



BLISS



AN OFFICIAL BULLETIN OF ROTARY CLUB OF CALCUTTA NORTH EAST Rotary International District 3291

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We meet every alternate Thursday at THE ANTELOPE, 3, Ho Chi Minh Sarani, Kolkata - 700071 at 8.00 pm.		
Rtn Angana Paul President	Rtn Sabyasachi Roy Secretary	PP Rtn Chandra Kumar Paul Treasurer
		PP Rtn Subhashis Ghosh Editor

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PP RTN VIVEKANANDA BHOWMICK

A monumental club project in South Dakota

By Kristen Pope

It would be, quite simply, the largest sculpture in the world: a colossal likeness of Crazy Horse, the Oglala Lakota chief, on a galloping stallion carved into the granite of a mountain in the Black Hills of South Dakota. But in 1949, about a year into the project, sculptor Korczak Ziolkowski ran into a vexing problem. He needed stairs. Lots of them.

“It was a very tedious process, and he just wasn’t moving as fast as he wanted, so he put a request out to the community,” says Marguerite Cullum, a retired staff librarian at the Crazy Horse Memorial, which manages the site.

Answering the call was the nearby Rotary Club of Custer. The members’ task was to help assemble a 700-foot wooden staircase running from the valley floor to the top of Thunderhead Mountain. They formed a human chain, passing each piece of lumber – 29 tons of it – from person to person up the side of the mountain to help construct the 741 steps. “Think how risky that was for them,” says Cullum, a past president of the club and its current secretary. “And they went and did it, and, as far as I know, they were the only ones that showed up. I couldn’t find that any anybody else attended.”

Thus began a long-standing collaboration and friendship between the Custer club and the Crazy Horse Memorial Foundation, which would grow beyond the monument to establish a museum and an educational institution, Crazy Horse Memorial University, that offers college credit in several academic programs and prepares Native American students to succeed in higher education.

Whitney Rencountre II is chief executive officer of the memorial today. He is Crow Creek Hunkpati Dakota from the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe. Because the foundation runs solely on donations and accepts no government funding, partners like the Rotary club are critically important. “As a nonprofit organization, we rely on collaborations and those many volunteers through the years to help us advance the work, our mission, and our dream here,” Rencountre says.

The idea for the monument began in the late 1930s with Lakota Chief Henry Standing Bear, who watched Mount Rushmore taking shape 10 miles away elsewhere in the Black Hills and wanted to show that his people had great heroes. The man he chose to honor was his cousin, Tasunke Witko, whose name translates to His Horse Is Wild or Crazy Horse, a leader best known for defeating Lieutenant Colonel George Custer and the Army’s 7th Cavalry at the Battle of Little Bighorn.

In 1939, Standing Bear wrote to Ziolkowski, a Boston-born sculptor who had assisted at Mount Rushmore, to invite him to take the job. Ziolkowski began construction in 1948 and devoted the rest of his life to the project until his death in 1982 at age 74.

Each year, more than 1 million people visit the memorial, which remains a work in progress. The 87-foot, 6-inch-tall face was finished in 1998, and sculptors are working on other parts of the mammoth artwork, such as the 263-foot outstretched arm.

While the monument is not without critics – some object to the reshaping of a sacred mountain or contend that the some of the funding could



The Rotary Club of Custer on a tour of the mountaintop.
Courtesy of Crazy Horse Memorial Foundation



Rotary members formed a human chain to move lumber needed for stairs to assist the sculptor. Sculptor Korczak Ziolkowski talks with Chief Henry Standing Bear at the monument site.

Courtesy of Crazy Horse Memorial Foundation

have gone directly to tribes – the Rotary club is dedicated to its relationship with the organization. “Crazy Horse is an important part of Custer,” says Club President Jason Ferguson. “And we want to be partners with entities like [them because their] mission is great.”

That mission includes themes important to Rotary members. Intended to honor all Indigenous people of North America, the memorial, according to its website, “stands as a reminder of the importance of reconciliation, respecting differences, embracing diversity, striving for unity, and appreciating life’s deeper meaning as it has always been represented in Native American cultural values.”

With an annual donation, the club has supported the Crazy Horse Memorial University, where hundreds of Native students have earned college credit through short academic programs and gone on to pursue degrees at other colleges and universities. “They get wraparound support to help them understand what [is needed] to be successful in college,” Rencountre says. The school, which also offers internships at the memorial, partners with Black Hills State University and hopes to one day receive its own accreditation. The memorial foundation has also awarded more than \$2 million in scholarships.

Over the years, the club has invited representatives of the university and the memorial to present at meetings and share their work and progress. “We appreciate when they come and educate us on what’s going on up there because it’s just fascinating stuff,” Ferguson says. The club had a chance to observe the monument’s progress firsthand when members toured the top of the mountain. “The view up there is unbelievable,” Ferguson adds.

The club has also relied on the memorial as a venue for events like a Christmas party and its wine-tasting and raffle fundraisers. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the memorial offered the club a conference room to host remote and socially distanced meetings after the group could no longer gather at its usual location. “That was a huge thing to keep us pulled together, that we didn’t dissolve.

We’re still going strong,” says Cullum, who was a club president during the pandemic. “It’s a good bond. It’s good to know that we can ask for help.”

Rencountre shares that sentiment: “The Rotary collaboration that we’ve had through the years has really helped us to advance the work of the mission and the dream, the vision of Crazy Horse Memorial.”

A memorial with a Mission

A look at the purpose of the Crazy Horse Memorial Foundation:

Finish the world’s largest sculpture to honor Crazy Horse and all Indigenous people of North America

Provide educational and cultural programming to encourage reconciliation and unity

Serve as a repository for Native American artifacts, arts, and crafts

Operate the Crazy Horse Memorial University to provide a pathway to higher education for Native students



Today’s club members continue to support the foundation, including its Crazy Horse Memorial University, where hundreds of Native students have earned college credit.

Image credit: Dawn E. Lebeau

Family Corner

Congratulations!

Members of

Rotary Club of Calcutta North East

heartily congratulates

Anuttam Chattopadhyay

son of PP Rin Ramprasad Chattopadhyay,

on successfully completing

*his **MBBS** from*

R. G. Kar Medical College and Hospital.



Project Report - Spreading Awareness at the Heart of Maniktala

Rotary Club of Calcutta North East observed World Thalassemia Day on 8th May through an awareness campaign at Maniktala Bazaar. RCCNE members placed awareness banners at key locations and distributed informative leaflets among shopkeepers and shoppers to spread awareness about thalassemia prevention, screening, and care within the community. The project was attended by PP Rtn Chandra Kumar Paul, IPP Rtn Subasish Haldar and President Rtn Anagan Paul. President Rtn Angana Paul and PP Rtn Ramprasad Chattopadhyay attended the Thalassemia Summit 2026 at ICCR, Kolkata on the same day.





Members of RCCNE at DLA 2026

Members of RCCNE attended the DLA 2026 held at the Hyatt Regency, Kolkata on 17th May, 2026. The club was recognized as a Bronze award winner for attendance of 10+ members at the event. A total of 12 members attended the event.





In an effort to elevate the living standards of weavers in Begumpur, RCCNE completely renovated the homes of three weavers.

ROTARY CLUB OF CALCUTTA NORTHEAST

Minutes of Regular Meeting No. 1645

Date : 23rd April, 2026, Time : 8.00 pm.

Venue : Builders Association of India, Chowringhee Court, 1st Floor, 55 Chowringhee Road, Kolkata - 700071.

The meeting commenced with the singing of the National Anthem, led by Past President Rtn. Srikanta Basu Mallik. President Rtn. Angana Paul then called the meeting to order and congratulated the children of PP Rtn. Vivekananda Bhowmick for their outstanding achievements and the successful completion of MBBS by his daughter and CBSE Class 12 by his son.

Project & Events Completed

The President proudly announced that on 27th April 2026, RCCNE donated a television to the Gynaecology Outdoor Ward of NRS Medical College for the benefit of patients. Health drinks and nutritious dry foods were also distributed among mothers and newborns at the Neonatal Care Unit. The Principal of the department inaugurated the project in the presence of RCCNE members. The television was sponsored by PP

Rtn. Srikanta Basu Mallik. PP Rtn. Chandra Kumar Paul and Club Secretary Rtn. Sabyasachi Roy attended the project along with President Rtn. Angana Paul. She further reported on the successful execution of another project undertaken on 6th May 2026 at Rajabasha Primary School, Jhargram. RCCNE donated two computers, one printer, one Aquaguard, and one UPS for the students. Around 72 students were provided with dry food packets and lunch. The school teachers were also felicitated. PP Rtn. Subhasish Ghosh, PP Rtn. Chandra Kumar Paul, Club Secretary Rtn. Sabyasachi Roy, and President Rtn. Angana Paul attended the project.

Upcoming Projects & Events

The President informed the members that on 8th May 2026, World Thalassaemia Day would be observed by the District. In the morning, an awareness activity would be conducted at Howrah Station. A car rally organized by RC East Calcutta would start from Rotary Bhavan, Beliaghata, Kolkata. On the same day, RCCNE would organize an awareness activity at Maniktala Bazar, followed by a seminar in the evening organized by the District at ICCR, Kolkata. RCCNE would contribute Rs. 10,000 towards the District initiative.

The project scheduled for 10th May 2026 to provide uniforms to 140 Civic Police volunteers of the Lake Town Traffic Guard was postponed due to administrative changes within the Traffic Guard department. A revised date would be announced in upcoming meetings.

The President also announced that on the Club Charter Day, 12th June 2026, RCCNE would organize a special project for the distribution of artificial limbs at Mahavir Seva Sadan. A total of 41 beneficiaries would receive artificial limbs on that day. The cost per limb would be Rs. 3,000 for legs and Rs. 6,000 for hands. Charter Night would also be celebrated in the evening at BNR Club, Garden Reach.

Secretarial Report

Club Secretary Rtn. Sabyasachi Roy:

- Extended thanks to all members present.
- Confirmed the minutes of the previous meeting.
- Conveyed birthday and anniversary greetings to members and their families.
- Announced that the next Regular Meeting would be held on 21st May 2026.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned by President Rtn. Angana Paul. The session concluded with fellowship and snacks sponsored by the President.

Minutes Prepared By

Rtn Sabyasachi Roy, Club Secretary

Birthday Greetings

29 May : Sreejani, D/o Rtn Saumendra Mohan Rakshit

01 Jun : Ayush, S/o Rtn Vivekananda Bhowmick

06 Jun : Debayan, S/o Rtn Suven Mukherjee

06 Jun : Bhuvanesh, S/o Rtn Salil Kr. Chandra