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RID 3291  
**Rotary**  
Garden Reach



# Light

## WEEKLY NEWS LETTER

September 24th, 2024 - Vol. 47 No. 12

2283rd Regular Weekly Meeting  
3rd Board Meeting  
Attendance: 35

Birthday Greetings  
Sept 22nd Rtn. Debasis Das  
Sept 24th Chandrima, Daughter of Rtn. Amar Saha  
PP Mousumi Bhattacharyya  
Sept 25th PN Dr. BN Jha  
Sept 27th Bhavna, Daughter of PP Naresh Jain  
Spouse Leema, Wife of Rtn. Chiranjib Sha

One day a little old and very cute couple walked into the local fast food restaurant. The little old man went up to the counter and ordered their food. He brought back to the table a hamburger, a small amount of fries and a drink.

Carefully he sliced the hamburger in two and then neatly divided the fries into two small piles. He sipped the drink and then passed it to his wife. She took a sip and passed it back. A younger man at a nearby table observed this couple and begin to feel sorry for them. He offered to buy them another meal, but the old man respectfully declined saying that they were used to sharing everything.

The old man began to eat his food while his wife sat still, not eating. The young man continued to watch the old couple feeling there was something he should be doing to help. As the old man finished his half of the burger and fries, the old lady still had not started eating hers.

The young man couldn't take it anymore. He asked, "Ma'am, why aren't you eating?" The old lady looked up and politely said, pointing to the old man, "I'm waiting on the teeth."

You might have the same initial reaction my wife had when I shared this story with her. She laughed and then with a disgusted look on her face said, "Gross!"

But how many times are things not as they appear? Seek to understand first is a good rule of thumb.

What has been your experience as a leader with jumping to conclusions?

**Leadership Development is About You Too!**

*What's wrong? The problem is that it is easier to quickly identify the faults and weaknesses of others without seeing our own. Even when they are very obvious.*

*I found the following story that illustrates this in a light and humorous way.*

*A group of suppliers was once given a tour of a mental hospital. One of the visitors in the group had made some very insensitive and insulting remarks about the patients.*

*After the tour was completed the visitors were introduced and met with various members of the mental hospital staff in the cafeteria. The unkind visitor chatted with one of the security staff, Bill, a kind and wise ex-policeman.*

*"Are they all sick and crazy loonies in here then?" the insensitive and rude visitor asked.*

*"Only the ones who fail the test," replied Bill.*

*"What is the test?" asked the man.*

*Bill replied, "Well, we show them a bath filled with water, a large bucket, a large cup and a spoon. We then ask them what the quickest way to empty the water in the bath would be."*

*The man said, "Oh, I see... that is pretty simple – the 'normal one' knows it's the bucket, right?"*

*"No actually," replied Bill. "The normal ones say pull out the plug. Should I see if there is a bed free for you?"*

It is easy for leaders to get so caught up in seeing the weaknesses of others that they lose sight of their own development needs. However, before we look to develop others, it is wise to do our own personal inventory.

-EDITOR



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PREVENTION / RESOLUTION



DISEASE PREVENTION  
AND TREATMENT



WATER AND  
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MATERNAL AND  
CHILD HEALTH



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## Shaping the future with Literacy

Anirudha Roychowdhury, RI Director, 2023-25

As September unfolds, Rotary International embraces the significance of the Basic Education and Literacy Month. This month serves as a beacon, guiding us in our shared mission to empower individuals through the transformative power of education.

Education, in its truest form, is the foundation upon which we build a future of promise and potential. It is more than just an academic pursuit — it is the key to unlocking opportunities, breaking the chains of poverty and fostering innovation. Rotary's commitment to education is unwavering, as we believe that every individual, regardless of their circumstances, deserves the right to learn and grow.



This month, our focus sharpens on bridging the gaps that hinder access to quality education. Among the most pressing challenges is the need to address educational disparities, particularly those based on gender. We must work tirelessly to ensure that every child, whether boy or girl, has an equal opportunity to learn. By doing so, we lay the groundwork for a society that values equity and inclusivity, where everyone has the chance to succeed.

However, our dedication to education must extend beyond the classroom and beyond childhood. The staggering reality is that over 775 million adults worldwide are illiterate, representing 17 per cent of the global population. This statistic compels us to widen our focus to include adult literacy. By providing adults with the tools to read and write, we empower them to fully participate in society, enhance their livelihoods, and contribute meaningfully to their communities. A literate adult population is not only a sign of individual progress but also a catalyst for collective growth and development.

As we embrace this month of focus, we are reminded of the words of Malala Yousafzai: "One child, one teacher, one book, and one pen can change the world." These words capture the essence of Rotary's mission to drive change through education. By investing in both children and adults, we invest in the future — one that promises brighter tomorrow for all.

Let September be a time of renewed commitment and action. Together, let us champion the cause of education, ensuring that every person has the opportunity to learn, grow and thrive. In doing so, we not only change individual lives but also build stronger, more resilient communities and a more prosperous world.





## Hobbies that don't tax the Earth

Preeti Mehra, Senior journalist who writes on Environmental Issues

Google co-founder Larry Page once said, “*You never lose a dream, it just incubates as a hobby,*” and that’s exactly what happens to people who pursue a sustainable lifestyle. Just like their lives, their hobbies are also inspired by a desire not to harm the planet, to do things in their free time that do not tax the earth nor leave a carbon footprint. You could call it the art of engaging with the finer, subtler and sometimes mundane side without feeling guilty.

This is not for people who indulge in energy guzzling hobbies such as motor sport or computer games. One fervently hopes they will choose more earth-friendly ways to spend their leisure time. *Would it not be better if they pursue a harmless and yet inspiring ‘green’ hobby?*

What motivated me to write this article are three people I have known closely for years. They spend their weekends pursuing hobbies that often take them off the beaten track into a world that is vibrant, colourful and in perfect harmony with nature. To escape into this magical world, they do not seek the services of a travel agent or a tourist guide. All they do is to go to the neighbourhood park or green spaces in their city and begin exploring.



K, a neighbour of mine in Delhi loves to go bird watching. Armed with a pair of binoculars and his camera, he sets off early morning on his bicycle with a snack and lemonade in his backpack. He cycles to one of the parks a few kilometres from his home in South Delhi or to the Okhla bird sanctuary and spends hours observing his avian friends, taking occasional notes in his diary. He does not claim to be a Salim Ali but has learnt a thing or two about birds.

He simultaneously indulges in his other hobby which goes hand-in-hand with birdwatching — photography. His pictures of birds in flight, avian of the same feather flocking together, and images of the landscape and the changing hues of the sky as the sun comes into its own on a foggy Delhi morning leave family and friends breathless.

“When I spend time with nature, I forget about all my worldly cares. I forget about my busy life and find a sense of peace. It is very comforting,” he says. Very often, during the pleasant winter months it is only hunger pangs that make him pack up and cycle home for a well-deserved lunch.

The next on his to-do list is to learn drone photography, so that he can photograph nature without disturbing it in any





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way. “I will not even leave my footprints behind,” he says.

Another friend has a very different pursuit, but her objective is the same — spend her free hours engaging with her creativity and crafting artefacts out of waste. Yes, she has taken to sewing the last few years and collects waste cloth from friends and family and makes the most attractive cushions, runners, aprons, whatever she believes she can repurpose. She then announces a garage sale once every few months and forwards the proceeds she collects to a charity. “I find this upcycling exercise such a calming hobby, to just sit and sew discarded cloth into unique designs that are chosen by people to adorn their homes. They cost little but give me so much pleasure to make, sell and be able to make a difference to someone’s life,” she says.

Her creations are so popular in her colony, that people collect old scraps of cloth, torn dupattas, brocade borders, old buttons and embroidered pieces to give to her and love seeing what she will create out of them. Some of them buy back what she produces, all for a good cause.

Then there is A, who spends her weekends and leisure time on her terrace. She has shaded a part of it and grows all the herbs that you could wish to use in your kitchen. She has a good variety of them and all her friends know where to go when they need a particular leaf. She has a curry leaf plant, the leaves of which lend aroma for the perfect sambar; mint (pudina) leaves for various chutneys and cooling drinks in summer; carom (ajwain) is great in soups and dishes and good for digestion; and of course, her tulsi (holy basil) plants stand out as she has several in large terracotta pots.

In fact, A’s hobby gathers even more momentum in winter as she grows palak (spinach) in a few pots, and believe it or not, it grows in such abundance that all of us, her friends, benefit greatly from her green thumb and green hobby.

In the last few years, she has become even more aware of the environment and has started composting her own manure. For this she has requested her friends and neighbours to save their organic food and plant waste and pass it on to her for her home composting pit. Slowly, but surely, she has mastered the art of composting and has even shared her expertise with the Resident Welfare Association of her colony, so that they can pursue a community composting activity. “My hobby has almost become a passion now. It is so fulfilling to see so many households compost their organic waste as a collective activity and try to grow some plants and herbs to green their environs. Hobbies start in a small way but can grow slowly and make a big difference to your life and to the planet,” she says.

My three friends are not exceptions to the rule. Hobbies can play a role in each of our lives. Besides, if we do find a quiet way of enjoying ourselves while bringing about a small change in a world that is crying for sustainable intervention, we would have done our bit.





## A Legacy for future generations

Mark Daniel Maloney, TRF Trustee Chair

The great use of a life," wrote American philosopher William James in 1900, "is to spend it for something that outlasts it."

Some leave a legacy through family and friendships, others through faith or principles, and still others through their professions. The Rotary Foundation offers another powerful option.

As a believer in the power of passing down a legacy through The Rotary Foundation Endowment, I was humbled that my wife, Gay, and I were able recently to help others in Rotary leave their legacy.

Our district (6860 in northern Alabama) had never organised a fundraising dinner focused on the Foundation's Endowment before, but we knew it was time. We called it a legacy dinner, emphasising giving's long-term impact.

Progress was slow at first, and there were sceptics who doubted we could raise \$1 million, our initial goal. However, we remained optimistic, setting a date for Feb 23 2024, Rotary's anniversary.



During this campaign, committee members travelled throughout northern Alabama, meeting with small groups in fireside chats about contributing to the Endowment. Then, significant gifts began coming in. One Rotarian made a \$25,000 commitment, handing over a cheque for \$10,000. Soon, other members followed suit, and we had more than \$200,000 in gifts and commitments.

We still had far to go but if there is one thing I know about Rotary, it is this: If you present the opportunity to

members, they will respond. Topping off the district's generosity were two surprises. One was a bequest commitment of \$500,000, and then another of \$560,000.

By the end of the campaign, our committee had exceeded our greatest expectations: We had raised \$2,729,863.14 for the Endowment, nearly triple our goal. The impact of those gifts will create a legacy that will keep on giving forever. No single club or district alone will achieve our goal of fortifying The Rotary Foundation Endowment to \$2.025 billion by 2025. Not all of us can give \$25,000 now or as part of an estate plan. But I also know many of us can.

Please help us reach that Endowment goal and in doing so leave behind a legacy and further the work of future generations of Rotary members by visiting [rotary.org/legacy](https://rotary.org/legacy). On behalf of the Foundation Trustees, I am grateful for your Rotary legacy.





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## Rotary commits funds to Polio outbreak response in Gaza

The recent detection of variant poliovirus type-2 isolates in environmental samples and the confirmation of a 10-month-old child who has contracted polio in Gaza is a stark reminder that as long as polio exists anywhere, it is a threat everywhere.

The ongoing crisis in Gaza has contributed to reduced routine immunization rates and an increased risk of vaccine-preventable diseases, including polio. The crisis also poses a significant challenge to fully implementing disease surveillance and vaccination campaigns.

The **World Health Organization (WHO)** considers there to be a high risk for the spread of this polio strain within Gaza and internationally, particularly given the current situation's impact on public health services.

A humanitarian pause has allowed a two-round polio vaccination campaign that began in Gaza on 1 September. Initial reports indicate the campaign started successfully, with teams showing strong commitment and high levels of community participation.

Rotary is committing US\$500,000 to bolster the initiative, channelling these funds through a dedicated Polio Outbreak Response Fund. This contribution represents Rotary's sustained support to the WHO in combating polio globally.

Rotary will continue to work with its partners in the Global Polio Eradication Initiative and other agencies as vaccination efforts unfold.

Financial contributions to the PolioPlus fund will help Rotary and its Global Polio Eradication Initiative partners achieve a world in which no child is paralyzed by polio again.

# TOGETHER, WE END POLIO







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## **Minutes of the 2282nd RWM held on September 11th, 2024 at BNR Officers' Club, Garden Reach**

1. President Biswajit Saha called the RWM to order and welcomed the District Governor and other PDGs of our District. President then requested PP Rina Sinha Roy, Chair, IFRM to lead the National Anthem.
2. President informed the august gathering that a Desktop was installed for the students of Ramakrishna Gayatri Sevashram at Dongaria, Birlapur. This desktop was donated on "Shikha Labh Project" conducted on August 17th, 2024 at Rotary Sadan by Rotary Club of Calcutta Welfare Trust.
3. The Club Secretary conducted the Club business.
4. On confirmation of the minutes, President Biswajit terminated the meeting and requested all to join the Musical Soiree by the IFRM, Kolkata Chapter.

**India, once a leading recipient of Rotary's  
grants and programs,  
has transformed into a major donor.**

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WE MEET EVERY TUESDAY AT 7.30 P.M. AT B. N. R. OFFICERS' CLUB, GARDEN REACH, KOLKATA - 700 043  
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