

COGS

Official newsletter of the
ROTARY CLUB OF KINGSPORT September 14, 2026

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SEPTEMBER 16 MEETING PREVIEW

Sam Jones - Wreaths Across America



Sam Jones has been a Commissioner in Sullivan County for over 20 years. He has a Bachelors degree in Social Work from East Tennessee State University, and has spent over 40 years as an insurance professional. He currently serves as the President of the Tri-Cities Military Affairs Council (TCMAC), Commander of American Veterans (AMVETS) Post 37, and President of the Vietnam Veterans of America. He also serves on the Board of Directors of NETWORKS.

Sam will discuss the Mission of TCMAC at our September 16th meeting. He will cover TCMAC's involvement in the region, and their support of the Wreaths

Across America, as well their impact on Veterans in the region and State.

Sam is married to Susie Assid. They have three children and 4 grandchildren.

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Rotary



Club of Kingsport

CREATE LASTING IMPACT

September 9, 2026 Meeting Summary

Attendance was 52.8%



Co-President Aundrea Salyer presided over the club's noon meeting. Jane Crawford led the invocation and Pledge of Allegiance, and Isaac Webb delivered Sunshine. The club welcomed guests and visiting Rotarians Milton Carter, Area 13 Governor Joe Ley, and Vivian Crymble. Members again recognized Wirt Taylor for 59 years of Rotary service.

September brings a full slate of celebrations. Happy birthday to Pam Rehart (September 16), Jerry Lukach (September 17), and Tim Archer (September 25). Congratulations on wedding anniversaries to Tim Archer (32 years, September 10), Lindsey Franks (10 years, September 13), and Deborah Adams

(34 years, September 19). We also mark Rotary membership anniversaries for Gary Bridges (39 years) and Paul Gray (12 years), both on September 1, Isaac Webb (10 years, September 7), and Sharon Moore (5 years, September 8).

The meeting centered on the official club visit of District Governor Charlotte Whitted, who brought news from the International Convention, Zone 33, and District 7570 along with her priorities for 2026–27. Governor Whitted shared the story of a small act of service that grew into a lasting impact: she was able to help a student by connecting her with a Rotarian on the other side of the world — a Rotarian she had met at a Rotary convention. Her point landed with the room. The relationships formed by showing up, at conventions, district events, and other clubs' meetings, become the network that makes Rotary service possible far beyond what any one club could accomplish alone.

Among her district goals, Governor Whitted placed particular emphasis on making it easier to become and remain a Rotarian. Lowering the barriers to membership, she noted, is central to growing Rotary's capacity to serve — a theme that aligns closely with the membership and engagement work our club has under way this year. Members should also know that in lieu of a club gift, Governor Whitted asks that clubs consider a donation to the District 7570 Foundation designated for Rotary Youth Exchange, which helps offset rising application, travel, and insurance costs so more students from our district can participate.

In announcements, members were invited to an upcoming group hike on the Greenbelt. Please visit the club website to view the details and indicate whether you plan to attend, so we can plan an accurate headcount. Members are encouraged to check the site regularly for programs, events, and ways to get involved.



Bring your family, friends, and your dog,
let's go for a walk on our Greenbelt!!

When: Saturday, September 26 at 10 A.M.

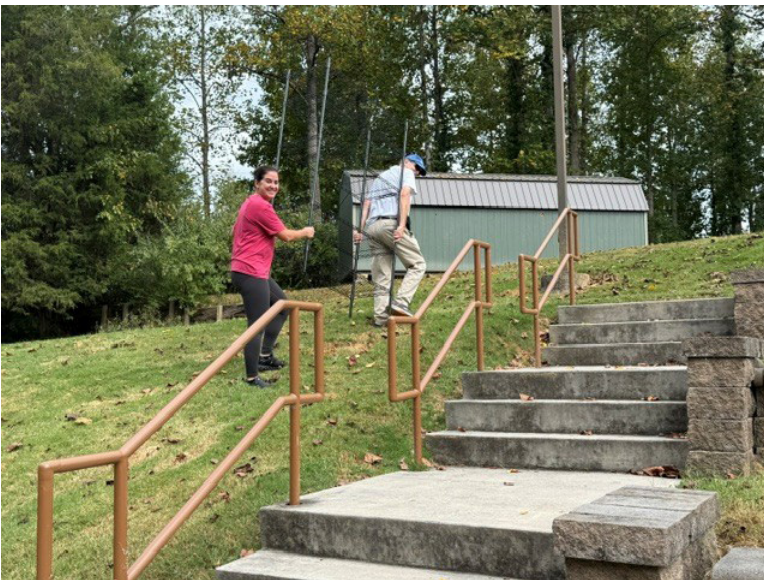
Where: Greenbelt Indian Trailhead,
804 Indian Trail Dr. (located behind Petsmart)

RSVP: [Kingsport Rotary Website Calendar](#)

Photos from Warrior's Path State Park Storage Shed Project



The shed was delivered and set up on leveling blocks.



Rotarians move assembled shelving unit to the shed.



What Dixon Rotary Club learned by welcoming Ukrainian families

Rotary Voices



By Doug Lee, a member of the Rotary Club of Dixon, Illinois, USA

When we tell stories about welcoming, we — as

we should — tend to focus on the good we're doing for others. We shouldn't be shy, however, about admitting the good we're doing for ourselves, whether that's the satisfaction we get by lending a hand or the perspective we gain by looking at our nation through outside eyes.

It's been almost four years since I logged onto the Welcome.US website to learn how to help Ukrainians fleeing Russia's invasion. What I learned inspired me to assemble a community-

based team, including several fellow members of the Rotary Club of Dixon, that led efforts to sponsor two Ukrainian families. A mother, a father, and their three young children arrived at the end of November 2022, and a young couple followed a month later. The time with them since has been one of my life's biggest blessings.

The first weeks and months were trying for everyone. They struggled with language and paperwork and transportation. We struggled with balancing our need to help and their need to learn. Soon, though, children were enrolled in school, jobs were obtained, cars were purchased, and routines were developed.

Through it all, our team members never felt more alive. We problem-solved, we supported, we laughed, and we loved. Our community embraced our new friends, sometimes with tender and knowing smiles, and sometimes with more. I'll never forget our first Christmas shopping adventure, only a few weeks after our first family arrived, when an older gentleman none of us knew approached us and handed the family \$50. "I hope you have a nice Christmas," he said shyly before hustling away.

As our families have acclimated to their new home and become more independent, they've remained deeply grateful for everything our team, our community, and our country have provided. When they arrived, they would have been satisfied with living in safety. Now, three-plus years later, they've enjoyed so much more.

They've pursued employment opportunities to work unbelievably hard. They've saved, they've explored, they've learned, and they've experienced new freedoms. They've marveled at life in America and are dumbfounded that U.S. citizens seem hopelessly and bitterly divided.

Unfortunately, that division explains why our new friends' time here appears to be coming to an end.



Continued from Page 3

The U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services website that once offered newcomers encouragement and assistance now features “News & Alerts” that trumpet convictions, deportations, and denaturalization efforts. Applications for extensions languish, draining hope and puncturing dreams every passing day.

I’ve never felt more helpless. I lament that our national discourse fails to distinguish between legal and illegal immigration. I lament that lawmakers have failed to see that Uniting for Ukraine and similar programs offer a model for reforming an immigration system mired in political impasse. I lament that our inability to figure out how to enforce immigration laws humanely has led us to turn our backs on immigration — and immigrants — entirely.

And I ache for our families. I cannot fathom how they live in the uncertainty swirling around them. What are their options? Where will they go? What will they do? How will parents explain it to their children?

Yet, when I attempt to comfort them, I find them trying to comfort me. It’s OK, they tell me. It’s not my fault. They’ll manage. They’re thankful for the opportunity to come here, even if their stay is shorter than they’d hoped. This is a great country, they remind me. I’m lucky to live here, they say. And, of course, they’re right.

I’ve been further reminded of my good luck by my participation in Welcome.US’s Citizen Guide program, which matches volunteers with green card holders studying for the citizenship exam. I’ve been matched with a delightful young single mother who came here 10 years ago. Although she’s also tending to her three daughters, working, and taking classes to earn her GED, she is determined to pass her citizenship interview and civics test to achieve her dream of becoming a U.S. citizen.

I majored in history and political science, but I never imagined how hard it would be to explain our three branches of government to someone who grew up in a country roiled by political and gang violence. Or to explain why 435 representatives are elected to two-year terms, 100 senators are elected to six-year terms, a president is elected to a four-year term, and Supreme Court justices are appointed for life. Or to explain a sprawling federal bureaucracy led by Cabinet secretaries most citizens can’t name.

But, like my Ukrainians, my learner sees our democracy as the shining city on a hill that we claim it to be. She wants to learn everything she can about it, not just so she can pass the test but so she can understand the system that ensures the “life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness” she’s studied. Unburdened by the cynicism so many Americans have developed, she clearly sees the opportunities that freedom provides.

Welcoming isn’t easy, especially now. Those difficulties, however, only reinforce that our work is more needed than ever.

When we welcome immigrants, we change lives, we offer hope, and we honor those who migrated here generations ago to forge a free and democratic nation. In return, we receive much, including the necessary reminder that we mustn’t take that nation or its blessings for granted.

About the author: Doug Lee, an Illinois circuit court judge, is a private sponsor of Ukrainian refugees, Citizen Guide, and member of the Rotary Club of Dixon, Illinois.

Learn more about Welcoming Week 10-19 September and Citizenship Day and Constitution Day 17 September. Watch this video about how, as a Rotary member, you can take part in the Citizen Guide Program.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SEPTEMBER 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2 Cameron Yarberry - TDOT Projects	3	4	5
6	7	8	9 Charlotte Whitted - Rotary District News	10	11	12
13	14	15	16 Sam Jones - Wreaths Across America	17	18	19
20	21	22	23 Tony Melson - Julia C West Foundation	24	28	26 Social Event Walk on the Greenbelt
27	28	29	30 No Meeting This Week.			

MEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Sept 16 - Pam Rehart
Sept 17 - Jerry Lukach
Sept 25 - Tim Archer

MEMBERSHIP ANNIVERSARIES

Sept 01-Gary Bridges - 39 Years
Sept 01-Paul Gray - 12 Years
Sept 07-Isaac Webb - 10 Years
Sept 08-Sharon Moore - 5 Years

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Sept 10-Tim Archer - 32 Years
Sept 13-Lindsey Franks - 10 Years
Sept 19-Deborah Adams - 34 Years

UPCOMING EVENTS

September 26 - Walk on the Greenbelt - Greenbelt Indian Trailhead (behind Petsmart) 10:00AM
October 2-3, 2026—Erwin Apple Festival—Club Members Assist in Selling Apple Butter See sign Up Sheet
November 14 - Fall Day of Caring at Darrell's Dream Boundless Playground

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/



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KingsportRotaryClub@gmail.com



KingsportRotaryClub.org

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Leslie Lynch | 520-425-2259

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RI PRESIDENT:

Francesco Arezzo

DISTRICT 7570 GOVERNOR

Charlotte Whitted

AREA 13 GOVERNOR:

Joseph (Foe) 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.RotaryeClubOne.org