



# LIGHT

WEEKLY BULLETIN

# Rotary

## Garden Reach



SERVE TO CHANGE LIVES

JULY

PRESIDENT - Rtn Amitav Ganguly • SECRETARY - Rtn Tamal Guha Roy • TREASURER - PP Chinmay Pal • EDITOR - PP Tanu Roy

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**Today is our 2135th RWM at BNR Officers' Club  
Members attended last RWM: 20**

### Easy, fun ways to keep a new Club going

**Tom Gump, Governor of Rotary District 5950, USA**

My district has several new and vibrant clubs. They are all flourishing. Not just because they formed, but also, because they keep on growing.

A majority of charter members, about 88%, are new to Rotary. So, we need to nurture these new clubs as they don't all know the Rotary way. How do we do this most effectively? It's simple, we: give them a cause, stay flexible, add diversity, and have fun!

#### Give them a cause and a way to act


I speak to a lot of Rotarians and ask why they joined Rotary and why they stay. They stay for friendship, fun, and service. You have to keep members engaged with service projects or they will likely leave.


What are the best types of service projects? The ones that focus around a cause, as there is nothing more engaging or motivating than working on a cause. Before COVID-19, some of the members of The Rotary Minnesota Veterans would drive for two hours to come to an in-person meeting or service project even if it was a simple blood, food, or clothing drive.


Combine service with fun and you have a winning event. For example, we signed cards for active military personnel while simultaneously having a pizza and beer party. Our new Kaleidoscope Rotaract Club serves individuals with autism and their families and has similar events.


#### Be flexible

Rotary International studies show that most people leave Rotary because of too many requirements and financial obligations. Clubs can alleviate this by being flexible.

 **Meeting Time:** Most traditional clubs meet on Monday through Friday over breakfast or lunch. New clubs tend to meet on Tuesday nights and Saturday mornings.

 **Meeting Place:** Most traditional clubs meet near where members live or work and typically meet at a country club or a hotel and participate in a mandatory, fixed-price meal. That is changing as new corporate Rotary clubs are meeting at work and young professionals are meeting at bars and restaurants without the burden of fixed-price meals. Places of worship are also becoming more popular. Our Veterans Club meets in the basement of the church where one of its members is the Pastor.

 **Meeting Format:** Our traditional clubs typically have four business meetings a month. Our new clubs have two business meetings a month and replace the other meetings with a social or service project. Our new clubs have "Rotary In-the-Workplace." We visit a member's place of business and tour it. For example, we have visited an airport owned by a member and took those that wanted to fly on a short plane ride. We also visit local grant recipient facilities and conduct service projects there. You could unpack boxes and load the shelves at the local food bank. If you're meeting in-person, make sure to bring a breakfast or lunch treat and coffee.

 **Meeting Delivery:** Before the pandemic, most traditional clubs met in person. Now most clubs are meeting on virtual or "hybrid" virtual/in-person meetings. There is an excellent blog on how to set up such a meeting. My district's new International Rotaract eClub for the Environment, has 20 members that come together virtually from

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20 different countries from around the world. Instead of communicating through emails, like most of our traditional clubs do, this club communicates primarily through WhatsApp.

## Add diversity of all kinds to build interest

District 5950 started several new cause-based clubs, reduced membership barriers, and provided new flexible membership models. With this came 80 additional new female members to our district, increasing the percentage of female members from 30% to 32.25% this year. The bump came primarily from three newly-formed clubs:

- 🌀 **The Twin Cities Eco Club** has 52% female members;
- 🌀 **The Rotary Club to End Human Trafficking** has 61% female members; and
- 🌀 **The Network for Empowering Women Rotary Club** has 69% female members.

Of course, striving for gender parity is not enough. We need to seek diversity of all types. Our new clubs are more diverse in other areas as well; but, exact statistics on those areas is not requested on our membership forms for privacy reasons. Our district is currently working on a Pride club.

## Have fun

Our most recent club, the Rotary E-Club Global Travelers, which formed on 23 April and was chartered on 1 May, recently conducted a virtual friendship exchange with India. After taking a virtual tour, the club participated in an online Indian cooking class. This will soon be followed by a yoga and meditation class.

If you nurture your new clubs by giving them a cause, encouraging flexibility, adding diversity, and having fun - your club is destined to not only survive; but also to thrive!

## Club turns masks to bricks

Abdullah Al Fahad, Rotaract Dhaka Orchid, Bangladesh



The COVID-19 pandemic has presented us with a new environmental challenge. Every month, more than 120 billion disposable masks and gloves are being thrown

out, with some of them polluting our land and water.

Our Rotaract club, like many, is concerned about the environment. Emboldened by Rotary's newest cause, protecting the environment, we decided to do something about this problem. We began a recycling effort which we called our Clean Earth project to collect masks that were littering our streets, parking lots, and other common areas and find a way to reuse them.

Medical experts have said that the virus can survive up to three days on an object. We place the masks that we pick up in a locked room for three days. Then we bleach them and wash them with detergent over a period of 24 hours. We dry them in sunlight, then tear them into smaller pieces and mix them with cement. We use this mixture to create planting containers filled with soil, which we plant trees inside.

We have also made bricks with the mixture and find it stronger than regular bricks. We are planning to use the bricks to build toilets in rural areas. We are working with other clubs to expand our effort, perhaps creating a recycling centre where people could bring their used masks, and we could employ other people to help us turn them into bricks and other products.

As much as 13 million tons of plastic makes its way into our oceans every year. Masks often contain plastics such as polypropylene with a lifespan of hundreds of years. Rotary members are creative and innovative, and we are sure that with some thought, other clubs could join us in finding ways to convert glove and mask waste into usable commodities. Let's protect this planet of ours while we embrace Rotary's newest cause.

## Rotary and the Corona virus impact: Frequently Asked Questions

### GRANTS

**Q: Can my District use District Grants to fund COVID-19 related projects?**

A: Yes, districts can use district grant funds to support local activities, like purchasing thermometers, protective medical gear, or other items to donate to medical professionals who need them. Districts can also use contingency funds from an open district grant or repurpose previously planned activities as a COVID-19 response.

**Q: Can I use a Global Grant to fund COVID-19 related projects?**

A: Yes. Global grants remain an excellent way to make a transformative impact in a community. If medical equipment is needed in order to respond effectively to

COVID-19, global grants can help pay for these items. Note that global grant applications must adhere to standard eligibility requirements as noted in the grant terms and conditions and the area of focus policy statements.

**Q: Can I apply for a Disaster Response Grant for COVID-19 related projects?**

A: No, disaster response grants are no longer available to support COVID-19 related projects.

**Q: Can my Club or District use Rotary Foundation grant funds to purchase COVID-19 vaccines?**

A: No, Rotary Foundation grant funds may not be used to purchase COVID-19 vaccines. This restriction applies to district, global and disaster response grants.



## COVID-19 VACCINATIONS

**Q: Will Rotary have a role to play in COVID-19 vaccinations?**

A: Yes. Rotary will tap into its decades of experience in bringing polio to the brink of eradication, to highlight the power and efficacy of vaccines. Rotary's tenacity, strategic partnerships, and innovation can all support the effort to protect communities from COVID-19.

Rotary and its partners at the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) recently announced that it is ready to support vaccine introduction and delivery. The group is also committed to equitable distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine and lending its support to ensure that all communities have equal access to vaccines.

More information and resources will soon be available for clubs and districts.

**Q: Are the RI Board of Directors and Foundation Trustees taking action in regards to vaccines?**

A: Yes, they are. At a recent joint session, the RI Board and Trustees created a joint task force that will develop and execute a plan to encourage Rotary and Rotaract clubs to support vaccinations.

**Q: How can Rotary and Rotaractors get involved?**

A: There are several ways members can get involved. Members can enhance community education on COVID-

19 vaccinations by sharing information from local and regional health authorities and supporting their efforts. They should contact local health departments to determine where assistance is most needed. Moreover, members can connect with local health officials, including World Health Organization and UNICEF where applicable, to advocate for and support their efforts to ensure all communities receive equal access to the vaccine.

**Q: What about vaccine misinformation and hesitancy? Are there ways to combat this?**

A: Yes. Rotary is asking members to disseminate accurate, fact-based information as provided by local health agencies. It's important to spread the word that vaccines work by using #vaccineswork in their social media postings. Highlight Rotary's work on polio as a key example.

Members can invite medical professionals or local health officials to speak at club meetings. Try to also engage with local media, for example writing letters to the editor, in support of local efforts and vaccine safety and efficacy—using Rotary's success in polio eradication as a proof point.

**Q: How can I share my efforts?**

A: Let the Rotary world know what your club or district is doing to support COVID-19 vaccine introduction efforts by posting your initiatives and projects on Rotary Showcase.

## We refused to allow TRF to be “burned to the ground”: KR Ravindran

History is full of catastrophes, rebirths and incredible accomplishments that seemed impossible in the darkest moments. Rotary was born in Chicago in 1905. Only 34 years before that, the entire city had burned to the ground with only a handful of structures still standing. Some wondered if it was even worth the effort to rebuild Chicago.”

With this anecdote, TRF Trustee Chair K R Ravindran captivated participants of the RI virtual convention, to illustrate how every catastrophe comes with an opportunity.





Chicago's devastating destruction also brought with it both "hope and vision", with city planner Daniel Burnham drawing up an entire new vision of the city that "defined the landscape and set the stage for all the structures that we see today. He said about his ambitious city plan: 'Make no little plans. They have no magic to stir men's blood; make big plans, aim high in hope and worth, remembering that a noble logical diagram once recorded will never die. But long after we are gone, we'll see a living thing asserting itself with ever growing insistency. Remember that our sons and grandsons are going to do things that will stagger us. Let your watchword be order, and your beacon, beauty.'

Ravindran added that Burnham's plans were adopted; Chicago grew, great skyscrapers rose and "Rotary was hatched in this atmosphere of optimism and ambition." Drawing this analogy to TRF and its performance during the pandemic challenges, he said, "Early in 2020 when we set the goals for this Rotary year we did so with high hopes of achievement only to see Covid 19 posing so many challenges which threatened to derail our plans. But we have, incredibly, not only achieved much of what we set out to do but in early Jan 21, we even exceeded the goal (the milepost set for the year till January). We refused to allow TRF to be burned to the ground."

The Trustee chair urged all Rotarians to "look at our architecture and envision a future foundation that will withstand every storm in the horizon." This year TRF had laid the groundwork to enable Rotary's seventh area of focus, the environment, to take off on July 1 "to inspire our clubs to think of innovative ways that will help protect our planet and mitigate the growing threat of climate change".

"We also opened the doors to Rotaract clubs to apply for global grants. Beginning 2022, Rotaractors take on a new and important role in shaping the service projects that define us." Even as Rotary celebrated Africa being declared polio-free, "TRF has awarded our first project of scale grant, that will make a major impact towards a 90 per cent reduction in the incidence of malaria in Zambia, saving countless lives of children and pregnant mothers." In this, the Foundation received equal financial contribution from the Gates Foundation and World Vision. This could be a precursor for the future. Opening the door to corporations looking to partner with us to make a big impact through big projects."

Ravindran announced that thanks to "an extraordinary pledge by the Otto and Fran Walter Foundation" a new Peace Center in the Middle East and North Africa region

would be opened with no cost to us."



Amidst "all these ambitious steps", the Trustees were constantly pondering on ways to raise more funds for the global grants, TRF's flagship programme, which were getting immensely popular. Giving numbers, he said that in 2013-14 when GGs were introduced, 868 grants were given worth \$47.3 million; by 2019-20, the number of these grants had risen to 1,359 (worth \$95.6 million)! "While global grants funding increased by over 100 per cent, the corresponding Annual Funds contributions did not keep pace, increasing by only 6 per cent during that period."

So "corrective action" was taken "to ensure that GGs will be sustainable for years to come, even, as we predict, that the demand for them will grow further. And we are not stopping there; TRF has been exploring avenues to raise more funds from outside agencies. This year we obtained \$5million from USAID to fund Italian Covid- related projects." he said.

## Innovate for a digital world

**Dr Mahesh Kotbagi, RI Director, 2021-23**



Greetings fellow Rotarians, Welcome to a journey of opportunities and joy. We are about to begin a new year of Rotary which is not only challenging but is also going to test our commitment towards our motto: Service Above Self.

In these challenging times, we need innovative minds brimming with ideas, joy and enthusiasm. We have to

get away from negativity of the pandemic, apply our minds, plan and re-plan, design and re-design our actions.

We have to be innovative in everything we say, think and do. This is the time to re-define our ways and means to serve humanity. We can no longer rely on the way we used to serve for more than a century now.

We need innovation in today's digital world, in this new-normal life. It has provided, along with challenges, new opportunities to us. Post-pandemic, the world has changed forever and the process continues. Nobody knows exactly where we will end up but we need to prepare and be ready to serve in this changing environment.

Instead of trying to achieve our goals on our own, let us expand our vision and outreach to other organisations that are doing good in the world. Find NGOs in your vicinity which can collaborate with Rotary to make dreams real... ours, theirs and those of our communities.

#### **Edgar A Guest said:**

**There are thousands to tell you, it cannot be done,**

**There are thousands to prophesy failure;**

**There are thousands to point to you, one by one,**

**The dangers that await to assail you;**

**But just buckle in with a bit of a grin,**

**Just take off your coat and go to it;**

**Just start to sing as you tackle the thing,**

**That "cannot be done," and you will do it.**

I conclude with Swami Vivekananda's thoughts: Stop not till the goal is reached. Stand up and express the divinity within you.

Fellow Rotarians, the time has come for all of us to stand up and express ourselves through our acts and deeds. Be a light not only for yourself but others too. Be a friend not only for a few chosen ones but others too.

Remember that "We shall not pass this way again. Whatever good you want to do in the world, start doing it today." My best wishes to each of you on the journey of change, opportunities and challenges.



#### **Minutes of the 2134th RWM held on July 6th, 2021 on Zoom Meeting**

1. President Amitav called the 2134th RWM to order.
2. President welcomed all members to the first meeting of the new Rotary year 2021-22.
3. As per the initiative taken for Rotary Foundation, by DG Prabir Chatterjee, President requested all the members to donate a minimum of US\$100 each towards The Rotary Foundation in the year 2021-22.
4. President requested the Club Foundation Chairman PP Tapan Roy to form a Foundation Committee.
5. PP Dr. Sumanta Dasgupta agreed to Chair the Installation Committee as per the request of the President. An installation committee was formed by the Chairman & President consisting of the following Rtns: Co-chair: PP Dr. Arabinda Ray, Committee Members - PP Prosenjit Barua, PP Mousumi Bhattacharyya, PP Tanu Roy, PP Subir Singha Roy, PP Kumud C Kar, PE Abinash Singh.
6. It was decided that Installation Ceremony be held both physically and on virtual platform (Hybrid meeting).
7. The members decided to invite only the President and Secretaries of Inner Wheel Garden Reach, Rotaract, and the co-ordinators of all RCCs of Garden Reach to the Installation Ceremony.
8. It was resolved that the Bank account held in Bank of Maharashtra, New Alipore Branch, may be now operated for year 2021-22 by President - Amitav Ganguly, Secretary - Tamal Guha Roy & Treasurer - Chinmay Pal, any two of them jointly.
9. It was collectively decided that installation charges of Rs. 2,000 shall be paid by all the members.
10. It was decided that 5 numbers sewing machine to be distributed from the office of PP Tapan Roy to the needy persons.
11. The President requested the members to decide on the amount of Semi-Annual Dues.
12. On the request of the President, Secretary Tamal conducted the club business.
13. The minutes of the last RWM were confirmed.
14. With no other business to conduct the President terminated the meeting.