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VICE PRESIDENT & TREASURER

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Rtne. Gita Krishnan

Rtn. PHF Shantha Mathew

Rtn. PHF PP Joseph Maleieckal

NEXT MEETING

Will intimate later



BULLETIN OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF COCHIN

THE COCHIN ROTARIAN

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AGM OF THE CLUB FOR THE RY 2024- 25



AGM of the Club for the RY 2024-25 was held on 18th December at Balbhavan and chaired by the President Rtn. Rajesh Nair. At the meeting, President announced the nominations received for the position of seven voting Directors for the RY 2025-26, and they were declared unanimously elected, as there were no other nominations received. President informed the General Body that Rtn. Michealle Niaz, who is the President Elect for RY 2024-25 will be the President for the RY 2025-26. M/s Varma & Varma were appointed as auditors for the RY 2024-25, as there were no objections from the members of the general body. Rtn. Michealle Niaz then presented the audited accounts for

the RY 2023-24 to the members present and the same was passed by the General body. She also shared the Budget vs Actuals for both Income and expenditure for the current year for the information of the members. President thanked the Board Advisors for their guidance rendered.

Newly elected voting directors for the RY 2025-26, with Rtn. Michealle Niaz as incoming President.

- Rtn. Gayatri Krishnan
- Rtn. Arun D. Mookken
- Rtn. Gautam Sreedharan
- Rtn. Srikantan Suryanarayan
- Rtn. Dr. P.T. Mathew
- Rtn. Razin Rahman C.P.
- Rtn. John Mathew Anthraper.



MOTHER LUCY

Three million years ago, she was sitting on top of a tall tree looking towards the sea in the distance. Her name was 'Dinkinesh' or 'Marvellous'. She was a skilled climber of tall trees gathering tender leaves and vines from top branches that was cleaner and healthier to eat. Her husband, of late had been very critical of a new style of walking of hers, an upright style on two legs. He was worried Dinkinesh would develop knee problems having put the whole weight of body on them. Moreover, he figured she would have tight muscles that was required to stay upright. She would have reduced nimbleness and ability to climb trees.

Dinkinesh had observed that the husband and a gang of friends and her little daughter named 'Neelimali' spent a lot of time at the water front collecting logs and vines to make barges to travel on water. They were saying there were lands across the water where delicious fruits and vegetables grew which was better than the tasteless leaves and figs. There were tall trees with no branches but with big fruits

containing invigorating sweet water. The husband promised he and daughter would return and take Dinkinesh to settle down in the new found land.

One early morning, the daughter Neelimali woke up the mother, kissed her and ran away to the waterfront. The one meter tall Dinkinesh felt a pang of sadness but walked to the tallest tree. She felt some pain on the thigh bone where a wretched wild pig had bit her. She visualised the daughter eating juicy fruits in the new land, no more figs and grass. May be the husband would bring bright glittering stones like the stars in the sky for her to wear around the neck. She wanted to see them embarking on this adventure. She climbed the tallest tree and took the jump to the top most branch. She felt a stiffness on the thigh muscles and as she fell, Dinkinesh realised she would not be able to live with Neelimali in the new land.

Professor Donald Johnson, the Archaeologist was a firm believer in the existence of fossils of *Australopithecus*, *Afarensis* in Ethio-

pia, the crucible of early human development. Fossils of immediate predecessors of *Homo Sapiens* would open up new evidence of walking on two legs. He and a young team of diggers worked hard cheered by Beatles song 'Lucy in the sky with Diamonds' played continuously from a portable player. That was when Johnson found a thigh bone with an animal bite mark. He found around the area a skull and bones of hand and leg of the right side and rib cage. Johnson could tell it was a skeleton of a meter tall female but with the damaged side, who he named Lucy after the Beatles song. Studies in the United States showed knees similar to those who walked on two legs. Her age was found to be 3.30 million years. Prof Johnson was very happy when Mitochondrial DNA was found on Lucy which as research had shown was inherited by successive generations of daughters from Neelimali to all new generations. Dinkinesh was the Mitochondrial Eve, the Mother Lucy of all humanity.

PP Rtn. Joseph Billy Malieckal

NO LIMITS WITH ACCESSIBLE TRAVEL

Travel has long been a source of inspiration, joy, and discovery, but for travellers with disabilities, it often comes with unique challenges. Barriers, both physical and systemic, can make exploring the world daunting. However, the tide is turning, with growing efforts to break down these obstacles and make travel inclusive for everyone.

From accessible hiking trails to improved airport services, innovative projects are transforming the

travel experience for people with disabilities. This shift is not only empowering travellers but also reshaping the way society views accessibility.

Trails Without Barriers

Nestled on the edge of Yarmouth, Maine, the West Side Trail is a testament to what's possible when accessibility is prioritized. Designed with gentle slopes, flat terrain, and flush wooden planks on board-

walks, this trail invites everyone, regardless of mobility challenges, to enjoy the beauty of nature. Dan Ostrye, trail coordinator and member of the Rotary Club of Yarmouth, explains that accessibility isn't just about meeting the needs of a specific group—it's about creating sustainable designs that benefit all users.

In Canada, the Winnipeg-Charleswood Rotary Club is spearheading similar efforts at the As-

siniboine Forest, one of the largest urban forests in the country. Their work includes upgrading facilities, hardening trail surfaces, and ensuring that the forest can be enjoyed by everyone.

Bridging the Gaps in Air Travel

While progress is evident on the ground, air travel remains a significant hurdle. For individuals using wheelchairs or other mobility aids, flying is often fraught with frustrations. Damaged or delayed equipment, inaccessible plane designs, and limited facilities make the experience challenging.

Peter Tonge, a frequent traveler and accessibility consultant, has personally faced these issues, with his wheelchair damaged multiple times during flights. Despite these setbacks, Tonge continues to advocate for change, leveraging his experiences to raise awareness and push for better policies.

Empowering Travel Through Information

Accessibility isn't just about physical infrastructure; it's also about information. Maayan Ziv, founder of the platform Access Now, believes that empowering travelers with detailed accessibility information allows them to plan trips that suit their needs. Her platform includes crowd-sourced reports on features like sensory details, accessible bathrooms, and more.

In Fort Lauderdale, Florida, such efforts have resulted in innovative solutions like beach mats and big-tire wheelchairs, allowing individu-

als with mobility challenges to enjoy the sand and surf.

A Growing Market for Inclusive Tourism

The travel industry is beginning to recognize the immense potential of accessible tourism. With Americans with disabilities spending nearly \$59 billion annually on travel, hotels, and platforms like Wheel the World, businesses are in-

of travel are outweighed by the rewards. A lifelong adventurer, Sygall has hitchhiked across New Zealand and cycled Scotland's rugged landscapes, proving that the world is open to those who dare to explore.

Sygall emphasizes the importance of shifting the narrative from "if" to "how." Through resources, tools, and determination, travel becomes not just a possibility but a transformative experience.



Rotary's Role in Accessibility

As Rotarians, the commitment to Service Above Self extends to advocating for inclusivity and breaking down barriers for all. Projects like the West Side Trail and Assiniboine Forest improvements showcase the power of Rotary clubs to create meaningful change in their communities.

Accessible travel is about more than infrastructure; it's about fostering connections, broadening perspectives, and making the

world a place where everyone can thrive. By continuing to champion inclusivity, Rotary is playing a vital role in ensuring that no one is left behind.

creasingly adapting to meet diverse needs. From lower beds to group tours designed with accessibility in mind, these changes reflect a broader cultural shift.

Joy Burns of Wheel the World highlights the ripple effect: as more people with disabilities travel, the demand for accessible options grows, prompting businesses to adapt.

The Joy of Exploration

For travelers like Susan Sygall, CEO and co-founder of Mobility International USA, the challenges

of travel are outweighed by the rewards. A lifelong adventurer, Sygall has hitchhiked across New Zealand and cycled Scotland's rugged landscapes, proving that the world is open to those who dare to explore.

Let us strive to create a world without limits, where every individual has the opportunity to explore, discover, and connect. Together, we can make accessible travel a reality for all.

This is an abstract from a story that originally appeared in the December 2024 issue of *Rotary* magazine.

Source : <https://www.rotary.org/en/no-limits-accessible-travel>.

CHRISTMAS: A SEASON OF JOY, GIVING, AND TOGETHERNESS

As the year winds down and the festive air takes over, Christmas emerges as a season of wonder and warmth, a time when the world seems to pause and embrace the magic of togetherness. It's a season that transcends religious and cultural boundaries, bringing people together to celebrate love, kindness, and hope. The twinkling lights, melodious carols, and the joyful anticipation of celebrations fill the air with an infectious energy that unites us all.

Christmas is more than just a day on the calendar; it is a spirit that lives in the hearts of those who cherish its message of peace and goodwill. It reminds us of the joy of giving and the importance of being there for one another. Whether it's the excitement of unwrapping gifts under the tree, the shared laughter over festive meals, or the quiet moments spent reflecting on the year gone by, Christmas has a way of bringing out the best in us.

For many, this time of year is a reminder to reconnect—with family, friends, and even with ourselves. It's an opportunity to pause and express gratitude for the blessings we've received and to acknowledge the lessons learned along the way. It's also a time to reach out to those who may feel alone or left out of the celebrations. After all, the true spirit of Christmas lies in sharing joy and making a difference in the lives of others.

As Rotarians, this season holds an even deeper significance. Service Above Self is at the core of everything we do, and Christmas gives us an opportunity to embody this principle in meaningful ways. Whether it's organizing food drives, donating essentials to the less fortunate, or simply lending a helping hand to someone in need, every act of kindness becomes a light in someone's life. In the hustle and bustle of the festivities, let us not forget the profound impact of a simple gesture—a warm smile, a kind word, or a heartfelt act of generosity.

The beauty of Christmas is that it allows us to blend tradition with the contemporary, faith with community, and personal joy with shared happiness. It's a time to honor the values of compassion, forgiveness, and unity, which are the essence of Rotary as well. As we gather

around our decorated trees and tables filled with festive treats, let us also come together to reaffirm our commitment to creating a brighter world.

This Christmas, let us choose to spread joy not just within our families and circles but to the world at large. Let us be the reason someone smiles, the reason someone feels loved, and the reason someone believes in the magic of Christmas.

On behalf of the Rotary family, I wish you and your loved ones a very Merry Christmas! May your homes be filled with laughter, your hearts with love, and your days with countless moments to cherish. May the new year bring you renewed hope, unshakable health, and continued success in all your endeavours.

As we celebrate the season of giving and gratitude, let us also take a moment to envision the impact we can create together. Here's to a Christmas filled with service, compassion, and the unyielding spirit of Rotary. Let us shine as beacons of hope, spreading cheer and kindness wherever we go.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! Let us keep the spirit of the season alive in all that we do. Together, we can make this world a little brighter, one act of kindness at a time

- By Rtn. Prathik Nayar



PP Rtn. Joseph Malieckal / Rtne. Rema	26 Dec
Rtn. Philip Mathew / Rtne. Aniamma	27 Dec
Rtn. Ninan Philip / Rtne. Elvy	28 Dec
Rtn. Sebastian Joseph Zacharias / Rtne. Aditi	29 Dec
Rtn. Francis John / Rtne. Leena	01 Jan



PP Rtn. V.M. Liaquat Ali	25 Dec
Rtn. Arundhaty Nayar	26 Dec
PP Rtn. K.P. Satish	28 Dec