

LEXINGTON ROTARIANS HELP KET BRING LEARNING TO LIFE

The Rotary Club of Lexington has long been a supporter of KET, providing volunteers to man the phones for KET’s annual fundraiser. We even count Michele Ripley, President of the Commonwealth Fund for KET, as one of our valued members. While the fundraiser format has changed with the times, Rotary’s support has not!



A number of Rotarians joined KET to support this year’s SummerPledge event. This August event is one of KET’s on-air membership drives that provide funds to purchase and produce the programs which appear on KET each year. Smiling for their photo-op are:  
Front row: Bill Straus, Brad Blain, Sheri Straus and back row: Bill Byrd, Eileen O’Brien, Rodes Smith, Judy Worth, Susan Adams, Chris Anderson, Chris Aldridge. Not pictured: Winn Stephens, Gerry van der Meer, Eileen O’Brien Markus Cross, Barry Stumbo, and Michelle Ripley.

NEW MEMBER PROPOSAL

The following individual has been proposed for membership in Rotary:

**Brian S. Martin**  
Classification: Insurance, Life and Medicare  
Sponsor: Trey McCallie

Objections should be made in writing within seven (7) days to The Board of Directors, Rotary Club of Lexington, 401 W. Main Street, Suite 305, Lexington, KY 40507. Objections are kept in strict confidence.

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UPCOMING PROGRAMS		UPCOMING EVENTS/VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES	
Sep 12	LaKisha Miller, Kentucky Chamber Foundation & Work Force Center	Sep 7	Toyota Bluegrass Miracle League, Opening Day, Shillato Park, 10:00am
Sep 19	No Lunch Meeting, Service Week, Doing Rotary Differently	Sep 14	District 6740 Rotary Leadership Institute, Part I, II, and III presented concurrently. <b>Location:</b> Lexington Public Library, Eastside Branch, 9:30-4:30pm
Sep 26	Allison Lankford, Update on Gatton Park at Town Branch	Sep 18	Military Missions, 12 Volunteers, Pack Boxes for Servicemen, 6-7:30pm
Oct 3	Matthew Mitchell, Winning Tools: 3 Leadership Principals that Build Purpose, Respect, and Success	Sep 28	Tailgate for Town Branch, UK vs Ole Miss game watching, Basham home, 11:30am
Oct 10	Adam Edelen, CEO & Founder, Edelen Renewables	Oct 17	Spin to Win the Fight Against Polio, CycleYOU, 6:30pm
Oct 17	No Lunch Meeting, Service Week, Doing Rotary Differently	Oct 23	Keeneland, Lexington Room, \$100, 11:00-6:00pm
Oct 24	Nick Mingione, Head Baseball Coach, University of Kentucky		
Nov 7	Dr. Ryan Quarles and Dr. Greg Feeney, KCTCS and BTC		
Nov 14	David Lyons, Murder Podcast		

The ROTARY Club of Lexington

WHEEL HORSE

September 5, 2024  
— TODAY’S PROGRAM —

Presiding: President Bret Anderson  
Inspiration, Pledge, & 4 Way Test: Phil Gray  
Introduction of Guests: Michele Ripley  
Introduction of Speaker: Susie Basham

Speaker: Richard Gibbens, Bluegrass Realtors Association  
Program: Bluegrass Realtors – Market Update  
**Location: The Mane on Main**

See Peggy’s weekly club email for meeting details: ordering lunch and how to view the meeting live online via Zoom or view a recording of the meeting later.

**RICHARD GIBBENS**

The traditionally staid world of real estate has, no doubt to its consternation, found itself in the spotlight in recent years, as the industry deals with a variety of challenges. These include of course current home interest rates which, while historically low, appear high to those weaned on even lower rates, and shortages of new homes for sale. But no event is likely to cause more change and disruption than a recently reported settlement by the National Association of Realtors (NAR). As reported in the Wall Street Journal in May of this year: “The National Association of Realtors has reached a nationwide settlement of claims that the industry conspired to keep agent commissions high, . . . a deal set to usher in the

**MEET OUR SPEAKER**

GAAR, Gibbens helped bring industry awareness to his Association for its willingness to embrace new technology, employing pilot programs and beta testing for many strategic priorities.

Prior to his work at GAAR, Gibbens led the Central Panhandle Association of Realtors as the MLS Director where he fully transformed the organization through a rebranding and policy overhaul to better serve the membership. He has also led a team of customer service professionals for Sprint/Teleperformance USA where he was recognized for his proactivity in evaluating and improving company processes and policies.

Bluegrass REALTORS® was founded in 1912 and represents over 4,000 members located in thirty Kentucky counties. Per its webpage, the organization “works diligently to preserve and enhance the rights and privileges of the owners of private property. Our Club’s own Trey McCallie serves on its Board of Directors.

Throughout his tenure with



LIVING LEGENDS: JON LARSON



JON LARSON

As Rotary Club of Lexington reinvents itself for the future, Living Legends, a series of interviews conducted by President Bret Anderson, seeks to recognize Rotary “Legends” to whom we all owe so much. In this edition, Bret interviews Jon Larson.

Bret: Mind sharing your age?  
Jon: I turned 79 on August 9th.  
Bret: Where did you grow up?  
Jon: I was born in Southern Illinois but moved to Indiana when I was two years old. We moved around a lot. The place I spent the most time was New Jersey where I lived for about five years (and became a Brooklyn Dodgers fan). When I was 16, I hitchhiked to Lexington to enroll at UK. I consider Kentucky my true home.  
Bret: What was your favorite childhood memory?  
Jon: Moving around so much and being the new kid often made me the target of bullying. In face I was able to get protection from the bullies by the local juvenile gangs. But some of my best memories are of hiking in the woods with a gravity knife when I was about 13 years old.  
Bret: What is the most valuable lesson you’ve learned whether in school or life?  
Jon: Joining the Army was a turning point for me. I was pretty wild before that, but the military held me accountable for the betterment of the team, and it forced me to get my

act together. When I got out of the military, there was an anti-war movement that often targeted soldiers coming back from fighting. Seeing that fueled my desire to help those in need. I earned my way through undergrad at the University of Kentucky and went on to graduate school at George Washington University, where I played rugby and was in the same class as Colin Powell. After that, I earned my JD from UK and became a criminal defense lawyer, eventually becoming the first public defender in Fayette County.  
Bret: What did you enjoy most about your career?  
Jon: Helping those in need has always been my greatest satisfaction. During law school, I was elected president of the law students and was proud to start the first integrated professional fraternity at UK. In my public career, I took pride in my efforts to reduce the cost of government. On the personal side, we coached a women’s softball team to a national championship, which was incredibly rewarding. But what I’m most proud of is raising a baby girl as her de facto custodian and now helping her two sons.  
Bret: How long have you been in the Rotary Club of Lexington, and what does being a Rotarian mean to you?  
Jon: I joined the Rotary Club eight years ago, late in my career. The friendships I’ve made here are invaluable—they truly understand what it means to be present and in the moment. I enjoy being around people who are open and willing to help each other.  
Bret: I saw a video of you doing a backflip

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Rotary in Review

FRAUD IN KENTUCKY: BE AFRAID, BE VERY AFRAID!

One of the constants of the Rotary Club of Lexington has been the quality and timeliness of the weekly programs. They run the gamut of entertainment, motivation, inspiration, and education. Last week Shane Ensminger, Senior Vice President, Director of Financial Intelligence & Security Unit at Central Bank & Trust Co. presented “The State of Fraud in Kentucky”. It was an abundance of information regarding fraud and theft that takes place in our community every day.  
Through a variety of charts, he showed how large banks (those with assets of \$10 billion or more) lose \$445 billion dollars and consumers \$12.5 billion dollars annually. Ensminger stated that those consumer numbers may represent only 25% of the actual dollars stolen, as it is generally believed that there is serious underreporting of fraud for reasons such as embarrassment. The Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) requires reporting of fraud greater than \$5,000 and reports that it received just under 1.9 million such reports in 2023. These numbers lead to his description of fraud as being “out of control”  
He referenced a Kentucky Banking As-

sociation study that began with Kentucky community banks only (120 in number) and later included thirty-one banking associations outside the state that indicated that at many institutions fraud is simply not tracked. Thirty-four respondents indicated that \$78 million dollars had been investigated; the others were again simply writing fraud off without investigation. Shane hopes this attitude will change as knowledge of the scope of the problem grows.  
That same study showed that the biggest concerns of community banks were stolen credit/debit cards and checks, along with artificial intelligence. In 2021 there were 9 trillion dollars in credit/debit card transactions, 9.1 trillion dollars in ACH transactions, and 27 trillion dollars in check transactions. He did note that check use is rapidly decreasing. We also learned about “arrow keys” that are used to open boxes at the US Post Office and that those keys are easily duplicated with very crude and simple tools.  
Ensminger then took us on a trip through Fayette County through the lens of “Operation Homeless.” Criminals from outside Kentucky engage the local homeless to

cash stolen and fraudulent checks. The homeless are recruited at shelters and street corners. He notes it is easy to use stolen checks and have them cashed. Women with purses are watched in large parking lots. When they leave their purses in a car the criminals break the window and steal the purse. The thieves take the credit cards, checks, and identification cards. Checks are made out to cash and then homeless folks drive through the outside lane at a drive through (called the felony lane by police) to cash the checks.  
Ensminger encouraged everyone to take out insurance for cyber crimes that would include the stealing of e-mail addresses. When asked about safer transactions he talked about “person-to-person activities like Zelle. But he also cautioned about the impact of artificial intelligence imitating actual human beings.  
All in all, a very sobering presentation. Shane left us concerned about the growing fraud in our financial transactions with the phrase “the race is on” between criminals and financial institutions.  
— Jim Richardson



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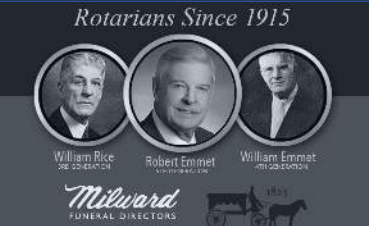


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# The 5<sup>th</sup> Page

## LEXINGTON ROTARIANS IN THE NEWS

Rotarians in the news is really not news. We are, as a whole, largely successful at what we do. Nonetheless, we are always proud to tout our members' horns when others go out of their way to recognize their accomplishments.

For example: The annual Bike Walk Kentucky Summit was recently held at Transylvania University. This event was attended by folks from all over Kentucky to further Bike Walk Kentucky's mission of promoting safe bicycling and walking through education, outreach and events. Our Club's own

Wanda Bertram, an avid hiker and cyclist, was one of two individuals recognized by the organization for their "unmatched advocacy." Bike Walk Kentucky went on to note that "When remarkable people share their time, talents, and passions, amazing things happen." We agree: Wanda is a remarkable Rotarian!



Not to be outdone, Rotarian Chris Peck and the organization he leads as CEO, Big Brothers Big Sisters of the BlueGrass (BBBS), continued its summer of accolades by receiving the Nonprofit Community Impact Award from Commerce Lexington at its Small Business Awards Luncheon. Following receipt of this prestigious award, Chris had the following to say:

We are still in awe of the amazing honor we received being selected as Commerce Lexington's 2024 Non-Profit Community Impact Award recipient this year! It was an amazing week celebrating small businesses across Lexington . . . Our program wouldn't be possible without the families, volunteers, donors, staff and board members who all work together to fulfill the mission of empowering young kids . . . As we were leaving the awards luncheon, we were stopped by two individuals who were working at the Central Bank Center clearing tables. With big smiles they introduced themselves, one as a parent with two kids in our program. She shared that the event that we partnered with UK athletics was the most fun her kids had ever had. She shared how much she loved BBBS of the Bluegrass and how grateful she was for the program. The other

gentleman turned to us as we were leaving and with a tender voice said, "Big Brothers Big Sisters saved my life." With a heartfelt message he shared that he still talks to his big brother and he was in the BBBS of the Bluegrass program for 10 years. He loved it so much and credits it for setting his life in a positive direction that he recommended his niece join as well (she is currently enrolled as a little sister).

Wow! Well done, Chris and BBBS.



Shown with Chris in photo, among others: Rocky Adkins, Senior Advisor to Governor Andy Beshear, Sixth District Congressman Andy Barr, and Mayor Linda Gorton

## ROTARY "BEE" DOING ROTARY, DIFFERENTLY

Perhaps it was the heat, but August sure seemed to drag on forever. At least it included a 5th Thursday, giving our always active Social Committee a chance to plan an event to get us out and about by working with the Rural Urban Committee and its Pollinator Garden crew. Last Thursday, over thirty-five Rotarians and friends braved the heat and enjoyed an "evening walk in the park" at the Rotary Pollinator Garden at Kenawood Park for our 5th Thursday social. In addition to some great fellowship, snacks, and libations, attendees learned more about Rotary's part in helping to save the pollinators and, in turn, our food supply. Some even went home with "doorless" prizes, including plants, garden tools, and two bottles of honey from Jake Graves' own bees!

Contributors to our Pollinator Garden efforts in addition to Jake include Judy Worth, Harry Richart, Jeff Thompson, Jack McAllister, Wanda Bertram, Gerry van der Meer, Larry Cowgill, and Bill Wilson.

Your Editor has one suggestion to improve this event in the future: music! Possibilities include the Bee-tles, the Bee Gees, the Bee-ch Boys, Bee-yonce, the Bee-stie Boys, and, for those us who love jazz: Bee-bop! But please, no Sting.



## NEW MEMBER DEEP DIVE: LINDSAY HUGHES THURSTON



**JOHN THURSTON &  
LINDSAY HUGHES  
THURSTON**

I asked Fayette County District Court Judge Lindsay Hughes Thurston to tell me something about herself that others may not know and would find surprising and she confessed that she is actually very shy and considers herself to be a homebody. But despite this, she has a strong drive to continue public service and giving back to the community, thereby naturally leading her to involvement with Lexington Rotary. Her stepdad, Pat Halloran,

had always spoken highly of the activities of our club.

Judge Thurston, a lifelong resident of Lexington, attended Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri before attending UK College of Law. Although she never worked in a law firm, she devoted the early years of her career to various prosecutorial jobs. But she had previously clerked for Fayette County Circuit Court Judge Sheila Isaac and had gotten the bug and wanted to become a judge at some point in her career. When the opportunity arose for her to run for judge, she did and won, with a current term now ending in 2027.

Lindsay and her husband, John, have been married for fourteen years and are both very active in veteran-oriented charity work. She admits to being a big sports fan – primarily football, but is now a follower of UK Baseball as well. She is also an avid collector of baseball caps, having a collection numbering in the hundreds! Her favorite hat is from her favorite place – Bozeman, Montana with its spectacular hiking trails. Travel is a favorite activity with Greece and Dubai both high on her bucket list.

At this point, she is just learning about opportunities offered by Rotary and is looking forward to continuing to serve the community.

– John Meyers



Dave	Blondell	4
Mike	Halligan	7
Mark	Piccoro	8
Tom	Ashford	8
Blanton	Coates, Jr.	18
Kent	Hisle	19
Kevin	Doyle	20
Winn	Stephens	26
Bret	Anderson	29
Michael	Wallace	30

## NEWS FLASH: ROTARY HAS GONE TO THE DOGS (AND CATS)!

Rotary Being Done, Differently was recently spotted in Woodford County on August 17. Several Rotarians participated in the Woodford Humane Society's Triple Crown Trot 5K held at beautiful Ashford Stud Farm. Congrats to all for your service above self and especially to Susan and Kurt Adams, shown with Kim Johnson, for flying the Rotary colors! Also participating were Judy Worth and John Kiebler. John got a medal for finishing second in his age category with almost 600 runners and walkers participating. John, great job and we won't disclose the age category!



– John Meyers

## NEW MEMBER DEEP DIVE: JOHN THURSTON

Much like his wife, Judge Lindsay Hughes Thurston, John Thurston has spent a great deal of his life in public service. He joined the Lexington Police Department and served in several different capacities – patrol officer, detective, and in the narcotics division among others. After that career, John served as an investigator for the U.S. Attorney's Office for twenty-three years before becoming a private investigator for five years. He has had a great career, but his real passion for community service was inspired by his service in the Navy during the Vietnam War.

John has witnessed firsthand the struggles that returning soldiers have had and he has been dedicated to doing what he can to help. Every Wednesday, John assists veterans at the Lexington Vet Center. John also served on the Honor Guard for the Military Freedom Fest. He frequently goes to Cardinal Hill Hospital to counsel fellow amputees. John says that he has faced death several times and is driven to assist others in their times of need. His work with veterans resulted in John being named to the Kentucky Veterans Hall of Fame last year.

His volunteering is not limited to those activities, though. John is a former board member of both the Bluegrass Crime Stoppers as well as the Lexington FOP. He was one of the founders of the Lexington Police Activities/Athletics League, an organization that works with at-risk kids to provide productive activities for them.

John is also a big sports fan and counts his 2012 trip to New Orleans for UK's NCAA Championship win as his all-time favorite trip. Also noteworthy for a different reason was his trip to the 2008 SEC Tournament in Atlanta that was interrupted by a tornado. He and his wife Lindsay also enjoy short trips around the state.

John has been to several Rotary functions and has enjoyed meeting his fellow Rotarians. He describes himself as a "true and loyal friend" and looks forward to volunteering wherever he can be of service.

## 5<sup>TH</sup> PAGE CONTRIBUTORS

Joe Bark, Paul Chewning, John Meyers, Sharon Reed, John Wharton - Editor