



## Editorial

November is the month of commitment for The Rotary Foundation, members are expected to wholeheartedly support and strengthen the edifice of Rotary helping it to survive and thrive!

That brings us to the moot point of whether we are doing enough to help it grow and are the leaders forward looking enough to reach out to the masses to support TRF? How many, leaving aside the members, actually know the story of TRF and the wonderful work it does to make the world a better place? Sometimes I feel we are very myopic and inward looking in seeking funds and we hardly reach out to the masses, perhaps the perception that Rotary is a rich people's organization has actually impeded our resource mobilization. Why are we so reluctant to seek money from the common people to support our work for the humanity? When was the last time that Rotary leaders and members hit the streets to collect alms for the community like cine actors, sportsmen and other celebrated faces do? Maybe it is time we introspect and increase the visibility of TRF among the people and just not November let us celebrate every month in our calendar

*Subhojit Roy*

## President's Message - October 2020



**Holger Knaack**  
President 2020-21

We all know Rotary's tremendous power to transform our communities and ourselves. However, in every community, people have been left out, and we have not made a strong enough effort to reach them.

The RI Board of Directors is taking action to make Rotary more welcoming and diverse. We formed a task force to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion to help clubs attract new members regardless of gender, race, religion, age, or other factors. This will help us speed up the change we all want and need. The selection of Jennifer E. Jones as Rotary president for 2022-23 – the first woman to lead our organization – is another step in this direction.

At the grassroots level, clubs drive inclusion and diversity. Alia Ali – who serves on the board of directors at the Big West Rotaract Multidistrict Information Organization and is a Rotary Youth Leadership Awards alumna and past president of the Rotaract Club of Surrey-Newton, British Columbia – offers her perspective.

I still remember the relief I felt as a RYLA participant

# ROTARY HISTORY

## A Home for Headquarters

four years ago. I had finally found my people: people who cared as much as I did. All over the world, Rotary has the same heart. We serve our communities and take action where others feel paralyzed by the size and scope of a problem.

Let's continue that spirit, especially when the conversation is difficult. Racism, prejudice, and discrimination take on different forms but exist in every country, in every city, and in every person. How do we root it out? As a diversity, equity, and inclusion consultant, I help organizations create a culture that empowers and attracts everyone using the power of empathy. When we feel with others as if they were ourselves, we cannot hold prejudice in our hearts. When every child reminds you of your own child, when every woman or man reminds you of your mother or brother, you start seeing the world differently.

We can apply The Four-Way Test through the lens of empathy. Are we building goodwill and friendship with everyone in our area, including women? Are things fair and beneficial to people of all ages? Who has to make choices that you don't have to make?

I made a heartbreaking choice between Rotary and my religion when a Rotary convention was held during Ramadan. I wondered: When we ask if this is fair and beneficial to all concerned, did that not include me as a Muslim? Would the convention ever be held over Easter? Only by asking difficult questions can we begin the work of creating a more inclusive and diverse Rotary.

We already connect so many people across the world. Imagine the possibilities when we bring even more people along for the ride. That's the future of Rotary I want to see: one where we are unstoppable in our service, relentless in our kindness, and intentional in the change we want to see.

Rotary has a big enough heart. If we open our door wider, we might find a lot of interesting people with new voices and new perspectives. We already have a variety of clubs offering different styles, cultures, and opportunities – and those who do not feel welcome in any particular club might be great candidates for new clubs created on different models. It's important that we make sure every new Rotary member is a good fit for their club. Rotary Opens Opportunities through diversity.



*Guy Gundaker (with trowel), 1923-24 RI president, prepares to lay the cornerstone of the Ridge Avenue building in Evanston, Illinois, USA. 1954*

The idea that Rotary should own its headquarters dates back at least to the 1920 convention, when Albert Adams, 1919-20 Rotary president, told attendees that he hoped to someday see the headquarters in a beautiful building of Rotary's own.

"It sounds like a dream, doesn't it?" he said. "But it can be done."

Rotary's worldwide presence, and the number of secretariat staff members working to support it, would grow considerably by the time the idea became a reality in the 1950s.

The Chicago years

The National Association of Rotary Clubs – now Rotary International – formed in 1910 and had its headquarters in the Chicago, Illinois, USA, office of its secretary, Chesley R. Perry. In March 1911, Rotary's headquarters moved to rented space in the First National Bank Building, one of many downtown Chicago rentals.

In 1914, Rotary set up its headquarters in the Karpen Building on South Michigan Avenue. During its nine years there, the staff grew to 78 people, and Rotary expanded beyond North America and Europe to Asia, South America, Africa, and Oceania. Citing increasing rent after World War I, Rotary moved to the Atwell Building in 1923, then to several more buildings after that.

After so many moves, some Rotary leaders began to call for a world headquarters that RI itself would own. Delegates at the 1921 convention attempted to pass a resolution to purchase a site for a building of Rotary's

own, but they were unsuccessful. The 1928 convention delegates adopted a similar resolution, which had two notable conditions: There would be no increase in the per capita tax or assessment on clubs, and the site was to be in Chicago. A committee was formed and potential locations identified, but the Depression and the U.S. entry into World War II delayed any further action.

The search begins

Finally, in 1943, the debate over sites got underway when the RI Board appointed a headquarters committee consisting of 1939-40 RI Director Roy Weaver from Colorado, 1942-43 RI Director Fred Haas from Nebraska, and 1935-36 RI President Ed Johnson.

Around the time of his appointment, Johnson sent a letter to other past presidents sharing his vision for a building for Rotary in Evanston, a suburb north of Chicago and near the campus of Northwestern University. He appealed to the financial sensibilities of ownership and to the sentimental opportunity to dedicate a building to Paul Harris, Rotary's founder. He also proposed that sponsoring the building could become an objective of The Rotary Foundation, which at the time had no regular programs.

The 1944 convention delegates approved expanding the headquarters search beyond Chicago. Thirty clubs expressed interest in having the headquarters located in or near their cities. Committee members visited seven of the cities and ultimately recommended Denver, Colorado, USA, as the site for headquarters.

The recommendation surprised members and the Chicago community. The group representing Chicago met with the Board and highlighted the city's status as a financial and transportation center accessible by rail and air. Representatives also reinforced the connection between Rotary and the city, noting that "Chicago business and civic leaders have a justifiable pride centered in the fact that Rotary is an offspring of Chicago."

Proposals to relocate to Denver were debated at length and finally rejected at the 1946 and 1947 conventions.

Making Evanston home

In January 1952, the Board decided to "immediately and energetically" begin looking for land or a building in Chicago or the vicinity. That August, a lot was purchased in Evanston. The November issue of *The Rotarian* (as Rotary magazine was then known) previewed sketches and details of the new three-story building, which was distinguished by a large granite staircase, monolithic columns, and angled building

wings. Inside the building were modern systems and features, including an acoustic ceiling treatment and air conditioning.

Rotary leaders gathered at 1600 Ridge Avenue for a groundbreaking ceremony in 1953, and the building opened in August of the following year. In that first month, 250 Rotary members and friends visited to see it for themselves.

Despite initial room to grow and a later addition, Rotary eventually outgrew that space. In 1987, Rotary purchased the building on Sherman Avenue in Evanston from Baxter Travenol Laboratories. Known today as One Rotary Center, that building is still home to Rotary International World Headquarters and welcomes more than 2,000 visitors a year.

## International Assembly



The Rotary International Board of Directors has taken the decision to prioritize the health and safety of our participants by moving the 2021 International Assembly to a virtual format to be held 1-11 February 2021.

Governors-elect and selected Rotaractors will come together virtually to discuss the impact of our service, the power of Rotarians and Rotaractors to do good in the world and the importance of telling our story. We'll also focus on membership and how Rotary leaders can empower each and every member to play a role in growing Rotary.

Governor-elect partners will enjoy a robust program of their own, discuss Rotary's Action Plan as well as Rotary's membership, service, and Rotary Foundation programs and initiatives.

All participants will be invited to participate in ongoing discussion groups, activities and challenges designed to prepare and inspire them for the year ahead.

# Sanitation Solutions for Island Paradise



Rotary presence in the Pacific region was recently bolstered by the return of Rotary to the small island nation of Kiribati. The newly chartered Rotary Club of Tarawa, Kiribati, has hit the ground running by partnering with the Rotary Club of Richfield, US, and the Rotary Club of Otahuhu, NZ, to score a whopping \$100,000 global grant for the Kiribati Sanitation Project.

The project will provide three Betio commu-

nities – Ueen te Uri, Ueen te Tangira and Uaan Kunkun – with access to high-standard sanitation buildings, each comprising of five toilets and two shower facilities for the shared use of all families.

"We are ecstatic with this opportunity to tackle pressing issues head and bum on!" said club president and project coordinator Ruth Cross.

"Kiribati is a very special place, an untouched secret paradise. But it's a country that is challenged by its remote location, so it remains without access to the kinds of resources and opportunities many might take for granted. No one in this day and age should be without access to a toilet and we are determined to reclaim our beaches for romantic walks instead of toilet facilities!"

The success of this application was due to the joint efforts of key individuals and collaborating organisations, whose commitment to combating open defecation will help families in communities with a dignified solution. More than 110 households and 500 individuals will directly benefit from the sanitation project to provide facilities and WASH training for happier and healthier solutions for the people in these three communities.

The project started on November 2, with plans to handover by December 4.

Ruth invites you to learn more about beautiful Kiribati. Zoom teleport holidays into the heart of the Pacific are available twice a week.



*Shubhankar Mondal  
10th November!*

*Preetam Ghosh  
13th November!*



*Nausheen & Md Firoz  
14th November!*