



ROTARY REPORTER

February 17, 2026

Speaker schedule and upcoming events can also be found on Charlotte Rotary's website under "Events / News"

Action Item - Last meeting to bring nonperishable protein for Scouting for Food.

Tues., Feb. 24 - Orientation: Curious About Rotary? Ready to get more involved? Join the orientation at 11 a.m. - noon. Fairfield Inn & Suites, 201 S. McDowell St., Studio 1 Conference Room

Tues., Feb. 24 - Weekly Meeting: Max Siegel, CEO, USA Track & Field

Tues., Mar. 3 - Weekly Meeting: State of the Club, Charlotte Rotary's Visioning Process

Sat., Mar. 14 - Interact Event: St. Patrick's Day Parade, Parade begins at 11 a.m. **Join the Green Parade!** Support the Myers Park Interact Club by walking with their homemade float in the St. Patrick's Day Parade. See details below.

Sat., April 11 - Rotary Peace Center: 23rd Annual Rotary Peace Center Conference – Research presentations by graduating Fellows from the Duke-UNC Rotary Peace Center on global peace and conflict issues. **Click here for more information.**

Save the Date! Tues., May 5 - Volunteer Event: American Red Cross Blood Drive, 11 a.m. - 3 p.m., Fairfield Inn & Suites.

Fri., May 29 - Sun., May 31 - District Conference: District Conference 2026, Renaissance Asheville Downtown Hotel, 31 Woodfin St. Asheville, NC. **Click here for more information.**

July 16-19 - District Event: Rotary's Seminar for Tomorrow's Leaders (SFTL) is a leadership camp for incoming high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors, held July 16–19, 2026 at Gardner-Webb University. See details below.

This Week's Meeting



Ben Kinney, Publisher at Business North Carolina and SouthPark Magazine

by Elly Clary

Economically, North Carolina is "in a really great spot compared to other places in the country," the publisher of state's premier business magazine assured Rotarians.

Business North Carolina's Ben Kinney peppered his presentation with examples of why CNBC named the Tar Heel state tops for business for 2025. The business-friendly bent is well-known, he added, but reasons for it are changing.

Historically, industry relocated in North Carolina for cheap power, he said, but lately the lure includes quality health care, solid education, temperate climate and inviting atmosphere for raising a family.

Because he constantly travels the state talking to business and industry leaders, Kinney speaks with authority. Celebrating its 45th year, his Charlotte-based monthly has been recognized as the nation's Best Regional Business Magazine. It's owners also publish SouthPark Magazine.

Workforce is a major reason the state's economy continues to expand, Kinney said, praising training capabilities of the community college system. "CPCC, are you kidding me? What a great community college," he raved, generating spontaneous applause. **Click here for more.**

Below are the recordings of the meeting:

With Slides: <https://vimeo.com/1166989487?fl=pl&fe=sh>

Without Slides: <https://vimeo.com/1166989751?fl=pl&fe=sh>

Introduction of the program begins at approximately 24 minutes.

Speaking of *Business North Carolina*, thank you to *Business North Carolina* for coverage of the Excellence in Leadership Award Charlotte Rotary presented to honor Richard Vinroot.



Club News

Curious about Rotary? Ready to get more involved?

Tuesday, Feb. 24th, 11 a.m. - noon.

Fairfield Inn & Suites, 201 S. McDowell St., Studio 1 Conference Room

Join Us!

Join a one-hour Orientation & Information Session for new members or for anyone who wants a deeper look at Charlotte Rotary.

During this interactive session, we'll explore:

- Rotary's global impact and how it connects to our Charlotte community
- What you can expect from your Rotary experience
- How you can get the most out of your membership

Whether you're newly inducted or still considering membership, this is your chance to go beyond the lunch meeting and discover what truly makes Rotary meaningful.

We'll wrap promptly at noon so everyone can enjoy lunch together. If you plan to attend, contact Bill Gill at whgill3@outlook.com. We look forward to welcoming you.



SCOUTING FOR FOOD

Next Tuesday is the last opportunity to support the 2026 **Scouting For Food** drive that supports their partner agency, **Nourish Up**.

Call it **PROTEIN TUESDAY!**

Bring non-perishable protein items like: (Set your goal to bring 10 pounds of protein!!)

- Canned Tuna
- Canned Chicken
- Peanut Butter
- Canned Salmon
- Canned Beans
- Canned Chili

Questions? Contact **Mark Turner** at mark.turner@scouting.org



Celebrate St. Patrick's Day with Myers Park Interact and Charlotte Rotary!

Myers Park High School's Interact club, along with its advisers, Anne and Robert Cullip, are working to create a Irish-festive parade float for the Charlotte St. Patrick's Day Parade... and are encouraging Rotarian participation.

With nearly 100 Interact students marching alongside Rotary members, this is a great opportunity to celebrate service, fellowship, and a little Irish luck. Wear your **green** and walk with us as we represent Rotary and Interact in one of Charlotte's most spirited events.

Parade Details:

Date: Saturday, March 14th

Parade Time: 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Assembly: Begins at 9:00 a.m. on Tryon Street between 9th and 11th Streets, with possible overflow to 12th Street. Assembly areas will be marked, and event personnel will be on hand to assist.

Reach out to ED, Christine Cipriano at christine@charlotterotary.org for more information.

Let's make this a memorable celebration! *Sláinte!*

More than 300 winter items. More than 18,000 families served each year. And donations that help cover rent and utilities.

A special thank you to [Karen Calder](#), [Tish Atkins Charles](#), [Elizabeth Caspers](#), and [JD DuPuy](#) for leading this effort so beautifully. Their coordination helped us surpass previous Rotary records, and the letter below from Crisis Assistance Ministry says it best.



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CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Carol L. Hardison

February 2026

Dear Rotary Club of Charlotte,

Thank you for your decades of support for the moms, dads, and children who strengthen their financial stability through the Crisis Assistance Ministry Free Store.

Warm Up Charlotte 2026 was a tremendous success! You surpassed previous Rotary records by collecting more than 300 winter items. Each year, over 18,000 families seek assistance here, and our purpose is to help them increase housing stability through various services. Families tell us they save more than \$100 per Free Store visit — and over the course of a year, those savings help cover vital expenses such as rent and utilities.

With the recent back-to-back cold snap, warm winter wear has been flying off our shelves. Because of you, we have been able to meet that urgent need. Your donations of new and gently used items bring dignity, stability, and peace of mind to families working hard to stay safe and move forward.

We are especially grateful to Karen Calder, Tish Atkins Charles and Elizabeth Caspers, and JD DuPuy for their leadership and coordination. Their care and commitment truly reflect Rotary's spirit of service.

Thank you for your compassion and continued impact on Charlotte.

With deep appreciation and love for our Rotary friends,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Carol Hardison".

Carol Hardison
Chief Executive Officer
Crisis Assistance Ministry





How It All Began

Did you know Rotary started with just one meeting in Chicago?

On February 23, 1905, attorney Paul P. Harris gathered a small group of professionals who simply wanted to recapture the friendship and integrity of small-town life. They rotated their meetings among their offices, and just like that, the name "Rotary" was born.

What began as a professional fellowship quickly became something much bigger. By 1921, Rotary clubs had formed on six continents, and the organization adopted the name Rotary International.

As Rotary grew, so did its purpose. Members began pooling their talents and resources to serve communities in need, living out the motto we still stand by today: Service Above Self.

And to guide our conduct? The timeless Four-Way Test — a code of ethics translated into hundreds of languages around the world.

From one meeting in Chicago... to a global force for good.

A graphic with a dark blue background. At the top left is the Rotary logo and the word "Rotary". To the right is the text "THE FOUR-WAY TEST" in orange and white, with the subtitle "Of the things we think, say or do:" in white. Below this are four items, each with a yellow arrow pointing right containing a word in italics, followed by a question in white text.

Rotary  **THE FOUR-WAY TEST**
Of the things we think, say or do:

- first* Is it the **TRUTH**?
- second* Is it **FAIR** to all concerned?
- third* Will it build **GOODWILL** and **BETTER FRIENDSHIPS**?
- fourth* Will it be **BENEFICIAL** to all concerned?

Beyond the Club

FEBRUARY 2026

Rotary

District 7680

NEWSLETTER



#PeopleOfAction #ServiceAboveSelf #ProudRotarian

Don't miss what's happening across District 7680 — read the latest **District Newsletter!**

Rotary District 7680

SEMINAR FOR TOMORROW'S LEADERS



SUMMER LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

Unlock your potential this summer with the ROTARY 7680 leadership program!

OUR SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM:

- ✓ For Rising Juniors and Seniors in High School
- ✓ July 16-19, 2026
- ✓ Gardner Webb University

APPLY HERE ←



MORE INFORMATION & REGISTRATION
<https://rotary7680.org/sft/>



Membership Update

07/01/2025 224
01/31/2026 206
02/17/2026 205 (Resignation: Chris Kemper)

Meeting Attendance - Feb. 17, 2026: 90

This week's Guests: Martha Cochrane ([Mark Turner](#)), Taylor Gloyd ([Bill Gill](#)), William Herndon ([Peirce Ward](#)), Lori Keller ([Christine Cipriano](#)), Daniel Korn ([Shelley Dean](#)), Riley Mehaffey, Neil Moore ([Luther Moore](#)), Libby Simonini ([Alan Simonini](#)), Alice Womack ([Bill Bartee](#))

Milestones

(February 24 - March 2)

Rotary Anniversaries

54 years: Lamar Thomas
41 years: John Phillips
32 years: Mike Hawley
28 years: Luther Moore
11 years: Fred Wagner
4 years: Christine Cipriano
2 years (18 total): Mark Erwin
1 year: Alex Wiltberger

Birthdays

25 – Cynthia Marshall
26 – Will Hadley
27 – Jerry Coughter
28 – Margaret Marshall

2025 - 2026 Board Members

- President Patrick Baker
- President-Elect Bill Bartee
- Immediate Past President Kim Brattain
- Secretary Bill Gill
- Treasurer Craig Field

Current Directors: Benton S. Bragg, Byrd Bergeron, John F. Cantrell, Karen N. Calder, Tish Atkins Charles, Dena R. Diorio, J Hill, Jesse G. Hite, Lori Keeton, Michael B. Orzech, Robert Shaw, Elizabeth Teagarden, Michael Wollinger

Contact Us

For more information about how to get involved, volunteer opportunities and meeting topics, contact **Christine Cipriano**, Executive Director, at christine@charlotterotary.org



Photos from our luncheons, historical photos, and other events and projects can be found on the club's Flickr site. Click here [charlotterotary6006](#) to view pictures from recent meetings.



Recordings of weekly club luncheons can be found on the club's Vimeo site. Click here <https://vimeo.com/user24733153> to watch recent videos.



Guest Check-In If you have a guest who would like to preregister for the weekly meeting, a QR code is provided for easy scanning, or the link can be found here: [Visitor Pre-Register \(jotform.com\)](#)

Rotary Club of Charlotte | 1850 E 3rd St, Ste 220 | Charlotte, NC 28204 US

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