

The Madison WI Rotary News - January 2026 Edition

a publication of the Rotary Club of Madison



Upcoming Rotary Programs at Park Hotel

January 7: Lynn Buckmaster -- What is Future Problem Solving and Why is it Important?

RSVP for Jan. 7 Luncheon: https://forms.gle/ynnnJtxjoXbCDbSY9



January 14: Dr. Zachary Morris -- Theranostics and Particle Therapy: Advancing Personalized Precision Medicine For Patients

January 21: Fred Risser and Doug Moe -- Forward for the People: A Discussion

January 28: Keisha Harrison -- Madison Public Market

Rotary District 6250

December 2025 Rotary District Newsletter

Here's a **LINK** to this month's Rotary District 6250 newsletter so you can read about happenings within other Rotary Clubs in our district and key District and Rotary International news.

Review of Last Month's Guest Speaker Presentations

December 3: Phil Hands -- Tooned In: The Political Art of Phil Hands
--submitted by Jessika Kasten



Phil Hands, the Wisconsin State Journal's political cartoonist and the state's only newspaper cartoonist, gave Downtown Rotary an engaging presentation on his work and industry. He outlined the three essential components of a good cartoon: compelling artwork, humor, and a strong opinion, emphasizing the importance of pushing boundaries. Hands shared a range of his favorite cartoons and described his creative process—starting with pencil sketches, outlining in ink, then adding color digitally. His cartoons appear in newspapers nationwide, serving as visual columns to spark thought and open minds through humor.

December 10: Mo Cheeks -- How a Former Madison Alder Makes a Difference by Baking Bread
--submitted by Larry Larrabee



Our own Joy Cardin interviewed **Maurice "Mo" Cheeks**, former Madison alder and activist for social justice, regarding his development of Bread and Justice, a not-for-profit organization that bakes sour dough bread in his basement and donates all monthly profits to various organizations fighting for social justice or those leading anti-poverty and anti-racism endeavors. The organization grew from Mo's family's Friday night pizza baking into baking sour dough bread for a cause and is modeled after actor Paul Newman's highly successful not-for-profit that sells food products and donates all profits to charity. To subscribe to the weekly newsletter, go to breadandjustice.org where you can order loaves of bread to be picked up at his home on Saturdays.

December 17: Holiday Buffet -- Performance by the Wisconsin Singers



Our thanks to **Jessika Kasten** and **Larry Larrabee** for providing these summary articles for our guest speakers during the month of December. If you missed an previous Rotary guest speaker presentations, you can watch most of them on our club's **YouTube Channel**.

Meet Our Newest Members!

Patrick Baldwin, Cynthia Everitt, Sara Finger, Alan Robinson, and Lora Wilhite joined our Rotary Club on December 3rd and Ben Jones joined our Rotary Club on December 17th:



Patrick Baldwin is President of Advanced Building Corporation. Patrick was born and raised in Madison. He lives in Cottage Grove with his wife, Misty, and he has three grown children. Patrick holds a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in Marketing from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He was previously the Vice President for Madison Area Builders Association. Patrick has extensive community service experience with the Village of Cottage Grove, serving on their Board, Plan Commission and Fire Department Commission. He was also the Patriots Youth Hockey President and served on the Region 4 Hockey Board and was also Treasurer. Patrick enjoys traveling, boating, and being active in the lives of his kids and grandkids. Rhonda Adams is his sponsor.

Cynthia Everitt is Executive Vice President of Stearns Packaging Corporation. Cynthia was born in Oak Park, Illinois, and moved to Madison in 1996. She is married to John Everitt, also a member of our club, and they have two grown children. Cynthia holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She has served with Scouting USA as a volunteer, and as a Fort Winnebago Surgeons Quarters Museum Volunteer. Additionally, she served many years as the John Bell DAR Good



Citizenship Award chairperson. Cynthia enjoys gardening, cooking and painting. Lew Harned is her sponsor.



Sara Finger is Executive Director at Embolden WI. Since 2004, Sara has been leading an effort to ensure policy happens with people rather than to them. She is proud to call herself an “advocacy doula” and lives to help embolden others to be effective advocates for positive change. Sara graduated with a degree in Political Science from UW Eau Claire and has continued to live as an eager learner of all things policy, advocacy, leadership, nonprofit management, and social justice. She is honored to have been recognized with several awards including being named a Champion of Change by the Obama White House for her work on the Affordable Care Act. Sara is motivated and inspired to radically imagine a healthier democracy in our state by her 15 year old daughter Layla and 12 year old son William. To practice critical self care, Sara loves to do crossword puzzles and Lego sets! Scott Haumersen is her sponsor.



Ben Jones is a Judge with the Dane County Circuit Court. Ben was appointed by Governor Evers to take over Branch 1 of the Circuit Court after Susan Crawford was elected to the Supreme Court. Ben was born in Minneapolis and moved to Madison in 2004 from Bloomington, Minnesota. He lives with his wife Christina and their two kids in Monona. Ben holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from UW-Madison, and a Juris Doctor from the University of Wisconsin Law School. Ben was a member of the Pro Bono Society and Moot Court Board at the UW Law School. Ben enjoys board games, biking, soccer and watching movies. Stephen Ehlke is his sponsor.



Alan Robinson is Executive Director of Satori House Recovery, Inc. Alan is also the co-founder of a company, which was awarded the Retail Excellence Award by the Black Chamber of Madison. He previously served as the executive director of Wisconsin’s NORML chapter, earning national acclaim in 2020 for his advocacy in cannabis reform. Alan’s tenure in the media includes hosting “Mr. Robinson’s Neighborhood”, a daily radio show focusing on Madison politics, and as the host of WisCannibis Radio, covering the state of cannabis in our state. His background in radio and television was fostered at Iowa Western Community College. Beyond his professional endeavors, Alan enjoys wine, billiards, and Chicago Bears football. Charles McLimans is his sponsor.



Lora Wilhite was born in Madison and moved back here from Maryland earlier this year. She has two adult children. Lora holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree from California State University Sacramento and a Masters Degree from the University of Delaware. Lora was a teacher in Germany for nine years and she served as an ALS Service Coordinator in Bethesda, Maryland from 2018-2023. Lora received a Distinguished Award from Ramstein Air Force Base in Germany. Lora enjoys traveling and volunteering. Susan Schmitz is her sponsor.

Our Sympathies

Dave Duchow's father, Roger Duchow, passed away on November 8th. We extend our sympathies to Dave and to his family.

Jennifer Winding's father, Kevin Egan, passed away on November 21st in Milwaukee. We extend our sympathies to Jennifer and to her family.

Martha Casey's husband, Charles Casey, passed away on December 21st. We extend our sympathies to Martha and to her family.

In Memory of Carol Toussaint



We are sorry to report the death of long-time member Carol Toussaint. Carol joined our Rotary Club in 1987.

Carol was the first woman to serve as president of our club, serving during the 1992-93 Rotary year. She was incredibly active in all areas of our Rotary Club during her 38 years of membership, including serving as our Madison Rotary Foundation President in 1996-97.

She will be remembered as an effective leader whose service touched every corner of our Rotary community as well as the Madison community.

Our club has made a $100 contribution to our Madison Rotary Foundation to establish a Memorial Fund in her name. Anyone wishing to make a gift to this fund may send it to the Madison Rotary Foundation, 2 S. Carroll St. Ste. 255, Madison, WI 53703 or donate online: https://rotarymadison.org/donate/madison-rotary-foundation-memorial-fund/

Rotary International has approved our global grant project to protect at-risk youth in Vietnam from human traffickers

--submitted by Joyce Bromley, Co-leader of project

Our club's International Projects and Program Committee is pleased to announce our next signature project.

Our past signature project in Ghana was influential in directing us to the importance of upstream programs to prevent abuse of vulnerable populations.

Human trafficking is a rapidly expanding global crisis, and Vietnam remains a major hotspot. Youth from low-income communities are especially vulnerable to deceptive job offers and misinformation. This new grant project will build on two highly successful previous California Rotary Global Grants in Vietnam and expands the reach and depth of training.

Our club has partnered with the Rotary Club of Saratoga, California, the Pacific Links Foundation—which developed the online learning platform—Rotary District 5170 of

California, and the Rotary Club of Saigon.

The program aims to equip at least 240 disadvantaged girls and boys with the skills needed to pursue safe, stable employment and avoid traffickers. That requires training 24 teachers and 120 parents/guardians to better support students in their development. Training will be delivered through classroom workshops and peer-to-peer learning models such as student-led clubs.

Similarly to our Ghana project, teachers and parents in Vietnam will also receive training to help reinforce these skills at home and in the community, creating a strong support system around each student.

Students will be equipped with essential workforce readiness skills, leadership training, English proficiency, and trafficking-prevention knowledge.

You are probably asking: How can members of our club be engaged in this project? On-site visits will be available and will be announced later.

Online opportunities are plentiful:

- You can help students practice and improve their English communication skills.
- Conduct virtual workshops sharing your insights and expertise.
- Guide university students in their career pursuits.
- Consult with high school students in their pursuit of IT careers and practice skills with them.
- Deliver workshops on entrepreneurship.
- Mentor students.

If you are interested in learning more about how to help volunteer, contact the Rotary office.

Fund Drive Update

Mark Clear chairs this year's annual Fund Drive Campaign, and the campaign was kicked-off at our November 5th Rotary meeting. Our annual fund drive began on November 5th, and we have a goal of raising $160,000 this year. **To date, we have raised $123,733 in contributions and pledges.**

All members received a mailing that includes information on the grants supported by your gifts to our Madison Rotary Foundation that focus primarily on youth and education. Together, we can do so much more, so please make your gift today.

Thank you!

Thank You For Making Holidays Happy for Children in Need in our Community!

The 2025 holidays were made brighter for 75 children in our community due in thanks to members of our Rotary Club of Madison.

This year, our Community Projects Committee worked with three organizations -- **Big Brothers Big Sisters of Dane County**, **Madison Reading Project** and **Vera Court Neighborhood Center** – with 41 Rotary members picking up gift tags and purchasing gifts for 75 children.

We sincerely appreciate the generosity of our Rotarians in making this year's holiday season a happy one for these children! Thank you!



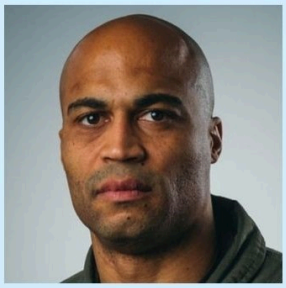
Rotary Club of Madison Officers Elected for 2026-2027

At the December 3 meeting, our Club Board of Directors elected officers for the upcoming Rotary year that begins July 1.

Mark Greene, current President-elect and will become president July 1, 2026. **Janet Piraino**, current President-elect Nominee and will become president July 1, 2027. **Janine O'Rourke** has been elected our next President-elect Nominee and will become president July 1, 2028.

Wendy Wink will serve as Sergeant-at-Arms

Mark Greene



President
July 1, 2026

Janet Pirano



President-Elect
2027

Janine O'Rourke



President-Elect
2028

Wendy Wink



Sergeant-at-Arms

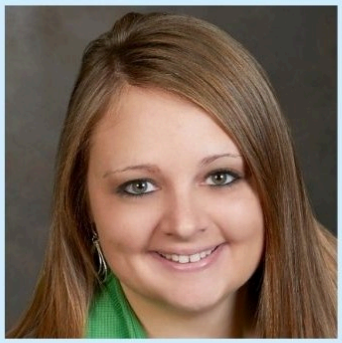
And, continuing in their roles will be **Pat Jenkins** as Secretary; **Tara Grays** as Treasurer and **Nick Curran** as Assistant Treasurer.

Pat Jenkins



Secretary

Tara Grays



Treasurer

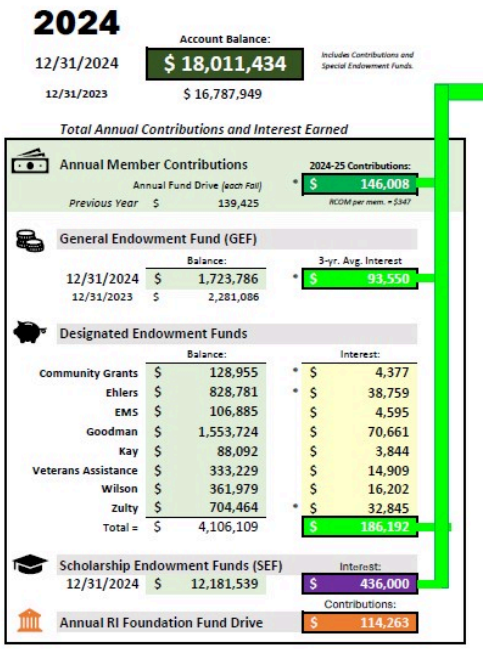
Nick Curran



Assistant Treasurer

Madison Rotary Foundation: For every $1 donated, we are able to convert that dollar into $6.68 of distributed support

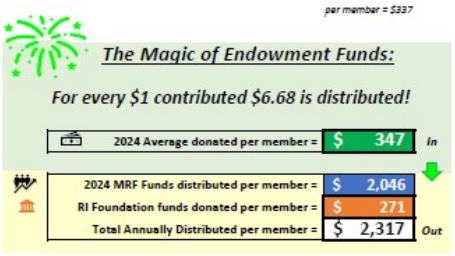
During our December 10th Rotary luncheon, Madison Rotary Foundation President Paul Hoffmann provided an overview of our Madison Rotary Foundation. He created a one-page chart that shows the endowment funds and the income side of our foundation as well as the outflow of funds for our various annual grants and program funding.



The chart showed a market value of $18,011,434 as of December 31, 2024. (Our foundation assets exceeded $20 million currently.)

Contributions and investment earnings generated by our endowment funds are the resources that fuel our annual programming. We are providing $861,750 in project and program funding.

Paul's chart also shows the *magic of endowment funds* -- the extraordinary transformation that occurs every time a gift is made to the Madison Rotary Foundation.



For every **$1** donated, we are able to convert that dollar into **$6.68** of distributed support. This multiplier effect is powered by the strategic growth of our investments which dramatically amplifies the reach of every dollar contributed.

Each gift is creating stories of opportunity, service, and hope that reach farther than any of us could imagine. Together, as Rotarians, we are creating meaningful and measurable impact.

And it's not only financial resources that drive our success. More than 100 Rotarians volunteer their time and expertise on committees that implement our projects and manage our grantmaking. Their service saves our foundation thousands of dollars each year and embodies the true spirit of Rotary: giving both time and talent to strengthen our community.

Let's continue our foundation work with pride, with purpose, and with the confidence that every contribution, every hour volunteered, and every connection we make truly matters.



Jan. 2 -- Lisa Birkenthal -- Adm. Date: 7/10/2024
Health Services-Retired.

Jan. 3 -- Charlie Berthoud -- Adm. Date: 7/10/2019
Religion. Covenant Presbyterian Church

Jan. 3 -- Doug Dittmann -- Adm. Date: 10/12/1988
Insurance-Retired. Director 2008-10; MRF President 2022-23 PHF (2)

Jan. 4 -- Ted Bilich -- Adm. Date: 5/3/2023
Business Services, Supplies & Technology. Risk Alternatives LLC

Jan. 4 -- Gary Kuter -- Adm. Date: 8/4/2010
Financial Institutions. Bank of Sun Prairie Formerly Rotarian at Middleton Area Sunrise PHF (2)

Jan. 4 -- Brad Mullins -- Adm. Date: 10/4/2000
Hotels. Park Hotel, Inc. PHF (7)

Jan. 5 -- Chris Laurent -- Adm. Date: 11/5/2025
Business Services, Supplies & Technology. Cinnaire Solutions

Jan. 6 -- Justin Hart -- Adm. Date: 7/5/2017
Financial Institutions. Capitol Bank

Jan. 6 -- Chris Kolakowski -- Adm. Date: 6/30/2021
Government-State. Wisconsin Veterans Museum

Jan. 7 -- Joel Rivlin -- Adm. Date: 4/5/2023
Consulting. Vilas Consulting LLC

Jan. 8 -- Adam Barr -- Adm. Date: 2/5/2025
Business Services, Supplies & Technology. Michael Best Strategies

Jan. 8 -- Mark Westover -- Adm. Date: 1/9/2019
Community Services. YMCA of Dane County Inc.

Jan. 10 -- Sharyn Alden -- Adm. Date: 9/8/2009
Advertising, Publicity & Public Relations. Sharyn L. Alden Communications, Inc. Former member of club 1997-2008 PHF

Jan. 11 -- Julia Bolz -- Adm. Date: 10/2/2024
Community Services.

Jan. 11 -- Elaine Mischler -- Adm. Date: 11/5/2008
Physician-Retired. Director 2023-25 PHF (5)

Jan. 11 – Alan Robinson -- Adm. Date: 12/3/2025
Health Services. Satori Recovery House, Inc. Former member of our club 2024

Jan. 11 -- Gregg Tipple -- Adm. Date: 8/22/1984
Business Services, Supplies & Technology-Retired. Director 1990-92, Sgt.-At-Arms 1988-91 PHF

Jan. 12 -- Carol Koby -- Adm. Date: 4/7/1993
Communications. Koby Communication Services LLC Director 1995-97 & 2012-14 PHF (6)

Jan. 13 -- Chris Jimieson -- Adm. Date: 6/4/2025
Engineering. SCS Engineers

Jan. 13 -- Mary Wright -- Adm. Date: 3/2/2011
Housing-Retired.

Jan. 15 -- Larry Smith -- Adm. Date: 10/29/1986
Consulting-Retired. Director 1993-96; President 1996-97; 100% Attendance since 10/29/1986 PHF (10)

Jan. 16 -- Alex Vitanye -- Adm. Date: 12/6/2017
Business Services, Supplies & Technology. Forward Madison FC/Madison Mallards Sgt-at-Arms 2024-25

Jan. 18 -- Matt Boatright-Simon -- Adm. Date: 2/9/2022
Communications. Boatright-Simon Picture+Sound

Jan. 21 -- Tanya Zastrow -- Adm. Date: 3/1/2023
Cultural Institutions. Olbrich Botanical Gardens

Jan. 22 -- Jessica Ace -- Adm. Date: 6/26/2024
Government-State. State of WI Dept. of Health Services

Jan. 22 -- Al Bryan -- Adm. Date: 7/10/1985
Physician-Retired. PHF

Jan. 23 -- Tara Grays -- Adm. Date: 6/6/2018
Financial Institutions. Lake Ridge Bank Treasurer since July 1, 2022

Jan. 24 -- Mary Helen Becker -- Adm. Date: 3/21/1990
Retail-Services & Products-Retired. PHF (5)

Jan. 24 -- Tom Walker -- Adm. Date: 8/22/1990

Communications. Mid-West Management, Inc. Sgt.-at-Arms 2005-06. PHF (4)

Jan. 25 -- Angela Bartell -- Adm. Date: 7/8/1987
Judiciary-Retired. Bartell Dispute Services Director 1990-92 and 2001-03, President 2003-04. PHF (6)

Jan. 25 -- Bryan Woodhouse -- Adm. Date: 3/6/2024
Foundations. Madison College Foundation

Jan. 26 -- Sharyl Kato -- Adm. Date: 10/5/2005
Community Services. Rainbow Project-Child & Family Counseling Director 2015-17 PHF

Jan. 26 -- Joe McNeil -- Adm. Date: 3/2/2005
Brokerage & Investments. Isthmus Partners MRF Treasurer 2014 - 2024 PHF

Jan. 26 -- Chris Rich -- Adm. Date: 6/3/2015
Brokerage & Investments. EnRich Financial Partners LLC MRF Ass't Treasurer 2024-present PHF (4)

Jan. 26 -- Trey Sprinkman -- Adm. Date: 5/2/2007
Real Estate. Sprinkman Real Estate Sgt.-at-Arms 2015-16; Director 2016-18 PHF

Jan. 27 – Sara Finger -- Adm. Date: 12/5/2025
Consulting. Embolden WI

Jan. 27 -- Jim Hamre -- Adm. Date: 8/11/1982
Consulting-Retired. PHF (4)

Jan. 27 -- Rick Kiley -- Adm. Date: 1/7/2009
Business Services, Supplies & Technology-Retired. PHF (3)

Jan. 27 -- Susan Schmitz -- Adm. Date: 11/15/1989
Consulting. Schmitz Consulting, LLC Director 1992-94; President 1995-96; 100% Attendance since 11/15/1989 PHF (2)

Jan. 28 -- Roberta Gassman -- Adm. Date: 12/10/1997
Consulting. UW-Madison School of Social Work Director 2000-02 PHF (3)

Jan. 28 -- Rich Lynch -- Adm. Date: 11/1/2006
Construction-Retired. PHF

Jan. 29 -- Jeff Bartell -- Adm. Date: 7/25/1979
Law-Retired. Director 1987-89 & 2007-09; MRF President 2003-04. PHF (8)

Jan. 30 -- Chuck Elliott -- Adm. Date: 6/26/1968
Energy Services-Retired. PHF (3)

Jan. 31 -- Dave Duchow -- Adm. Date: 8/4/2010

Financial Institutions. U.S. Bank MRF Asst. Treasurer 2014 -2024; Treasurer 2024-present PHF

Jan. 31 -- Bing Rikkers -- Adm. Date: 10/6/2021
Health Services. UW-Madison, Dept. of Surgery PHF (5)

Jan. 31 -- Michael Sjogren -- Adm. Date: 9/6/2023
Community Services. The Salvation Army Former Rotarian at Cedar Rapids, IA (2009-13); Harwood Heights, IL (2017-20); Quincy, IL (2021)



Get Social with Us! Visit www.rotarymadison.org

Rotary Club of Madison, 2 S. Carroll St., Ste. 255, Madison, WI 53703
Phone/Text 608-255-9164 Fax 608-255-9007
Email rotaryoffice@rotarymadison.org