



From the President's Desk

Dear Fellow Members,

September is celebrated in Rotary as **Basic Education and Literacy Month**—an opportunity to reflect on one of the most powerful forces for individual empowerment and social progress: education.

Literacy is much more than the ability to read and write. It gives people the confidence and capability to learn, make informed choices, access opportunities, and participate meaningfully in society. Through countless projects around the world, Rotary has made education and literacy an important part of its commitment to building stronger communities.

For the Rotary Global History Fellowship, this theme has a special resonance. **Education connects generations, and history is one of the most valuable forms of knowledge that we pass from one generation to another.**

The history of Rotary is not merely a collection of dates and milestones. It is a repository of experiences, ideas, challenges, successes, and lessons. When we document the history of our clubs and districts, preserve photographs and records, or capture the memories of senior Rotarians, we are creating valuable learning resources for those who will follow us.

There is also an important lesson for all of us: **today's Rotarians are creating the history that tomorrow's Rotarians will learn from.**

I therefore encourage every member to look beyond preserving the past and think about documenting the present. Record the story behind your club's important projects. Capture the experiences of those who have contributed to its growth. Preserve the milestones that might otherwise be forgotten.

As we celebrate Basic Education and Literacy Month, let us remember that knowledge becomes truly valuable when it is shared. And by preserving Rotary's history, we ensure that the knowledge and experiences of one generation can educate and inspire the next.

Let us preserve our history—not simply to remember where Rotary has been, but to help future generations understand where Rotary can go.

Rotary Regards,

Jeetendra Sharma
President
Rotary Global History Fellowship



FROM THE DESK OF ARCHIE

A Revolutionary September

A few discoveries from the archives - and an invitation to help keep Rotary history alive

Fellow History Hunters,

Come in, pull up a chair, and let us open the September ledger together.

September has always felt a little revolutionary. Around the world, it is a month filled with stories of ideas taking hold, nations finding their voice, and ordinary people discovering that knowledge can change the course of history.

It is also Rotary's Basic Education and Literacy Month. That seems fitting, because few things are more revolutionary than learning to read, gaining access to knowledge, and discovering the ability to write your own future.

A Few September Morsels from World History

On September 3, 1783, the Treaty of Paris was signed, formally ending the American Revolutionary War. A new nation stepped onto the world stage, carrying with it an experiment in self-government that would influence generations.

On September 8, the world observes International Literacy Day, a reminder that the written word opens doors to education, opportunity, independence, and dignity.

A September Milestone That Changed the World

September also holds one of the most important milestones in Rotary history. On September 29, 1979, Rotarians joined representatives of the Philippine Ministry of Health at a health center in Makati, where children received the first drops of oral polio vaccine in Rotary's groundbreaking immunization effort.

Rotary International and the Philippine government had committed to a multiyear partnership to immunize approximately six million children. It became Rotary's first Health, Hunger and Humanity Grant project. Its success helped lay the foundation for PolioPlus, launched in 1985, and Rotary's continuing promise to help rid the world of polio. What began that September day in the Philippines became one of the greatest humanitarian commitments in Rotary history.

September 11: Service in the Face of Tragedy

September also carries a day the world will never forget. After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Rotary clubs and Rotarians quickly mobilized to help victims' families, rescue workers, and affected communities. With support from Rotarians around the world, the New York Rotary World Trade Center Disaster Relief Fund raised nearly \$1.5 million. Clubs across the country also organized local fundraisers, scholarships, and other acts of support. In one of America's darkest hours, Rotarians once again answered tragedy with service, compassion, and action.

Our New Website Is Open

Our new RGHF website is now open at [RGHE.org](https://www.RGHE.org). I invite you to take a look, wander through the exhibits, and come back often.

We are continuing to upload more documents, photographs, articles, and historic treasures. Like any living museum, it will keep growing. Each item we preserve helps another Rotarian discover where we came from, understand how Rotary changed the world, and imagine what Rotary can still become.

NOW IS THE TIME

If you have not joined, renewed your membership, or paid your current dues, please do so now. We truly need your help.

History Does Not Preserve Itself

An old photograph can lose its names. A club record can disappear during a move. A handwritten letter can be tossed away because no one realizes what it is. And a wonderful story can vanish when the last person who remembers it is gone.

That is why your membership matters. Your dues help us find, organize, protect, and share Rotary's history. They help keep Rotary's Living Museum open and growing so these stories can be delivered to Rotarians, researchers, students, and future generations around the world.

If your membership has lapsed, please renew it. If your dues are still outstanding, please take care of them. If you are not yet a member, now is a wonderful time to join us. And while you are there, please make sure your name, email address, and other contact information are correct so we can continue sending you the latest discoveries and all the great things happening throughout RGHF.

This is not simply about paying dues. It is about making sure the work continues. It is about keeping Rotary history alive, useful, and within reach for generations yet to come.

Keep Watch for the 711 Society

There is another exciting chapter just ahead. Keep a close eye on your email for news about the brand-new 711 Society, inspired by Room 711 of the Unity Building on Dearborn Street, where the Rotary story began.

The 711 Society will offer a special opportunity to help preserve Rotary's history and support the future of Rotary's Living Museum. We will be sharing the full story and membership details very soon.

Until then, visit RGHF.org, renew your membership, check your information, and take a little time to explore. There are many more treasures waiting to be discovered, and many more still waiting to be saved.

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

I'll see you around the museum.

Archie
Archibald Gearhart
History Hunter



