Best practices ideas about how we are staying in touch with the social distancing keeping us apart.

It is time to reveal the best practices ideas sent by you.

Here’s the list collected in April:

Gillian Leggett: Assistant Governor - Zoom is working great - both for Rotary and personal connections.  With your help, I have done one webinar on District Grants, attended several Rotary "meetings", one Rotary and one personal "social".  It has also brought our family together as we are using Zoom to connect with people that we don't normally "see".

Jim Skinner: Griffin Daybreak has been meeting via Zoom. This gives us a chance to see our fellow members since our meeting place is closed due to it being a restaurant. I am also sending out a Presidents e-mail each week.

Will Daniel: Alpharetta We are having weekly Zoom meetings, going well! Tonight we are having a Zoom happy hour and working on teams for our next Virtual fundraiser. It will serve as a fundraiser for local charities as well as a “party for DGE Kirk.”

Kimberly Walden: Thomasville

1. Week 1 we had each board member call a page of our members to check in

2. Week 1 we immediately went to online meetings

3.  We have continued online meetings and have inducted 4 new Rotarians so far!

4. We decided to give some of our club meal monies to Second Harvest of South Georgia - a needy local food bank. Members have the option (this quarter) to receive their meal money back or to add it to a donation for a local charitable cause.

4. We held a meeting on the CARES small business loan to help our small businesses AND included the Presidents from neighboring Rotary Clubs.

5.  We sent out our membership directory in print and asked our members to reach out to 2-3 people with calls on a regular basis.

6.  We are about to start holding online Membership Wine or Whine Happy Hours for camaraderie!!!

7. TBD!!!

Gordon Owens: Roswell - For Roswell we are continuing to publish a weekly Rotascope that goes out by Tuesday each week, just like normal. The newsletter typically has ways to help the community for those that want to get involved.

On Thursday I send out a virtual meeting with links to pre-recorded video updates so people can “attend” the meeting when they have time. I forwarded a sample below, but in case the links don’t work here are the links to the videos:

Virtual Club Meeting: <https://youtu.be/GN_Ob1t9i9k>

Weekly Speaker: <https://youtu.be/U3XaW9pk3WE>

Hospital Update: <https://youtu.be/qU9yuMq3Ixc>

Clairmont Austin: Tucker -We will meet weekly via conference call.

Dave Moody: Atlanta - a video link to the members

Lakisha Taylor: Muscogee Columbus -We are holding zoom meetings in place of our regular meetings. I would love to implement other ideas so I look forward to seeing what others are doing.

Kim Daugherty: Airport-Atlanta - The Atlanta Airport Rotary Club is planning to trial a virtual meet up/ happy hour using Zoom.  We are individually reaching out to all members to check on them, via emails and texts.  We will compile and share members' "good news" and "concerns" via an email update to all members. Interested to hear other ideas.

Anthony Shaffer: Brookhaven -we've done a couple of virtual club socials

David Schwickerath: North Cobb - Rotary Club of North Cobb is pretty straightforward.

* We hold a weekly Zoom meeting at our normal meeting time. We get about half the normal number to participate. Last week 29 people. Usually we have 50-55 at a regular meeting.
  + Discuss Sunshine, “Tales of Sheltering in Place” and Good Deeds done this week
  + Announcements
  + Updates on our limited and curtailed service activities
  + We did a Cocktail Hour one Thursday afternoon instead of our weekly meeting
* We are holding our monthly Board meeting with Zoom
  + We actually met on a two-week schedule to determine a strategy during lockdown
* We continue to make financial grants to needy organizations, bought lunch for Kennesaw Police Department, we are going to buy lunch/dinner for all three shifts at Marietta Police Department, purchased dinner(Mexican) and dropped it off for sixty men at The Men’s Extension
* Raised $3,000 internal to club for Crate for Venezuela NOW food for 25,000 meals and med supplies(in transit)

Donna Drakes: Vinings Cumberland -Our membership team members are making regular check-in calls to members, especially our most vulnerable. Our meetings have gone virtual. We are exploring a virtual ‘happy hour’ component, as well.

Patricia Allen: Thomaston-Upson County - It is amazing how we all are being so creative during this pandemic and staying in touch.  We are having our weekly meeting via ZOOM; and we are staying in touch via email and text messages.

Carol Moore: Newnan -Once a week I send an email out to our members in the Newnan Rotary Club basically checking in with them.  I love humor so I typically include a joke that hopefully brings a smile to their face. We are hosting our first virtual Zoom meeting on Friday with a speaker on Winston Churchill.  I’m hoping we get a lot of participation for the meeting.

Jeremy Stratton: Rotary Club of Lake Spivey/Clayton County -The Lake Spivey/ Clayton County Club has been very consistent with holding weekly Zoom meetings with distinguished speakers thanks to the technology Wizardry of our in-coming President Troy Hodges and Claudia Mertl doing a great job with the speakers in April.  With the virtual meetings there is no limit on who in the world you can ask to be your speaker. We run our Zoom meetings on Wednesday at noon and run it like a regular meeting with fellowship time, nags and brags, pledge, prayer, and announcements.  I think this gives our club some consistency and a chance to see each other albeit briefly.  We also try to check in with the membership to see if they are all right and see if anyone needs special help. We have been giving out needed supplies, masks, gloves, sanitizer, and snacks, in baskets with attractive cellophane covering, with our Rotary card included, to children’s homes, hospitals and emergency management centers. We have also provided food to first responders in Emergency Rooms and fire stations, all thanks to a $10,000.00 challenge grant from Lata and Manteet Chinnan and a $3000.00 grant from Rotary International.

Tracy Van Norman: Assistant Governor - I'm making phone calls and emailing club presidents and dropping in on their virtual meetings.

Randy Nixon: East Cobb -I hosted our club’s first Virtual meeting this morning and it was a huge success. We moved the starting time from our usual 7:00 am slot to 8:00 am and that was well received.

Our club Membership is 64 and we had **40 participants on the call!!** I was totally blown away. My goal was to run it like a normal meeting as best we could.

We started out with the Pledge and had a member lead us. Next, we called on another member for the invocation which focused on the coronavirus and it was very good and of course timely.

I made several announcements that included a reminder about the District Conference scheduled in mid-June; gave a shout-out to several members, Fred & Lynn Hanna who coordinated a food drive where the food items were delivered on multiple occasions to help feed the homeless at Must Ministries in Marietta and finally I encouraged members to send in their payment for dues (our Board made this optional for Q4, and we agreed to use our Foundation to match all money paid. So far, we have $12k that we have earmarked as a financial donation to our local YMCA as they offer are quite active in helping to feed the hungry, transporting elderly people to doctor’s appointments, other errands etc. We anticipate delivery of a check (or most likely it will be an electronic wire transmittal to their bank) to the Y very shortly in excess of $12k.

I used a video from the Lake Spivey Rotary Club, compliments of Claudia Mertl, where Rotarian John Smarge, delivered a recorded PowerPoint on a new Water Project in Haiti and it was very powerful and interesting. The video was 15 minutes which worked out beautifully time wise. In fact, I would recommend to any club try to keep their speaker comments to that limit to allow for more time for Sunshine or comments from members.

Given that we had such a large group, we all had lots to catch up on, including a couple of people in our club that had contracted the coronavirus and thankfully both families have been blessed with full recoveries.

Afterwards, we asked a member to lead us in the 4-Way Test and then adjourned. Several members stayed connected after the meeting to catch up.

All in all, it was a great first meeting. For the time being, we are planning to host other Virtual meetings. We actually held a Virtual Board meeting several week ago so that was our first attempt.

East Cobb is blessed to have a strong group of Rotarians that are quite passionate about helping others in our community.

Tyler Townsend: Columbus - The Rotary Club of Columbus has implemented several activities to keep our members engaged:

* Because we had been streaming our meetings live on Facebook, we had the technology to immediately shift from in-person to virtual-only meetings without missing a week.
* Our directors began a “Keep Rotary on Your Calendar” campaign. Strategy one is broad messaging to inform members how they can continue engaging with Rotary. Strategy two is to identify and speak with individual members who either 1) had perfect attendance but missed a virtual meeting, or 2) was a regular attendee and has missed virtual meetings.
* Each meeting is broadcast live on Facebook and available later on demand on both Facebook and YouTube. We also have audio of each meeting available live in a telephone conference call for anyone without internet access.
* We’ve begun holding bi-weekly Happy Hour mixes on Thursday evenings using Zoom; these replaced our monthly happy hours we held at restaurants.
* We’ve begun holding a weekly game of friendly (no money changes hands, free to play) game of online poker using Zoom and PokerStars on Monday evenings.
* Each meeting highlights a “Rotarian Leader” from within our club. These club members are CEO’s, presidents, and executive directors whose organizations have innovated to continue providing services during these unusual times. Examples have included the Community Foundation of the Chattahoochee Valley and Unity Way’s COVID-19 partnership, the Youth Orchestra of Greater Columbus, Feeding the Valley Food Bank, the Columbus Museum, and the Pastoral Institute. The club member films a 2-3 minute video clip of themselves that airs during our meeting.
* Our club has a long tradition of honoring a Soldier from nearby Fort Benning at each of our regular meetings. During COVID-19 weeks in which a Solider is not available, we are honoring one of our own veterans. A club member films a video clip honoring the veteran member that airs during our meeting.
* Each meeting highlights an area of Rotary.  Examples have included Service Above Self, GRSP, the Rotary Foundation Football Fundraiser, RYLA, Rotary Career Day, and End Human Trafficking Now. A club member films a 2-3 minute video clip that airs during our meeting.
* We’ve recognized or have plans to recognize: 50 Year Perfect Attendance Anniversary, multiple Paul Harris Fellows, and Hue Thomas Fellow. A club member films a 2-3 minute video clip that airs during our meeting.
* Each of the above video clips are also posted as stand-alone videos on our Facebook page.
* We’ve inducted a new member virtually during one of our meetings.
* Many keynote speakers have been able to change easily to a virtual format. For those that can’t, we have been able to reschedule with engaging speakers taking their place.

Cathie Brumfield: Dunwoody - We have gone to Zoom board meetings monthly and weekly Zoom happy hours. We also have a wonderful newsletter editor who keeps us informed. Finally, we have done one round of phone calls to check in on all members- divided up among several board members who reported back. We will likely do that again in a few weeks as it appears it is going to be mid-May before we start back. We are having a Zoom Thursday evening happy hour check in and having our regular Friday a.m. meeting where you can have a cup of coffee and breakfast while listening to our speaker.

Thanks to everyone! Great ideas!

​Claudia

Claudia Mertl, District Trainer

Rotary Club of Lake Spivey/Clayton County

Zone 34 Rotary Coordinator- 2014-15

Rotary District 6900   District Governor 2005-06

District Trainer 2010-11 thru  2012-13; 2014-15; 2016-17,2019-2020

**The task ahead of you is never greater than the Power behind you.**