

Lewiston/Niagara-on-the-Lake Rotary Club celebrates its 85th anniversary

SUBMITTED BY THOMAS R. GERBASI, M.D., F.A.A.P.

There are only a few binational Rotary Clubs in the world, and the Rotary Club of Lewiston/Niagara-on-the-Lake is one of them. The club was founded in 1938 and is comprised of members from both Canada and the United States. The binational nature of the club epitomizes Rotary's international fellowship at work right at the club level.

Dinner meetings are held on Wednesdays, half in Canada, and half in the U.S. The presidency has been alternated, one year from Canada, the following year from the U.S. Speakers from both nations have provided lively and thought-provoking programs that encompass a wide diversity of thought.

Rotary has always valued diversity. Members are not only welcomed from all ages, all genders, all fields of endeavor, all socioeconomic strata, all political opinions, all national origins and all races, but are actively sought after.

Over the years, Lewiston/Niagara-on-the-Lake initiatives have included donations to a multiplicity of worthy causes, both locally in the U.S. and Canada, but also around

the world, including the libraries and historical societies in both Lewiston and NOTL; Rotary awards for academic achievement; the maternity unit at Mount St. Mary's; defibrillators and other necessary equipment for the Lewiston Police Department; food pantries on both sides of the river; bereaved children through Camp Hope; and the elderly and infirm at the Niagara Rehabilitation and Nursing Center.

We have participated in a districtwide "Pedal for Polio" event to raise funds to support World Polio Day. We have supported the environment by participating in the binational Great Lakes Watershed Cleanup, and have supported the health of our community by working in conjunction with the Greenway initiative and the New York State Parks Department to develop a trail from Lake Erie to Lake Ontario on the U.S. side of the Niagara River.

We have sponsored an Autism Awareness Day, in conjunction with John R. Oishei Children's Hospital of Buffalo, to educate the public about the condition and available resources; and, in conjunction with the Lewiston Council on the Arts,



we sponsored the first "Bluegrass Monday" to entertain the public and promote local spirit and further innovative programs.

Prior to COVID, we raised funds for our charitable endeavors at Shaw Festival Theatre in Niagara-on-the-Lake with a garden party and a theater production, open to the public. We held a "Pints, Pierogi and Placek" fundraiser to raise money to build a sensory room for children with autism at John R. Oishei Children's Hospital of Buffalo. The food tent in Lewiston during the annual Art Festival has been a landmark event for many years but, in 2010, we ran Lewiston's first BBQ Rib Festival in its place.

In the past, we have supported group study exchanges of young professionals from India and the Netherlands; and supported Rotary ambassadorial fellowships to allow postgraduate studies in Mauritius. We have provided a truck to a medical mission in Chiapas. We have helped provide potable water in developing nations by funding wells (and ensured sustainability by funding sanitary latrines); provided funding and housing, so a child from Belarus could have life-saving cardiac surgery in Toronto; helped provide vitamins, clothing and educational aid to a blind kindergarten in Minsk; supported the efforts of Rotary International to



eradicate polio worldwide; spearheaded an effort to provide hundreds of wheelchairs to unfortunate children in Central America; and provide specialized food for refeeding starvation victims.

We have helped provide prenatal care in Haiti, in collaboration with International Child Care, and also helped provide funds for disaster relief in that area. Through our continued support for Rotary "Gift of Life," we have helped many children have lifesaving cardiac surgery. We helped, through Shelter Box, to provide disaster relief in Miramar.

As mentioned, our club hopes to continue its message of service wherever and whenever it is needed, and spread goodwill and understanding not only in the areas in which we live, but also throughout the world.

If you would like to join with us to do good in the world and in the



community, we would welcome you. Please contact the club secretary at 716-754-2464.

Rotary in action

On a family trip to Niagara Falls, visiting Rotarian Suchil Malhotra from Rotary District 3040 India) and his wife, Ruby, dropped by Syros Restaurant to visit with members of the proudly Binational Lewiston/NOTL Rotary Club and absorb a little of the local ambience.

They have also promoted global grants in which Rotary Clubs in two different countries, aided by a grant from the Rotary International Foundation, work together to help alleviate a problem in one of the Rotary areas of focus (promoting peace; fighting disease; providing clean water/sanitation/hygiene; promoting maternal and child health; promoting education; developing local economies; protecting the environment).

Rotary is proud of its international reach. There are over 46,000 Rotary Clubs worldwide, with a membership of more than 1.4 million individuals of all nations, professions and orientations, and every member is welcomed in any country that they may visit.

Suchil will be a Rotary District governor in India in 2025-26. He and Ruby are very interested in promoting friendship exchanges with interested Rotarians in which



Rotary members host Rotarians from other countries in their homes for an immersion into the local culture, and then, in turn, are hosted by those same members in their homes at a later time.

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Together, Rotarians from Western New York and Southern Ontario look forward to joining with our members in countries around the world to make a difference in our local, national and worldwide communities.



For More
✓ Lewiston-NOTL Rotary website: <https://www.lewiston-notlrotary.com/>



✓ Rotary International website: <http://www.rotary.org>
✓ Club Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/Lewiston-Niagara-on-the-Lake-Rotary>
✓ District 7090 website: www.rotary7090.org



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Youngstown Garden Club to host naturalist

The Youngstown Garden Club will

present a program on bird friendly communities, featuring naturalist Tom Kerr, at 7 p.m. Wednesday, April 12, in the Youngstown First

Presbyterian Church, 100 Church St. According to the Garden Club, Kerr, a member of the Buffalo Audubon Society, was the first to graduate with a degree in natural history and interpretation from the SUNY College of Environmental Sciences and Forestry in Syracuse. He has been active in environmental education his adult life and served as a park ranger for New York City Parks where he honed his interest and knowledge of migratory birds.

His presentation is expected to focus on the negative impacts of rapidly accelerated habitat loss, and its impacts on migratory birds. Kerr will also discuss how residents can encourage migratory birds in their backyards, and ways to ensure natural pest control and plant pollination. The program is being offered free

of charge to members of any garden club, and students, with a \$5 admission fee for others.

Quilt show in Wheatfield

The Twin City Quilters Guild quilt show is April 15-16 at the Wheatfield Community Center, 2790 Church Road. Show times are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, and 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Sunday.

The show is expected to feature more than 200 quilts on display, as well as home decor items, wall hangings, wearables and examples of the guild's various classes and challenge items. A raffle will be offered for a quilt, with proceeds going to the North Tonawanda Meals on Wheels.

Guild meetings are held the first Wednesday of each month at the Wheatfield Community Center. New members are welcome. For more information or to download an application, visit lewistongardenfest.com. The deadline to apply for open gardens is May 20.

Apply for GardenFest

Lewiston GardenFest is recruiting both vendors and residents interested in showcasing their own gardens for the annual event. Presented by Lewiston Garden Club, the Lewiston GardenFest is Saturday, June 17, and Sunday, June 18, along Center Street.

"Once again, Lewiston Garden Club is excited to showcase our community's love of gardening with our annual Lewiston GardenFest," said Mary Ann Yates, chair, Lewiston GardenFest. "There's something for everyone at the event, no matter how green your thumb may be, thanks to the support of our vendor partners and local gardeners. We encourage you to join us and 'Celebrate Sum-

mer at the Lewiston GardenFest' this year."

Businesses and vendors who sell items related to gardening, horticulture and/or the outdoors, including nurseries, landscapers, garden artists and others, are encouraged to apply. Vendor applications are due by May 1 and can be downloaded at lewistongardenfest.com. The application fee varies from \$150 to \$275 based on the size of the vendor display.

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Sanborn Historical Society 'Spring Flea Vendor Show'

The Sanborn Area Historical Society will host a "Spring Flea Vendor Show" from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, April 23-24, at the Sanborn Farm Museum, 2660 Sanders Settlement Road.

The event will feature a variety of items for sale, with lunch available. Table rentals are still being taken; vendor cost is \$10 for both days. For more information on table rentals, contact Bonnie at 716-957-4851.

Admission to the show is a \$1 donation per person, with all proceeds going to the Historical Society's schoolhouse restoration project.



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