WHAT A YEAR!

June is Rotary Fellowship Month, and I can see no better theme under which to share some of what my year as district governor has meant to me. Yes, it is a lot of work, but the enjoyment and experience have made it one of best years of my life. I have thoroughly enjoyed meeting all of you and appreciate the support that you have given me and the new friendships that have developed. To see and hear about all the great things that you are doing in your communities has truly been a joy, and I look forward to hearing about your continued efforts to improve your communities and make life better for those in need. Finally, this year has been plain fun...yes, fun, fun, fun! Rotarians do have fun, and as DG, I was able to share in many of those fun times. Of course, we shed some tears along the way as we lost a few people who have been such key players in our club efforts. What a year!

Many of you played key roles in our successes this year, and I could spend the rest of this newsletter listing you all. I might also leave someone important out as I did last month when I wrote about our conference speakers. Probably because I think of him more as “family,” I failed to mention our RIPR Sam “Woody” Wilbanks. Woody is a past district governor from our neighboring district, and he and his wife Kim and Jim and I have known each other since I began working with RYLA in 2008. Many of you shared with me how inspired you were by his Saturday morning talk where he commended all of you for what you have done this year but also talked about what Rotary has meant to him in his life and inspired us to aim even higher. We were so fortunate to have him!

Several of you have asked me about my plans for my Rotary future. Obviously, I don’t have that all mapped out, but I do know that I will become more involved in facilitating international service in our district. See, I was even inspired by my own conference! I also want to continue looking for ways to build new clubs consisting of new Rotarians to do good work in our communities. I am especially interested in developing evening opportunities in areas where there are none because many of our potential young members find it difficult, if not impossible, to attend a breakfast or lunch meeting. While I don’t know where I will end up beyond that, know that you’ll continue to see me around in some capacity. Rotary has become a way of life for me!
Mary Lyn Kagan: A Dog Lover and a Lot More!

When you encounter Mary Lyn Kagan, she usually has companion with her—a canine companion, that is. That’s because Mary Lyn is a volunteer puppy raiser and trainer for Canine Companions for Independence, an organization that provides assistance dogs for persons with disabilities. Josie, her current companion, is Mary Lyn’s sixth dog, and she is proud that two of her dogs have gone on to become service dogs and one has become a breeder.

Mary Lyn has been a Rotarian since 2006. After her husband passed away in 2005, she found herself looking for positive activities to fill her time. Rotary fit the bill, and she jumped right in. As a member of the Rotary Club of Point West, Mary Lyn chaired or co-chaired their Festa di Vino fundraiser for several years, served as the club’s scholarship chair for seven years, served on the Student Leadership Conference Committee, and is currently part of the Lunar Lunacy Committee. She also has been an active participant in the club’s Paint the Town, Chicken Chucken, and Salvation Army Toy Giveaway projects.

Mary Lyn’s service does not stop at the club, however. With a passion for youth, Mary Lyn has been an active member of the District Rotary Youth Exchange (RYE) Program for years and has served as the inbound coordinator for the past five. That role includes all communication with the chairs in the countries from which our district will have exchange students, the arrangement for visas, and communication with the students. She is also a member of the District Foundation Committee, serving as the district grant chair. In that role, in addition to serving as a resource, she approves all applications and receives all reports. Most recently Mary Lyn served as the registrar to the 2017 district conference, another huge task with a lot of details.

As a volunteer outside Rotary, Mary Lyn set up two academies within schools and put together a charter school focused on construction. She also volunteers with the Sacramento County Sheriff’s Youth Services Department and takes her other dog Simone into schools where they participate in the Helpful Hounds Reading Program. She also volunteered in the department’s call center before its closure. Finally, she worked with Communities in Schools. Through its America at Work Program, Mary Lyn helped veterans get the training they needed to find meaningful work. She also started a business academy at Hiram Johnson High School and installed a computer lab there.

Before retirement, Mary Lyn had her own business: Kagan and Associates. As a project manager, she along with her team focused on helping non-profits develop more efficient and effective processes. Prior to starting her own business, Mary Lyn was a woman in a man’s world. She worked with a construction and engineering firm, pouring cement and hanging sheetrock. She eventually became a supervisor.

Mary Lyn has four adult children—one son and three daughters including a set of twins—and three grandchildren, two of whom are grown. Jannette,
Johnny, and Tammy all live in Northern California; Tina resides in Texas.

When she has time, Mary Lyn enjoys spending time in her garden or taking her dogs for long walks along the river. She claims to be a musical junkie and is a regular attendee at touring company productions and at the Music Circus. A reader, Mary Lyn especially appreciates historical fiction where facts are integrated into the story line, biographies, mysteries, and of course, The Rotarian. She moved a year ago from Land Park, where she lived for 24 years, to Elk Grove. She says this has enabled her to simplify her life and that she enjoys having a number of stores nearby.

When asked to share her favorite Rotary experience, Mary Lyn responded that there have been too many. She remembers fondly the 90th birthday celebration for Guy Heilman where the female club members all dressed up in pink boas and sat on his lap.

Scholarships hold a special place in her heart, and she looks forward to the thank you notes she receives after the scholarships have been awarded. The hands-on projects are her favorites though. She likes to get her hands dirty and finds such activities rewarding.

It is said that if you want to get something done, you should ask a busy person. Mary Lyn is a living example of that statement. She jumps at the opportunity when she knows it will make a difference in someone’s life. With that attitude and all she has accomplished, it is easy to see why Mary Lyn was named as one of the 2017 Rotarians of the Year.
Thousands of patients are indebted to District 5180 Rotarians who participated in the District’s Blood Drive Challenge. Rotarians contributed an amazing 1,365 blood donations totaling 2,052 Rotary Points from May 1, 2016 to April 15, 2017.

Your good-natured and genuine championing of a lifesaving cause, along with genial competitive spirits are deeply appreciated by BloodSource and patients in need. BloodSource is proud to contribute to the winning clubs’ Rotary Foundations that will make an impact for good in various ways. Thank you!

**MOST DONORS AND PERCENTAGE OF PARTICIPATION**

Small Club Category: Rotary Club of South Sacramento

Medium Club Category: Rotary Club of Lincoln

Large Club Category: Rotary Club of Point West
Rotary Honors West Sac/Clarksburg Firefighters, Police & Educators

by Drew Gidlof, Past President and Vocational Service Chair, Rotary Club of West Sacramento

Each year, Rotary Club of West Sacramento honors outstanding police officers, firefighters and educators. This year, honorees received their Vocational Service Awards on April 22, during the club’s regular Friday meeting at Club Pheasant.

Rotary’s Vocational Service Program recognizes individuals who are dedicated to community service, helping others and who have shown exemplary qualities in their chosen profession. They are our Community Patron Saints. Individuals recognized may not necessarily be Rotarians, but they exemplify the qualities that Rotarians possess as defined by Rotary International’s goal for Vocational Service: to promote and to advance high ethical standards within their profession.

West Sacramento Rotary’s 2017 Vocational Certificate of Achievement identifies individuals as the “Professional of the Year” in his/her/their chosen profession. This year, all members of the Clarksburg Fire Department were recognized for their outstanding service. For exemplary service to their community the following are this year’s honorees:

- Clarksburg Volunteer Fire Department: Special Recognition to the entire department of volunteers. Volunteer firefighters present April 22 were Paul Scherbinsky, Joe Gomes and Richard Bagby
- West Sacramento Fire Department: “EMT of the Year” Captain Mark Hull, “Firefighter of the Year” Jeff Bohnet
- West Sacramento Police Department: “Officer of the Year” Louis Cameron
- Delta Charter School District (Clarksburg): Delta Elementary “Teacher of the Year” Karis Jewell
- Lighthouse Elementary Charter School (West Sacramento): “Teacher of the Year” Dina Johnson
- Washington Unified School District: Elementary School “Teacher of the Year” Heather Best; “Secondary School Teacher of the Year” Stephanie Kugler; “Support Staff of the Year” counselors Alex Yang and Francis Quinn
- Yolo County Sheriff’s Department: “Officer of the Year” Deputy Gary Richter and Deputy Ryan Mez.

After the presentation of certificates and recognition of each recipient’s guest(s), the club again thanked the honorees, adding: “It is truly an honor for us to stand amongst professionals of your caliber and integrity.”
The Rotary Club of Folsom has completed the renovation of the shade structure (patio) at the Powerhouse Ministries Women’s Transition Center in Folsom. Begun last year, the shade structure project was completed with the recent acquisition of new patio furniture.

Our Rotarians had a wonderful time working on the project, and we couldn’t be happier with the outcome. The before and after photos definitely highlight the improvements!

The Powerhouse Ministries supervisor, Kevin, was a great partner on this project, and his willingness to allow us to store materials and work on the property was certainly appreciated.

We are always looking for community based projects, so no one should be shy about asking us for assistance in the future.
Rotary District 5180 celebrated the 100th birthday of the Rotary Foundation in Folsom on May 20 with special guest Rotary International President John Germ and his wife Judy. After a social hour where District members had a chance to meet and greet with President John, our District Polio Plus Chair (and recently named Rotarian of the Year) Bill Tobin called the event to order. After welcoming the guests, Bill introduced South Yuba County Sunrise President Beth Hastey, who sang “America the Beautiful.” This was followed by incoming District Polio Plus Chair Bob Mutchler, a polio survivor otherwise known as “Motorcycle Bob,” who gave a Foundation moment.
After a delicious family-style smoked tri-tip dinner, Bill Tobin started the main program by thanking the members of Oak Ridge High Interact and student volunteers from Folsom High for being the servers for dinner, and they quickly raised over $1,000 in tips for Polio Plus. District Foundation Chair PDG Bob Deering then introduced an impassioned group of special guests who spoke frankly on what the young women and men go through as they are enslaved and sex trafficked right here in our District and how our District’s proposed global grant can help put an end to human trafficking in California and beyond through education and public awareness. The featured speaker on that topic was Ashlie Bryant, the co-founder and president of 3Strands Global Foundation, who spoke on her personal connection that propelled her to become a champion of sex trafficking prevention education.

PDG Bob then introduced the evening’s key note speaker, Rotary International President John Germ. John immediately got comfortable by taking his coat and tie off on a warm evening and then praised the many Interactors, Rotaractors and RYE students in attendance as “Future Rotarians and leaders” before turning his attention to The Rotary Foundation’s honorable history, its effect on the world and Rotary’s current and future involvement, including efforts to help end slavery and trafficking of humans.
Bill Tobin closed the evening by introducing Melanie, a human trafficking survivor, who is now a small business owner and advocate for youth who are still enslaved and trafficked in California and beyond. Melanie lit the ceremonial first candle for those from our District who will attend the candlelight vigil and walk to end human trafficking to be held during the RI Convention in Atlanta on June 10.