

THE EARLY BIRD CATCHES THE BUSINESS CONTACT

The Rotary Club of Lexington recently hosted another of its highly successful networking opportunities at 46Solutions. Who can pass up the opportunity to mix and mingle with Lexington business professionals while enjoying coffee and donuts? Not the folks in the accompanying photos taken by our own Michael Wallace.



EARLY BIRD MIXER SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Looking for a great way to promote your business to Lexington professionals? The aforementioned **Early Bird Morning Mixers** are the perfect opportunity! Each event attracts 40+ young professionals and offers sponsors valuable exposure. For a sponsorship cost of just **\$175-\$200**, your business will cover breakfast and enjoy social media promotion, dedicated time to address attendees, and the opportunity to provide a door prize. Spaces fill quickly, so don't miss out! Interested businesses should contact Jenny Schnurr at jenny@rotarylexky.org for more details.

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UPCOMING PROGRAMS		UPCOMING EVENTS/ VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES	
Mar 13	Dr. Maj-Linda Selenica, Associate Director of Outreach & Partnerships, Sanders Brown Center on Aging	Mar 6	Studio Players, <i>Witness for the Prosecution</i> , Carriage House Theatre, \$25, 7:30pm
Mar 20	Doing Rotary Differently, No Lunch Meeting	Mar 15	St. Patrick's Day Parade, Join us to walk as a group, Midland Ave. 12:45pm
Mar 27	Dr. Rufus Friday, Executive Director, Center for Integrity in News Reporting	Mar 20	Backpack Pack-Up, God's Pantry Food Bank, Winchester Road, 1:00pm
Apr 3	TBA	Mar 28	Early Morning Mixer, 46Solutions, Lexington Green, 8-9:30am
Apr 10	DeVone Holt, Muhammad Ali Center	Mar 29	Toyota Bluegrass Miracle League, Opening Day! Shillito Park, 10:00am
Apr 17	Doing Rotary Differently, No Lunch Meeting	Apr 16	Membership Social/Recruitment, Miracle League Field, Shillito Park, 5:00pm
Apr 24	Kip Cornett, Lexington's 250 th Celebration	Apr 23	Keeneland, Spring Meet, Lexington Room, 11:00-6:00pm, \$125

The ROTARY Club of Lexington

WHEEL HORSE

March 6, 2025

— TODAY'S PROGRAM —

Presiding: President Bret Anderson
Inspiration, Pledge, & 4 Way Test: Bill Byrd
Introduction of Guests: Rod Hartzler
Introduction of Speaker: Laurel Martin

Speaker: Laura Gregory, Watershed Program Director, Kentucky Waterways Alliance
Program: Why do we Need Septic Education & Assistance Programs?
Location: The Mane on Main

BECOME A MONTHLY LUNCH SPONSOR & PROMOTE YOUR COMPANY HERE!

MEET OUR SPEAKER



LAURA GREGORY

In designating Water, Sanitation and Hygiene as one of its seven areas of focus, Rotary International was operating on a fundamental belief that “clean water, sanitation, and hygiene education are basic necessities for a healthy environment and a productive life.”

Today's speaker, Laura Gregory, along with the organization she represents, Kentucky Waterways Alliance (KWA), is clearly in line with the Rotary playbook in this regard. Gregory is the Watershed Program Director for KWA, a statewide non-profit organization. She works with watershed stewards of all kinds across Kentucky - community volun-

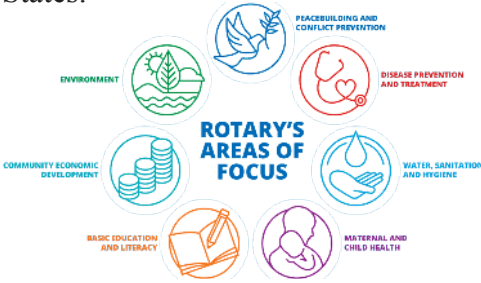
teers, watershed/"friends of" groups, and professionals in the field - in various capacities, such as partnering on projects, managing projects, fiscal sponsorship, technical support/guidance, and much more. Since 2017, she has managed on-the-ground septic installation for low-income families in Eastern Kentucky to help reduce bacteria in impaired waterways.

Since 1993, KWA has been the only statewide organization focused on waterways in Kentucky. They work with communities on local watershed issues and advocate for better policies and programs at the state and national levels. With a mission to protect, restore, and celebrate Kentucky's waterways, their work is making a difference in the quality of life for all Kentuckians.

Today Gregory will address why we need septic education and assistance programs. She will accomplish this by taking a look at human impacts to waterways through the lens of septic care. KWA and Rotary have similar, neighboring septic assistance

programs for low-income families in Eastern Kentucky. We will learn from personal stories and project experience why these programs are important for human and environmental health.

Our Club's interest in this work is well established. Members will recall that by partnering with clubs from London, England and Nigeria, along with support from District 6740, we were awarded a Rotary Foundation Global Grant of \$175,000. Using these funds, we will be installing septic systems in Leslie County, Kentucky and connecting homes to the Hyden-Leslie County Kentucky Water District waterline. Eastern Kentucky has some of the poorest water quality in the United States.



YEARLINGS RECEIVE BLUE BADGES!

Congratulations to the yearling class from the spring of 2024 on turning the orange badges into red then blue!

Pictured are Susie Basham and Chris Campbell, members of the Yearling Committee, with Graham Marks, Lucas McAvoy, Don Tharpe, Julie Kwasniewski, Matt Tabb, and Michael Wallace.

Not pictured are Regan Blevins, Matt Goble, Pam Goodwine, Jarred Paull, and Rodes Smith.



WOMEN IN ROTARY CLUB OF LEXINGTON: A BRIEF HISTORY



Women in Rotary Club of Lexington in 1987: None. Women our Club in 2025: 56. Okay that is the brief version. In honor of March's designation as Women's History Month, we thought a bit more information would help illuminate the road we have travelled since 1987.

It was the late 1980s and the world was changing fast. Rotary not so much. In spite of sporadic efforts at the local level to admit women into Rotary, the Rotary International constitution expressly excluded women from membership, dooming such efforts to failure. Enter the US Supreme Court and its 1987 landmark decision holding that Rotary Clubs could not exclude women from membership on the basis of gender. That same year saw the first female charter member of a Rotary club and the first female club President. Quoting the Rotary.org web page: "The response to the decision was overwhelming. By June 1990, the number of female Rotarians had skyrocketed to over 20,000. The number of women members worldwide reached 195,000 in July 2010 (about 16% of Rotarians) and surpassed 277,000 in July 2020 (about 23%)."

It took the Rotary Club of Lexington until the following year to admit Sharron Townsend as its first female member. Sharron's courage in taking that first step in the

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journey of transformation paved the way for all that followed, including Carolyn Kurz who served as our Club's first female President in 2004-05. Carolyn was followed in the President's role by Mar-

tha Riddell (2011-12), Mary Beth Wright (2015-16), Sharon Reed (2018-19), Kim Johnson (2023-24), and Laurel Martin continues in that tradition, serving as President-Elect for 2024-25.

Rotary in Review

PARTNERS FOR RURAL IMPACT IMPROVES OUTCOMES FOR ALL

I am continuously impressed at the quality of speakers that we are blessed to have at the Rotary Club of Lexington. But last week's presentation from Partners for Rural Impact (PRI) focused on an organization whose sole purpose is to provide a better future for the youth in our communities. Since my family and I have devoted much of our time to similar missions, I was excited to learn of yet another path for children. Executive Director and Associate Vice-President of National Place-Based Programming of PRI Amon Couch began by telling us of his upbringing in eastern Kentucky. He served as a teacher, principal, and superintendent prior to joining PRI. PRI is a national non-profit, headquartered in Berea, Kentucky, whose mission it is to ensure that all rural youth ages 0-24 are on a path to upward mobility.

What makes PRI unique is that although its mission is directed to rural youth, its programs are inclusive of

both suburban and urban communities. He was inspired by Dreama Gentry, CEO of PRI, and hoped to eventually work for her organization. There are 14.2 million children living in rural environments. He learned that the outcome for ALL children should not be determined by their zip code or anything else that is out of their control. PRI hosts leadership conferences for rural children on the campuses of universities and he shared a note received from one of the student attendees. That note simply but eloquently said, "Thank you for giving me hope."

Dr. Couch shared with us that he has one grandchild and another on the way and he stated it is more important than ever for him to help build systems, processes and policies for all children to have a path to success. He believes that all parents want their children to have a better life than the one they had. The impact of the work of PRI is to help every organization (schools,

[Editor's Note: Much of this article was printed in the Wheel Horse in 2022. It bears repeating and has been updated].
- The Editor

YMCA, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, etc.) to do what they do, but "better and more". They have a "Theory of Action" to create and build on what currently exists to strengthen capacity, and share an exemplar (model) to build better outcomes for rural youth.

He showed a picture from just this past that captured the extent to which his organization will go to make a difference. The photo was of a member of their organization using a john boat in eastern Kentucky to deliver supplies and food to folks cut off by the floods there.

In concluding his presentation, he commented that his organization is about building partnerships both public and private in order to provide resources to grow PRI. He left us with a testament about Appalachian people and how they live a Rotary-like life, a life of service to one another. He was preaching to the choir today.

- Jim Richardson



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