

# Rotary



# WEEKLY REVIEW

UNITE FOR GOOD

Rotary Club of Rock Island

Rock Island, Illinois

Meeting Tuesdays at Noon – Quad City Botanical Center

March 31, 2026

Volume XXXIII, Issue 39



INSURING LIVES  
SUPPORTING WOMEN  
SERVING COMMUNITIES<sup>SM</sup>

Today Rock Island Rotary held our meeting at the National Headquarters of Royal Neighbors of America, a non-profit fraternal insurance company with its home base located in Rock Island. Virtually all of our members have heard the name Royal Neighbors and have admired their iconic National Headquarters with its beautiful bronze entry doors, but far fewer had previously been inside the building or were familiar with how a fraternal insurance organization works or the multitude of community services provided by the organization and their members. We appreciated their invitation and came away with a much better understanding of Royal Neighbors and their importance in our community. But we begin our report with a brief look at the history of the organization. In 1888, Marie Kirkland of Council Bluffs, Iowa placed a notice in her town newspaper asking the wives of Modern Woodmen of America members to meet for a social get-together. Eight women responded and organized what was to become Royal Neighbors of America. A year later, the group reorganized as a social organization with a constitution, ritual, and articles of incorporation. The women chose the name Royal Neighbors of America because they adhered to the biblical verse “For better is a neighbor that is near than a brother that is far.” (Proverbs 27:10). Royal Neighbors was chartered as a fraternal benefit society on March 21, 1895. The first home office was in Peoria, IL, and was moved to Rock Island, IL in 1908. The group's initial goal was to provide insurance products for under served women. The administrative structure and leadership of Royal Neighbors of America was run by women, many of whom were also involved with the suffrage movement. In 1902, membership in the organization was 4,124. By 1920, membership was 400,000. At its peak In 1945 there were more than 500,000 members, with 5,640 local camps in 43 states and the District of Columbia. As of May 2025, Royal Neighbors reported 300,000 members nationwide and is now the second-fastest growing fraternal life insurance organization in the United States. Entering the historic building through the impressive double doors we met by Angie Bardsley, Member Engagement Specialist and Team Lead, Philanthropy at Royal Neighbors of America. The entry lobby continues the historic and impressive architecture and design of the building with inlaid stone flooring and two large, curved sofas fashioned after sofas shown in 100-year-old photos taken when the building was new. From there we had our choice of taking turns riding up in a small elevator, (original equipment we speculate) or using the large stairways. Most chose the stairs! We gathered in the fourth-floor dining/meeting room with an impressive all glass northern wall with a beautiful view of the Mississippi River, Centennial Bridge, Modern Woodmen of American buildings, and Davenport, in the background. The meeting serves as the monthly meeting area for all Royal Neighbors’ employees, most of whom now work from home. The room also hosts periodic lunches and visits by groups like ours. After enjoying our lunch, a brief business meeting, and an acapella rendition of “God Bless America” led by President John, Angie explained that the second and third floors were almost entirely employee cubicles of little interest for visitors to see. She directed us back down the stairs and elevator to the first-floor entry lobby. There we learned about the floors, flooring,



### MAR - APR PROGRAMS

- Apr 7 - Danielle Scott - Publishing a Children's Book
- Apr 14 - Bert Blood Scholarships
- Apr 21 - Jim Shearouse – National Library Week
- Apr 28 - Rotary Awards Banquet
- May 5 - RIHS Entrepreneur Incubator Program
- May 12 - Fislar Scholarship & Club Foundation Grants Presentation
- May 19 - Houlton Scholarship & Jordan Earlyact Club
- May 26 - TBA

See Royal Neighbors – Continued on page 3

Service Above  
Self

Webpage [www.rirotary.com](http://www.rirotary.com)



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Interact at [https://unlkr.ee/rocky\\_rotaryclub](https://unlkr.ee/rocky_rotaryclub)

One Profits  
Most Who  
Serves Best

# Rotary



Club of Rock Island

P.O. Box 4514  
Rock Island, IL 61204  
[www.rirotary.com](http://www.rirotary.com)

## Officers

John Olinger, President  
Amber Wood, 1st Vice Pres.  
Julie Gelaude, 2nd Vice Pres.  
Holly Sparkman, Secretary  
Molly Shattuck, Treasurer  
Sue Rector, Past President  
Frank Lambert, Sgt at Arms  
Bob Swanson, Sgt. at Arms

## Directors

Kenda Burrows, Director  
Carrie Crossen, Director  
Geno DelPreore, Director  
Jeff Dismer, Director  
Rick Emery, Director  
Forrest Meyer, Director  
Jim Moran, Director  
Jim Nordquist, Director

## Program Chair 2025-26

Rebecca Arnold

### Presenters

July:	Tom Hammar
August:	Erin Williams
September:	Dave Hodge
October:	Yolanda Pugh & Rebecca Arnold
November:	Rebecca Arnold
December:	Bob Swanson
January:	Gary Rowe
February:	Kai Swanson
March:	Yolanda Pugh & Rebecca Arnold
April:	Angela Campbell
May:	John Wetzel
June:	Tom Hammar

# Club Notes & Announcements!

- ★ **WELCOME GUESTS** – Our third week with no guests. Not surprising today, with an off-site meeting. We look forward to guest next week at the Botanical Center! Invite a friend or colleague to join you for lunch to learn what we do and why you are a dedicated Rotarian!
- ★ **MILLION DOLLAR MILESTONE UPDATE!** – With a new offer of a two for one match by a generous anonymous donor our Club Foundation received a “shot in the arm” in soliciting pledges in the effort to build the Foundation assets to one million dollars. Going into the past week the fund sat at just a bit over \$950,000. With the donor’s match, every dollar equals three dollars. Every club member is urged to participate at whatever level fits their budget, no donation is too low, and none are too high! Donations to our Club Foundation are not spent, they are invested! Every year the interest generated provides the funds for our Clug Foundation grant.
- ★ **SAVE THE DATES! -Rotary at the Ball Park** – Friday, June 5<sup>th</sup> 6:30 Game Time. Tickets will be \$20 each which includes \$10 in Bandit Bucks for concessions! You, your family, friends, and guests are welcome. Baseball & Fireworks! Watch for ticket signup coming in May! **Rotary At The Backwater Gamblers** with a possible potluck picnic, Sunday, August 2<sup>nd</sup>. Watch for further details.
- ★ **BIRTHDAY BOOKS** – With students out for their spring intersession, our March Birthday Books at Earl Hanson was postponed to this Thursday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>. No foolin! We will meet at the school at 2:15 and give away books to all the students who had birthdays in March. Help is always appreciated! Arrive at 2:15 and you will be done by 2:35. You see plenty of big smiles as the Kids get Rotarians to autograph their books, sing Happy Birthday, and enjoy some birthday cookies! Come join the fun!
- ★ **A LAUGH FROM BUD** – Broken pencils are pointless!
- ★ **ROTARY DISTRICT CONFERENCE** - registration for the District 6420 Conference closes April 2. join us in Rockford on April 10–11 for a weekend focused on connection, inspiration, and practical ideas for our clubs. The Friday banquet is a celebration of Youth Exchange with Noa, and fellow exchange students present!
- ★ **HAVE ITEMS FOR OUR NEWSLETTER?** – Our newsletter goes out via email every Tuesday afternoon. Send to, [bobdebswanson@att.net](mailto:bobdebswanson@att.net).

## The Object of Rotary

The Object of Rotary is to encourage and foster the ideal of service as a basis of worthy enterprise and, in particular, to encourage and foster:

**FIRST:** The development of acquaintance as an opportunity for service;

**SECOND:** High ethical standards in business and professions; the recognition of the worthiness of all useful occupations; and the dignifying of each Rotarian’s occupation as an opportunity to serve society;

**THIRD:** The application of the ideal of service in each Rotarian’s personal, business, and community life;

**FOURTH:** The advancement of international understanding, goodwill, and peace through a world fellowship of business and professional persons united in the ideal of service.

## The Four-Way Test

(of the things we Think, Say or Do)

1. Is it the **TRUTH**?
2. Is it **FAIR** to all concerned?
3. Will it build **GOODWILL** and **BETTER FRIENDSHIPS**?
4. Will it be **BENEFICIAL** to all concerned?

## MARCH ROTARY BIRTHDAYS

Avery Pearl	Mar 2	Danielle Scott	Mar 18
Brooke Spaulding	Mar 7	Clarence Darrow	Mar 22
Lonnie Behnke	Mar 13	Jerry Jones	Mar 22
Kathy Trone	Mar 15	Robin VanKeuein	Mar 28
Gary Rowe	Mar 17	Avalon Thomas-Roebal	Mar 29
Patty Ulrich	Mar 17	Bill Stengel	Mar 31



Our Guide - Angie Beardsley

and history of the building, built by accessing all members of Royal Neighbors one dollar each! From the lobby room we were led through a hallway in which portraits of the Current and the First President of Royal Neighbors are displayed on each side of a beautiful roll top desk used by the founding President of Royal Neighbors. Moving through that area we were led into a gallery room with walls lined with portraits of every president that has served Royal Neighbors over its more than one-hundred twenty year history. Again the architecture was incredible in workmanship, design, and pristine preservation. Our tour concluded in the large adjacent Board Room. We were told that originally the Board of Directors meet monthly in this room with each director having their own desk. Modern technology has been blended seamlessly with historical grandeur and majestic draperies. Individual desks have been replaced by long meeting tables place to form a square. Behind what appeared to be the head table were two discretely placed video screens. To this day the Board of Directors meets in this room. No doubt the original board members would be shocked to see the video boards light up, speak, play music, and present information to the board. Royal Neighbors has kept pace and moved into twenty-first century technology, but in so doing has preserved the best of their storied history and proud past. We appreciate being welcomed into their national headquarters and thank Angie for her interesting tour commentary and appreciated the assistance of staff members who helped move our boxed lunches from the parking lot into the buiding and up to the fourth floor. It was a fun day at Rock Island Rotary!

## FOUNDATION MINUTE

The Rotary Foundation's 7th Area of Focus, protecting the environment, just got recertified by LEED. In an online report, One Rotary Center, the world headquarters of global membership organization Rotary International, has been LEED Gold recertified by the U.S. Green Building Council. The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Certification refers to a global green building rating system developed by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) to promote healthy, highly efficient, and cost-saving sustainable buildings, homes and communities. The deputy general- secretary of Rotary International, Michael Berg, explains that the recertification aligns with TRF's commitment to protecting the environment "Attaining such a high rating for our water and energy efficiency, indoor air quality, and our use of sustainable materials demonstrates that we are creating a greener and healthier workplace as our charitable arm, The Rotary Foundation, provides millions in funding each year to member projects that strengthen and protect ecosystems around the world," Berg added. "We know that implementing a LEED strategy delivers measurable benefits, from improving air and water quality to reducing energy consumption in a cost-effective manner, positively impacting owners, occupants, and society as a whole," said Cushman & Wakefield's Sandra Gutierrez, general manager for the building who led its recertification efforts. Since 2009, One Rotary Center has also received the Energy Star Award from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for energy-efficient products and practices, including energy-efficient heating and cooling systems, a renewable electricity supply, occupancy sensors for lighting and HVAC, and more.

## Rotary Awards Committee – LAST CHANCE!

Our Awards Luncheon is approaching quickly on April 28<sup>th</sup>. The Committee needs your nominations of fellow Club members for the Luckenbill-Wray and A.T. Peera Awards, and your nomination of club or community members for outstanding Community Service and Professional Excellence in the career or endeavor. Please see page 4 for additional details and who to call or email to make your nomination(s). There are many deserving people in our Club and community. Do not allow them to go unrecognized! Take the few minutes it takes to submit one or more nominations! Tomorrow is the final day to submit your nominees.

## NO FINES – NO HAPPY/SAD DOLLARS - NO FOUNDATION RAFFLE!

Being off site today and wanting to preserve time for our tour of Royal Neighbors, Amber and Julie were given the day off with no introduction of guests (our only guest was Noa, our Youth Exchange daughter) and no fines or happy dollars collected. I suspect we all should bring our wallets to the Botanical Center next week! John also was without his gavel and bell, but we survived. See you next Tuesday when we return to Quad City Botanical Center's dining room!

## Club Foundation Million Dollar Milestone Campaign

Just a quick reminder that although there was no update on our campaign to push our Club Foundations assets to the million-dollar level, the campaign is still in full swing. If you still need to make your pledge, the form is on the next page. You will note that pledges can be paid in any number of ways, including quarterly payments of the next two years. You decide how much you want to pledge and how you want to pay it. Amounts large and small are welcome as we strive to reach 80% participation by our club members.



## Rock Island Rotary Club Foundation

### *Million Dollar Milestone Campaign*

Supporting Rock Island-Based Service Projects  
*Together, we are building a stronger Rock Island through local service,  
leadership, and lasting impact.*

**YES! I/We proudly support the Million Dollar Milestone Campaign.**

**Name(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Business (if applicable):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### My/Our Commitment

- \$50
- \$100
- \$250
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- \$500
- \$1000
- \$2,500

#### Payment Method

- Check enclosed (payable to Rock Island Rotary Club Foundation)
- Please invoice me
- Credit Card

Card #: \_\_\_\_\_

Exp: \_\_\_\_\_ CVV: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**One-Time Gift**

**Two-Year Pledge (Paid Quarterly)**  
Total Pledge Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Quarterly Payment: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(8 payments over 2 years)

Donate through **Birdies for Charity** which qualifies for bonus dollars

Other Pledge Arrangement (including using an **IRA Qualified Charitable Distribution, ACH Bank authorized transfer, or transfer of Appreciated Stock**)

\_\_\_\_\_

Total Commitment: \$ \_\_\_\_\_



Use this QR code to make a one-time gift by credit card.

#### Recognition

- Please recognize this gift as: \_\_\_\_\_
- I/We prefer to remain anonymous

*Thank you.* Please return your form to Carrie Crossen or to the Sergeant at Arms or raffle table.

*Your gift directly supports Rock Island-based service projects that will improve lives and strengthen our community for generations to come.*

# TOMORROW IS THE LAST DAY TO SUBMIT NOMINATIONS!!

## *It's Rotary Awards Time!*

A highlight of our Rotary Year is the annual Rotary Awards Luncheon. At that event we honor Rock Island's top senior students from Augustana, Alleman, and Rock Island High School. We also honor local citizens for Excellence and Community Service and invite those honorees to join our Rotary contingent in the Rock Island Labor Day Parade! We also honor outstanding members of our Club. All of this is possible in large part because of your help in nominating prospective recipients of the various awards.

Today, Sarah Gorham, chair of our Awards Committee distributed the below notice to all present at our meeting:

### 2026 AWARDS

The 2026 Rock Island Rotary's Awards Luncheon is scheduled for Tuesday, April 28th. In order to help our Committee choose awardees, please email nominations to Sarah Gorham at sgorham@sbrlawfirm.law or tell Sarah or another member of our Committee your ideas by March 25, 2026.

As in past years, the following will be awarded:

1. **Excellence Award**: Recognizes distinction or superiority in a field of endeavor. This can be for a single accomplishment or for achieving a high standards of achievement or performance over a sustained period.
2. **Community Service Award**: Recognizes individuals or organizations who have worked effectively for the betterment of our community.
3. **The Luckenbill-Wray Award**: Recognizes a current Rock Island Rotarian for outstanding service and dedication to our club over the past year.
4. **A. T. Peara Award for Service Above Self**: Recognized the Rock Island Rotary member who has exhibited the dedicated service and faithful commitment to the ideals of Rotary that were personified by A.T. Peara, for whom the award is named. This is a "life-time" award and can only be won once by a club member.

Here are the members who have won this award previously and are ineligible to be considered again.

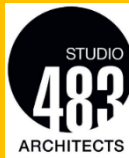
#### Previous A.T. Peara Recipients

2025	Kevin Koski	2010	Jeff Dismer	1995	Keith E. Pfundstein
2024	Cindi Gramenz	2009	Ruth Lee	1994	Victor Pearson
2023	Kathy Trone	2008	Jay Stanley	1993	Dr. Conrad Bergendoff
2022	Jim Moran	2007	George Johnson	1992	Robert E. Frank
2021	Molly Shattuck	2006	Mary Fislar	1991	Dr. Richard Phillis
2020	Carrie Crossen	2005	W.J. "Bing" Bingaman	1990	Carl Larson
2020	Mark Mayeski	2004	Thomas Hammar	1989	Dr. Bennett Litherland
2019	John Phillips	2003	Bruce Anderson	1988	Donn Iogha
2018	Steve Morenz	2002	Jan Christensen	1987	Fred Luckenbill
2017	Sam Wray	2002	Frank Lambert	1986	Clarence "Mel" Park
2016	Mike Locander	2001	Suzanne Golden	1985	Charles O. Austin, Jr.
2015	Dr. Tricia Barron	2000	Gary N. Rowe	1984	Frederick R. Houlton
2014	Bob Swanson	1999	Donald W. Peterson	1983	Raymond P. Botch
2013	Anne McGlynn	1998	Stanley H. Coin	1982	Dr. Larry O. Tadlock
2012	Holly Sparkman	1997	Alfred J. Kukla	1981	A.T. Peara
2011	John Wetzel	1996	Harry B. Nelson		

# OUR ROCK ISLAND ROTARY CLUB SPONSORS!



In Memory Of  
Fred  
Luckenbill



**Edward Jones**  
MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING  
Mark Mayeski – Rock Island



**THANK YOU!**

## Rock Island Rotary



### March 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3 Noon Meeting Speaker: Mgcini Mpfu Rock Island YMCA	4	5	6 District PETS conference	7 District PETS conference
8 District PETS conference	9	10 Noon Meeting Speaker: Thurgood Brooks and Avery Pearl West End Revitalization	11	12	13	14
15	16 Rotary Board Meeting Noon Studio 483 Conference Room	17 Noon Meeting Speaker: Resheda Jamison J&M Financial Educator Foundation Tuesday	18	19	20	21
22	23	24 Noon Meeting Speaker: Dylaan Bibbs Wholly Grinds Coffee Shop	25	26 Birthday Books Earl Hanson 2:15 pm	27	28
29	30	31 Noon Meeting REMOTE Meeting Royal Neighbors of America World Headquarters	Consider a pledge to the Rock Island Rotary Club Foundation for the Million Dollar Challenge Campaign	Submit your nominations for our Rotary Club Awards to Sarah Gorham	Register for the District 6420 Conference in Rockford on April 10-11	

Programs: Yolanda Pugh and Rebecca Arnold    Invocations: Carrie Crossen