

COGS

official newsletter of the
ROTARY CLUB OF KINGSPORT **AUGUST 3, 2026**

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AUGUST 5 MEETING PREVIEW

Joey Christian—Dobyns-Bennett Head Football Coach



This week Joey Christian, Dobyns-Bennett High School Head Football Coach, will be with us to give an update on the DB Football program and expectations for the 2026 Season.

Joey began his coaching career at Volunteer High School as the Offensive Coordinator in 1997. He became the Assistant Varsity Coach at Dobyns-Bennett High School in 2003 where the team

compiled 132 victories and nine conference championships, along with 15 playoff appearances. He was named Head Coach in 2018. As Head Coach the team's record has been 62 wins and 29 losses, including 4 conference championships and 7 playoff appearances.

A native of East Tennessee, he is a graduate of ETSU where he played football and received a bachelor's degree in Marketing and a Master's degree in Education. He also has an education degree from Lincoln Memorial University.

Joey will bring 5 of his current players to the meeting to assist in update.

IN THIS ISSUE:

PAGE 1

Upcoming Meeting Preview

PAGES 2

Previous Meeting Summary

PAGE 3

President's Corner

PAGE 4

Rotary Voices

PAGE 6

Calendar of Events

PAGE 7

Club Information

JULY 29, 2026 MEETING SUMMARY

Our Rotary club recently enjoyed a heartwarming baby shower celebrating Kaylee and the upcoming arrival of her baby boy, Owen. It was a wonderful opportunity for members to gather, share in her excitement, and offer their support as she prepares for this special new chapter.

As a club, we presented Kaylee with a \$200 gift card to SmashMeal in Kingsport, providing her with convenient, nutritious meals during the busy weeks ahead. She also received a thoughtful activity book created by fellow



Rotarians, filled with parenting advice, caregiver tips, and words of encouragement from club members. In addition to the club gifts, many individual members brought presents, both practical and thoughtful, for Kaylee and baby Owen, reflecting the generosity and friendship that make our Rotary family so special.

The celebration also introduced members to SmashMeals, a Kingsport business dedicated to making healthy eating simple and convenient. Owner Lewis Kizer joined us to share more about the company and its mission of providing fresh, high-quality meals for busy individuals and families. As a generous surprise, Lewis treated every club member to one of

SmashMeals' delicious protein bars along with a \$25 gift certificate to experience the menu firsthand.

The afternoon was filled with laughter, conversation, and warm wishes for Kaylee and baby Owen. It was a joyful reminder that Rotary is about more than service—it is also about building lasting friendships and celebrating life's meaningful milestones together. We look forward to welcoming Owen into the world and wish Kaylee and her family every happiness in the exciting days ahead.



President's Corner

Progress on Our 2026–2027 Strategic Priorities

Our 2026–2027 club strategy is taking shape through the ideas, concerns and priorities shared by our members. The recent member engagement survey and clubwide SWOT analysis gave us a clearer understanding of what the Rotary Club of Kingsport does well, where improvement is needed and where meaningful opportunities exist.

A central commitment of this year's leadership is **greater transparency**. We want members to understand what the club is working toward, what progress is being made and how they can participate. Strategic planning is only valuable when it leads to visible action, shared accountability and measurable improvement.

Several initiatives are already underway. While this work will continue to evolve, the following actions demonstrate that we are moving from discussion to implementation.

Items Already Being Executed

- The new club website was developed using feedback from the member engagement survey and SWOT process.
- The website is improving transparency, public awareness, event communication and our ability to tell the club's story.
- Members are being asked to complete and regularly update their online profiles.
- Complimentary professional headshots were offered to strengthen member profiles and the club's public presentation.
- An annual member engagement survey has been launched.
- A one-year new-member journey and onboarding checklist have been developed.
- A membership growth and engagement plan is being prepared.
- Social events, including the Kingsport Axmen outing, are expanding fellowship beyond weekly meetings.
- Visitors and prospective members are receiving more intentional and personalized follow-up.
- Trello boards have been established to organize committee work and clarify responsibilities.
- Public relations, website announcements, press releases and member recognition efforts have increased.
- Members are being invited to suggest social events and contribute stories and photographs.

This is the beginning of a longer process. As priorities are finalized, we will continue sharing updates, identifying responsible leaders and reporting progress to the membership. Our goal is not simply to create a strategic plan, but to build a stronger, more connected and more visible Rotary club.

Service above self,

Don't wait until you are ready to try new things in Rotary



Rotary Voices

By Angela Lopez, RI supervisor of Membership Growth and Experience, and a former Rotary Youth Exchange student

In 2003, I began a [Rotary Youth Exchange](#) to Denmark. My family was not a traveling one, and when I was accepted for the exchange, they were a bit apprehensive. I remember my mom crying at the airport before saying, "I really hope someone is there when you get off the plane." Thinking back on that, I'm amazed my mom sent me, an insular 16-year-old, to another country, having only had email conversations with my hosts. If you think youth exchange students are brave, consider how brave their parents are.



Angela Lopez' Journal stack before after Rotary Youth Exchange.

I could tell so many stories of that year. I filled seven journals of amazing experiences



while I was in Denmark. I had regularly journaled since eighth grade, but for the year and a half after I returned, I didn't journal a page. I felt like, by comparison, I didn't have anything interesting to write anymore. I didn't just learn about another culture, I adopted customs in my life and came back a completely new person. (Looking back, I realize my journal silence was a sign of reverse culture shock and wish I had kept writing to capture my many intense feelings during that time).

My exchange year was just the beginning of my experience with Rotary. I joined the Peace Corps and helped Rotary clubs connect with Peace Corps in Colombia. In 2017, I turned 30 and joined the Rotary Club of Phoenix, Arizona. I served as president in 2021-22, and as assistant governor in 2022-25.

In 2023, I was hired by Rotary International and now serve on the Membership Growth and Experience team. I am passionate about youth services and about inspiring millennials to give to [The Rotary Foundation](#). I am my club's TRF chair and a Paul Harris Fellow (PHF+8).

When I mention to Rotary members in my district that I am a past president of my club, many are amazed that, as a woman in my 30s, I became one of only five women to serve as president of the 108-year-old club. But I've often found myself in predominantly male spaces. In high school, I even played football. My youth exchange experience without a doubt has also helped me succeed, with the knowledge and respect for Rotary that I learned.

Continued from Page 6

There are now three former youth exchange students in my club. Seeing me as president inspired others like me to join, seeing that we had a place.

I often hear parents question sending their children on a youth exchange, because they feel that at 16, they are not mature enough. Looking over my journal entries from those days, I am sure many of you would think, "Who let that girl get on a plane by herself?" But it's actually the experience that makes a person ready.

One of our past district governors, Elizabeth Mahoney, is fond of saying, "I appreciate Rotary for giving me opportunities to do things before I was ready." I couldn't agree more. After 22 years, I am still learning from Rotary members around me as I embark on new projects.

As we prepare to celebrate Membership and New Club Development Month in August, consider:

- Attending a membership or networking event.
 - Inviting family and friends to a service project to showcase the impact of Rotary.
- Mentoring a new member. Mentorship can empower new members to take on leadership roles.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

AUGUST 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
2	3	4	5 Joey Christian— Dobyns Bennett	6	7	8
9	10	11	12 David Hoover— Famous Tennesseans	13	14	15
16	17	18	19 Steven Bower— Kingsport Economic Development	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

MEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Aug 07—Gary Bridges
Aug 14—Ambre Torbett

MEMBERSHIP ANNIVERSARIES

Aug-01—Deborah Adams—31 Years
Aug-15—Leslie Lynch—23 Years
Aug 16—Rebecca Beck—8 Years
Aug 24—Heather Cook—15 Years
Aug 26—Karen Short—1 Year
Aug 26—Linda Figliolino—1 Year
Aug 28—Jennifer Salyer—13 Years

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Aug 13—Ambre Torbett—32 Years
Aug 14—Emily Ball—16 Years
Aug 19—Tom Todd—65 Years
Aug 25—Bill Adams—63 Years
Aug 27—Ken Calvert—49 Years
Aug 29—Leslie Lynch—56 Years

UPCOMING EVENTS

HOW TO FIND US

Rotary Club of Kingsport

District 7570 | Area 13 | Club 5739

Meets every Wednesday at Noon

at
The MeadowView Conference Center
1901 Meadowview Pkwy Kingsport, TN



facebook.com/RotaryClubofKingsport/



@RotaryClubofKingsport



KingsportRotaryClub@gmail.com



KingsportRotaryClub.org

CLUB OFFICERS:

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Charlotte Whitted

AREA 13 GOVERNOR:

Joseph (Joe) Ley

DISTRICT SECRETARY:

Andrea Milliron

DISTRICT TREASURER:

Peter K. Howard

DISTRICT FOUNDATION CHAIR:

Paula K. Alston

Rotary THE FOUR-WAY TEST

- 1 | Is it the **TRUTH**?
- 2 | Is it **FAIR** to all concerned?
- 3 | Will it build **GOODWILL** & **BETTER FRIENDSHIPS**?
- 4 | Will it be **BENEFICIAL** to all concerned?

LOCAL CLUBS FOR MAKE-UPS

MONDAY

Noon | Tri-Cities—Northeast State Community College, Pierce Admin Bldg., Room P309, Blountville, TN

6:00 PM | Johnson City Evening—Howard Hunt's Edward Jones Office, 4018 Roan St., Johnson City, TN

TUESDAY

7:15 AM | Scott County—Scott Co. Park & Golf Course Clubhouse, 247 Fore Drive, Gate City, VA

7:30 AM | Bristol Morning VA-TN—The Summit Co-Work Space (Expedition Meeting Room) 1227 Volunteer Pkwy., Bristol, TN

Noon | Bristol VA-TN—Bristol Train Station, 101 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Bristol, VA

Noon | Johnson City—Johnson City Country Club 1901 E Unaka Ave., Johnson City, TN

Noon | Greeneville—Tusculum University, Niswonger Commons Pioneer Café, 60 Shiloh Road, Greeneville, TN

WEDNESDAY

7:00 AM | Greeneville-Morning—Laughlin Memorial Hospital Cafeteria Conference Room, Greeneville, TN

7:30 AM | Kingsport-Sunrise—Food City Press Room, Suite 300, 200 Clinchfield St., Kingsport, TN

Noon | Unicoi County—Town Hall, 211 N. Main St., Erwin, TN

Noon | Elizabethton—First Christian Church of Elizabethton, Fellowship Hall, 513 Hattie Ave., Elizabethton, TN

THURSDAY

7:15 AM | Johnson City Morning—Food City Community Room, 920 N. State of Franklin Rd., Johnson City, TN

Noon | Kingsport-Downtown—Food City Crown Center, 1205 N. Eastman Road, Kingsport, TN

AVAILABLE 24/7—

www.RotaryClubOne.org