

IS MALARIA THE NEXT GREAT ROTARY CHALLENGE?

It would seem that Service Above Self does not have a finish line. As Rotarians, we understandably take great pride as we see the PolioPlus campaign approach its goal of eradicating polio. But we also understand that the race against polio is but one of many races that Rotarians are challenged to take on as a recent article in *Rotary Magazine* highlights.

April 25 is World Malaria Day. Consider this: "Today, though the disease is preventable and treatable, malaria remains a deadly and destructive force in large swaths of the world, nowhere more than in Africa, home to 95 percent of cases and deaths. In 2024, malaria is estimated to have sickened 282 million people and killed 610,000, **about 75 percent of them under the age of 5.**" Those are daunting statistics. However, modeling suggests that currently available vaccines could save the lives of an estimated half a million children by 2035 if distribution were scaled up in areas of moderate and high transmission, according to the World Health Organization.

And, to no one's surprise, we have a Rotary Action Group working to solve this scourge. The Rotarians Against Malaria-Global Action Group invited applications of \$2,500 each for projects ranging from distribution of insecticide-treated nets and rapid diagnostic test kits to education programming in schools and social media campaigns. Ninety-one applications resulted in thirty-three grants. Dan Perlman, chair of the action group, noted that "these grant opportunities change lives, but they also change us. Rotary grounds us in service, connects us across cultures, and reminds us that progress happens when people show up with purpose and dedication."

Showing up with purpose and dedication. That sounds like Rotary to this writer. Learn more and get involved at ram-global.org.

– John Wharton (with unapologetic plagiarism from *Rotarian Magazine*)

"HOPE" YOU CAN JOIN US FOR THIS SERVICE ACTIVITY

Our Community Service/Outreach Chair Alisha Chaffin has arranged for us a Third Thursday service activity, April 16th, to benefit the Hope Center. Rotary Club of Lexington members will gather at the Hope Center's Don Ball Campus Center, where we will meet in the Blue Room to prepare sandwiches for those in need. Following the service project, members will have the opportunity to tour the facility and learn more about the Hope Center's impact in our community.

The Center is located at 298 West Loudon Avenue in Lexington. The event runs from 11:30am to 1:00pm. The Hope Center's mission is "to provide comprehensive life-sustaining and life re-building services that promote healing from substance use disorder, mental health disorders, and homelessness."

This opportunity is made possible thanks to our own Rotarian, Chris Peck, Chief Advancement Officer at the Hope Center, whose leadership continues to connect our Club with meaningful service. We are grateful for the chance to serve, learn, and make a difference together.

NEW MEMBER PROPOSAL

The following individual has been proposed for membership in Rotary:

Jarrett Millsaps

Classification: Hospitals & Clinics, Administration

Sponsor: Tony Barrett

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.

The **ROTARY** Club of Lexington
WHEEL HORSE

April 9, 2026
— TODAY'S PROGRAM —

Presiding: President Dean Hammond
Inspiration, Pledge, & 4 Way Test: Eric Brooks
Introduction of Guests: Kristie Woodrum

Introduction of Speaker: Chris Aldridge
Speaker: Navy Rear Admiral Mike Brown
Location: The Mane on Main

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MEET OUR SPEAKER



NAVY REAR ADMIRAL MIKE BROWN

Rear Adm. Charles M. "Mike" Brown is a native of Montgomery, Alabama. He earned a Bachelor of Arts in International Relations from Tulane University (1989) and a Master of Science in Foreign Service from Georgetown University (1991). He completed Joint Professional Military Education at the Naval War College and Joint Forces Staff College.

In 1995, he joined the Navy as a Direct Commission Reserve Intelligence Officer. He mobilized in 2001 to Chief of Naval Operations Intelligence Plot in Washington, D.C., to reconstitute intelligence operations after the 9/11 attack on the Pentagon. He mobilized

in 2015 as officer in charge of the Intelligence Train, Advise, and Assist mission for Operation Resolute Support in Kabul, Afghanistan. In 2017 he served on orders as a senior assistant to Director, Navy Staff.

His reserve assignments include reserve defense attaché with Defense Intelligence Agency 0166 in Washington, D.C.; operations officer and executive officer, U.S. European Command 0430, Molesworth, UK; executive officer, U.S. European Command 0167, Atlanta, GA; and chief of staff, Naval Information Force Reserve, Fort Worth, TX.

His reserve command assignments include Chief of Naval Operations Information Warfare, Washington, D.C.; U.S. European Command 0167, Atlanta, GA; U.S. Africa Command J2, Washington, D.C.; Defense Intelligence Agency 0601, Fort Dix, NJ; and Regional Commander, Naval Information Force Reserve Region, Washington, D.C., overseeing thirty Information Warfare reserve units and 1,200 reserve Sailors.

As a Flag Officer, RDML Brown served three years as Director for Op-

erations in the Information Environment under the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Information Warfare (OPNAV N2N6). He is currently the Reserve Deputy for OPNAV N2N6.

Personal awards include the Legion of Merit (2), Defense Meritorious Service Medal (3), and Navy Meritorious Service Medal (3), plus NATO and Afghanistan campaign medals. As a civilian, he is a Foreign Affairs Specialist in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. In 2006-09, he was a civilian exchange officer in the UK Ministry of Defense.

Admiral Brown is in Lexington this week as part of Navy Week, as our city was selected as one of twelve host cities nationwide this year. Here's a link to Lexington's official page: Navy Outreach | Navy Weeks 2026 | Lexington Kentucky. Navy Weeks are held annually in select cities across the country to connect with communities - especially those without a significant Navy presence. Throughout the week, events will take place across Lexington to educate the public on the Navy's role in global security and defense.

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UPCOMING PROGRAMS

- Apr 16** Doing Rotary, Differently, See Upcoming Events
- Apr 23** TBA
- Apr 30** Keeneland/Derby Meeting, Gabby Gaudet & Tom Leach
- May 7** Leon Hirsh, Rotary's Fight for Polio Eradication
- May 14** Tommy Bell Award
- May 21** Doing Rotary Differently
- May 28** Scholarship Day

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Apr 16** Volunteer, Hope Center Don Ball Campus Center, 298 W. Loudon Ave., 11:30-1:00 pm
- Apr 18** Opening Day Miracle League, Shillato Park, 10:00 - 2:00pm
- Apr 22** Keeneland Outing, Lexington Room, \$125
- Apr 24** Early Morning Mixer, 46Solutions, Lexington Green, 8:00-9:30am
- Apr 25** RYLA, Life Adventure Center, Versailles, 8-6pm
- Apr 27** God's Pantry, Backpack Pack-Up, 817 Winchester Rd., 1:00- 2:30pm
- Apr 29** Call to the Post Membership Event, Rooster's, Richmond Road, 5:00-7:30 pm

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CAN'T DANCE? YOU CAN STILL HELP MAKE DWLS A SUCCESS

The Rotary Club of Lexington 2026 Dancing with the Lexington Stars (DWLS) Signature Fundraiser Annual Charity Event returns to the Carrick House on May 30. This event is our Club's largest fundraiser and provides us with funds to support local nonprofits in the community, including Baby Health Services.

Since its inception, DWLS has raised over \$2 million for community initiatives, benefiting local nonprofits, education programs, and Rotary service projects throughout Central Kentucky.

Planning for this year's event is going very well. We have nine dance teams, have met our sponsorship goals, secured over \$43,000 in auction items, and the event is a sellout! Congratulations to the Committee for all their hard work to date.

But more remains to be done and we need help from the entire club membership. What kind of help? We are glad you asked!

1. We need sixty bottles of Bourbon valued at \$50 or more for the Bourbon Pull: bring to a lunch meeting or to the Rotary office
2. Volunteers are needed for the set up and for the actual event. Please reach out to Susie Basham to sign up
3. We need nice items for our sponsor bags. Please reach out to Kim Johnson or Bret Anderson
4. Reach out to Linda Weaver if you can help out with any of the following:
 - a. If you have an item or service to donate
 - b. If you want to place an ad in our program
 - c. If you would like a table sign at the event for \$500
 - d. We need three volunteers to help with putting signs in holders and filling auction envelopes

Susie Basham: susie@theagencyky.com or 859-699-4663
Kim Johnson: kim.johnson@ocwfg.com or 859-971-9479
Bret Anderson: banderson@cohesionllc.com or 859-942-1533
Linda Weaver: rrlw459@aol.com or 248-321-1731

Rotary in Review

HALL OF FAME JOCKEY CHRIS MCCARRON BRINGS DERBY SPIRIT TO LEXINGTON

With Kentucky Derby season right around the corner, the Rotary Club of Lexington welcomed a true legend of the sport, Hall of Fame jockey Chris McCarron, for a program that blended humor, history, and heartfelt reflection on a remarkable career in horse racing.

From the moment he stepped to the podium, McCarron had the room engaged, opening with self-deprecating humor before taking Rotarians on a journey from his early days sneaking into Suffolk Downs as a teenager to becoming one of the most accomplished jockeys in racing history.

"I knew that I had found something that I really could be interested in," McCarron shared, recalling his introduction to the sport. "The question was, would I be any good at it?"

That question was answered emphatically over a career that included more than 7,100 wins, two Kentucky Derby victories, and mounts aboard some of racing's most iconic horses. But beyond the accolades, McCarron emphasized the unique connection

between jockey and horse as the foundation of success.

"God has blessed me with a specific talent to communicate with horses," he said. "That's the number one thing a person who's going to be successful in this sport requires."

McCarron's stories brought to life not only the thrill of racing, but also the magnitude of its biggest stage. Reflecting on his first Kentucky Derby ride, he recalled the moment the enormity of the event truly set in.

"I had no idea how big it was until I rode in that race," he said. "When I walked onto the track and they sang 'My Old Kentucky Home,' I still get goosebumps every time I hear that song."

In addition to his racing accomplishments, McCarron highlighted his efforts to give back to the sport, co-founding a fund to support permanently disabled jockeys and later establishing the North American Racing Academy in Lexington to train the next generation of riders.

His commitment to mentorship and

safety underscored a career defined not only by excellence, but by purpose.

Following his retirement in 2002, fittingly after winning his final race, McCarron remained closely connected to the sport and even played a role in bringing it to the big screen, serving as a technical advisor and actor in the film Seabiscuit.

Throughout his remarks, McCarron's humility and gratitude were evident, as he reflected on the opportunities the sport had provided.

"I'm so blessed," he said. "The horses gave me so much, they allowed me to travel the world and experience things I never could have imagined."

As Derby Day approaches, McCarron's visit served as a timely reminder of the passion, discipline, and deep respect for the sport that define horse racing at its highest level, and the enduring connection between Lexington and the global racing community.

- Dan Koett

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