a better place. Thank you all for connecting with the world and making it a better place.

In February we are looking forward to meeting with the satellite groups in Loveland and with the Ft Collins Rotary evening group.

We are also looking forward to seeing all of the President Elects and Nominees at the President Elect Training Seminar (PETS) in Denver on Feb 28-Mar 1. This is always a wonderful event with current and upcoming Rotary leaders.

We hope that you received our invitation to join us at our District Conference in Greeley on May 29-30, 2020. All conference events are at the new Doubletree Hotel. We have outstanding speakers, great food, and a wonderful reunion of our Rotary family planned. Early registration is open, with significant cost savings. We hope that you will come over and join us for this celebration of our achievements in this Rotary Year.

Finally, Karoline and I want to thank all of you for your overwhelming support of the Dig Deep Water project in Navajoland. Your generous support has us pushing \$30,000 as our contribution from District 5440. That's three times what we pledged. We hope to visit an installation in Navajoland in April so we can bring you all first hand reports of the project and the difference you made in the lives of our friends in Arizona and New Mexico.

We will be visiting some clubs we missed due to weather and celebrating 100th anniversaries in Loveland, Laramie, Scottsbluff and Sterling. We will also see many of you at other club functions in the near future.

Chris Woodruff, District Governor (2019-2020)
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Thank you all for making this such an outstanding time for us. We are truly grateful and honored to be in your company.



Lee Varra-Nelson Selected as District Governor for 2022-23

Lee Varra-Nelson from the Ft Collins Breakfast Club has been selected to be the District Governor in RY 2022-2023.

Lee joined Rotary as a member of the Rotary Club of Fort Collins Breakfast in 2003. In the club, Lee has participated on the Vocational Service, Community Service and Membership committees and is currently serving as a member of the International Service committee and as an active member of the Peach Sales committee. She served as the Club President in 2013-14, Director of Club Administration, The Rotary Foundation (TRF) Chair, and currently serves as Club Membership Committee Chair.



In District 5440, Lee served as Assistant District Governor, and as the Foundation Annual Fund Chair. She is currently the District Membership Co-Chair. She became a ShelterBox Ambassador for District 5440 in 2017 and is currently the Lead ShelterBox Ambassador for the District.

Lee is a Paul Harris Fellow, Bequest Society member, Benefactor and a Major Donor (2018).

Lee completed a successful 35 year career with *Hewlett-Packard* that crossed many business functional areas. While at *Hewlett-Packard*, Lee certified as a LEAN Six-Sigma Green Belt and also launched her focus in Project Management. In 2013, Lee left *Hewlett-Packard* to work as a Senior Technical Project Manager for *Intrado*, a company that supports and enhances the national 911 emergency system.

Lee completed her undergraduate work in education and sociology at the University of Northern Colorado and enjoyed playing collegiate Field Hockey and Softball. She also attended Colorado State University, doing graduate work in Business Management.

In her private consulting work, Lee has enjoyed working with major technology corporations and government agencies but her favorite work was a special project with NASA's Director of the International Year of Astronomy.

Lee's wife, Catherine Varra-Nelson, is also a Rotarian in the Ft Collins Breakfast Club and a multiple Paul Harris Fellow. Lee and Catherine make their home in Ft Collins.

Cheyenne Sunrise Rotary Club

Service Clubs Join Forces for Community Blood Drive

This article was recently printed in the Wyoming Tribune Eagle in Cheyenne.

Service Clubs Join Forces for Community Blood Drive
By Brenda Laird, Assistant Governor,
Rotary District 5440
Cheyenne

During the month of February, something special will be happening in our community – a blood drive organized by local service/community organizations.

Kiwanis, Lions, Rotary and Zonta have teamed up to encourage life saving blood donations. Every two seconds in the US, someone needs blood. In Wyoming, there is a need for a weekly donation of 3,500 units of blood, and every donation can save up to three lives.

Join the amazing team of caring, giving individuals and donate blood. One hour of your time, could save the life of another.

Please go to Vitalant (formerly United Blood Services) and support the local service/community organizations efforts. We can all join hands and save lives together.

Douglas Rotary Club

By Mike Moore

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Alexander can't hide his big grin as Santa takes him by surprise by joining him in his family's living room to hand-deliver presents.

Alexander Pettet couldn't contain his excitement. As a vehicle pulled into his driveway in the dark of night, he had to see what all of the commotion was about. Stepping onto the snowy front porch into freezing temperatures in his pajamas, he was taken aback when he saw a big man in red and white, and a string of helper elves walking up. "Hi Santa," he shouted out, before rushing back inside to personally answer the door himself for Santa's personal visit.

Once inside, the six-year-old couldn't resist giving the holly, jolly fellow a big hug, before sitting with him on the family couch, staring in awe with a big grin smeared across his face. Presents were handed out, which Pettet refrained from tearing into, instead opting to place them under the tree for Christmas morning instead. Although the visit was maybe less than 10 minutes in total, it was sure to leave a lasting memory for everyone present in the room for years to come.

For Blake Hollon, that memory is the quintessential spirit of Christmas. For him, that's what the season is all about in a time where commercialization has nearly suffocated the true meaning of Christmas. "This is Christmas," Hollon said. "It gets back to the roots of Christmas and sharing."

It's what keeps him coming back year after year to organize the Douglas Rotary Christmas Giving Program, never growing tired of all the work that goes into bringing a Merry Christmas to families for the better part of 26 years or longer. Every year he laughs, as he honestly can't remember how long he's helped put this event on.

Each year, Hollon and members of the Douglas Rotary Club have teams head into the night to hand-deliver presents. The goal is to give local families, and Rotarians, the true feeling of the Christmas spirit, Hollon said. At the end of the day, he says those who participate in the giving get just as much out of the event as the families they visit.

Rotarians are given names of a family and purchase presents after contacting the parents to learn more about the children and what they truly want this holiday season. For this year, 13 families were picked for the home deliveries. With one family moving out of town and two not at home that evening, the trio of teams visited 10 homes during the early evening hours.

Names of who to deliver to originate from Noel's Christmas Giving, with Hollon picking families who approved a Santa home delivery on the form, while also being the appropriate age for Santa.

"We get as much out of it, if not more, than the kids," Blake said.

He says the annual tradition would not be the success it is today without the kind hearts that chip in their time and sometimes money to help buy gifts for the families. Often members are apprehensive about being a part of it initially but upon their return to Blake's house, are ecstatic about the experience they took part in.

"We're always trying to get new Rotarians to be an elf every year," Hollon said. "Every year they thank me and say, 'I loved it.' They get that spirit, and that's what it is all about. It's not only good for the people we help, but the Rotarians, too."



A helper elf unloads gifts as the group of elves and Santa himself make the rounds in Douglas delivering presents.



Santa delivered gifts, and Christmas Spirit, to a very appreciative family.

Upcoming District Events

- [Rotary High Country PETS](#)

Feb. 28 - Mar. 1, 2020, Denver Renaissance Stapleton Hotel

- [Rotary District 5440 - Spring Assembly in Casper](#)

Mar. 28, 2020, 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM, TBD

- [Rotary District 5440 - Spring Assembly in Windsor](#)

Apr. 4, 2020, 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM, TBD

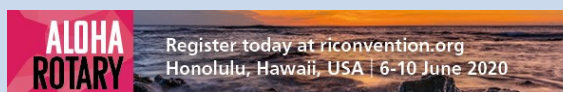
- [Rotary District 5440 Conference - 2020](#)

A Rotary Unexpected Blast on May 29-30, 2020

This will be one day conference at the new Doubletree Conference Hotel at Lincoln Park in Greeley. Plans include national speakers, fun, preconference activities awards, and an exchange student reunion. Much more to come!

May 28, 2020 : Rotary Foundation Recognition Dinner at the Poudre Learning Center in Greeley. This will be held in conjunction with, but is separate from the District Conference. More to follow.

- [RI Convention - June 6-10, 2020](#)



Aloha, Rotary! Discover the true spirit of aloha and Rotary with your family, friends, and fellow Rotarians in Honolulu. It's the perfect setting for the entire family of Rotary to celebrate, collaborate, and connect while experiencing the warmth and welcome of Honolulu. The convention is one of the only times when people of action from around the world gather in one place to celebrate Rotary. Our engaging speakers will boost your passion for service and provide new perspectives on our work in the world. Make new friends and connect with old ones while you explore all that Honolulu and the convention has to offer. You'll return from our convention refreshed and inspired to continue your service and community leadership. Don't miss your chance to find and share aloha at the 2020 Rotary Convention in Honolulu, Hawaii, USA, 6-10 June. Register now and save To take advantage of early registration savings, register before 15 December at riconvention.org.

- [Rotary District 5440 Conference - 2021](#)

May 20, 2021 5:00 PM – May 22, 2021 9:00 PM



Service Above Self

<https://rotary5440.org/>

District Governor—Chris Woodruff

