

# Rotary



# WEEKLY REVIEW



Rotary Club of Rock Island  
Rock Island, Illinois  
Meeting Tuesdays at Noon – Quad City Botanical Center

April 28, 2026  
Volume XXXIII, Issue 43

## 52<sup>nd</sup> Annual Rotary Awards Banquet

Rotary  
Club of Rock Island



### MAY - JUNE PROGRAMS

- May 5 - RIHS Entrepreneur Incubator Program
- May 12 - Fislar Scholarship & Club Foundation Grants Presentation
- May 19 - Houlton Scholarship & Jordan Earlyact Club
- May 26 - TBA
- June 2 - Community Grants Presentation – Frank Lambert



A highlight each year for Rock Island Rotary is recognizing those in our community that stand out, accomplishing great things in their schools, their businesses, our community, and in our Club. In all ten Awards were presented to incredible honorees. In addition to tangible awards, we chose also to honor them by presenting an incredible keynote speaker who himself represents the qualities of intelligence, excellence, community service, and dedication. Today's Award Banquet guest keynote speaker was Mr. Dave Heller President & CEO of Main Street Baseball and the majority owner and Managing Partner of four minor league baseball teams including the Quad Cities River Bandits an Advanced-A affiliate of the Kansas City Royals. Mr Heller knows something about Community Service and Excellence!

In 2016, Main Street Baseball earned *Ballpark Digest's* coveted "Minor League Baseball Organization of the Year" award – one of the industry's highest honors. His Quad Cities team, the River Bandits, was named *Ballpark Digest's* 2021 "Team of the Year" and one of *Baseball America's* "Most Accomplished Franchises of the 2010s." In 2022, the Kansas City Royals presented Heller with their Matt Minker Award as the outstanding person in their minor league system. Quad Cities was the only non-MLB city to host the Baseball Hall of Fame traveling exhibit (2016) and the only minor league team to host a game at the Field of Dreams in Dyersville. Heller's teams are known for fun, innovative promotions; making significant ballpark improvements; and giving back to their home communities. In 2021, *Stadium Journey* magazine named both Modern Woodmen Park (Quad Cities) and Frawley Stadium (Wilmington) to its Top-5 list of best game-day experiences in Advanced-A ballparks. In the Quad Cities, Heller's River Bandits have enjoyed a stunning resurgence, becoming the only team in Midwest League history to win four championships in ten seasons, setting per-game attendance records, and earning numerous awards. His team has set records for group and sponsorship sales, attendance, concessions, and merchandise sales. The team's home, Modern Woodmen Park, has earned as many accolades as any ballpark in the country. It has been named multiple times "America's Best Minor League Ballpark" by USA Today and *10Best.com* and chosen the Midwest League's best ballpark by Baseball America. *Sports Illustrated* called it "an All-American hidden gem" and "a must-see attraction." It earned a 5-star rating from *Ballpark Digest*, one of the top 10 by *Parade Magazine*, the second-best Single-A ballpark by Newsweek, and "the #2 Coolest Minor League Ballpark in America" by *Complex Magazine*. The team even won multiple awards for best TV commercial! Under Heller, the Bandits have added many fun new features to the ballpark, including two outfield bars, five concourse-level "loge boxes," an 80-foot HD ribbon-board, a 36' x 42' HD videoboard, new sound system, playground, a renovated suite level, new playing field, and a large, multi-purpose banquet hall with glass garage doors that open/close based on the weather. The team also added a new Diamond Club, a triple suite, a Hall of Fame autographed jersey display, three new group areas, a special seating area for our nation's veterans, a 58-panel solar farm, a permanent home for the Quad-Cities Sports Hall of Fame, and a (sponsored) corn field from where

See Heller – Continued on page 3

Service Above  
Self

### FOLLOW US!

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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.  
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Holly Sparkman, Secretary  
Molly Shattuck, Treasurer  
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Carrie Crossen, Director  
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Jeff Dismer, Director  
Rick Emery, Director  
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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** – Today we welcomed many guests to our meeting. Most were family members of those receiving Awards and will be named in the Award Winners' bios. Jr. Rotarians from Alleman Nicole Magee and Emilye Polich were present as was our Youth Exchange daughter, Noa Smith. Rock Island Rotarians are immensely proud of our Club and happy to have you visiting us!
- ★ **DRIVER NEEDED** – Kevin Koski has volunteered to take Noa and the other three outstanding student leaders to RYLA Camp near Oregon, Illinois on Friday, May 8<sup>th</sup>. We still need a volunteer driver to pick up the students Sunday, May 10<sup>th</sup> at the camp at 12 noon and return them to Rock Island High School for pick up by their parents. Time is getting short! **PLEASE Volunteer.** We will provide easy to follow directions and instructions. Contact Jeff Dismer 309-269-2301 or Bob Swanson 309-738-3476.
- ★ **PICTURES NEXT WEEK!** – Wezz from Wezz DeLaRosa Photography will be at next week's meeting with light, backdrop, and camera ready to take complimentary photos of any member wanting a new photo for our upcoming directory. You are free to use the head/shoulders photo for other uses as well. Photo shoots start at 11:30, will take a break for our meeting from noon to 1pm, and then restart. Put on your best-looking outfit and get a new photo! Thank you Wezz for offering to do the photos for photos. Do not forget him when you or family members need photograph services!
- ★ **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** AND **family potluck picnic**, Sunday, August 2<sup>nd</sup>. Rotary will provide chicken and beverages for the picnic in the shelter prior to the ski show. Yard and table games will start at 4:15pm and eat at 5:15pm. We will have a signup to attend coming in July for our chicken & beverage count.
- ★ **A LAUGH FROM BUD** – I just ordered a chicken and an egg from Amazon. I'll let you know.
- ★ **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?

## APRIL ROTARY BIRTHDAYS

Katie Resig	April 6
Frank Perez	April 17
Mark Zimmerman	April 17
Rick Devinney	April 18
Rick Emery	April 26

Heller - Continued from page 1

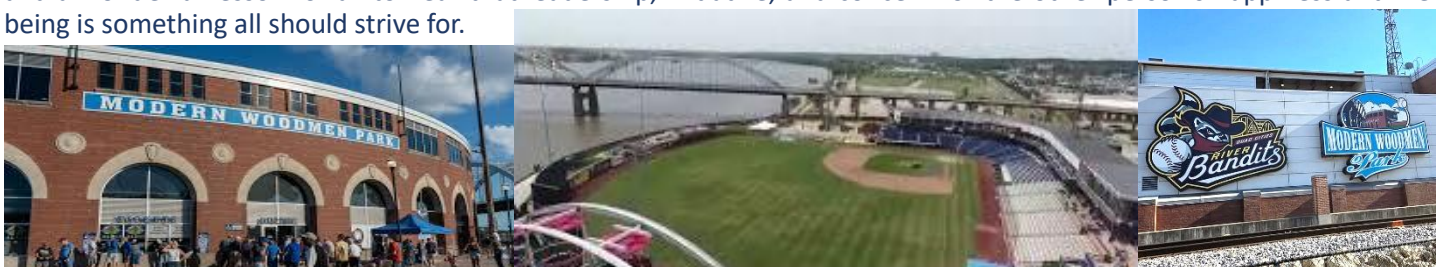
the players are introduced at the game's outset. Last, the team added more than \$5million worth of amusement rides, including a 105-foot-tall Ferris wheel, a spinning kids' coaster, two thrill rides, a Froghopper, gyroscope, and a 30-foot Drop-N-Twist to go with bounce houses, a kiddie train, and Iowa's only double-decker carousel. The team has also seen improvements to the "back of the house": the entire ballpark is now flood-protected, the batting cages enclosed and air conditioned, and new additions include a video classroom, nutritionist's office, and trainer's office, as well as three large storage areas, new protective netting covering every seat, new weight and workout rooms, and a new players' parking lot. In addition, the home and visitors' clubhouses were renovated, the playing field and irrigation system replaced, the suite kitchen expanded, and the HVAC system upgraded. Modern Woodmen Park was even the first non-Triple-A ballpark in the U.S. to install new, energy-efficient LED lights. All four Main Street Baseball teams are leaders in their leagues, and all four are distinguished by a commitment to providing the best fan experience possible. Did we say Dave Heller knows something about "Excellence"!

As for his commitment to community service, Ballpark Digest, summed it up very well, saying: "Heller and the Bandits love giving back: the team has donated more than \$5 million to area charities, helped raise \$101,000 for flood relief, and won multiple U.S. Army Gold Awards for community service. Its "Bandit Scholars" program, which pays an entire year's tuition to three area colleges, is the largest college scholarship foundation in all of Minor League Baseball. In addition, the team pays for free flu shots for Quad Cities children, is one of the largest funders of Camp Hope (for kids dealing with cancer) and the MercyOne Genesis Neo-Natal Intensive Care Unit, and supports the Family Connects program that pays a nurse to spend a week with every baby born to an impoverished mother. In 2015, 2017, 2019 and 2023, Ballpark Digest honored the River Bandits with its "Commitment to Charity" award, the only team to earn that distinction four times (no other club has won more than once).

Heller is not an executive who sits behind a desk. He is probably the only professional baseball owner in America that spends virtually every home game at the ball part, stands at the top of the entry stairs personally greeting fans as they enter. After the game you'll find him back at the stairway thanking the fans for attending. He is an executive with teams scattered through out the country and has the means and ability to live wherever he might choose. We are indeed fortunate that he chose the Quad Cities for his home and the place to raise his family.

With that background and level of expertise, Mr. Heller spoke directly to our 2026 award winners. He first talked about community and why he decided to make the Quad Cities his home. He said it is the people! With teams in four different times zones and family roots in Ohio, Heller and his wife could have settle almost anywhere. He said however after coming here initially to look into purchaing the River Bandits and "falling in love with Modern Woodman Park and the riverside location and view", he decided, "in about three and a half minutes", that he wanted to buy the team. That brought him into the community which he described as, "the greatest people in the entire country". Six years after buying the team he and his wife made the Quad Cities their permanent home. His two sons, now 18 and 15 were both born here and have been raised and educated here. He said the reason he stands at the entry stairs at every home game as spectators enter and leave is not because he has to, but because he want to meet and greet "the nicest people anywhere". He then turned to community service and said the reason the River Bandits have been successful is, "not because because the community is obliged to support us, but because we [the River Bandits organization] support the community. In turn he said, "the community does support us." He then noted that of all minor league sports franchises in the nation, including both Baseball, basketball, and football, many in major marketsl, the Quad City River Bandits have the largest charity giving record of all. They also lead all minor league franchises in scholarships provided for local students. He mentioned too that the River Bandits pay to provide free flu shot for any youngster in the Quad Cities that wants one. They also establish a "Family Connects" program that pays for a private nurse to go home with every impoverished mother and remains for the child's first week of life. He noted a study that shows that the nurture and attendion a infant receives in the first week after birth has a corrolation between whether they end up in education or incarceration.

Mr. Heller clearly made the point through the example of his own success and that of the River Bandits, that leadership in the community and service to the community brings about a tremendous return. He stressed that when people come to games at Modern Woodman Park their goal is to entertain and make sure every fan has fun. He stresses to his ballpark staff before each game that they are to be the friendliest person in the park. He said he doesn't care when fans leave if they remember the final score, his concern is, did they have fun! It was a fun message, a great update on the River Bandits, and a wonderful lesson for all to hear that leadership, initiative, and concern for the other person's happiness and well being is something all should strive for.



The first awards were presented to the top senior scholars from Alleman Catholic High School, Rock Island High Schools and Augustana College.

Alleman Catholic High School's top two scholars were introduced by Lindsey Honert, Alleman's Communications Director. **Claire Mehochko** is the daughter of Maureen Riggs and Hohn Mehochko. She is a National Merti commended student, an Illinois State Scholar, a member of the National Honor Society and a John O'Connor Scholar. She is regularly on the Honor Roll, the Principals List and was recognized by the Western Big 6 Conference as Academic All Conference in Girls Basketball. She served as captain as the girls soccer team and was a varsity girls basketball player., She was elected president of the Student Council, and was Dance Marathon captain and was chair of Sigma Alpha Delta (Students Against Drugs). Claire participated in the Student Hunger Drive, ICTM Math Competition, and Alleman Aces science and engineering competition. She is a member of St. Pius Catholic Church and plans to attend the University of Notre Dame to study finance.



Alleman High School



**Marcella Healy** is the daughter of Jason and Sarah Healy. She is vice-president of the National Honor Society, a John O'Connor Scholar, and an Illinois State Scholar. She received department awards in Spanish, Mathamatics, Histor, Science and English. Marcella was also recognized as an Alleman "Student of the Month". She has twice placed (8th and 11th) in the Illinois Council of Teachers or Mathmetics statewide competition. Marcella was also a Dance Marathon Captain and Vice-Captain. She has represented Alleman in the ACES Engineering and Science Competition placing 11th in the state. Her skill extend beyond the classroom an include varsity track & field, Drama Club, and working on the student hunger drive. Beyond the walls of Alleman, Marcella has work experience as a Farmhand at the Shady Knoll Farm. She was the grand prize winner of the 2024 Quad City Teentober Writing Contest and a volunteer, Marcella is a Vacation Bible School volunteer, also volunteers at the Riverbend Foodbank, and as an assistant counselor at Camp Shalom. She plans to attend Bradley University majoring in Nursing Science.

Rock Island principal Dr. Patricia Ulrich introduced Rock Island High School's two top scholars. **Olivia Seidlitz** is the daughter of Lisa Seidlitz and Nick Dobson. Olivia is a member of the National Honor Society and a Charles O. Austin, Jr. Scholar, a recognition reserved only for students who have maintained a 3.5 grade point average every semester of their high school career. Olivia was a member of the Rocky Debate Team and served as team captain for three years. She is an IHSA All-State Nominee. In addition to her outstanding academic record Olivia also is a member of the Rock Island High Girls Cross Country team, the Volleyball team, and the Girls Track and Field team. Olivia was recognized as an Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) scholar. The scholars were selected based on a combination of ACT, SAT scores earned by the end of junior year, sixth-semester unweighted GPA, and class rank. As a student at Washington Jr. High School She was awarded the Rock Island-Milan School District "Medal of Honor". While accomplishing all of this she has also held a part-time job as a receptionist at a local nursing home. Her future plans are to attend the University of San Francisco.



**Averi Vroman** is the daughter of Laurie & Zach Vroman. She is a member of the National Honor Society and a Charles O. Austin, Jr. Scholar having earned a 3.5 or above grade average every semester while in high shcool. She is a member of the Environmental Action Club and serves as treasurer. Averi is an Illinois State Scholar, and has received awards Austin Academic Achievement Awards for being in the Top 10 of her class all four years of her high school career. Beyond academics she also is a member of the Girls Tennis team, the Girls Wrestling team, and Rocky's Girls Soccer team. As a senior she received the Varsity's Most Valuable Player (MVP) Award and served as team captain. Outside of school, Averi volunteers at the local animal shelter. After graduation she will attend the University of Wisconsin – Madison and will study Genetics. Averi was recognized as an Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) scholar. The scholars were selected based on a combination of ACT, SAT scores earned by the end of junior year, sixth-semester unweighted GPA, and class rank.

Rotary Awards – Continued from page 4

Augustana College president, Dr. Andrea Talentino introduced the top two scholars in their graduating class. **Kailynn Catalani** comes from Roscoe, Illinois and is the daughter of Marty and Lori Catalani. She is a Biochemistry; pre-medicine Major with a Minor in Philosophy. Kailynn is a German peer tutor and president of the Campus Kitchen. She is a Campus Ministries Leadership Team Member and the principal viola player for the Augustana Symphony Orchestra. Kailynn participated in the Baylor University Texas Medical Center Summer Research Internship Program, and served as patient care technician at Unity Point Health in 2024-2025. She spent a J-Term at Holden Village, a remote, rustic camp in the North Cascade Mountains, above Lake Chelan, Minnesota. Which she described as a life-changing experience with no modern technology or cell phones for 21 days. Kailynn also participated in the Summer Medical Research Training (SMaRT) Program at the University of Illinois College of Medicine in Rockford. After graduation she will be attending medical school at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska.



**Alexander Sell** is from Rosemount, Minnesota. He is the son of Jeffrey and Jennifer Sell. He received the Roy J. Carver Scholarship in Natural Sciences and a Chemistry Department Scholarship. He is a student lab proctor and has been on the Deans list every term since the Fall of 2022. Alex is a member of the Pi Mu Epsilon mathematical honor society. He groundskeeps the Augie Acres student-run garden. He serves as treasurer and academic officer of Phi Mu Alpha musical service fraternity. Alex is involved with on campus organic chemistry research and was selected to participate in the National Science Foundation Research Experiences for Undergraduates (NSF REU) summer research program at the University of Minnesota. His talents also extend to music where he is principal bass trombone player of the Augustana Symphonic Band, lead trombone of Augustana's Jazz Ensemble, and trombone member of the Augustana Symphony Orchestra, the Low Brass Ensemble, and Jazz Combos. He was winner of the fall 2022 music department concerto competition. Alex received the Deisenroth music scholarship and the Louis Nathanson music scholarship. He participates in the math and baseball clubs.



#### **2026 OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD WINNER - MODERN WOODMEN OF AMERICA**

Modern Woodmen has no woodworking in their history. No cabinet making. No lumberjacks. The name was inspired by pioneer woodmen. They cleared forests to build homes and communities and provide security for their families. Modern Woodmen's founder, Joseph Cullen Root, felt this was the perfect symbol to illustrate his goal of clearing away financial burdens for families. Modern Woodmen of America was born in Lyons, Iowa in 1883. They moved Fulton, Illinois, in 1884. Their headquarters relocated to Rock Island in 1897. Our community is fortunate that Rock Island remains their national headquarters. The Rotary Community Service Award recognizes a community person or entity that performs outstanding service to Rock Island and surrounding communities. From the obvious, Modern Woodmen's two beautiful riverfront National Headquarters buildings in downtown Rock Island and directly across the river in downtown Davenport, + Modern Woodman Park, home of the River Bandits and many other community events, to many services not known to most citizens. Their Printing & Shipping Center donates professional printing services to numerous local non-profit organizations, including frequently to Rock Island Rotary. Thousands of dollars are given annually in Modern Woodmen grants by both a corporate stewardship committee and a separate Employee Charity Committee. They do this with no fanfare and without seeking publicity. Being a fraternal financial organization, when a person purchases a Modern Woodmen investment or Life Insurance policy they become part of a local Modern Woodmen "Chapter". Chapters meet regularly and offer fellowship and community service opportunities for members. Modern Woodmen encourages chapters to perform community service and provides thousands of dollars in grants to help fund chapter service projects. Members unite for volunteer efforts that provide money, donations, hands-on labor and other resources to improve lives in Rock Island and communities across the nation. With over 2,300 local chapters and over 350 youth service clubs nationwide, Modern Woodmen provided 232,545 volunteer hours donated by members in chapters last year and over \$57.8 million contributed to worthy causes. Rock Island Rotary is pleased to recognize Modern Woodmen of America as our **2026 Community Service Award** recipient. Representing Modern Woodmen to accept the award was corporate counsel, Liz Aguilar.



See Rotary Awards – Continued on page 6



**2026 EXCELLENCE AWARD WINNER – THE ROCK ISLAND-MILAN EDUCATION FOUNDATION.**

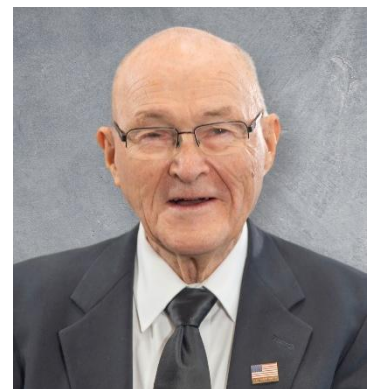
Monta Ponsetto the Executive Director of the Foundation and therefore accepted the award on behalf of the RIMEF. [Although the award was strictly for the excellent work done by the Education Foundation, it is worthy of note that Monta personally is a Rock Island Rotarian and serves as a Sergeant at Arms Aide, co-chair of our Festival of Trees committee, and will be a host parent for our 2026-27 Youth Exchange student.] The Rock Island-Milan Education Foundation was founded in 1986 when a small group of dedicated alumni, parents, and community members established it as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit to assist with the financial needs of the Rock Island-Milan School District. From that small beginning RIMEF has grown and given millions of dollars to strengthen our community's schools and provided opportunities for our students to continue their education. The RIMEF strives to "Be a Rock" - always there for support when the district's students, teachers, and schools need help. The RIMEF provides

\$500,000 in grants, scholarships, and other program dollars annually for the benefit of Rock Island-Milan schools and students. The Foundation has awarded over \$1.5 million in PRIME Grants to the teachers and schools of our school district for innovative programs and materials. The RIMEF has also awarded over \$1 million in scholarships to RIHS seniors in Austin Academic Achievement Awards and Foundation Named Scholarships. The RIMEF funds additional programs including the RIHS INCubator Class, Bright Ideas Awards, New Teacher Welcome Bags, Extracurricular Funds, HAVlife, Seal of Biliteracy, and Reynolds Returning Rocks. The Foundation is governed by a Board composed of Rock Island – Milan citizens, school district alumni, and friends of the district. Ms. Ponsetto is the day-to-day administrator and executive director. Their dedication and incredible funding support for our schools, students, and teachers is done with great efficiency and effectiveness. Rock Island Rotary is pleased to present our **2026 Excellence Award** to the Rock Island-Milan Education Foundation .



**2026 LUCKENBILL – WRAY AWARD WINNER – DR. RICHARD “BUD” PHILLIS**

Bud Phillis joined Rock Island Rotary in 1983. He frequently has said he decided if he was going to belong to something, he should commit to do everything possible to be an active participant. Through his 43 years of membership he has been true to that commitment. He has served as Club President, Board Member, and for many years was our Rotary Foundation chairman. Having lost his sister in her early teens to polio and survived the disease himself, he decided to become a doctor. He served our country as an Army doctor and to our great fortune settled in Rock Island after his service. He was a founding member of Medical Arts Associates, helped create Rock Island Community Health Care, and was a founder of the Quad City Health Initiative. He served our community as a internist for 36 years prior to his retirement. He has been an ardent advocate and frequent guest speaker supporting Rotary's Polio Plus campaign. He has also traveled widely through the bi-state area throughout western Illinois and eastern Iowa speaking on behalf of our club's Kenya water filter project. He celebrated his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday earlier this year at a club meeting, but has shown no sign of slowing down in his commitment to Rotary. He is one of our most generous financial supporters, attends every weekly meeting coming early to help set up the meeting banners and raffle table, and then sells Foundation Raffle Tickets and handles drawing and announcing winners. Bud is a co-coordinator for our Club's sponsorship of the Jordan Elementary School's EarlyAct Club and attends their bi-weekly meetings at 7:30am. He was instrumental in funding and help place a Rotary Peace Pole at Friendship Manor, the only faith-based, charitable Life Plan Community in the Illinois Quad Cities, where he serves as President of the resident's organization. Bud is also a frequent volunteer for Rotary Birthday Books at Earl Hanson Elementary School, and can be counted on to help wherever needed on Club Committees and projects. It is with great pleasure and admiration that Rock Island Rotary presented our **2026 Luckenbill-Wray Award** to Dr. Richard “Bud” Phillis for his outstanding dedication and service to our Club during the 2025-2026 Rotary year.



**2026 A. T. PEARA "SERVICE ABOVE SELF" AWARD WINNER – SUE RECTOR**



The highest award Rock Island Rotary can bestow to a fellow member is the A.T. Peara Award named in honor of former member Abasalom "A.T." Peara. It recognizes a Rotarian who has exhibited a life commitment to the principles of Rotary. "Service Above Self" is much more than a motto, it is a way of life. The Peara Award can only be won by a member of our Club who fellow members recognize for outstanding dedication, a record of selfless service, and faithful commitment to the ideals of Rotary. Sue has shown such a sustaining commitment. The Peara award is considered a Life Time Achievement award and therefore may be won only once. Sue joins an exclusive group of Club members who are recognized as A.T. Peara recipients. Sue has served as club president, Rotary Foundation Committee Chair, Literacy Chair, Pumpkin Palooza Chair, Festival of Trees Co-Chair, and Trivia Night Co-Chair. She serves our District on multiple committees, and as Foundation Chair and as an Assistant District Governor. Sue

volunteers and actively participates on virtually every Rock Island Rotary Club committee. She is a constant source of ideas and the driving force behind multiple projects serving our community, schools, and children. We take great pride in recognizing Sue Rector as our 2026 A.T. Peara Award recipient. It is easiest to show her dedication in photographs.



Sue and family at Rotary at Backwater Gamblers    Circa 21 Rotary Holiday party,    Rotary at the River Bandits    Peace Pole Dedication



Sue at Rotary Milan Festival Food Tent    Sue help the children at Pumkin Palooza    Labor Day Parade with Exchange Daughter



Preident Sue Presides    Sue Represents our Club receiving District awards on several occasions    Sue with Club memberd at District Conference

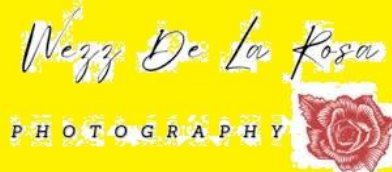
Rock Island Rotary congratulates all our 2026 Award winners. Your efforts, whether in education, the boardroom, or in the community, do not go unnoticed. You make a difference; the community is a better place because of what you have done. Outstanding students serve as critical role models for younger students, and your commitment to study and learning is preparing you to take the reins of community leadership in the near future. Devotion to assisting students and schools provides the means, experiences, and opportunities critical to the development of future leaders. Business leaders committed to giving back to their community and encouraging their employees and clientele to be service minded, set the tone by example and leadership, reminding all that community and caring for one another brings the highest returns. Dedication to service organizations like Rotary fosters the spirit of fellowship, service, and helps build brotherhood and a better and peaceful world for all. "Service Above Self" is more than a motto, it is our way of life!

## HELP!! STILL NEED ONE DRIVER VOLUNTEER!

Rock Island Rotary is sponsoring FOUR incredible young students for the 2026 RYLA (Rotary Youth Leadership Awards) camp held near Oregon, Illinois, May 8<sup>th</sup> through 10<sup>th</sup>. We need to provide transportation to and from the camp. Our Youth Exchange Daughter, Noa Smith is one of the students and she will be joined by three student leaders from Rocky's Interact Club. For going, we have a volunteer to take the kids from Rock Island High School to Oregon. WE NEED A VOLUNTEER for returning them home from the Camp on Sunday, May 10<sup>th</sup>. Pick up at 12 noon and bring them back to Rock Island High School where they will be picked up by parents. If you be that volunteer, please notify Bob Swanson [bobdebswanson@att.net](mailto:bobdebswanson@att.net) or Jeff Dismer [jdismer@studio483.com](mailto:jdismer@studio483.com) as soon as possible! It is a wonderful way to serve and at the same time meet and get to know four future community leaders. It is a beautiful 1.5 hour drive on Route 2 along the Rock River.

## Great News! – NEXT WEEK ...

Our 2026-2027 Club Directory book goes to press in mid-June and will be distributed to members at our July 7<sup>th</sup> meeting. Fellow member and Professional Photographer, Wezz DeLaRosa has generously offered to take complimentary photos for member at our May 5<sup>th</sup> meeting. Photos will start at 11:30am and restart after the meeting at 1pm.

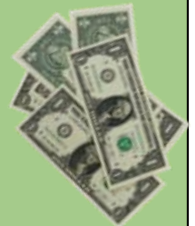


Anyone needing a photo, mark your calendar now! Arrive at our meeting early or plan to remain after on May 5<sup>th</sup> for your photo shoot. Or you may keep your current photo or email your own new photo.

## Rotary International Foundation Raffle



Today the raffle featured a 50/50 cash drawing and a bottle of fine Chardonnay wine. The first winning ticket pulled was held by none other than Sue Rector's daughter, Emily. She took the cash and donated it back to the Rotary Foundation. The second lucky winner was Jeff Dismer, who added a new bottle of Chardonnay to his growing collection of wine won at Rotary meetings! Congratulations to the winners and to all who participated in the raffle!



## FOUNDATION MINUTE

For parents of premature babies at the Ospital ng Maynila Medical Center, every breath once came with a staggering financial burden. Now, an international alliance is helping ensure the city's most vulnerable newborns can breathe more freely. The hospital's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) had been operating without dedicated neonatal ventilators, forcing families to choose between using adult machines for fragile infants or paying for costly external rentals. "Whenever the neonates needed one, they would either have to use the adult hospital ventilators or rent from outside, which costs around 8,500 pesos," said Dr. Reynand Jay Canoy, grants management chair for the Rotary Club of the Asian Institute of Management (AIM). "If you can imagine, for a 30-day ventilation, a patient would need at least 100,000 pesos (USD 5,756.55)." To address the gap, the Rotary Club of AIM formally turned over modern digital neonatal ventilators to the hospital on Thursday, funded through a Rotary Foundation Global Grant. Despite being founded just two years ago, the Rotary Club of AIM led the project, bringing together international and local partners. The effort included South Korean sponsors—the Rotary Clubs of Onyang-Oncheon and Onyang-Mogryeon—as well as local clubs such as Makati Premier District, Makati Legazpi, and Manila JP Laurel Malacañang. "We are thankful to the Rotary clubs and the district that trusted us. We are only in our second year, yet we were already given a Global Grant," said Adam Ong, current president of the Rotary Club of AIM, in Filipino. "Collaboration is really what made this project happen... Filipinos are very generous and always want to help; sometimes they just need to be given an avenue."

## WATCH FOR YOUR DIRECTORY UPDATE

All members will soon receive an email asking you to approve or update your Club Directory listing. We each have one opportunity every May to edit our own listing in the Directory. This is when contact information, employment details, and/or your club photo can be added or updated.

You will receive the listing as we currently have it. New members will see a mockup using the information we currently have. You will be asked to confirm the listing to be printed as shown to you or to provide revisions if needed. If we are missing information, you will be asked to provide it.

Because of the print deadline, time for your reply will be limited. If no reply is received, we will print what we have. If you wish to change photos you may email any photo (head/shoulders) you want us to use. If you are having Wezz take a new photo and want to view it prior to making a decision, please reply explaining that we will send a proof of the new photo to you for approval.

**DON'T MISS THE BOOK OR HAVE INACCURATE INFORMATION! Reply Promptly when requested.**

**SIGN UP  
NOW!**

## ROTARY NIGHT AT THE BALLPARK!

FRIDAY, JUNE 5<sup>th</sup> – 5:30 GAME TIME

Reserved Box Seats Just \$20 and each comes with a \$10 Bandits Bucks Card for use at concessions, carnival rides, or Bandit's Store Items. Family and Friends are invited to purchase tickets at this great group rate! Do not miss the action and fun of professional baseball, The Bandits vs. The South Bend **CUBS**.



### ~BE THINKING~

Soon president elect Amber Wood will be asking each of us to serve on one or more club committees. Be thinking about all we do, the many projects we undertake each year, fundraising events, and needed club logistics with things such as membership recruitment, new member mentoring, working with Interact and Earlyact, club public relations, social media, the Rotary Foundation, our Club Foundation, and much more. What are interested in? What skills have you not told us about? Be ready to volunteer your talents when Amber asks. Rotary is a Club of community leaders, are you ready to lead? **Get Active in Rotary!**



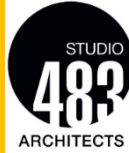
## Make Your Birdies Pledge!

Kevin Koski has distributed our 2026 Birdies for Charity pledge forms, and one is available as the final page of this newsletter. All proceeds will go to our Club Foundation so your donations will have a sustaining impact on our community. Donations will be invested and only the income earned from the investment will be used for our Club Foundation grants. Our goal this year is pledges from at least 38 members. Not too much to ask for a club with more than 100 members!

# 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



## April 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Save the Date – Rotary at the Ball Park June 5 Save the Date- Backwater Gamblers Aug. 2	Support the RI Rotary Club Foundation Million Dollar Milestone campaign	Save the date for the End Polio Now District Walk on Oct. 24	1	2	3	4
5	6	7 Noon Meeting Danielle Scott Childrens Book Author Awards Committee Mtg after	8	9	10 District 6420 Conference in Rockford	11 District 6420 Conference in Rockford
12	13	14 Noon Meeting Bert Blood Scholarships	15	16	17	18
19	20 Rotary Board Meeting Noon Studio 483 Conference Room	21 Noon Meeting Jim Sheargouse National Library Week Foundation Tuesday Membership Committee Mtg After	22	23	24 Literacy Committee Mtg via Zoom 9 am	25
26	27	28 Noon Meeting Rotary Awards Banquet	29	30 Birthday Books Earl Hanson 2:15 pm	Plan to attend May 5 for the Incubator Program  Plan to attend May 12 for the Fislar Sch. and Club Foundation Grants	Plan to attend May 19 for the Houlton Sch. and Jordan EarlyAct Club

Programs: Angela Campbell Invocations: Hannah Carr

Rock Island Rotary

CHARITY SOLICITED FOR

937

BIRD NUMBER



**I PLEDGE TO DONATE:**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ to the charity noted above.  
*(one time, flat donation amount) All pledges due by July 1, 2026.*

**GUESS THE BIRDIES TO WIN A TWO YEAR LEASE ON A 2026 LEXUS!**

I guess that \_\_\_\_\_ birdies will be made.

*Only one grand prize will be awarded.  
Void where prohibited by law. Guesses due to BFC office by July 1.*

**BIRDIES SCORED BY YEAR**

1,918 (2017)	N/A (2020)	1,929 (2023)
2,355 (2018)	1,905 (2021)	2,315 (2024)
2,091 (2019)	2,041 (2022)	2,102 (2025)

**MAKE MORE MAGIC with the BONUS FUND**

YES, I would like to make an additional donation to the Birdies for Charity Bonus Fund in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_, to help provide the minimum 5% match to all participating charities.

**PLEDGE & DONOR INFORMATION (please print)**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY, STATE, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE AND/OR EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

*By providing an email, you are opting in to email updates from Birdies for Charity.*

Please include payment & make checks payable to:  
**BIRDIES FOR CHARITY**

**WHY BIRDIES FOR CHARITY?**

- Every cent you donate goes directly to your chosen charity!
- We will match your contribution by at least 5%, and up to 10% from our Bonus Fund!
- For your tax records, we are recognized as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization!
- By participating in the contest, YOU have the opportunity to win!

Simply make a one-time flat donation and mail with payment to the Birdies for Charity office at:

**15623 Coaltown Road, East Moline, IL 61244**

OR



[BIRDIESFORCHARITY.COM/DONATE](http://BIRDIESFORCHARITY.COM/DONATE)

**KEEP FOR YOUR RECORDS**

I pledged \$ \_\_\_\_\_ one-time donation.

I guessed \_\_\_\_\_ birdies would be made.

Payment was included with pledge

YES \$ \_\_\_\_\_  NO

CASH  CHECK NO. \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to:

**BIRDIES FOR CHARITY**

15623 COALTOWN ROAD

EAST MOLINE, IL 61244

*Quad Cities Golf Classic Charitable Foundation is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization, EIN #93-1332421, doing business as John Deere Classic & Birdies for Charity.*

**Chip in for your chance to win!**

When you chip in to support local charities, you could win big! But the real champs? Your beloved charities! They score 100% of every donation you make through this program, plus a sweet bonus from the Birdies for Charity Bonus Fund, which guarantees a 5% match. Talk about a win-win!

**HERE'S HOW IT WORKS**

To enter the contest, guess the number of birdies that will actually be made by PGA TOUR Pros during the tournament, Wednesday through Sunday.



**GRAND PRIZE: 2 YEAR LEASE ON A 2026 LEXUS!**

One lucky supporter of the **SMART LEXUS OF QUAD CITIES** John Deere Classic's Birdies

for Charity program will win a 2 year lease on a 2026 Lexus, courtesy of Smart Lexus of Quad Cities.

**CONTEST RULES**

- Only 1 grand prize awarded. Ties determined by random drawing
- Open to all participants 21 years or older & a U.S. licensed driver
- The grand prize shall only be delivered within or around the Quad Cities metropolitan area
- All guesses must be on an official pledge card & received at the tournament office by July 1.
- No pledge or purchase required. Need not be present to win.
- Winner responsible for all sales taxes, registration fees, license plate fees, & income taxes on all prizes, including local, state, & federal taxes.
- Full list of official rules & details found at [birdiesforcharity.com/about/contest](http://birdiesforcharity.com/about/contest)