



Rock Island Rotary Weekly Review

January 11, 2021: Volume XXVIII, Issue 27

MEETING EVERY TUESDAY NOON - QUAD CITY BOTANICAL CENTER



STATE OF THE CITY

Mike Thoms, Mayor
City of Rock Island



Jan. – Feb. Calendar

Jan 19 - TBA

Jan 26 - TBA

Feb 2 - TBA

Feb 9 - TBA

Feb 16 - TBA

Feb 23 - TBA

Today Rock Island Rotary joined with Rock Island Kiwanis to hear Mayor Mike Thom's annual "State of the City" address. Mike is a lifelong resident of Rock Island and has been a member of Trinity Lutheran Church for approximately 42 years. He and his wife Sara have been married for 40 years and have 3 grown children, Jordan, Stephanie, and Elizabeth and 10 grandchildren. He retired after 29 years at Thoms-Proestler Co., a family-owned wholesale food service, where he held several positions, including dockworker, inventory control, buyer, warehouse manager, and Vice President of Operations. Currently in addition to his mayoral duties, he is developing various residential and commercial properties including Airport Minute Suites. Prior to his election in 2017, Mike served as president of Renaissance Rock Island, a non-profit economic development organization in the City of Rock Island, and served on several City of Rock Island boards, including Boaters Advisory Board and Stormwater Runoff Appeals Board. He has also been involved in many community boards including: Trinity Health Foundation, Trinity Regional Health Systems, German-American Heritage Society, the Illinois Quad City Chamber of Commerce, Family Museum of Arts & Science, Niabi Zoological Society, Two Rivers YMCA, U.S. Bank Advisory Board, HavLife, Junior Achievement, Bethany for Children and Families, Putnam Museum, and worked on various projects like RiverVision, school referendums, and fundraisers for Skip-A-Long Child Care, Child Abuse Council and the Quad City Symphony. We are proud to note that Mike is a member of Rock Island Rotary. Today's speech was perhaps the most detailed and complete report on City affairs in many years. The Mayor first noted that the COVID pandemic made it a very difficult year for all and for the city. Huge amounts of revenue were lost because of businesses being shut down and therefore bringing in no sales tax. Mayor Thoms noted that Jumer's alone normally accounts for \$350,000 per month in city revenue. In addition, the city began the year (pre-coronavirus) short of revenue and considering a 6% increase in city taxes. COVID and an outpouring of complaints caused the city to drop the idea of any tax increase and looked to ways to reduce spending. The city is now operating with fewer employees than in 2019 and have delayed various projects to save money and avoid increasing taxes. The City has also worked hard to obtain state and federal grants so that many of the planned projects could go forward. Noting how proud he is of the city staff and employees; the mayor then provided a detailed report on each city department. He said the Parks and Recreation Department had maintained 80 programs during the past year with over 5,500 residents participating. Both municipal golf courses were opened and remained self-supporting. Work at Douglas Park progressed as did renovation of the Hauberg Community Center, both through funding from grants. Rock Island's White Water Junction was the only municipal pool that opened and operated through the summer and did so safely. The Mayor stated that the Martin Luther King Center continued its active community involvement including serving their annual Thanksgiving Dinner – this year on a carry out basis – with a record number of 3,000 complete dinners being served.

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Officers

Angela Campbell President
Justin Peterson, 1st Vice Pres.
Cindi Gramenz, 2nd Vice Pres.
Anne McGlynn, Secretary
Carrie Crossen, Treasurer
Mark Mayeski, Past President

Board Members

Howard Beck
Kim Calhoun
Molly Shattuck
Eric Westphall
John Daly
Chris Lemon
Sue Rector
Gary Rowe
Bob Swanson Co-Sgt.-at-Arms
Cindi Gramenz Co-Sgt.-at-Arms

Program Chairs

2019-20

Aug – Sept Rebecca Arnold
Oct – Nov John Daly
Dec – Jan John Wetzel
Feb – Mar Gary Rowe
Apr – May Bill Stengel
June – July Tom Hammar
Have a program idea? Contact
the chairman listed above for a
possible date.

Club Notes & Announcements!

- ☐ **WELCOME GUESTS** – Today with a huge attendance (75+) we did not take time from the mayor's address to introduce guests; but noticed in the crowd Duncan Cameron a visiting Rotarian from the Naples Florida Club, and several other visiting Rotarians from clubs in Illinois and Iowa. Also joining us were Sara Thoms, Rock Island's "First Lady", Tom Thoms, the mayor's brother, and several of the mayor's grown children. We also had several representatives from lo9cal media present.
- ☐ **WORKING TOGETHER** – Not only did our President and the Kiwanis President share a computer for today's meeting, Kiwanian Joan Kranovich took care of publicity for today's event. Thanks Joan for a great job!
- ☐ **HELP NEEDED** – AT HEART OF HOPE FOOD PANTRY Volunteers are needed from 3:30pm to 5:30pm every Thursday to help make up food packages and assist in handing them to needy recipients. It is strictly as drive thru, no contact distribution. Heart of Hope also needs old grocery sacks. They also have a clothing ministry and need donations of clothes. Older or slightly used men's, women's, and children's clothing will be appreciated. This time of year, coats, gloves, and caps, as well as warm pants and shirts/blouses are greatly appreciated. Project chair Steve Morenz will arrange to collect sacks and clothing. Email Steve at smorenz3@gmail.com.
- ☐ **BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING** – Is set for 11:45am next Monday via ZOOM. The agenda will be sent to all members along with an invitation to join the meeting. All Board meetings are open to club members. It's a great way to keep up to date on what's going on and offers you an opportunity to voice your opinion on matters of importance to you.
DON'T FORGET - We need either your \$20 check and filled out stubs, or the five WINE RAFFLE tickets that were sent to you, returned to Anne McGlynn, at 11502 - 47th St., Milan, IL 61264 or dropped off to Kathy Trone at Wessels & Wierman law firm, 423 -17th Street, Rock Island.
- ☐ **HAVE ITEMS FOR OUR NEWSLETTER?** Email items, including photos to Bob Swanson at bobdebswanson@att.net.

ROTARY OLDIES QUIZES

Next Week the prizes will be revealed, and the winners announced in our "How Well Do You Know Your Oldies" quizzes. Plus, watch for special details on how you can get one or more of our fantastic and unique prizes, even if you didn't enter or win our contests! Rotary finds ways to have fun when we can't socialize and enjoy the things we normally do!



ROCK ISLAND ROTARY NAMES HONORARY MEMBER

At our December meeting our Board of Directors named Lo Milani as our newest Honorary member. Italo "Lo" Milani joined Rock Island Rotary in 2007 and for the past 13 years has been a stalwart in attendance and support of our club. Frequently seen at the Sergeant at Arms table, Lo served as a Sergeant's Aide helping with attendance, badges, and setting up and taking down our banners, flags, rostrum, and raffle materials. Speaking of raffle, Lo established what has become a club tradition by donating a bottle of fine wine each week for our raffle drawing. Lo has served on the Blood Drive, Fun, EarlyAct and Salvation Army Bell Ringing Committees. He is a dedicated supporter of Club events and activities, our exchange sons and daughters, and fundraising projects. Lo joins a very special, small group of our Club's Honorary Members: Jay Stanley, Don Peterson, Fred Houlton, and Sam Doak. Health issues kept Lo from attending recently, but we look forward to seeing him once again in regular attendance when we resume in person meetings.



Italo "Lo" Milani

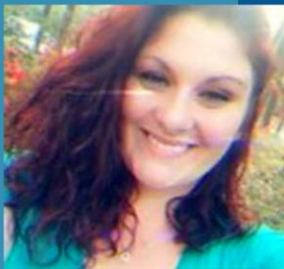
MAYESKI NEPHEW OUR MOST RECENT PAUL HARRIS FELLOW



Club past president, Mark Mayeski honored his nephew, Izaak Hunter of Rock Spring, Wyoming with a Paul Harris award. Izaak is the son of Mark's wife's sister Julie Hunter. A Rotarian who donates \$1,000 to the Rotary Foundation (which may be accumulated over time) earns the designation of "Paul Harris Fellow". The honor may be taken in the Rotarian's name or may be designated by the Rotarian to honor or memorialize another person. Himself a Paul Harris Fellow, Mark previously honored his wife Kimberly, daughters Madelyn and Maya, and parents John and Fran, as Paul Harris Fellows. To assist our Club members, Rock Island Rotary will contribute \$400 once a member Rotarian's donations have reached \$600.



ROTARIANS CAN JOIN TWO GREAT PROGRAMS!



January Speaker Information

INTERNATIONAL END HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS MONTH

January 14 at 7 a.m. CST

Hear Jessica Hamlet's story about human exploitation and not just surviving but overcoming.



January 28 at 7 a.m. CST

Learn more about modern slavery and the private sector from Matt Friedman.



Click on the link to join <https://endhtrotaryclub.org/speakers>

"Mayor" Continued from page 1 –

Turning to public safety, Mayor Thoms reported that the police department continued an outstanding record of service with Officer Zachary Costas named by the Knights of Columbus as "Police Officer of the Year 2020". Thoms mentioned that even with COVID, the police are required to be out in the public often unable to social distance. As a result, numerous officers were forced to quarantine after having contact with COVID infected or suspected infected persons, resulting in a departmental manpower shortage. The department worked through the hardship and services were reliably provided. Turning to the Fire department the mayor reported that Rock Island fire personnel completed a new 1st Responder course this year and continued providing free fire detectors to citizens. They also put a new pumper truck into service. The Knights of Columbus recognized Lieutenant Jason Leemans as the 2020 Firefighter of the Year. Next on the Mayor's list of departments was Human Resources (HR). The city was able to continue its wellness clinic, reviewed and updated municipal policies, and authorized MetroNet to begin offering high speed internet service to Rock Island citizens adding additional competition for service providers and hopefully helping to keep prices down. The Public Works Department also had a busy year in part because of the surprise mid-August derecho storm that hit the Quad Cities. Public Works picked up and hauled away 20,000 cubic yards of debris. The department also is doing a 13.8-million-dollar upgrade to city sewer and water systems and equipment including new highly efficient HVAC systems for city buildings and new LED streetlights. Much was accomplished through grants and at no cost to taxpayers. The City also entered a 10-year partnership with the Rock Island Arsenal for providing water and street maintenance service for Arsenal Island. This will bring in \$120,000 in annual revenue to the city. A federal grant of \$1.4 million was obtained to repair flood damage at Sunset Marina. Improvements will include an upgrade in electrical service and repair or replacement of several docking facilities. Turning attention to our City Library, the mayor was proud to tout the new Mobile Library which helped provide hot spots for internet access when area schools began remote learning, assisted in the census data collection, and provided a "stay at home" way for citizens to obtain library services. The Library established a Home Bound Program, created a new Mobile Library APP, and created e-cards so citizens could sign up and obtain library services online. The library also created a curbside pickup and drop off service. [Proud to say our President is Director of the Rock Island Public Library.] The Information & Technology (IT) Department also had an extremely busy year. With COVID, many city employees and departments were forced to work from home. The IT department was responsible for getting these people set up so they could effectively operate from home. No small task considering the hundred of city employees and diverse location of residences. Turning to the Finance Department the Mayor was proud to report, 1) No increase in taxes for 2021, 2) A balanced budget for 2020 and 2021. 3) Bonds refinance or retired saving the city money. And 4) Improved the city's credit rating from A- to A+. All of this accomplished in a pandemic year with a huge loss of revenue! Regarding Economic Development Mayor Thoms praised getting a National Historic Area designation for the Rock Island downtown. This will make obtaining loan for improving the area easier to get and at a lower interest rate. He also said the city had a record-breaking year in home renovation projects, assisting with renovations to 48 residences. He said the City zoning code was updated and completed. The City also entered a new 3-year agreement with DARI to assist with Rock Island Economic Development. DARI agreed to hire 2 new employees to work with city personnel on economic growth. Mayor Thoms also stated that during the pandemic the city had obtained grants and loans for businesses and established the Rock Island Forward Program which helps business identify grants they might qualify for and provides the necessary forms for applying. During 2020, 87 Rock Island businesses received \$330,000 in new grants. In addition, over \$5 million in federal and state grants were obtained through numerous COVID relief programs. During the pandemic Rock Island saw 10 new businesses created and 15 others expanded, while to date it appears just one business was permanently lost. The Mayor observed that some of the challenges of the pandemic year will provide benefits for the future. He said businesses adapted with carry out and outdoor dining services established and likely will remain. Looking ahead the Mayor said \$9.7 million is targeted for investment in downtown revitalization for 2021. He expects that the aged sewer and water lines under 11th street will be replaced in 2021 and is hoping a grant which has been submitted will provide for repaving the entire street. Overall, he summed up an extremely challenging year as one in which Rock Island maintained all city services, approved no tax increase, obtained millions in grants, balanced the budget, improved our credit rating, and continued tax incentives for business growth and development. When asked what city projects were delayed to help balance the budget, Mayor Toms said a hiring freeze was implemented, some road projects were deferred, vehicle purchases were delayed, and some maintenance projects were also postponed. Overall, our City appears to be in excellent shape and weathering the pandemic very well. Thanks, Mayor, for an excellent and positive update. Thanks to Kiwanis for joining us for the 2021 State of the City Address.



FOUNDATION MINUTE

Welcome to Week 2 of Rotary International's Month of Vocational Service.

The village of Sae Sabona, situated in sub-Saharan Niger, is inhabited by 7,500 individuals who eke out a dry existence on a parched landscape with no rain for 10 months of the year. When the rain finally comes in the months of July and August, much of it is contaminated; but it is the villagers' only source for drinking and bathing.

David Smith of The Rotary Club of Pagosa Springs, Colorado, described in a report how his club, working with Rotary Clubs in Vienna, Austria, and Niamey, Niger sponsored a well that provides water for drinking, bathing, and irrigation for the people of Sae Sabona. The \$70,000 project was funded in a Global Grant by TRF. According to Smith, the 350-foot-deep well provides more than 1,000 gallons of clean water a day for the people. Aside from the health benefit, the well has opened a new source of livelihood for villagers. No fewer than 180 women from the community are growing high value crops such as tomatoes, onions, and lettuce, on the irrigated land. Sale of these crops provides both income and food for their families. Smith admits that the Rotary Club of Pagosa Springs is pleased to be part of the three-continent project aimed at combating "deep poverty". He stated that the motto of Rotary International, "Service above self," applies to both individuals and communities.

Vocational Service is one of Rotary's Avenues of Service.

Through Vocational Service we:

- **Serve** others by using our unique skills to address community needs
- **Empower** others through training and skill development
- **Inspire** others to act with integrity by following Rotary's guiding principles (rotary.org)

Rock Island Rotary Trivia Night April 2021

Serving our community through our generosity of time, talent, and treasure



It is NOT too early to start collecting great ideas and items for our Silent Auction.

Sue has already started collecting some favorite products to make a Sustainable Products Basket, and there are always great sales around the holidays, closeouts from the summer that we can take advantage of not to mention re-gifting opportunities!! And she's got a stash of baskets if you will need one and is happy to take random items and put them together to make great baskets if you don't want to do a full basket.



Give Sue a call or e-mail with questions or donations. She will store things until April!

Sue Rector....563-343-7985.... srector3614@gmail.com



Rock Island Rotary TRIVIA NIGHT

Friday, April 16th at 6:30pm

SAVE the DATE and get your team together for Rock Island Rotary's annual fundraiser!

Cash prizes, cash bar, 50/50, silent auction and TONS of FUN with MR. TRIVIA!!!

This fundraiser supports Earl Hanson Elementary School and RI Rotary Community Grants. Corporate Sponsorships are available!

When: Friday, April 16th, 2021

Time: 6:30pm START time, doors open at 5:45pm

Where: Milan Community Center, 2701 1st Street East, Milan

Cost: \$100 a table, up to 10 players

RSVP: Kathy Trone 309-794-9400 or Kathy@wesselspc.com

MORE FOOTBALL HUMOR FROM GENESEO ROTARIAN, BOB ORSI ---

"The only qualifications for a lineman are to be big and dumb. To be a back, you only have to be dumb." - Knute Rockne / Notre Dame

"We didn't tackle well today, but we made up for it by not blocking."
- John McKay / USC

"I've found that prayers work best when you have big players."
- Knute Rockne / Notre Dame

Ohio State's Urban Meyer on one of his players:

"He doesn't know the meaning of the word fear. In fact, I just saw his grades and he doesn't know the meaning of a lot of words."

How many Michigan State freshmen football players does it take to change a light bulb?
None. That's a sophomore course.

How did the Auburn football player die from drinking milk?
The cow fell on him.

Two Texas A&M football players were walking in the woods. One of them said, "Look, a dead bird."
The other looked up in the sky and said, "Where?"

"I asked Darrell Royal, the coach of the Texas Longhorns, why he didn't recruit me."
He said, "Well, Walt, we took a look at you, and you weren't any good." Walt Garrison / Oklahoma State

How can you tell if a Clemson football player has a girlfriend?
There's tobacco juice on both sides of the pickup truck.

University of Michigan Coach Jim Harbaugh is only going to dress half of his players for the game this week. The other half will have to dress themselves.