

ROTARY LEADERS IN THE LAND OF BREWS, BLUES, BARBECUE, AND ELVIS!

Take “Us” to the River!
The Rotary Club of Memphis hosted the 2024 Large Club Conference celebrating their city’s history and culture while fostering connections among club leaders. Over three days, executive directors and presidents-elect from the U.S. and Canada engaged in inspiring presentations and fast-paced informational sessions resulting in an exceptional conference.

At this year’s conference, Peggy, and Laurel Martin were joined by Past President Sharon Reed and board member Alisha Chaffin, all of whom gained valuable insights on planning and presenting the conference, as our Club has committed to do in 2026.

Musical highlights included performances by Beale Street’s Memphis Jones who tied together the history of timeless Memphis hit songs. Grammy winner saxophonist Kirk Whalum, who’s sax you hear in the mega-hit “I will Always Love you,” left the audience spellbound.

It wouldn’t be Memphis without a bit of Elvis Presley history and that was brought to life by Pricilla Presley. She graciously and at times comically spoke about their life and continues to be a steward of his legacy, infusing Memphis with economic prosperity.

We heard from James R. Downing, M. D., President, and

CEO of St. Jude Children’s Hospital. Dr. Downing is an inspiration and is bringing St. Jude to the world with his compassionate leadership.

One new format of an informational session was “Rotary speed dating.” This is where things really got going! So much information was exchanged. A great way to gather ideas in a short period of time!

There were panel discussions on charitable giving and the arts/media, sparking valuable insights to bring back to our clubs.

So much information was shared, we gathered to debrief in Lexington and reviewed some of the best practices and new ideas to implement. You’ll hear more about those soon!

Thank you for allowing me to attend my 12th annual conference. The lasting relationships formed over the years cannot be overstated. It is always rewarding and inspiring to be with other large club executive directors and club leadership, and that includes ours.

– Peggy Trafton



The ROTARY Club of Lexington

WHEEL HORSE

November 7, 2024
— TODAY’S PROGRAM —

Presiding: President Bret Anderson
Inspiration, Pledge, & 4 Way Test: Phil Gray
Introduction of Guests: Mary Beth Wright
Introduction of Speakers: Augusta Julian

Speakers: Dr Ryan Quarles, KCTCS and Dr. Greg Feeney, BCTC
Program: KCTCS Almost One Year In: Milestones and The Path Forward
Location: The Mane on Main

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MEET OUR SPEAKERS



DR. RYAN QUARLES

It was nearly one year ago today, that Dr. Ryan Quarles began his tenure as the fourth president of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS). Today Rotarians will hear from Dr. Quarles and Dr. Greg Feeney, president of Bluegrass Community and Technical College (BCTC) as they present a program entitled “Milestones and the Path Forward.”

KCTCS is the most affordable and accessible higher education institution in Kentucky. With sixteen colleges, seventy campuses, and 100,000 students, KCTCS is a key player in workforce development and economic vitality across the Commonwealth. Bluegrass Community and Technical



DR. GREG FEENEY

College (BCTC) is one of the sixteen colleges within KCTCS, with seven campuses within a 30-minute drive of 95% of Central Kentuckians. BCTC enrolls over 16,000 students annually and provides training to more than 2,000 employees. As an open access institution, they are dedicated to removing barriers, meeting students where they are at, and providing comprehensive wraparound services that empower every student to succeed. Their commitment extends beyond the classroom; by supporting our local industries and communities, they foster a thriving ecosystem where education meets opportunity. They are building pathways to success for their students and strengthening the communities

they serve.

Dr. Quarles is the first native Kentuckian to lead KCTCS. He was named president by the KCTCS Board of Regents Sept. 29, 2023, following a national search. Quarles began his position Jan. 1, 2024. Quarles comes to KCTCS with a long history in statewide public service. He was first elected to the Kentucky House of Representatives in 2010 where he served until his election as Kentucky’s state commissioner of agriculture in 2016. In that role, he led the state’s second largest executive branch agency through 2023, serving two terms. On the national front, he was president of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture in 2020-2021. Quarles holds seven college degrees including a doctorate from Vanderbilt University. He is also a ninth generation Kentucky farmer.

Dr. Feeney is the fourth president of BCTC. Previously he was provost, serving as the chief academic officer and student affairs officer. He has been engaged in workforce development for

SEE SPEAKERS, 3

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UPCOMING PROGRAMS		UPCOMING EVENTS/VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES	
Nov 14	David Lyons, The Police Murder Podcast: Dedicated to honoring victims and told through the eyes of the police who work the crimes.	Nov 21	Lexington Philharmonic, Rehearsal, Give Birth to The Dream, Singletary Center, Reception 6:15, Performance, 7:30pm, \$30
Nov 21	No Lunch Meeting, Service Week, Doing Rotary Differently	Dec 12	Holiday Party for Members and Guests, Campbell House, 6pm
Nov 28	Happy Thanksgiving		
Dec 5	Lori Flees, CEO, Valvoline		
Dec 12	No Lunch Meeting- Holiday Party at the Campbell House, 6 PM		
Dec 19	Booker T. Washington Holiday Party with Santa		
Dec 26 and Jan 2	HOLIDAY BREAK		

FROM PAGE 1

SPEAKERS

multiple industry sectors including manufacturing, financial services, information technology, and healthcare. Dr. Feeney served in other administrative roles including Vice President of Academics and Workforce Development, Dean of Academics, Dean of Academic Support, and Assistant Dean of History, Languages, and Social Sciences at the college. He achieved the faculty rank of full professor and has been at BCTC since 1998. He earned his doctorate at the University of Kentucky and completed his masters at Northern Illinois University.

NEW MEMBER PROPOSAL

The following individual has been proposed for membership in Rotary:

Kimberly Steele

Classification: Education, Administration

Sponsor: Brigitte Blom

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.

NOVEMBER SOCIAL:

SOOTHING THE SAVAGE BREAST WITH LEXPHIL!

William Congreve famously claimed that "music hath charms to soothe the savage breast." Check it out for yourself by joining the Social Committee's next outing on November 21st at the The Singletary Center. There will be a reception in the Presidents Room beginning at 6:15pm with libations and hors d'oeuvres, followed at 7:30pm by a dress rehearsal of the Lexington Philharmonic's November concert Give Birth to the Dream, featuring Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2. This is your chance to meet dynamic new Music Director Mélisse Brunet and watch her work her magic. Sign up for this event using the following link: http://e.givesmart.com/events/Arv. Cost is \$30. See Susan Adams for any questions.

The Rotary Club of Lexington
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2024-2025 OFFICERS

- Bret Anderson - President
Laurel Martin - President-Elect
Kim Johnson - Past President
Alisha Chaffin - Secretary
Eric Brooks - Sergeant-at-Arms
Chris Anderson - Treasurer
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- Chris Aldridge (2025) Shawn Lyons (2026)
Chris Campbell (2025) Brigitte Blom (2027)
John Wharton (2025) Dylan Harper (2027)
Susie Basham (2026) Chris Peck (2027)
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WHEEL HORSE CONTRIBUTORS

- Joe Bark Paul Chewning John Meyers
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Jenny Schnurr Bill Straus Peggy Trafton
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WELCOME, NEW ROTARIANS

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Sponsor: Jenny Schnurr
Look for their bios in an upcoming issue of The 5th Page.

IT'S BEGINNING TO LOOK A LOT LIKE THE HOLIDAYS

Yes, we know it is early, but not too early to make plans for holiday cheer. It is time to mark your calendars for our annual holiday party to be held on Thursday, December 12th at 6pm. We are moving to The Campbell House this year! It will be more accessible, offer bigger buffet to choose from, and reflect a new idea for live music. A UK Jazz Trio will be playing as you arrive at 6 pm and continue through the dinner hour until 8pm. Then, a DJ will take

over to play your favorites from the 50's to present and get you out on the dance floor. The DJ knows that those not on the dance floor will want to be able to continue table conversations. The dinner menu includes two proteins this year! We will start with a spinach salad with dried cranberries, red onion, cheese and candied pecans served with balsamic vinaigrette and ranch dressing. Grilled flank steak with black garlic molasses and grilled chicken breast with sauteed mushrooms and marsala cream sauce will both be available. Accompanying this will be warm rolls and butter, potatoes au gratin, glazed carrots and seasonal roasted vegetables. For dessert you'll find New York style cheesecake with raspberry sauce and a flourless chocolate torte. The price also includes coffee, decaffeinated coffee, hot tea, iced tea and water. A cash bar will be located in our room. Have fun at the photo booth and enjoy some holiday spirit with your Rotary friends. Invite a prospective member! Tickets are \$60 per person with the club picking up the cost of the live jazz and DJ. Mark your calendars and get your tickets now!

TAILGATING FOR GATTON PARK ON THE TOWN BRANCH

A big thank you to Susie and Kenny Basham for hosting our Tailgating for Gatton Park Town Branch fundraiser last Saturday night! Michael Stutland was the winner of the chili cookoff this year with Michael, Kenny, and the team of President Bret and Carrie participating. Michael is pictured wearing the apron trophy. It was a tough decision to choose our favorite! The evening was another great chance to get to know members, their spouses, and potential club members while cheering on the UK Wildcats both inside and around the outdoor firepit table.

- Susan Adams



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NOVEMBER 1-3
LEXINGTON OPERA HOUSE

The 5th Page

NEW MEMBER DEEP DIVE: MICHAEL THOMPSON



MIKE THOMPSON

Mike Thompson attributes much of his drive to succeed to the memory of his mother. A single parent, she sadly passed of cancer when Mike was only 16. A native of Decatur, Georgia, he moved to Simpsonville, Kentucky for the Job Corps shortly thereafter. Mike earned a bachelor's degree from Kentucky State University, majoring in Business Administration, with a minor in Psychology.

That educational background, plus Mike's natural ability to interact with people, positioned him perfectly for jobs in sales. He loves meeting and talking to people and connecting with customers. Mike's first job was with Stanley Steemer, but he now works with Mighty Dog Roofing as a Sales Representative. It's really the best of both worlds for him as he is learning organizational skills while still being able to work outside of the office and meet people. Mike has enjoyed the work environment as the company has encouraged its staff to network and become active in the community.

Mike was introduced to Lexington Rotary at 46 Solutions where Kim Johnson invited him to attend a meeting. He did and learned more about Rotary while enjoying all of the people he was meeting. But what he really loved was Rotary's emphasis on community service as he had been searching for an outlet to do just that.

A former guard in high school, Mike still loves basketball and frequently goes to local parks for pickup games. He loves healthy competition and the team aspect of the games. Mike also loves playing chess as he is attracted to the complex strategies involved.

Mike describes himself as a straight-forward guy who seeks openness in relationships. Sounds like a perfect fit for the Rotary Club of Lexington!

– John Meyers



Ken	Dougherty	3	Judy	Worth	20
John	Darnell	9	Jim	Host	23
Regan	Blevins	10	John	Tackett	24
Will	Goldey	13	Cindy	Sparks	25
George	Brooks, II	15	Candra	Bryant	25
Jeff	Nazarko	17	Don	Hart	25
Mary Ellen	Fiflis	18	Kim	Campbell	25

A DAY AT THE RACES, A NIGHT ON THE TOWN

Susan Adams and the Social Club have been especially busy in recent weeks, trying to keep Rotarians entertained and out of trouble. October 23, 2024, a beautiful fall day, saw Rotarians and guests gather for our Fall Keeneland outing in the Lexington Room. Susan notes that "It's always great to sit with different Rotarians and spouses to get to know people better - and this was no exception. We invite everyone to join Rotary in enjoying what thousands of tourists come to Lexington to experience."

Close on the heels of the Keeneland outing and on the night of Halloween, approximately twenty-five Rotarians, spouses, and friends were able to enjoy great conversations, libations, and some house-made guacamole with tortilla chips at the Lost Palm rooftop bar at The Manchester Hotel. On the one night of rain in three weeks – perhaps appropriate for Halloween - attendees gathered under cover, occasionally and as weather permitted peeking over the edge of the terrace to view the future Gatton Park on the Town Branch. Several came dressed with the Halloween theme in mind.



ROTARIAN CHRIS PECK TAKES ON ROLE WITH THE HOPE CENTER



CHRIS PECK

Fellow Rotarian, Chris Peck has recently taken on the role of Chief Advancement Officer at the Hope Center in Lexington, KY. Previously, Chris served as the President/CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Bluegrass. In his new role at the Hope Center, Chris will focus on leading the agency's fundraising, community out-

reach, and development efforts. The mission of the Hope Center is to provide life-sustaining and life-rebuilding services for individuals affected by substance use disorders, mental health issues, and homelessness.

ROTARIANS ADDRESS FOOD INSECURITY WITH FOOD FOR FAMILIES

On October 11, members of our Club got together for our first "Food for Families" pack up for this school year. Once a month the group, with support from Kroger, provides four bags of groceries each for fourteen families from Northern Elementary (fresh produce, staples, bread, eggs, and frozen chicken). The group, "Harry's Small Group," is a relic of the COVID lockdown when we set up small groups in a "Back to Our Roots" model. This group, which focused on food insecurity in Fayette County, was led by Harry Richart. Members include Harry, Judy Worth, Phil Gray, Jack McAllister, Sharron Townsend, John Meyers, Dean Hammond, Tom Lester, John Darnell, and Peggy Trafton. Our contact at the school is Nydia Higgins, the Family Resource Coordinator.

The folks who are participating help pay for more than 85% of the groceries as well as bag them up and, in some cases, deliver them to children's homes on Saturday mornings for those who cannot pick them up on Friday afternoon.

Not pictured, Phil Gray, John Meyers, Sharron Townsend, and Peggy Trafton



LIVING LEGENDS: SHARRON TOWNSEND



SHARRON TOWNSEND

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

Bret: Mind sharing your age?

Sharron: I turned 72 back in July

Bret: Where did you grow up?

Sharron: I grew up on a farm in Webster County in western Kentucky. In a small town near Madisonville.

Bret: What's your favorite childhood memory?

Sharron: Sleigh riding down a big hill on the farm. Lots

of family, neighbors, and friends would all come over and we'd build a big bonfire. My stepfather used a tractor and slide to pack the snow, so it was really fast. Then he waited at the bottom of the hill with the tractor and slide and used it as farm-style ski lift to bring all the sledders back up the hill. We were a truly blended family, my sister and I plus my stepfather's daughter and son. Speaking of my stepfather, we were and still are all so close and still get together to this day.

Bret: What's the most valuable lesson you've learned, either in school or life?

Sharron: To help others. I'm a social worker. My undergrad and graduate studies were in social work. I worked for nine years as a social worker in child protective services before becoming the Executive Director of the Lexington Child Abuse Council, which eventually became The Nest. But I was raised to always be kind and considerate to others... it was part of farm life.

Bret: What did you enjoy most about your career?

Sharron: The relationship with others... both clients and the community. I was so fortunate to form lasting relationships with so many great people.

Bret: How long have you been in the Rotary Club of Lexington, and what does being a Rotarian mean to you?

Sharron: I joined in the summer of 1988... that's thirty-six years ago. When I turned 72 this summer it means I've been a Rotarian exactly one half of my life. Not many other Rotarians can say that!

Being a Rotarian means to me truly living our motto of service above self. It's an opportunity to help the community and the world. I've chaired more (Rotary) committees than you can list. Right now, I am enjoying volunteering with the Food for Families committee. It's a small committee that meets once a month at Northern Elementary. The committee buys and prepares food bags for families. We have so much fun.

I also have the distinction of being the first woman in The Rotary Club of Lexington. I was asked by my mentor Bruce Cotton to join after the Supreme Court Ruling (requiring Rotary to allow women). Bruce was tasked with finding the right woman to join and he said I was the one. It was interesting to be the only woman for almost a year. I am also proud to have been the first woman Rotarian to receive the President's Cup. It was presented to me by Reed Polk in 1998.

Bret: What's your secret to longevity?

Sharron: Happiness. Enthusiasm for family, work, life, and community. Being connected to others. Giving back. I'm an Elder at my church and was just named a Deacon. It's important for me to give back in a variety of ways across our community.

5TH PAGE CONTRIBUTORS

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