

From the President's Desk

Dear Fellow Members,
August is celebrated across Rotary as **Membership and New Club Development Month**—a timely reminder that the strength of our organization lies not merely in numbers, but in the people who bring Rotary's ideals to life. Every new member brings fresh perspectives, unique experiences, and renewed energy, enriching our clubs and expanding our capacity to serve.

Membership has always been the heartbeat of Rotary. Since the first gathering of four professionals in Chicago in 1905, Rotary has grown into a truly global movement because individuals chose to become part of something larger than themselves. While projects and programs define what we do, it is our members who define who we are.

For the Rotary Global History Fellowship, membership carries an even deeper significance. Ours is a Fellowship united by a shared passion—to preserve, document, and celebrate the remarkable history of Rotary. Each member is not only a participant but also a custodian of our collective heritage.

History teaches us that Rotary has continually evolved because it welcomed people with diverse backgrounds, professions, cultures, and ideas. Every generation has contributed its own chapter to Rotary's story while remaining true to the timeless values of fellowship, integrity, diversity, service, and leadership. As historians, we recognize that the future of Rotary depends upon our ability to engage new members while preserving the traditions that have guided us for more than a century.

One of the greatest opportunities before our Fellowship is to inspire more Rotarians to discover the richness of Rotary's history. Many members know the name of Paul Harris and the founding of Rotary, but fewer are familiar with the countless stories of innovation, resilience, and service that have unfolded across clubs and districts around the world. These stories deserve to be shared—not simply as historical records, but as sources of inspiration for current and future generations.

RGHF Leadership

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When a new member joins the Rotary Global History Fellowship, they become part of a global network of individuals committed to ensuring that Rotary's legacy is preserved with care and accuracy. They help transform archives into knowledge, documents into narratives, and memories into history. In doing so, they ensure that the achievements of today's Rotarians will continue to inspire those who follow.

Membership is also about engagement. A Fellowship thrives when its members actively participate—by contributing articles, sharing historical material, documenting club milestones, conducting research, participating in discussions, and encouraging fellow Rotarians to appreciate the value of preserving our heritage. Every contribution, however modest, strengthens the Fellowship and enriches our collective understanding of Rotary's journey.

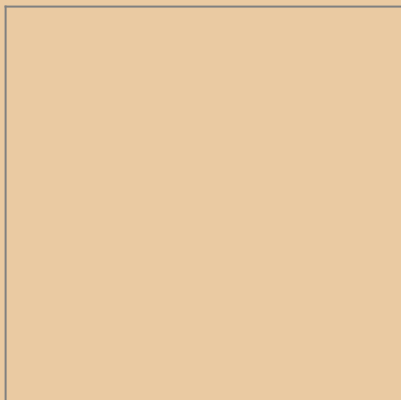
As we observe Membership Month, I encourage each of us to become an ambassador for the Rotary Global History Fellowship. Introduce fellow Rotarians to our mission. Invite those with an interest in Rotary's heritage to become part of our community. More importantly, help them discover that preserving history is not about looking backward—it is about providing context, continuity, and inspiration for the future.

The history we preserve today will become the foundation upon which tomorrow's Rotarians build new ideas, stronger friendships, and greater service. By growing our Fellowship, we are not simply increasing our membership; we are expanding the number of guardians entrusted with protecting Rotary's remarkable legacy.

Let us use this month to renew our commitment to welcoming new members, engaging existing ones, and strengthening the bonds of fellowship that unite us across continents. Together, we can ensure that Rotary's rich history continues to educate, inspire, and connect generations of Rotarians around the world.

Thank you for your continued support, enthusiasm, and dedication to the Rotary Global History Fellowship. I look forward to another year of learning, sharing, and preserving the stories that define our great organization.

Rotary Regards,



Jeetendra Sharma

AUGUST CURATOR'S COLUMN

From the Desk of RG, the Curator

Membership, memory, and the stories we leave behind August is Rotary's Membership and New Club Development Month. It is a time to celebrate our members, welcome new people, and remember what makes Rotary special in the first place - people coming together, building friendships, and serving others.

It is also a reminder that every person who joins Rotary becomes part of Rotary's history.

That history is not just found in old books or stored away in boxes. It lives in our photographs, club records, projects, friendships, and the stories Rotarians pass from one generation to the next.

That is what Rotary's Living Museum is all about. We are not simply looking back at the past. We are working to keep Rotary's story alive.

This Month in World History

August 10, 1793 - The Louvre opened as a public museum in Paris. What had once been a royal palace became a place where history and art could be shared with everyone.

August 10, 1846 - The Smithsonian Institution was established with a mission centered on increasing and sharing knowledge.

August 15, 1947 - India gained its independence from British rule, beginning a new chapter for one of the world's largest nations.

August 19 - World Humanitarian Day honors the people who serve others during wars, disasters, and humanitarian emergencies - sometimes at the cost of their own lives.

August 20, 1977 - NASA launched Voyager 2. It became the only spacecraft to visit Uranus and Neptune and continues carrying a small piece of humanity's story into interstellar space.

Each of these moments reminds us that history is more than a date on a calendar. History is about people, courage, discovery, service, and the decision to leave something meaningful behind.

This Month in Rotary History

In August 1909, when Rotary was only four years old, Chicago Rotarians gathered with their families and friends at Lake Harbor, Michigan. It is a simple reminder that fellowship, friendship, and family have been part of Rotary from the very beginning.

In August 1912, the Rotary Club of London was chartered, giving Rotary an official foothold in Europe. What began with four men gathering in Chicago was becoming an international movement.

The August 1936 issue of The Rotarian told the story of Rotary's changing names - from the National Association of Rotary Clubs, to the International Association of Rotary Clubs, and finally to Rotary International.

Rotary Global History Fellowship

Rotary kept changing because people kept joining, new clubs were formed, and the idea of Service Above Self continued to spread around the world.

The Curator's Reflection

History is not made only by famous people. It is made every time a Rotarian invites someone to a meeting, begins a service project, saves an important photograph, records the story of a longtime member, or helps start a new club.

The people joining Rotary today are already helping write the next chapter of its history.

That is why August is also an important month for the Rotary Global History Fellowship. A new RGHF membership structure will be introduced soon, along with an updated website that will make it easier to explore Rotary's past, share stories, and become involved in building our Living Museum. Please be on the lookout for more information.

Why join RGHF?

Because if we do not preserve Rotary's history, pieces of it will simply disappear. Photographs will be lost. Records will be discarded. Stories will go untold. And future generations of Rotarians will never know the people whose service and leadership helped build the Rotary they inherited.

Your membership helps us find those stories, preserve them, and share them with Rotarians around the world. Your support helps ensure that Rotary's history remains a living resource - not just for us, but for the generations that will follow.

Please consider joining RGHF, renewing your membership, or making a donation. Every membership and every gift helps save another piece of Rotary's story.

You're not just visiting Rotary's Living Museum. You're helping build it.

I'll see you around the museum.

Archie Gearhardt
