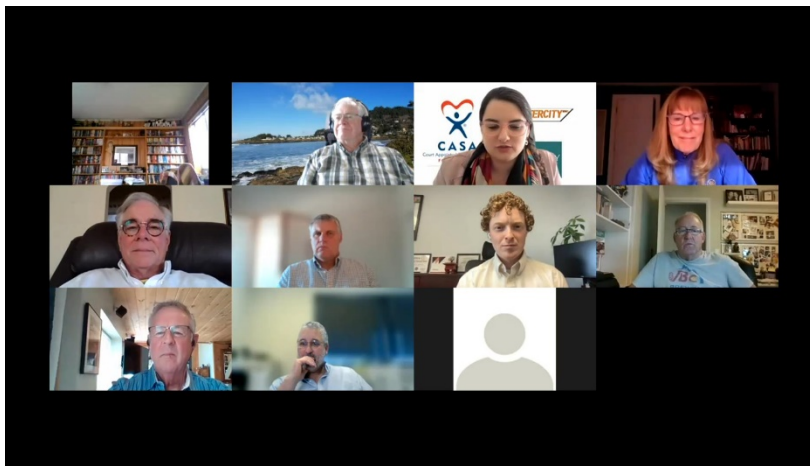


Probably everyone has seen the well-recognized symbol of Rotary international, and has heard Rotary mentioned, but how many actually know the organization and what it does? Springfield City club invited three Rotarians to give a history and overview of the organization at the February 3 program.

Jane Falls is a member and former president of the Springfield Rotary Club. She is also a district governor supporting all the 11 clubs in the local area. She was joined by Damon Burian, a local insurance broker and financial adviser who is a recent member of Rotary and Bob Fondren, of the Twin Rivers Rotary Club. Bob is the retired Chief Financial Officer of the Springfield Utility Board and also the treasurer of Springfield City Club.



Ms. Falls said that Rotary began in Chicago when a local attorney decided to organize luncheons for several of his colleagues to share experiences. The name came from the fact that the luncheons rotated among the various members. From that modest beginning, Rotary has grown to the point where it now includes over 1.4 million members organized in 46,000 clubs on six continents.

The principles of Rotary involve doing good, with integrity, she added. Rotarians guide their activities by a four-way test which they use to evaluate everything they do or say: is it the truth; is it fair to all; will it build good will; will it be beneficial to all concerned.

She said that Rotary focuses its efforts on several major causes: 1) the eradication of polio and disease prevention; 2) international water, sanitation, and hygiene; 3) maternal and child health; 4) peace keeping; 5) economic development; and 6) the environment.

The Rotary clubs rely on a variety of fund-raising techniques to generate funds. Springfield Rotary traditionally has an auction once a year raising as much as \$30 to \$60 thousand. Twin Rivers has sponsored races and tends to do a lot of “passing the hat.” Ms. Falls said that for many years the clubs participated in the Rotary Duck Race where thousands of rubber ducks were set loose in the Willamette River carrying raffle numbers where people could win large prizes. She said that effort, which was known nationally and internationally is on “pause” now as they try to resolve a number of technical problems. She did not know if it would be back any time soon. She added that the Bend Rotary clubs are still running a duck race in the Deschutes River.

The funds that are raised locally are multiplied many times, the Rotary members said, as the broader levels of the organization match locally generated funds and add some of the nationally generated money.

Rotary is known, the members said, for their broad range of service projects – rebuilding the McKenzie River medical clinic, help at Food for Lane County and at the Eugene Mission, participating in river

cleanups, are but a few that they mentioned. Springfield Rotary has partnered with the schools in the Gift of Literacy project, which provides every first grader in the school system with their own book, for many a first.

One international project of local note is the involvement of local members in building clean water wells in Togo.

The pandemic has affected both how Rotary meets and how it serves, Ms. Falls said. Many of their outreach efforts involve supporting local schools, an effort that is not possible given the need to keep children safe from infection.

Both Rotary clubs have been meeting remotely over the past two years. Twin Rivers meets every Friday at 7:00 a.m. over Zoom, although they are now experimenting with occasionally meeting at the Eugene County Club. The Springfield Rotary meets at noon every Wednesday in a hybrid meeting involving in-person gathering at the Elks Club on Centennial Boulevard along with a Zoom meeting. For information about clubs and meetings, Ms. Falls urged the audience to contact her at 541-517-3412 or [jafalls@comcast.net](mailto:jafalls@comcast.net).

In the coming year Twin Rivers will be focusing on youth scholarship and attempting to send one of its members back to Togo to help residents build another well. Springfield's major effort this year is a campaign to end human trafficking. Both clubs expect to participate in the Riverfront Festival that will be held in conjunction with the World Championship track and field meet in July.