



March 2022 Volume 6 Issue 9

Be the Inspiration for Fellow Rotarians!

Tuesday, March 15, 2022

The terrible news of the past month shows how desperately the world needs your compassion and knowledge. The stakes are starkly illuminated by this winter's [UN IPCC Climate Change Report](#) and the war in Ukraine, which - among its many horrors - reveals the peril of continued dependence on fossil fuels.

This issue invites you to share your environmental work during Rotary's International Convention in June, bringing hope, courage, and confidence to Rotarians from all parts of the world. Here are the ways you can do that:



- Get inspiration from the April 9-10 World Environment virtual conference organized by Rotarians and Rotaracters from Eastern Europe and Asia.
- Send your most eloquent project photos by April 1: we need them for our RICON exhibit banners!
- Network with Rotarians from other Action Groups during the June 2 RAGTIME evening at the Houston Aquarium. Help them see how supporting the environment protects and strengthens Rotary's other humanitarian work.
- Learn from - and enlighten - fellow environmentalists during the Green Road to RICON hybrid environmental conference on June 3.
- Volunteer for ESRAG's House of Friendship exhibit or the online EXPO 3-D exhibit, and enjoy fun training beforehand on ESRAG messaging and how to navigate in virtual reality.

Brian Braginton-Smith, Smart Cities Director of Boston Greenfest, expressed the opportunity perfectly in a letter to fellow Rotarians in ESRAG's Eastern North America Chapter this week: "This is our time, and it carries serious responsibility, as things are indeed quite desperate. From the core of my being I thank you all, for it is in what has been done by all, that the promise arises and the progress results."

Photo by Rob Edwards: celebrating the installation of solar power at a school in Navakawau, on Taveuni Island in Fiji. This is a project of [Its Time Foundation](#), founded by Rob, an Australian Rotarian, ESRAG member, and co-founder of the quarterly Climate and Peace Forum put on by the Rotary Clubs of Sydney.



Eastern Europe and Asian Chapters Host 2022 World Environment Area of Focus Conference

By Deniz Vural on Saturday, March 12, 2022

Rotaractors and Rotarians Teaming Up!

After the great success achieved last year by Latin American ESRAG members, this spring Rotaractors and Rotarians from Eastern Europe to Southeast Asia will present ESRAG's second **World Environment (AoF) Conference (WEC)** on **April 9-10**. Two ESRAG Regional Chapters, Eastern Europe-Central Asia-Middle East and Southeast Asia, will help organize the 2-day virtual conference which will welcome guest speakers from major NGOs and showcase the related work done by the family of Rotary across two continents.



We encourage Interactors and youth exchange students to attend! Please also invite people beyond Rotary who are concerned about environmental issues. You can register for the conference by using [this link](#).

The conference will combine plenary talks, break-out sessions, and videos illustrating Rotary and Rotaract projects. This event aims to build further collaboration not only within Rotary, but also with other NGOs. This model builds on the tremendous success of the first WEC organized by Rotaractors and Rotarians of the ESRAG Latin America Chapter.

Participating NGOs include the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

The **conference goals** are to:

- Deepen participants' insight into the impacts of climate change on the environment.
- Increase networking with other NGOs that combat the climate crisis.
- Encourage local Rotary members to pursue environment-friendly and sustainable projects through engaging with their ESRAG Chapters.
- Foster collaboration on environmentally sustainable projects/actions across ESRAG Chapters and worldwide.

Each day's program will start with speakers and videos. In the afternoons, breakout sessions will be organized for each of ESRAG's six themes: biodiversity, climate, sustainable living, food systems, pollution, and circular economy.

The conference will be in English with simultaneous translation in the second language that receives the most votes. You will be able to vote on the language when you register.

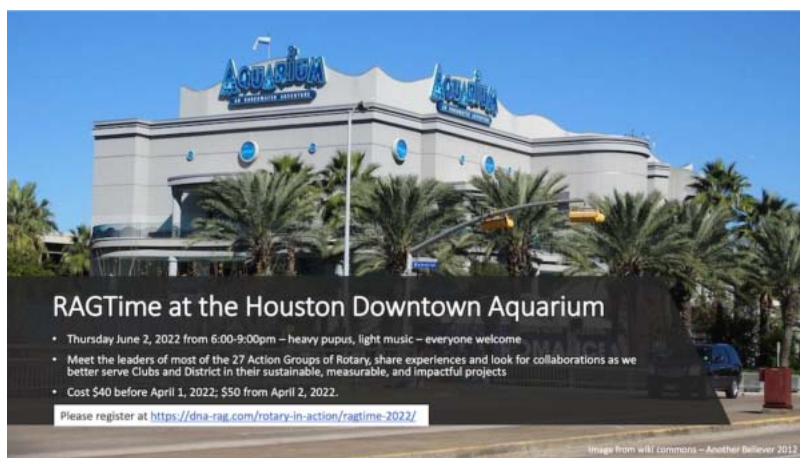
For further information (e.g. guest speakers, breakout sessions, and other features) about the conference, follow our [Instagram account](#) as the conference continues to develop!

Despite the ongoing heartbreaking news in Ukraine, we hope to raise awareness on our ecology and highlight eco-friendly projects as much as we can, and invite our participating countries to be part of it.

We look forward to seeing you at the **WEC 2022**!

Party at the Houston Aquarium - RAGTIME June 2

By Ariel Miller on Saturday, March 12, 2022



After two years of pandemic, it's high time for a Rotary party! If you can get to Houston by June 2, join ESRAG at RAGTIME from 6 to 9 pm, for a fabulous evening of music, hors d'oeuvres, and drinks for all of the Rotary Action Groups at the Houston Downtown Aquarium. RAGTIME is a great opportunity to find out what other Rotarians are doing and to network about collaboration. Guests are welcome! Get your tickets at this link: <http://dna-rag.com/rotary-in-action/ragtime-2022/>

The Aquarium has over 300 species of aquatic life from around the world, including a Louisiana

Swamp exhibit with fish, reptiles, and amphibians from the marshes and bayous of the Gulf Coast. Not only does it feature biodiversity, but the Aquarium exemplifies recycling: its design repurposed a historic fire station and the city's former Central Waterworks plant. The cost is only \$40 if you sign up by April 1, \$50 thereafter.

The Green Road to RICON Conference

By Patricia Armstrong on Friday, March 11, 2022

From June 4-8, tens of thousands of Rotarians from across the globe will descend on Houston, Texas, to learn, to network and to celebrate the wonderful achievements of Rotary. If you're coming, arrive ahead to attend the RAGTIME party June 2 and the ESRAG Environmental Conference on June 3.

ESRAG's June 3 Green Road to RICON Conference

will feature expert panels speaking about current environmental issues and inspiring Rotary environmental projects, and advice on how to apply for a Rotary Foundation Global Grant through the new Area of Focus: Protecting the Environment. We'll be meeting in the LEED Gold-certified Faye S. Sarofim Building of the University of Texas. This building has won multiple architectural awards and is celebrated for its sustainable construction, conservation of energy and water, and hurricane resilience.



This year's Environmental Conference will be a hybrid event to accommodate both people who will be attending RICON in person and all those who have decided to stay at home this year, but would still like to experience the excitement, the buzz and the networking opportunities of the conference in the now-familiar online format of Zoom. The in-person cost for ESRAG members will be \$140 for Rotarians (including meals) and \$70 for virtual Rotary participants. The cost for people who are not yet members of ESRAG is \$30 more. The in-person cost for Rotaractors is \$70, and \$35 for virtual participants. [Register here.](#)

Venue for the live event: The live conference will take place in the beautiful Robertson Auditorium of the Faye S. Sarofim Building on the Health Sciences campus of the University of Texas. In-person

attendees will enjoy catered vegetarian breakfast and lunch in the Atrium, which is a key element of the building's energy-efficient design, and be able to explore the beautiful landscape surrounding the building. It's an easy walk from a METRO Red Line train that connects the campus to the downtown area close to many convention hotels.

Online event: Virtual participants will participate through a Zoom Webinar format. During the breaks, you will be able to take part in informal discussions and chats in Breakout Rooms with other virtual participants in the conference. Shortly before the event, online participants will receive an email with a Zoom link to hear the speakers. This email will also include Zoom links for breakout groups in various languages.

Program: The conference program has been developed around Rotary International's approach to the environment, focusing on conservation, sustainability, program design, and documenting impact.

[Read More](#)

Send us your Powerful Photos!

By Ariel Miller on Tuesday, March 15, 2022

ESRAG is creating new banners for our Rotary International Convention exhibits. Each one needs a compelling image to move and inspire Rotarians to take environmental action. Look through your project photos and send us your favorite action shot by April 1. Here's what we're asking you for:

- Close-up, action pictures of people implementing a project or benefitting from it.
- High-resolution image that will be sharp when enlarged on a banner.
- Illustration that fits of one of ESRAG's six themes: biodiversity, food systems, climate, sustainable living, pollution solutions, or circular economy.
- Your email that confirming the people in the photo gave permission for you to use it in publications, including online.



Please [email](#) your favorite environmental project photo to me by April 1. If it's too big to send that way, email me a note and we'll find another means of sharing files. Thanks! It will be so exciting to see these images! I will let you know if we're using one of yours on the banners.

Photo by Rob Edwards: children reminding you to be good stewards of the planet. Vuna Village on Taveuni Island, Fiji.

Earn your Wings as an ESRAG Virtual Reality Host

Tuesday, March 15, 2022

How would you like to amaze your children (and fellow Rotarians) by flying gracefully backwards while leading visitors through a multimedia 3D virtual reality exhibition hall?

After taking two fun online workshops with fellow ESRAG geeks, and designing yourself an Avatar of Ultimate Coolness, you will be ready to guide Rotarians through ESRAG's 2022 EXPO Online Social and Resource Center, our virtual reality House of Friendship, with a wealth of exhibits showcasing the resources offered by ESRAG's task forces and regional chapters. [Take a peak](#) at how ESRAG Europe's VR wizard Klas Holmlund is updating EXPO for the Houston Rotary International Convention. He and fellow Swedish Rotarian Gunilla Östberg guided a huge team of brave pioneers in building it for the virtual Taipei convention in 2021.



To volunteer, [email EXPO Coordinator Laurie Zuckerman](#). She'll send you links for two Zoom training sessions: one on ESRAG messaging and one on how to navigate as an EXPO host.

Photo: ESRAG Director Dr. Ludwig Kalthoff about to put on his virtual reality headset, and an Irresistible Avatar created by Laurie Zuckerman.

Last Chance to Volunteer in the ESRAG booth at RICON Houston June 4-8

By Karen McDaniels on Friday, March 11, 2022

Spending a couple of hours volunteering in the ESRAG booth at the House of Friendship can be a lot of fun. It's a great way to meet ESRAG members from around the world and share our messages with other Rotarians. Deadline to sign up to be a volunteer is March 25. As a volunteer, you will be able to attend an exciting 30-minute Zoom training session to learn about our messages and some talking points about ESRAG. The ESRAG booth has a wonderful location this year and you will receive an official ESRAG pin to wear proudly at your next club meeting. Ready to volunteer? Contact [Karen McDaniels](#), Chair of ESRAG's House of Friendship exhibit.

Build Hope and Courage Through I Fix the Planet!

By Ariel Miller on Saturday, March 12, 2022

ESRAG invites you to rally hope and inspire effective action by sharing your sustainability project in the 2022 [I Fix the Planet video contest](#). Entries will be accepted starting March 20, with the contest closing Oct. 31. "The latest IPCC report: not good. War in Europe: not good," said ESRAG Director Dr. Ludwig Kalthoff, who's leading this year's contest. "We can produce something positive with this video challenge to inspire not only the Rotarian family and other Rotary Action Groups, but also people beyond



Rotary. We can be an example, showing that with the right spirit, the right values, we can offer

another way.”

The challenge is to describe your project in a 70-100 second video, and upload it to the contest site. The 2nd round is now *interactive*! You can meet other teams easily in the [contest's virtual room](#) in EXPO, ESRAG's Online Social and Resource Center. No extra device needed: just upload your video to the [contest website](#) from your phone/ keyboard. You can see last year's winning videos on that site or enjoy them on the big screens in our [3-D EXPO gallery](#). *Picture: screen shot from the Rotary Club of Shanghai's 2021 video about cleaning up the Quingpu wetlands.*

[Read More](#)

RICON Environment Breakout Sessions

By Patricia Armstrong on Monday, March 14, 2022

If you are going to the RICON 2022 conference in Houston Texas, make sure that you book into the four breakout sessions being delivered by ESRAG members.



From left: Carlos Montoya, Dr. Chris Puttock, Michael Terrelonge, and Salvador Rico

It is an honour to have a proposal for a session selected for the Rotary International Convention, as there are always more applicants than places. Check out the RICON program and support our ESRAG champions:

- Carlos Montoya, Mexico, "Rotaractors and Rotarians Together Make an Impact"
- Dr. Chris Puttock, US, "Community Assessments for Environmental Projects"
- Michael Terrelonge, Jamaica, "Climate Adaptation for SIDS (Small Island Developing States)"
- Salvador Rico, US, "Our Rivers and the Environment"

Video Editors Wanted!!

By Patricia Armstrong on Saturday, January 15, 2022

Over the past two years, ESRAG has brought you hundreds of virtual environmental seminars and our hardworking volunteers have spent countless hours



editing these seminars.

Many of these seminars are now available on YouTube and the ESRAG and regional chapter websites for you to either watch at your leisure or to show to your club or District. We are planning to curate all these seminars, so that you can easily find them on the ESRAG website.

We now need your help. Do you have recording editing skills and have some time to help us edit the recordings of the 2022 seminars? Perhaps you know

someone who does. If so, we would like to hear from you. Please [contact Communications Director, Pat Armstrong](#) to explore how your editing skills could help inform and inspire fellow Rotarians for effective environmental action.

Photo: ESRAG's Pat Armstrong, PDG Joe Otin, and Rotary International Projects Officer Lauren Marquez-Viso explaining the process of applying for Rotary Foundation Global Grants during their virtual breakout session for the RI Virtual International Convention in 2021.

Send us Your News

We are eager to share your great projects with Rotarians worldwide who are dedicated to saving life on our planet. Through this newsletter, ESRAG's social media accounts, and the website we can publicize events if you give us at least two weeks notice.

We'd love you to submit articles explaining what you do, how you do it, and giving links to further resources. It's [easy to connect by email](#). You can send what you've already written or ask us to interview you. Looking forward to hearing from you!



The Environmental Sustainability Rotary Action Group

operates in accordance with Rotary International policy, but is not an agency of, or controlled by, Rotary International.