



THIS WEEK'S PROGRAM

April 8, 2025

2024-2025 Board Members

President Kim Brattain
Pres Elect Patrick Baker
Past Pres Edwin Peacock
Secretary Bill Gill
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Sergeant at Arms
Mike Wollinger
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John Cantrell
Tish Atkins Charles
Dena Diorio
Stuart Hair
Jesse Hite
Lori Keeton
Virginia Owen

Membership John Cantrell

Foundation Joe Morris

Programs Luther Moore



Leandre Adifon
CEO, Pyramid Base
Technologies



PDG Firoz Peera



Chase Saunders
Saunders Law, PLLC



Moderated by
Past President Mike Hawley



Closing Remarks by
Mark Erwin

Global Thinkers Panel, International Relations and Implications for Rotarians

by **Bill Barte**

Mike Hawley, Past President of Charlotte Rotary and retired Partner of K&L Gates Law Firm, invited the panel of "Global Thinkers" onto the stage of Charlotte Rotary with the statement that there was not enough time to cover the entirety of topics. The talent and wisdom of the panel was on full display from the beginning, which included the moderator.

That moderator, Hawley, gave a brief biography of each participant, an

expectation of the presentation, and the summary that would conclude the program. He then shared his thoughts that Rotary was able to play a pivotal role on the planet in the future. Using the metaphor that one of the most valuable currencies that the world has is not money but the “dots that we collect and connect in our journey along the way.” This social capital is something that should be curated and exercised whenever possible. He encouraged the club membership to battle against the “Triple T, the Tendency of Tables to be Tribal”. Charlotte Rotary has 100 members who meet each week, and they should interact, share, and get to know each other to strengthen the social capital and talent at hand. He also theorized about the Rotary 4-Way Test and its lack of flow. It is purposefully done so. The absence of rhythm and rhyme makes us take time to attend to its meaning each time it is recited.

He then called on his first panel member, Leandre Adifon, retired head of global technology at Ingersoll Rand, a catalyst for innovation, and a self-described “technologist”. Adifon shared the impact of the iconic “Earthrise” photograph taken by Bill Anders on December 24, 1968. That photo shows the smallness of our world, without boundaries, and its similarity to the attitude of Rotary to the world. He then cited the words used in the invocation by club member **Chris Thomas**, “digging wells that we’ll never drink from, helping people that we’ll never meet,” and espoused the spirit of communities working together rather than the policies that divide.

Next, **Chase Saunders**, Charlotte Rotary member, retired judge, and civic leader, began with the ongoing changes to society due to technology from the printing press’ transformative existence in the Far East and Europe, and the countless additions of technology later. The list included the now antiquated items like rotary phones, phone books, to current items like personal computers and mobile phones. That brought Saunders to the power of artificial intelligence in our world. He described the endless categories that it will influence, including Rotary. One of the standout mentions, especially to this observer, was the note-taking capabilities that AI offers for meetings like this one.

Firoz Peera has lived in six countries during his life. His Rotary career began in the Ballantyne Club in 2006, which then led to his presidency and later to his tenure as District Governor (7680). With that resume as his launching point, he began work with the Rotary Foundation and the Chair of Water and Sanitation Work across the globe. He described the history of civilization leadership from Asia to Europe, then the United States. The United States became a superpower through its many influences, not the least of which was its harnessing of the capital and currency standard of the world. However, the “view of the U.S. by other countries has changed between 1990-2025”, according to Peera. Now the U.S. is known for “bribing, bullying, and bombing its enemies.” He referenced the BRICS Alliance and the continuing demographic shift of influence from the U.S., back to Asia, and then to Africa. The shifting attitudes in government expenditures now cause organizations to self-fund their many causes. “Community development was funded by the government, which we now must do ourselves,” stated Peera.

Providing a summarized recap with comments was **Mark Erwin**. Erwin, the former U.S. Ambassador to Mauritius, Seychelles, and Comoros, a business leader, and a visionary in global relationships, called out the common alignment of the moderator and panel as Rotarians. “Wouldn’t the world be a better place if all people followed the 4-Way Test,” the Ambassador said. He then read the genesis of that Test and its effect on two people, their businesses, and their influence in the world. First, Herbert J. Taylor changed the trajectory of his Club Aluminum Products company by changing their culture by writing and introducing the 4-Way Test. Secondly, Erwin spent time with Chick-fil-A founder, Truett Cathey, who garnered strength and direction through prayer. Both of these influential people created and used positive tenets celebrated in Rotary.

Lastly, the charge was as continued Revolutions occur in culture, government, and the world, so is the need for continued Evolution of people, organizations, and the use of technology. The one continued constant pursuit is to “build friends, not enemies, around the world,” according to the Erwin.

This is where the 4-Way Test can play a part in the things that we say or do:

1. Is it the Truth?
2. Is it Fair to All Concerned?
3. Will it Build Goodwill and Better Friendships?
4. Will it be Beneficial to all Concerned?

A recording of the meeting can be found here:

With Slides: <https://vimeo.com/1073700954>

Without Slides: <https://vimeo.com/1073717978>

The program begins at 18 minutes and 30 seconds.