

EL RODEO

THE ROUNDUP

Year 114
Issue 04
Dec 2022



#5

THE CLUB. FOUNDED IN
1909 AND AGING LIKE
FINE WINE

FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Rotarians,

I apologize for the hiatus. I've just been ~~busy~~ engaged.

Anyhow, we're back in action and just in time to recap everything we've done this year so we can reflect on 2022 with pride. As we turn the corner into 2023, let me warn you that unless you want monthly updates on my wedding planning, please remember to use the El Rodeo as a(nother) distribution channel for your many updates.

Also, in a fateful white elephant exchange, I'm proud to say that I'm the new owner of a prestigious LA5 gavel - straight from the archives. Thank you, President Paul! I can't wait to wield this new power of mine next year. Ken is squirming, I just know it.

Grab your favorite drink and some snacks, get comfortable. This issue is a big one!

Wishing you a Happy New Year, LA5. See you in 2023.
insert gavel strike here

YIRS,

Tammy Nguyen

tammy.nguyen@rotaryla5.org

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Attend

The January 15th District 5280 "Peace" Brunch honoring MLK Jr. Day. Featuring Scott Martin, Peace Builder Rotary Peace Fellow, and Mobolajo Olambiwonnu, Filmmaker and director of *Ferguson Rises*.

View

The documentary *Ferguson Rises* now through January 27 (on Amazon Prime or other available streaming services).

Save The Date

January 28th, 10 am - Noon. A follow-up discussion on *Ferguson Rises* on Zoom. Hear from the director, and participate in small moderated discussion groups about what we saw and how we can apply the film's messages to peace-building. (Registration info and Zoom link to be sent in January.)

peace activities for Rotarians

BY THE DISTRICT 5280
PEACE COMMITTEE





Having won zero awards or accolades, El Rodeo's very own Page Six is the finest news source in America, maybe even in the world.

By Ken Chong, Past President

Here's a double helping of Page 6, November and December edition. I know you missed me because EVERYONE at Rotary asked where my article was last month (sarcasm). I hope you had happy holidays and got everything you wanted from 2022. If not, let's hope for it to come in 2023.

Here's my report from November and December: I really enjoyed the Veteran's Day program and the LA5 Songsters sounded great (no, they really did). You probably expect me to say this about every meeting because I am supposed to be supportive and a great cheerleader of LA5. The reality is as a member of the Red Badge Clu, I get to lob grenades from the peanut gallery, give unsolicited advice, and Monday morning quarterback as much as I want. When I saw no confirmed speaker the week before and that the club meeting fell on the actual federal holiday, making it a 3-day weekend for many people, I was nervous. I never want to see a President and Program Chair have a bad meeting. So big applause to **Herb** and **Malinda** for putting together a great program, even if it was a scramble.



I know the general membership pool doesn't want to know how the sausage is made when it comes to putting meetings together week after week, but sometimes it is messy. Members shared their family stories of service and heroism, and I was in awe. We all hung on every word from **PP Mike Birkholm** as he shared both sadness and sacrifice of his mother's loss of her first husband to war. Lucky for all of us she found love again, remarried, and the Birkholm family was formed. If you weren't at the meeting, in addition to missing all the family sharing, you also missed **Liz Skrzat** and **Ian Eddy** IN PERSON! The benefit of having a meeting on a federal holiday! It was great to see you both.



It is no surprise that an event orchestrated by **PP Erick Weiss** was a huge success and a lot of fun. The Good Sam Award Foundation Celebration was a packed house, filling up the entire downstairs main dining room of the California Club. I was just glad to see so many faces:

Ylenia Mino, Jermaine Ee, Michael Stevens, Harlan Gleeson, Mark Higgins, Mandi Budd, and Chrissy Moses.

PP Marc Leeka and Wilshire **PP Pearl Leeka** were both at the meeting AND STAYED for lunch. You know this was a good program.



December was a super short month, with only one meeting, but it was a good one. The Tournament of Roses Queen and Court with LA5er **Fritz Coleman** as the emcee. It is always a fun meeting, so popular that we didn't have enough seats ... or enough lunches. Remember my reference above about sausage making? It didn't matter though. We had enough Rotarians who believe in Service Above Self (and **President Malinda** owing them a favor) and gave their lunch and their seat for our guests and sat in the very jolly peanut gallery.



Chrissy Moses blinged it up with her sequined jacket and El Rodeo editor **Tammy Nguyen** brought the bling ... on her ring finger. Congrats **Tammy and Azim!** We were entertained by an ensemble from the Salvation Army Band, thank you **Captain Sean Kelsey!** We also were surprised with holiday carolers from the Jonathan Club. not sure if Santa's Helper **Johannes Masserer** had anything to do with that.



Rotarians

IN ACTION







Rotary Bike Build

BY PAST PRESIDENT
RICK GIBSON

It sounded like a parent's worst Christmas Eve nightmare when the announcement was made that the *LA5 Foundation* had purchased thirty youth-sized bikes and Rotarians were needed to assemble them.

Even so, over 12 courageous LA5ers volunteered to give up a Saturday morning to build the bikes.

On **October 15**, with tools supplied by the **Foster Love** organization, a non-profit that pairs volunteer groups and the **Schwinn** bicycle company, **LA5 volunteers** with a cup of coffee in one hand and a wrench in the other began the assembly process. The team got to work at 9AM knowing that by 11AM child clients from **Wellnest**, a clinic that provides emotional and wellness services for young people, would arrive to claim the gift of a new bicycle.

According to the project documentation, the project could easily be completed in two hours. But after forty minutes, not one bike had been completed. At that point, project organizers **Rick Gibson** and Wellnest CEO, **Charlene Dimas-Peinado** began to worry. When the first hour had passed and only one bike was finished, they began to panic.

Thankfully, the hardest bike to assemble is the first one and the production time decreased dramatically with most bikes being assembled and tires being inflated by 11AM.

As families arrived, **Rotarian bike-builders** stretched their legs and rubbed their stiff knees as the last bike rolled off the assembly line.

They were rewarded with bright smiles from children with new bikes. High fives were shared, tools were collected and repackaged and boxes broken down. Mission accomplished on time (sort of). But the real miracle was that there were no leftover parts!





DEFY Ventures

BY LAUREN SHLAU
& MEL SCOTT

Andrew Glazier, CEO of **DEFY** Ventures recently made an inspiring presentation to our club on how DEFY trains formerly incarcerated individuals, who have paid their debt to society, to become entrepreneurs. DEFY initiatives are about second chances, helping their clients become contributing members of society, rebuilding their lives and relationships.

DEFY's mission and stories of success, offer LA5 an important opportunity to play a positive role in the lives DEFY clients. Our meetings and events take place in an environment where DEFY Entrepreneur in Training (EIT) graduates can meet and interact on a professional business basis with our members. We can serve as role models and mentors that can mutually benefit EITs and Rotarians, exemplifying our commitment to **Service Above Self**.

LA5 and DEFY are in the process of setting up a pilot program for selected DEFY EIT grads to attend a Rotary meetings or social functions. Rotarians would help support the EITs by a welcoming and greeting them, introducing EITs to club members, and interacting with EITs during events. The logistics, and financial and human support would run through the Peace Committee, with Paul Ekstrand, **Mel Scott & Lauren Schlau** as LA5's main contacts to DEFY.

Mel, who is involved with DEFY and brought Andrew Glazer to us as a speaker, just attended an in-prison program to help those currently incarcerated who want to engage in the EIT program.

Lauren and Mel also attended EIT Coaching, interacting one on one with three of the 18 men in the program to flesh out and develop their entrepreneurial ideas. This group had a final session and graduation a few weeks ago that Lauren attended.

More details to follow as planning continues. We are so excited to bring this program to LA5, offering us the opportunity to support these hard working and deserving individuals with the next chapter of their lives!



THANKS FOR ALL THAT YOU DO.

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Secretary Spokes

THE SECRETARY'S REPORT

BY JOHN SPOKES

Greetings Fellow LA5ers-

I'm so grateful to be a part of a Club that has done so much in the last three months of 2022.

Led by President Monterrosa, here are the bright spots:

- The Club's finances are being well stewarded by Past President/Treasurer Leeka, assisted by the finance wizard Vic Marovich, and benefit from our previous bursar, Vien Le.
- The board has recommended the distribution of \$136,000 of LA5 Foundation funds to local non-profits and service projects.
- Past President Ball, Herb McGurk, and JT Warring are charting a new partnership for the Myanmar Water project.
- Lauren Schlau and Past President Ekstrand introduced a pilot program to welcome young members of the business community (through DEFY Ventures) to LA events.
- Past President Weiss planned a memorable event aimed at increasing community awareness of the LA5 Foundation.
- Marjorie Heller gathered a group of service-minded members from the Club and District for another extraordinary Angel City celebration.

While I am constantly aware of the good work we do, for me the highlight of this year (and many of my previous years in LA5) is the way in which the board of directors and Club members have identified, discussed, and overcome adversity. I am humbled to be a witness to how we navigate the waves.

This year we have been faced with 1) disturbing events involving our City Council; 2) declining membership numbers; 3) increasing costs of luncheons; and 4) mounting needs for paid staff.

In addressing these challenges, we have seen exemplary leadership. The formula for success in each case has been to seek input from the LA5 membership, discuss the issue openly with board members and advisors, and build consensus to trace a new path forward. And always pounding in our hearts is RI's oath of "Service Above Self."

I look forward to seeing you all as we traverse the second half of our 114th year. I am particularly looking forward to our next set of Peace Dinners, Pageant of the Arts and serving on the Scholarship Committee. And, I am making a resolution to get involved in at least one service project, while attending more Club luncheons. I hope you will join me.

Happy New Year,
Secretary Spokes



A MESSAGE FROM

THE PRES

Malinda Monterrosa
President

As we round the corner into a new calendar year and turn the bend at the halfway point of our Rotary year- I can't help but take on a contemplative mood.

Are we on track to accomplish all that we've set out to do? Do our members feel valued? Seen? Heard? Is anyone having any fun? Are we even making a difference?

If you're anything like me - or if you know me well enough - you know it's the easiest thing to spiral into questioning everything. (What better way to spend the holidays, amiright?)

This is why I keep spreadsheets, photos, and my social media accounts. They're material reminders of milestones and moments that matter. And somewhere in there is the story to be told.

Sort of like Emmanuel Todd Lopez's near-death and journey back to health. Every clip captured is a milestone to behold. Our collective investment in the well-being of an emu we've never met and the simple

joy he brings to one's day tells a story about how life is fleeting, there's common ground to be found everywhere, and sometimes you have to choose to seek out joy - even if it means finding it on the internet.

(Not to go too far off-topic here, but while we're on the matter of TikTok, it might interest some to know that Noodle the Pug passed away on Dec 3. It was a really sad day for 4.5 million people - myself included.)

Back to curing my seasonal depression!

Are we on track to accomplish anything this year? My spreadsheets came in handy here.

I set a goal to raise \$200,000 for the LA5 Foundation. By my math, we're sitting at just under \$73,000. Okay, not precisely half; not exactly bad, either.

Our other goal this year was to have an unprecedented level of impact. This, admittedly, was just plain rude of me: who am I to challenge the 113 years of community impact before this one? (Add this to the many times and valid reasons why Past Presidents shake their heads in disappointment when I open my mouth.)

But hey! My annoying personality aside, we've approved over \$250,000 in funding across 12 projects and over 20 well-deserving organizations thus far. I don't know how that tracks toward my poorly worded goal, but it sure feels like something to be proud of!

Only you can speak to whether you feel valued, seen, and heard as a member of LA5. I hope that you do. We've made a point to do some things this year to help this along (much for which I cannot take credit).

We're celebrating birthdays and Rotary-versaries like our joy depends on it (it does - celebrating the birthdays of others is one of my favorite things in life). President Nominee Brenda Wiewel has instituted our 'star' program, which is really bringing all the member-to-member feels, isn't it? And the social committee is, well, a lot of freaking fun. (I suppose it would be a fail if they weren't.) So if you aren't enjoying yourself this year, perhaps there's solace in knowing that Charles, Mel, Rudy, Mandi, Lance, and Paul are. (Or ask them to pass the juice!)

I hope the moments of connection are making you feel like the valued member of LA5 that you are. If not, well ... my year is almost over, so call President-Elect Gary! I kid. I kid.

Are we making a difference? I guess it depends on how you'd want to define that.

Lately, my 8-year-old daughter asks to wear my Rotary shirts to school so she can talk about the work we do and the occasions during which she helped volunteer. She's started to make a habit out of asking if she can join me for anything Rotary. Last year it was an annoying thing that took up too much of her mom's time. This year it's something cool that helps define her personality and makes her proud - both of herself and of me.

I could have used this paragraph to remind you of the hundred or so college students who are receiving funds from us. Or about the family of seven we recently helped celebrate Christmas. Or maybe even the thousands in Burma who have access to clean water because of this Club.

But for me, I see a daily reminder of the influence this club has and the difference we make in my own kid. Knowing she's proud of the work that we do and already chooses *service above self* is just the bee's knees.

It took me far too long to write this, but the good news is that I turned my spiraling questioning thoughts into thoughts of pride and feelings of accomplishment. So that's what I'm taking into 2023. That, and heavy gratitude for you, for you're helping me raise a Rotarian. (Well, at the very least a fundamentally good human.)

Happy new year, you. None of this magic could have been made without you. Cheers to that at midnight and I'll see you next year!

xx, M

NEW MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENT

meet the member



ELIZABETH HALL

Real Estate Agent
Douglas Elliman

[MORE INFO HERE](#)



YOU'RE INVITED!

sign up for peace dinners

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11
6 PM

Back by popular demand!

These dinners are hosted **for Rotarians by Rotarians** and intend to deepen our friendship and understanding of one another in festive and relaxed home settings.

Currently seeking hosts for dinners.

*Please contact Lauren Schlau
or John Spokes if interested.*



Elections

CONGRATS TO THE
LEADERSHIP CLASS OF
2023-2024

On December 2, at the club's last meeting of the calendar year, official business took place (per our club's bylaws). The officers and directors - as selected by the Nominating Committee - were elected into their leadership roles! Congrats!

President Gary Jimenez
President-Elect Brenda Wiewel
Vice President Paul Jacques
Secretary Charles Hamilton
Treasurer Paul St. John
Director Lance Miller
Director Mike Ross
Director Lauren Schlau
Director Carmen Estrada-Schaye

Director Judy Smith
Director Melonie Scott
Director Charlene Dimas-Peinado
Director Mandi Budd
Director Walker Railey
Director Azim Vishani
Director Jim Simonds
Director JT Warring
Director Tammy Nguyen

Director Meg Barron
SAA James Reynolds
SAA George Ko
SAA Michelle Dicks
SAA Loresa Grigsby
SAA Rudy Ramirez
SAA Jose Luis Sanchez
SAA Anthony Vasquez



FOR YOUR SERVICE TO OUR CLUB

THANK YOU



Per the Club bylaws, the **Nominating Committee** consists of the ten most recent Past Presidents (active members) willing to serve. **LA5** tradition extends the committee's input to include additional Past Presidents to ensure a diverse slate of opinions, transparency, and a robust and serious debate while selecting our hallowed club's future slate of leaders.

The nominating and election process requires significant consideration, planning, and time commitment in service to our Club.

Thank you to the following who participated in our nominating process this year:

Nominating Chair

Past President Paul Ekstrand

Past President Matt Ball

Past President Rick Gibson

Past President Ken Chong

Past President Jose Vera

Past President Erick Weiss

Past President Charisse Lara

Past President Todd Johnson

Past President Alan Bernstein

Past President Jay Richardson

Past President Megan O'Rourke

Past President Marc Leeka





TAKE A LOOK AT

ANGEL CITY CELEBRATION 2022

Another year, another successful event serving thousands of Los Angeles families. Head Elf Marjorie Heller does it again!



EVENT DATE: DECEMBER 3,, 2022

ALZ WALK



LA5 and Rotarians of District 5280 rose before the sun and braved the cold to Walk to End Alzheimer's at the LA Zoo. The club was highlighted as a key sponsor of the event- which brought out 1,564 participants and raised over \$400,000!





Get To Know Your Board

a not-so-in-depth feature of your favorite board member



Foundation Vice Chair

HI, I'M HEATHER SHUEMAKER

Q: What book you are reading currently OR what song you are listening to most right now?

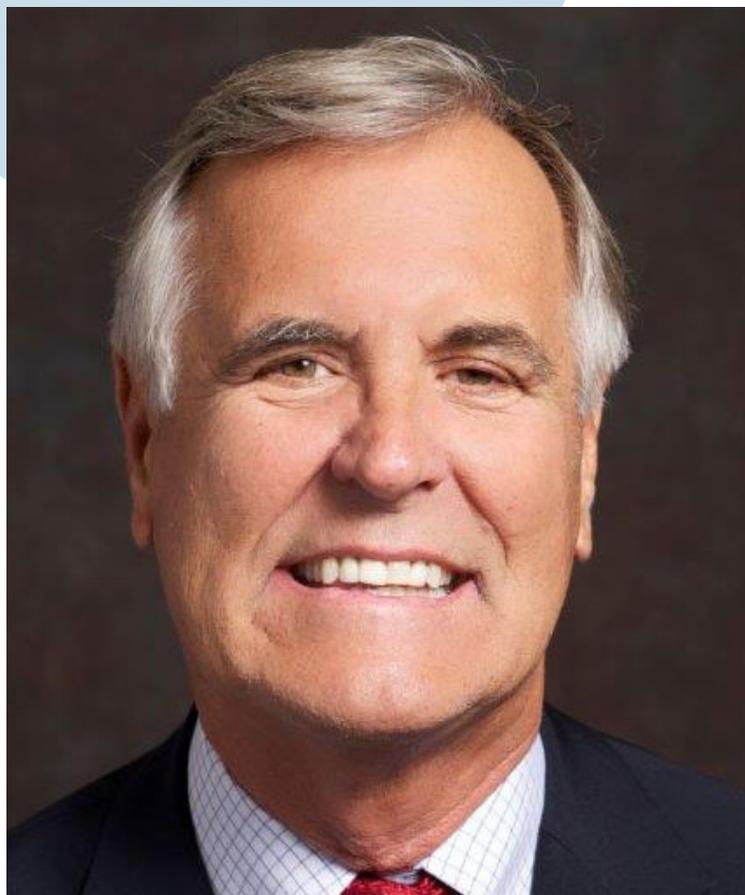
A: Empty Mansions by Bill Dedman and Paul Clark Newell.

Q: Why are you a Rotarian? OR what do you love most about LA5?

A: The friendships developed through LA5 Rotary are the best part of being a Rotarian.

Q: What compelled you to say “yes” to serving on the Foundation board?

A: I wanted to give back and help steer our philanthropic giving to make a real difference in the Greater Los Angeles Community.



Director

HI, I'M JIM SIMONDS

Q: What do you do when you're not at work or Rotary?

A: I'm found in the ocean snorkeling on the tropical reefs.

Q: What is your favorite meal, or place to eat?

A: Italian

Q: What album or artist are you listening to right now?

A: Dua Lipa





President

HI, MALINDA MONTERROSA

Q: Why did you join Rotary?

A: Charisse told me I should.

Q: Your favorite quote?

A: "Don't tell me the sky's the limit when there's footprints on the moon." ~ Paul Brandt

Q: What's your Meyers-briggs?

A: ENFP (but I think I need to be retested. I'm certain I've gone full introvert over the pandemic)





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Rotarians
OVER THE HOLIDAYS



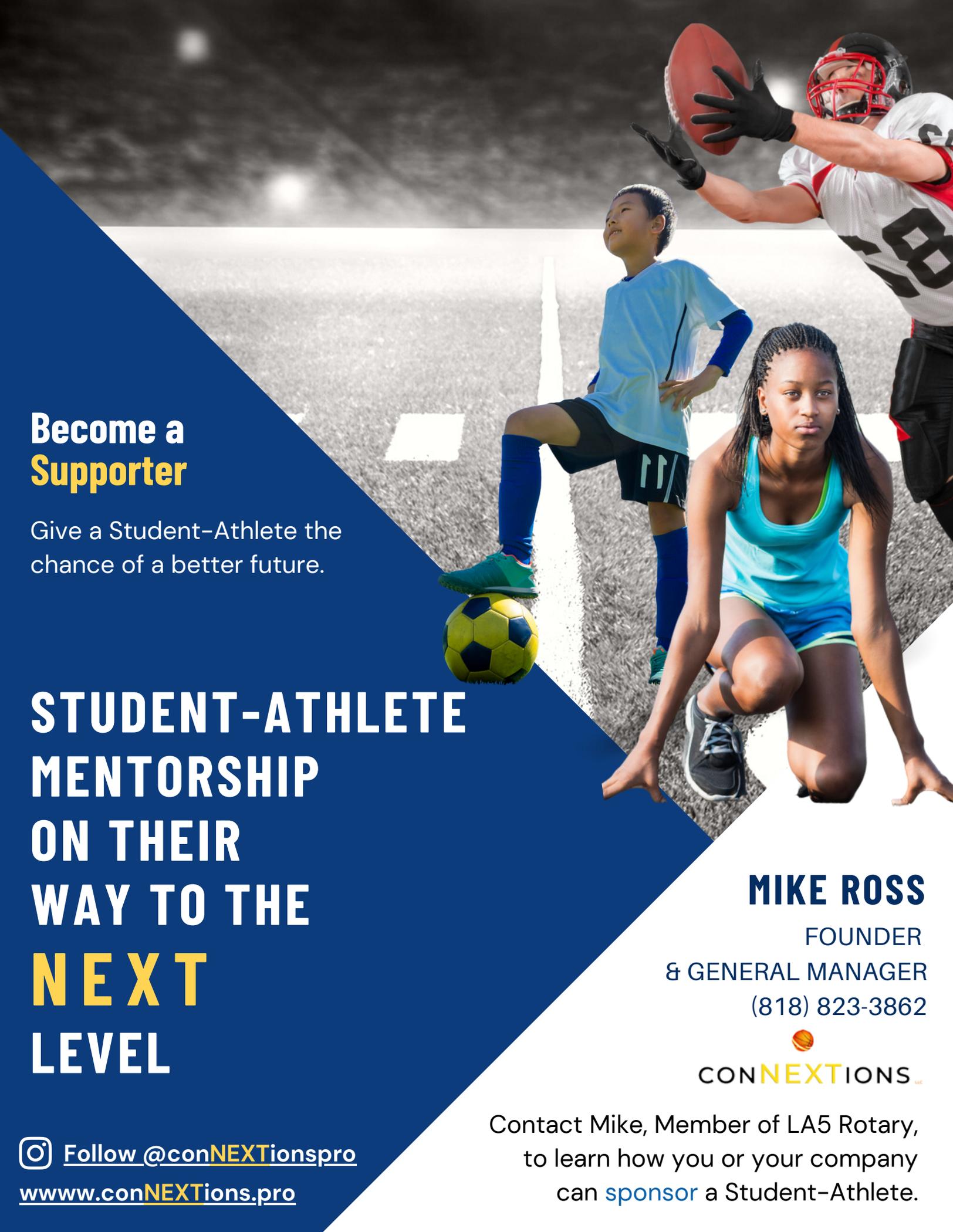


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Agency Team Recognition/Invitee, Liberty Mutual Presidents Awards Celebration 2019



Elite Agency Designation, Chubb Cornerstone

Meetings. Memories. Magic.



Veterans Day.



NEW MEMBER!

Meetings. Memories. Magic.



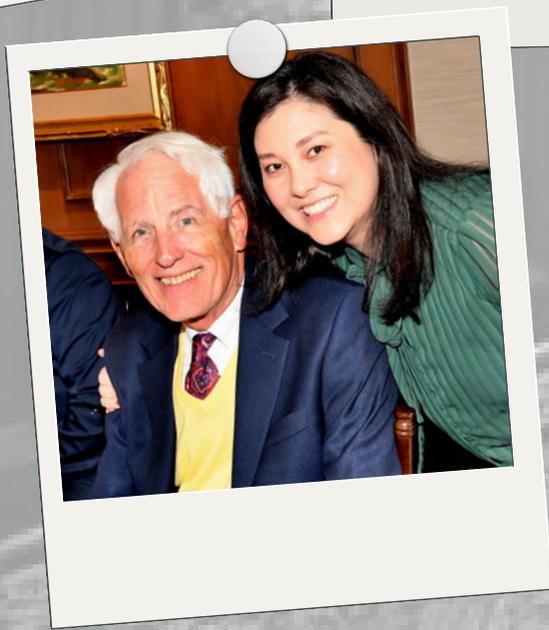
Good Sam Award.



Meetings. Memories. Magic.

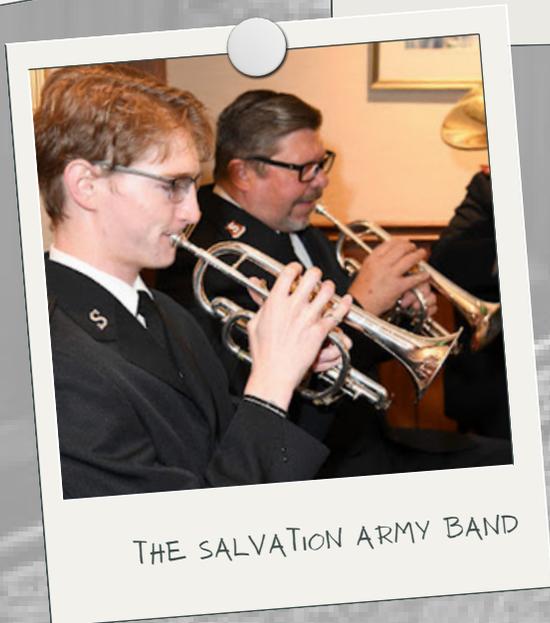


LA5 SONGSTERS!



CHEERS ROTARIANS!

The Rose Queen & Court



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FREE LA5 SWAG TO SOMEONE
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PICTURE OF ME.

(EVIDENCE SUGGESTS IT DOESN'T EXIST)



WE WANT

YOUR

FEEDBACK!



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