

Philippine Rotary

THE MAGAZINE OF CHOICE

DECEMBER 2024

Removing the
barriers to
accessible travel
page 12

Where to go to
escape the crowds
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out-of-this-world
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THE TRAVEL ISSUE

Hit the road with Rotary
and discover destinations
known — and unknown





GIVE US YOUR BEST SHOT

The Rotary magazine Photo Awards return in the June 2025 issue. It's your chance to share your vision of the world, be it in glorious color or classic black and white. Members of Rotary and their families may submit photos until 31 December. But don't wait: Send us your images today. Submit your photos at rotary.org/photoawards.

PHOTOGRAPHS: (FROM TOP) ERIC STRAND; LEIGH ANN WILSON; KEITH MARSH



With heart and mind

To adapt, as laid out in Rotary's Action Plan, we must occasionally step out of our comfort zone and try something new. Here are two examples of clubs that adapted — one with heart and one through critical thinking and strategy.

The Rotary Club of Chandigarh Mid Town, India, led with heart earlier this year. To engage members and grow membership, Club President Nitin Kapur personally called every former member of the club and invited them to a gathering billed as an alumni meet-up.

Eight former members attended, and the results were stupendous. The visitors had a chance to connect once more — not only with current members but with the sense of camaraderie and belonging that membership gave them. By the end of the evening, the club welcomed six of the former members back into the Rotary family.

Club President Kapur showed courage when he reached out to the alumni. Not only did he adapt and try something new but he had the strength of character to show the club's alumni how much they still meant to the family of Rotary. That bravery paid off.

People want to feel needed and appreciated. People want to feel that they belong. And they might never feel that way if we don't have the courage to tell them.

Meanwhile, the Rotary Club of Seoul-Hansoo, Korea, has been experimenting with different club models to great effect. Over the past four years, Seoul-Hansoo has created and maintained four satellite clubs — a service club, an interest-based club

for musicians, a cause-based club that mentors professionals, and a club for college students.

These satellite clubs are part of a five-year plan the Seoul-Hansoo club implemented to increase membership through innovation.

What's the secret to founding and maintaining so many satellite clubs? Membership between Seoul-Hansoo and its satellite clubs is fluid and synergistic. Many members of the satellite clubs attend the sponsor club's meetings. And many of the sponsor club's members participate in the satellite clubs.

Additionally, the focus of each satellite club is no accident. Each one appeals to different interests of people in the sponsor club and in the community, attracting existing and potential members. This is an excellent strategy to both retain and attract members because it offers flexibility. If someone is interested in joining but they can't make it to the sponsor club's meetings, they have plenty of options to choose from.

These are just two examples of how we can adapt with our hearts and minds. Every club is different, so I encourage you to reach out to members of your club and of the community around you. Ask them about the club experience and what you can do to improve.

Talk to enough people and you might find ways that you can adapt and spark *The Magic of Rotary* in your club.

STEPHANIE A. URCHICK
President, Rotary International

For resources on engaging and growing membership, visit [rotary.org/membership](https://www.rotary.org/membership).

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▲ ON THE COVER: Conscientious travelers who hesitate to add to the crowds are choosing less-trodden locales, like Ecuador's Andean Highlands. *Photo by Leonardo Carrizo.*



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Celebration of a united family

Message at joint Christmas celebration of the Philippine Rotary Magazine (PRM) and the Philippine College of Rotary Governors (PCRG) on December 10, 2024.

Let me greet all of you: Merry Christmas! Welcome to this joyous occasion as we celebrate the joint Christmas party of the PRM and the PCRG. Tonight we gather as a family united by service, fellowship, and a shared commitment to making a difference in our communities and beyond.

Christmas is a time to reflect on the blessings of the past year and to look forward to the opportunities that lie ahead of us.

I enjoin you all to enjoy the quality fellowship, the games prepared and the sumptuous food you will be served.

Let us also take this time to celebrate the friendship we have built, and renew our shared purpose as Rotarians.

May the joy of the season inspire us to keep on serving with our hearts full of compassion, and our minds open to possibilities.

We acknowledge with thanks the efforts of organizers of our Christmas fellowship.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year!

EMILIANO D. JOVEN
Chairman, PRMFI



“Let us also take this time to celebrate the friendship we have built, and renew our shared purpose as Rotarians.”

Below: Rotary spouses express glee at PRM Christmas party last Dec. 10, 2024.



Philippine Rotary

THE MAGAZINE OF CHOICE

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Heartfelt Christmas blessings

This is my sixth Christmas working with our Philippine Rotary Magazine (PRM). It's been a truly exciting experience to have chronicled in the PRM: Taal volcano eruption, COVID-19 pandemic, destructive earthquake and typhoons in Mindanao and the Visayas, a presidential election — and a truly memorable ride: the fruition and negation of Philippine Rotarians' dream of hosting an RI convention in our beloved land.

Through all of these, the essence of Christmas has shone through. We remember the humble birth of a child in a manger in Bethlehem that signaled mankind's redemption. Through our early youth and childhood, Christmas was the much-awaited time for receiving gifts and experiencing the love and caring of kith and kin. As we grew and matured, we focused more on being reunited with our expanded families at home, at work and in our communities.

This year, we may wish to read *A Child's Treasury of Philippine Christmas* co-authored by Lin Acacio Flores and Annette Flores Garcia, and illustrated by Albert Gamos. Here's a heartwarming excerpt:

"(A) story that resonated with me was "The Aeta Christmas Baby" when refugees from the Pinatubo eruption in 1990 celebrated Christmas Eve by staging a panunuluyan—a Christmas Eve street play, where in this case, the refugee center became the stage and the refugees were the characters in the play.

"As the refugees volunteer for the roles of Mary, Joseph, innkeeper, shepherds, angels and other assorted characters, they are pressed to find one young enough to be the baby Jesus.

"The role went to Maeta, an orphaned young Aeta, who lost everyone and everything to the volcano's eruption, and somehow stumbled into the refugee center that was set amidst the lahar that covered the Zambales landscape."

While reading this, I was reminded of the tremendous devastation caused by the Mt. Pinatubo eruption in June 1991, just as my year as President of the Rotary Club of University District Manila (RCUDM) was coming to a close. And that memorable year began with the destructive intensity 7.7 Luzon earthquake.

Being Rotarians enables us to manifest Christ's love for humanity through life's episodes.

A blessed Christmas to all!

Maligayang Pasko! Manigong Bagong Taon!

Sonny Coloma

SONNY COLOMA
Editor-in-chief



“Being Rotarians enables us to manifest Christ’s love for humanity through life’s episodes. The essence of Christmas shines through. We remember His humble birth in a manger at Bethlehem that signaled mankind’s redemption.”

ROTARY CLUB OF AIM

Cheer for kids

Last September, the Rotary Club of Aim led by its Charter President James Charles T. Que, held a heartwarming service project at Concordia Orphanage in Old Sta Mesa, Manila. This project was proposed by Rotarian Joanna Marie to address the nutrition and educational needs of children in the orphanage as part of the maternal and child Health Rotary Area of Focus.

Asian Institute of Management (AIM) alumni and students generously donated vitamins, hygiene kits, school supplies, educational toys, and medicines to support the health and well-being of the children aged 4 to 7 years old.

Rotarian Elliot Ngo, a Master in Cybersecurity (MCS) program graduate, reconstructed and contributed a built-in monitor and computer set to enhance the children's basic education and literacy.

The day was filled with joy and laughter as the children participated in various games. The highlight of the event was a surprise dance performance by Grimace of McDonald's, which delighted the kids. The fun continued as the children and Rotarians combined their talents for a dance presentation.

The first service project of the Club not only provided essential resources but also created lasting memories for the children beneficiaries. It was a start in the Club's commitment to making a positive impact in the community.

Charter President Que is a student from the pioneer class of the new Master in International Business Law (MIBL) of the Asian Institute of Management (AIM).

Joanna Marie, the orphanage project proponent, belonged to the first cohort

Top Left: CP Jake Que giving gratitude to the generous donors Maricar, Leni, and Cherry from the AIM EMBA '24; **Top Right:** Rtn. Carmelo Jalague teaching proper hand sanitation. **Bottom Left:** Rtn. Valerie Estares and Rtn. Vee Tabanda from AIM MIB & MSIB programs.



Bottom middle and right: Rtn. Mel, Rtn. Alden, Rtn. Elliot, & Rtn. Melo.



of AIM's Online Master's in Business Administration (OMBA) program. She dedicated it as a gesture of gratitude on the completion of her master's degree. Rotarian Adam Andrew Ong said that the project aimed to promote maternal and child health.

The first service project of the Club not only provided essential resources but also created lasting memories for the children beneficiaries.



Top left: CP Jake received a certificate on behalf of RC Aim from Concordia Orphanage; **Top right:** Rtn. Mel Jamero doing the invocation, Rtn. Elliot Ngo showing the orphanage its donated computer set for he orphans usage in basic education; **Middle left:** Grimace makes a surprise to the delightment of the kids; **Middle and bottom right:** Rtn. Vee Tabanda and Rtn Ysa Zacarias with the kids. **Bottom Left:** Rotarians from RCAIM distributing food





From left to right: Adam Andrew Ong, Dr. Reynand Canoy, Robin Leo John Baltazar, Alden EJORANGO, Carmelo Jalague, Arthur Jumarang, Joanna Marie Cantor, Ysabelle Zacarias, Samantha Kay Lisay, CP James Charles Que, Versailles Tabanda, Valerie Anne Estares, Louie Anthony Estares, Cesar Paolo Ubaldo, Melchor Jamero, Joseph Valdez, Arvin Gastardo. **Not in photo:** Michelle Boras, Atty. JP Salvador, Arnulfo Almeniana., Nikki Isabel Laynes, Ma. Cristina Zapanta.

ROTARY CLUB OF AIM

Magical wand of service

From just newly met professionals few months ago, the Rotary Club of Aim, comprised of individuals who graduated from the Asian Institute of Management (AIM), held its charter presentation at the Communication Foundation for Asia (CFA), aligned with Rotary’s annual theme The Magic of Rotary.

Senator Loren Legarda delivered the keynote message, emphasizing the importance of addressing climate change concerns as one of the Rotary Clubs’ aspirations.

The new club adviser, Past President Raissa Concepcion Hechanova-Posadas, highlighted the birth of a new club dedicated to the motto “Service Above Self.”

District 3830 Governor Prescy Yulo challenged the Rotary Clubs to join hands in uplifting Maternal and Child Health, focusing on the mental and physical development of children in their early stages of life.

Notable attendees included Past District Governor, Mildred Vitangcol, Rotary Club of Manila President Jujut Enriquez, Rotary Club of Makati President Keith Harrison, Rotary Club of Makati Premier District President Eric Quiason, and RC Makati Past President Conrado “Junjun” Dayrit, and presidents from various clubs.

Charter President James Charles “Jake” Que, delivered an inaugural address, detailing the magical journey of being a Club President of the Rotary Club of Manila Magic from Rotary District 3810 to chartering the new club and assembling its members from AIM that embodies the values “Lead, Inspire, Transform.” The Charter President outlined the club’s focus areas, including community and economic development, basic education and literacy, and environment.

Charging of the charter members was conducted by Past District Governor and former Communication Secretary Herminio “Sonny” Coloma, Jr. The members were inspired as Past Governor Sonny, a professor at AIM for 28 years shortly after becoming a Rotarian, reminded them about the significance of the case method framework. He recalled the story of Paul Harris and his friends creating Rotary to practice the rotation of meeting in the place of friends for fellowship and evolving to using the talents and resources of its club members for the betterment of their communities. By taking these values to heart, he said, each Rotarian becomes the embodiment of the motto Service Above Self.

He emphasized the importance of

getting up every day and doing one’s best, quoting Oscar Wilde: “The smallest act of kindness is worth more than the grandest intention.” He urged the new Rotarians to “become a force for good in the community: The answer is in your hearts, minds, and hands. To those whom much has been given, much is also expected. Being a friend, lending a hand, just do it.”

The program continued with the induction of Charter members of the Club was conducted by Immediate Past District Governor Jay Tambunting, an alumnus of the pioneer cohort of the Master in Entrepreneurship in 2001.

The ceremony concluded with the turning over of the bell and gavel, as well as the club banner, by RC Makati President Keith Harrison and RC Makati Premier District President Eric Quiason, respectively.

This momentous occasion marked the beginning of a new era of service and ended with the singing of lines from the popular song: “We can do Magic. We can do anything that we desire.”

For more information about Rotary Club of Aim and how you can support their mission, you may visit their website www.rotaryaim.org.

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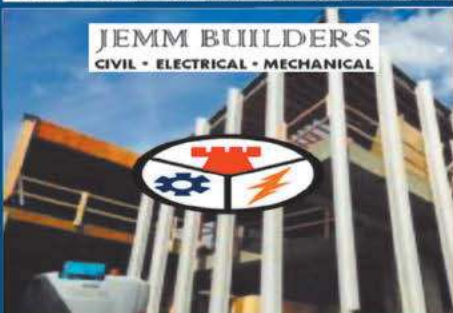


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ROTARY CLUB OF METRO KALIBO

Festive Yuletide

by Megs Lunn

On December 17, 2024, the Rotary Club of Metro Kalibo, under the leadership of President Jess Fernandez, celebrated another year of spreading holiday joy! We are excited to have collaborated with the Infant Jesus Academy Kalibo Campus and the Stimulation and Therapeutic Activity Center (STAC) Kalibo, our adopted handicapped center for the past six years. This year, we brought Christmas cheer to over 100 differently-abled children with shoebox gifts and supported

39 adopted kids through our foster ninang and ninong program. Joining the festivities were Santa Claus Adryan Martires and Rotaractors Roni and Joshua.

STAC Kalibo provides free therapy for these children, and each year we are grateful for the opportunity to help them in any way we can, whether through providing wheelchairs, therapy equipment, medical missions, and more.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who participated and made this event possible!



This spread: RC Metro Kalibo Rotarians led by PP Megs Lunn (with microphone) entertains kids with Santa Claus in tow.





J. Alfonso L. Katigbak
Chairman of the Board



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ACCESSIBLE TRAVEL

No limits

Long overlooked, travelers with disabilities are finding fewer barriers

On the edge of the idyllic coastal city of Yarmouth, Maine, a trail weaves through a dense strip of forest. There are no steep sections, just flat or gentle slopes. Hundreds of feet of boardwalk, with minimal gaps between the flush wooden planks, carry nature lovers over the top of marshy wetlands.

This segment of the West Side Trail, which soon will extend to about 2.5 miles, was designed with accessibility in mind, explains trail coordinator Dan Ostrye, a member of the Rotary Club of Yarmouth, a partner in the project. And when Ostrye is out on a 1-mile section that has already been completed, he often runs into people with limited mobility. “It’s so firm; it’s so flat, they don’t have roots to climb over,” he says. “These are all things that are impediments to people with disabilities.”

From hiking trails to airport concourses, travel can be challenging for anyone. For people with disabilities, a lack of accessible design or information can make it even tougher. But efforts are growing to reduce the barriers, from online platforms that make it easier to find suitable accommodations to excursions that meet the specific needs of tourists with disabilities.

“People think of travel as a luxury,” says Maayan Ziv, founder of Access Now, an online platform that shares accessibility information about businesses and attractions. “But I think the power of travel is that it touches so many aspects of life.”

An estimated one-sixth of the world’s population has some form of disability, a diverse group of people with a wide range of experiences and needs, not all of which require infrastructure investments. Hotels are realizing that travelers with autism, for instance, can find new sights and sounds challenging and may appreciate quieter check-in times or other low-sensory experiences.

For years, the travel world was designed largely without consideration for this sizable portion of the population. But in 2018-19, before the pandemic disrupted the travel industry, Americans with disabilities spent an estimated \$58.7 billion on travel. And one of the largest travel segments is made up of older adults, a group for which disabilities are more common. “This industry is realizing the opportunity and starting to make investments,” says Ziv.

Still, gaps remain, and one place where inequities are particularly stark is the airport. For people who use mobility equipment like wheelchairs, flying is “the absolute worst” form of transit, says Peter Tonge, an accessibility consultant and a member of the Rotary Club of Winnipeg-Charleswood, Manitoba.

Boarding a plane requires moving to a special wheelchair and then to the seat. Many planes don’t have accessible bathrooms. And travelers’ equipment is often transported in the baggage hold, where mishaps are frequent: U.S. airlines damaged, lost, or delayed delivery of 11,527 wheelchairs and scooters in 2023, or about 1.4 out of every 100 pieces of equipment transported, according to the

To learn more about empowering people with disabilities through international exchange, visit miosa.org.



At the West Side Trail in Yarmouth, Maine, volunteers found that building to accessible standards didn't involve much extra effort — and improved the trail for everyone.

U.S. Department of Transportation. A frequent traveler, Tonge has had his manual wheelchair damaged about half the times he's flown. Twice he needed to replace it entirely, a custom job that takes six months. "As long as airlines see mobility equipment as luggage, it's never going to get the care and respect that it has to have," he says. Tonge is skeptical airlines will change without new laws, though he's hopeful that grassroots advocacy is raising awareness. He's

playing his part, including on social media, where he posted about his experiences getting around Paris this summer to watch the Paralympics. And he is noticing shifts beyond the airport, including in his own community, as museums and popular cultural destinations take steps to meet the needs of all visitors. In Winnipeg, Tonge's consulting company is working with the Canadian Museum for Human Rights to improve accessibility, a rigorous process that involves auditing the

physical space, reviewing programs, and training staff.

Winnipeg's Assiniboine Forest, one of the largest urban forests in Canada, is also becoming easier for people with disabilities to explore. The Winnipeg-Charleswood club is the park's custodian and is spearheading an effort to improve facilities like washrooms and harden the trail surfaces, similar to the work at the West Side Trail project in Yarmouth, Maine.

Early in the Yarmouth project, a local leader urged trail builders to make the path accessible. As they planned the western side of the 11-mile trail network, they found that building to accessible standards didn't involve much extra effort — and improved the trail for everyone who uses it. "Everybody thinks, 'Well, that just makes it accessible for disabled people,'" Ostrye says. "That's far from the truth. It's the most sustainable trail that you can build."

While many places say they are accessible, Ziv, who uses a wheelchair, has often found that features are lacking to meet people's specific needs for diverse disabilities. That inspired her to launch Access Now, which includes a map where people share reports about specific accessibility features, such as sensory details like whether a space is quiet or scent-free, descriptions of bathrooms and entries, and whether braille or sign language is used.

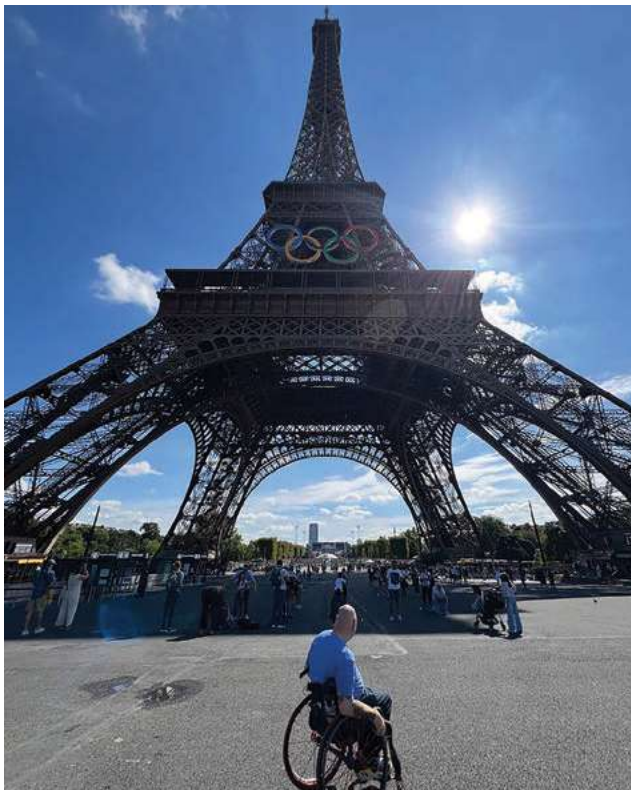
What makes a space accessible is different for each person, explains Ziv. "If you provide people with information, they know what works for them."

The feedback that Access Now users provide is identifying hurdles and leading to improvements, including on more than 60 sections of the 28,000-kilometer (17,000-mile) Trans Canada Trail network. The company is also working with tourism boards, like in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, where the city offers mats that enable beachgoing wheelchair users to traverse the sand and loans out big-tire beach wheelchairs.

Travel platforms are also making it easier for people to schedule stays that fit their needs. At every

OUR WORLD

From left: Peter Tonge is able to explore Winnipeg's Assiniboine Forest thanks to improvements spearheaded by the Rotary Club of Winnipeg-Charleswood; in Paris, he admires the Eiffel Tower while attending the Paralympics.



BY THE NUMBERS

11,527

Number of wheelchairs and scooters mishandled by U.S. airlines in 2023

\$58.7 billion

Estimated travel spending by Americans with disabilities in 2018-19

94%

Share of visually impaired and blind people in France who visit museums at least once a year

hotel room listed on the platform Wheel the World, for example, someone has used a tape measure to check details like the height of the bed and sink.

Arriving in a room that doesn't work for the traveler is a frustrating start to a trip, says Joy Burns, Wheel the World's alliances and community coordinator. She and her husband, who is quadriplegic and uses a wheelchair, have checked into wheelchair-accessible rooms only to find that the bed was too high. Meanwhile, others with different circumstances might need that higher bed.

The site details travel experiences ranging from vetted transport vans to guided group tours. As the disability travel sector grows, Burns sees a broader effect. "The more

people see people with disabilities out having an adventure and out traveling, it makes them need to make things more accessible."

Susan Sygall has cycled Scotland's rugged Outer Hebrides islands and backpacked through Europe and Israel. While on a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship in Australia in 1978-79, she hitchhiked across New Zealand. On a recent trip to Paris, Sygall, who uses a wheelchair, enjoyed the city's expanded bike lanes.

Sygall, CEO and co-founder of Mobility International USA, worries that people with disabilities may be discouraged from traveling abroad, especially to study or volunteer, either by others or by their own perceptions of what's possible. "I would

always go to 'yes,'" says Sygall, a member of the Rotary Club of Eugene, Oregon. "Then I think we just need to be focusing on the 'how.'"

There are many tools and strategies that can make a trip happen. Mobility International hosts a clearinghouse with resources for international exchange for people with disabilities.

Despite the challenges, Sygall says the rewards of travel are immeasurable. "It's the power of strangers becoming lifelong friends and how quickly that can happen."

— ELIZABETH HEWITT

This story is a collaboration between Rotary magazine and Reasons to be Cheerful, a non-profit solutions journalism outlet.

Short takes

In September, Rotary committed \$500,000 to help fight the reemergence of polio in Gaza. The funds went toward a campaign that provided vaccine doses to more than half a million children.



The United Nations observes 3 December as the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, which promotes the rights and well-being of over 1 billion people worldwide.



PROFILE

A bike named Kindness

A shocking encounter gives a wider purpose to a Rotarian's tandem bike treks

Naresh Kumar
Rotary Club of
Guindy, India

Naresh Kumar dismounted his red tandem bike, named Kindness, at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. Thirty-five days earlier, he had left Oregon to bike across America, inviting friends and strangers he met along the way to pedal with him for short distances.

The ride was the latest of Kumar's "human-powered adventures." Craving a simpler existence, the ultra-distance runner quit his job with a technology company in 2014 and traveled to Nepal to train to hike the length of New Zealand — in sandals.

An encounter while in Nepal changed his life. A man offered to provide him with girls, bragging that his were the youngest. "Almost like a product is being sold, but that product is a vulnerable child," he says. It broke his heart.

Since then, Kumar has embarked on grueling tandem trips, including a more than 5,000-mile ride from India to Germany, to raise awareness and money to fight human trafficking. "In a weird way, the more you suffer, the more people donate," he says. By inviting others to join him on his tandem bike, he can encourage them to advocate as well. He tells them, "Tell me your story, and I'll share my story, and let's join hands in fighting human trafficking together."

His most recent trip, which ended in June, raised about \$25,000 for the Rotary Action Group Against Slavery and another organization. Kindness the bike will be auctioned at the 2025 Rotary International Convention in Calgary as a fundraiser.

Kumar keeps in touch with friends he's made on his journeys. "The number of people I had an opportunity to meet, whom otherwise I would have never met, is always my biggest takeaway from all these adventures," he says.

— MAGGIE GIGANDET

In 2023-24, Rotary's Learning Center tallied more than 300,000 course completions. Enroll at rotary.org/learn.



Rotary's annual State of Membership webinar provides the latest membership data, research findings, and ideas for strengthening clubs. Watch at bit.ly/stateofmembershipwebinar24.

Donors contributed more than \$417 million to The Rotary Foundation in 2023-24.



BERLIN
31 August

Keep the Buzz going

Unexpected bumps fail to dampen an epic road trip around Europe in an electric VW Buzz

Bashar Asfour is no stranger to ambitious road trips. He's managed the course for an annual motorsport rally through the desert in his home country of Jordan — before there was Google Maps. He's had a passport since he was 4, traveled through 57 countries, and, as a polio survivor who has difficulty walking, is an ace driver himself. So, he was confident about organizing his own road odyssey around Europe last year to raise money for polio eradication.

He even had a cool ride picked out: a VW Bus. Not the classic version, but Volkswagen's modern electric one, known as the Buzz. At times, however, the Buzz turned out to be more of a buzzkill. "Charging the car was a real hassle," Asfour says, recalling charging stations that were fussy, slow, miles out of his way, or that wouldn't accept his credit card. "The trip took 54 days, 12,342 kilometers, hundreds of hours of driving, and hundreds of hours charging the car!"

Thankfully, the longtime Rotarian, who currently lives in Jordan but is forming an e-club based out of Georgia, made it to the finish line, raised an estimated \$277,000 (preliminary figure), and — astoundingly — missed only one of his 48 fundraising events. He also had a grand adventure, met some incredible people, and was awestruck by the kindness of strangers. Here, in his own words, are some of the stories from the 2023 My Journey to End Polio.

BREMEN, Germany

2 September

When the Buzz, with its bright paint job and End Polio Now logos, is displayed in the historic town center, it generates quite the buzz as passersby stop to ask what I'm doing or ask about polio. Later in this journey, other Rotary districts will do the same, putting the Buzz in the middle of marketplaces and old town plazas for a few hours to show people the good that Rotary is doing in the world. Many people in this part of the world have forgotten about polio, and it's important to remind them that it remains a problem and we need their support still.



MILAN

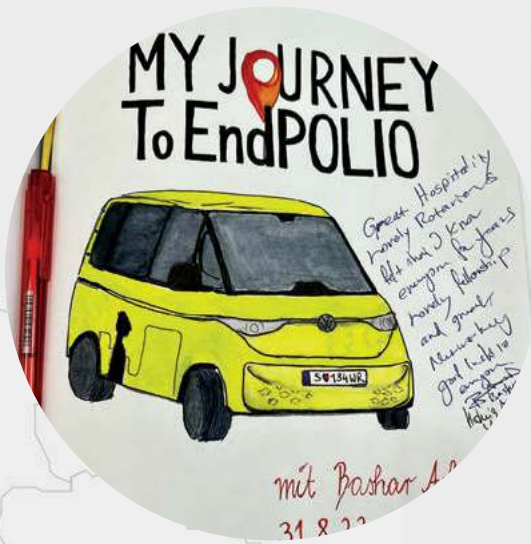
13 September

One of the biggest challenges of this journey is fatigue. I'm driving a minimum of six hours a day and sometimes as many as 13. Crossing the Alps from Switzerland to Italy, I discover a time-saving tunnel is closed, forcing me to drive over the mountains — and to charge the car even more. In Italy, charging stations are very difficult to find. On the positive side, there's a gala dinner with a large crowd waiting for me in Monza, outside of Milan. And later, there's an even larger crowd — the biggest of the trip — in Rome. While there, I will pass by the Colosseum, one of many extraordinary landmarks on the route.

CHEMNITZ, Germany

20 October

I arrive at the finish line in time to celebrate World Polio Day. I set out to do something big, and with the support of Rotary districts around Europe, I have. I'd like to do more of these trips on other continents. It has been a wonderful experience. I met so many friends and people I had never met before, but we talked like we'd known each other for 100 years. We are Rotarians, the same family.



In a guest book, Asfour notes the Rotarian hospitality.

MUNICH

13 October

Oktoberfest may have just ended but Rotarians here organize the production of a beer named My Journey to End Polio to raise funds. Of all the stops, Munich raises the most in contributions. During an event at a nearly full auditorium, local Rotarians present a check for 39,000 euros. I feel like I'm going to have a heart attack and am moved to tears again. With other contributions, the total raised here will hit 46,000 euros (about US\$48,000).

ANKARA, Turkey

28 September

The hospitality of the Turkish people is exquisite. This is another beautiful moment. Before reaching Ankara, I pull into a rest area and am surrounded by a motorcade of Rotary members in End Polio Now vests riding motorcycles. They escort me into the capital. The people are so generous. After discovering that my credit card wouldn't work at charging stations in the country, Rotary clubs call on their members to meet me on highways to charge me up. Some even invite me to lunch. Then, as I leave the country, I'm allowed to cross the border into Bulgaria like a VIP, without any delays. Once inside Bulgaria, a police escort is waiting to take me to my next stop, Stara Zagora. These moments I will never forget.



LJUBLJANA, Slovenia

12 October

If I ever decide to retire, I will retire here. They have delicious food, very kind people, and the most beautiful old town.

ISTANBUL

1 October



IZMIR, Turkey

25 September

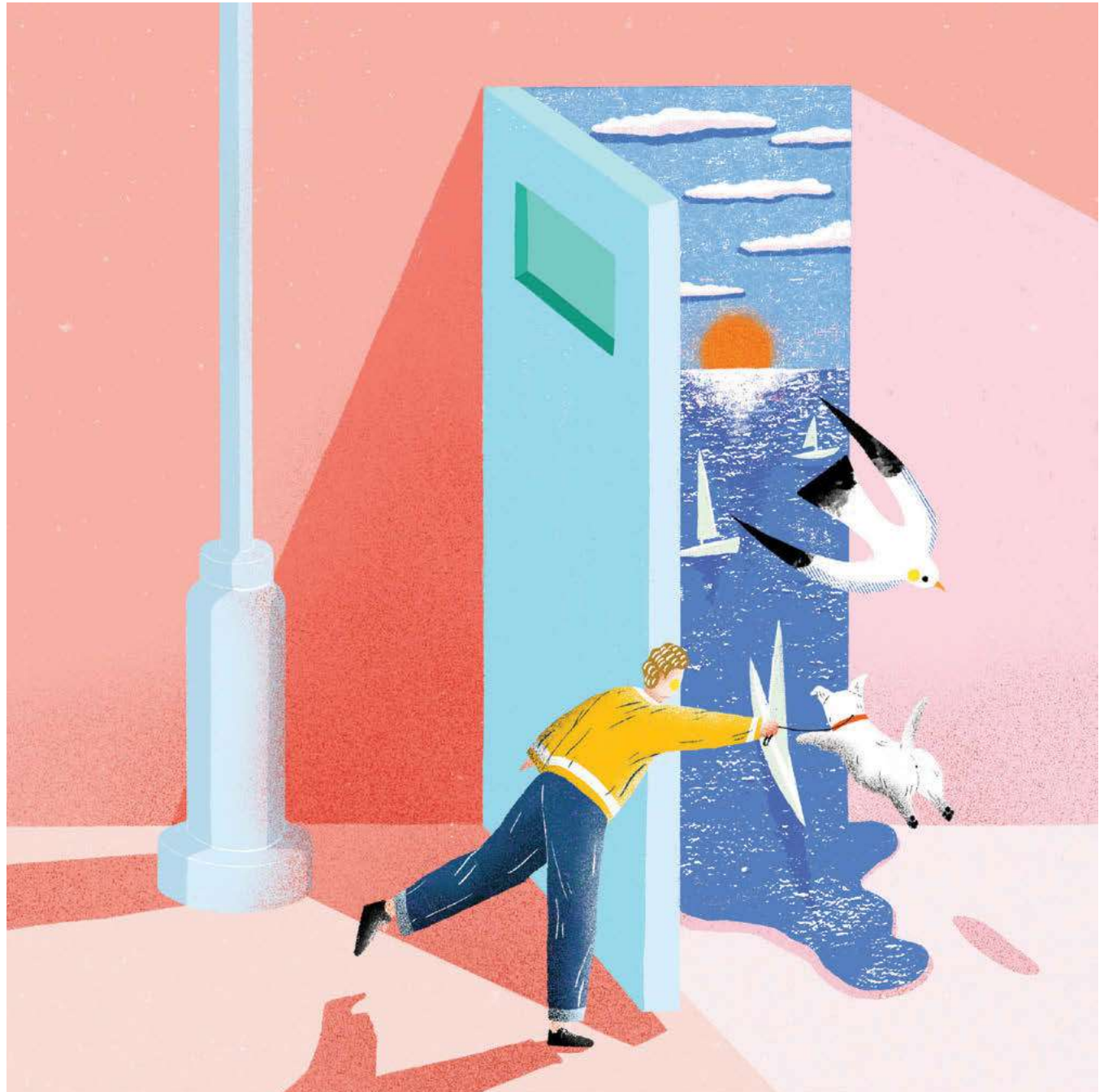
Crossing the Aegean Sea from Greece to Turkey — with a VW Buzz — is no easy feat. The first ferry takes hours. I arrive at an island at midnight to catch another boat with just enough room for the Buzz. The sea is choppy and every bump sets off the car alarm. I arrive at a port near Izmir, only to have customs hold the Buzz hostage. At last, a Rotary incoming district governor bails me and the Buzz out. Beyond the gates, I am amazed to find two dozen Rotarians and Rotaractors in End Polio Now T-shirts greeting me warmly. The memory brings tears to my eyes. It was so beautiful. I forgot all the troubles I had.

ESSAY

The eyes of another

Be it ever so humble, there's no finer destination than home

By Geoffrey Johnson



Marcel Proust had the right idea. “*Le seul véritable voyage ... ne serait pas d’aller vers de nouveaux paysages, mais d’avoir d’autres yeux, de voir l’univers avec les yeux d’un autre.*”

That observation comes deep into Proust’s seven-volume magnum opus, known variously, in its English translations, as *In Search of Lost Time* and *Remembrance of Things Past*. Proust posits that, if we were able to travel to Venus or Mars, we’d see things exactly as we see them on Earth, since even in an entirely foreign locale, we would possess the same senses we set out with. “The only true journey,” he insists, “... would not be to go toward new landscapes, but to have other eyes, to see the universe with the eyes of another.”

But how do we acquire those new eyes so as to enjoy the wonders of travel while remaining close to home? That is, how exactly do we make the familiar new? There are several ways, including one which you’ve likely tried before. Imagine you are expecting an out-of-town visitor: your favorite aunt from Cucamonga, your precocious nephew from Paris, your first cousin and his wife from Hamilton — Bermuda or Ontario, take your pick. They are coming to visit, and they expect you to show them around. You plan activities that you think will particularly please them, but you also intend to show them some of your favorite spots.

And while they enjoy those specially chosen destinations — afternoon tea at the Drake, the particle accelerator control room at Fermilab, the brilliant new play at Steppenwolf — they are most enchanted with those special places that please you most: sunrise from the Lake Michigan shore, the winding paths at Graceland (the cemetery, not the rock-and-roll shrine), the impressionist galleries at the Art Institute. And in seeing what they see, you find unexpected surprises and a renewed delight in something with which you were intimately acquainted. *Voilà: les yeux d’un autre.* The trick is to not wait for the arrival of your guests, but to endeavor to see through their eyes though aunt, nephew, and cousin remain far away.

Another way to transcend the familiar — and this is so commonplace as to almost not warrant mention — is to break

free from your daily routine. Take the fabled staycation without exactly staying. That is, abandon home and retreat to a nearby hotel, dine in fancy restaurants you’ve only read about, and revel in the company of someone whom you see most every day. Home becomes an exotic paradise, hopefully more Venus than Mars, and you experience it with the same pleasure and excitement as if you were in Cucamonga, Paris, or Hamilton (though I’ve had wonderful times in the Ontario port city, here I’m opting for the capital of Bermuda).

There’s a downside to this method, what a friend calls the PVBs: the post-vacation blues. Whether you’re coming back from two weeks abroad or a long weekend at L’Hôtel Nearby, you experience a letdown. Granted, there is the initial happiness, perhaps even relief, at being back home, and a brief period when the familiar does appear new. But the daily routine soon resumes, and the newness — or the ability to see the familiar as new — recedes. There has to be a better way.

There is, and again it’s so obvious, I am reluctant to mention it. Without leaving your hometown, visit a place you’ve never been before. Granted, I have the advantage of living in Chicago, one of the great cities of the world, so there are all sorts of museums, restaurants, theaters, neighborhoods, landmarks, shorelines, bike paths, and walking trails I have yet to visit or explore exhaustively. And I’ve lived here for most of my life.

But I don’t need to spend an afternoon at the International Museum of Surgical Science to be reminded of the

special privilege of living where I do. I don’t necessarily even need Chicago (though it doesn’t hurt). Here’s what you do. Choose a destination some distance from your home and walk there while noticing all the unexpected things along the way. As clichés go, “the journey is its own reward” is as tired as they come. But clichés are repeated ad nauseam not simply because they relieve us of the burden of thinking freshly. They’re repeated because they contain a kernel of truth.

Pick an unfamiliar destination: a quaint shop a friend mentioned, a new building rising on the outskirts of town, a public garden that, after a long winter, has suddenly burst into bloom. Unplug your ears, turn off your phone, eschew the automobile, and amble blithely toward your designated objective. Eyes open, ears alert, mind attuned to what’s around you, as well as to your own thoughts, the everyday comes alive in unexpected ways. It hardly matters if the shop’s a disappointment, the building’s merely a hole in the ground, or the garden gates closed 10 minutes before you arrived. The catalog of things that seduced your senses, things you blindly passed on previous outings — or drove by with hurried impatience — will charm you as you drift off to sleep that evening, or beguile that everyday companion as you find ways, sans cliché, to express the wonders that lay unexpectedly beyond your front door.

And if you have a dog — or can find ways to think, or perhaps abandon thinking, like a dog — you don’t even need a destination. For a little more than nine years, I took daily, and sometimes twice- or thrice-daily, walks with our dog. Stuart was a short-legged Dandie Dinmont terrier — the only breed of dog named after a literary character, which is how my wily daughter, knowing my affinities, persuaded me to rescue Stu and give him his forever home — but he had a passion for walking. We’d head off with no destination in mind, and for the first 30 or 40 minutes, I’d let Stu take the lead. He not only loved to walk, he loved to meander, and we’d end up strolling (and sniffing) along streets and through neighborhoods I had never visited before. Each walk was a revelation, often of the simplest kind, and I’d return home feeling like Marco Polo or Meriwether Lewis or (your ideal traveler here), though we’d

Whether we’re
aware of it or not,
we are constantly
traveling at an
inconceivable pace,
circling the sun
at 67,000 miles
per hour.

been gone for only an hour or so. Master that way of walking and thinking — and sniffing, if you're so inclined — and all the joys and benefits of travel remain forever close at hand.

Maybe we don't even need eyes. After four years as a volunteer at the Tijuana River Reserve in Southern California, Ron Peterson lost his eyesight to glaucoma. A couple of years passed, and Peterson, a retired scientist and engineer, realized that, given what he already knew about the plants and habitat at the reserve, he could find other ways of "seeing" those familiar surroundings. Now, with his guide dog, Gidget, Peterson — "a man who found meaning in darkness," as he was introduced in a September report on the *PBS News Hour* — helps visitors explore the reserve relying on senses other than sight.

"I have learned to identify almost 40 plants by touch and also smell," said Peterson. And, he added, "there's even sounds," in one case, the shimmering vibration of the leaves on a particular plant as it was caressed by the breeze. As the reserve explained, Peterson's tour was "an eye-opening experience without sight."

There is another traveler we might emulate as we discover ways to see the familiar anew. That this island castaway since the age of 2 is fictional does not undercut the validity of the lesson she offers. That lesson works on familiar places and things, but it's especially applicable to people, perhaps that person with whom you dallied away that long weekend close to but not at home. When next you look at that person — someone who, even after the passage of many years, you might still perceive as your beloved — try to see them through the eyes with which you first beheld them. And see if, like Miranda, the tenderhearted naïf of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, you don't exclaim: "O brave new world that has such people in it!" (Somebody had to reclaim that lovely phrase, and that beautiful moment, from Aldous Huxley.)

On close examination, this exercise in how to travel without traveling is moot. Whether we're aware of it or not, we are constantly traveling at an inconceivable pace: circling the sun at 67,000 miles per hour, while the Earth itself, here in Chicago, is spinning on its axis at about 775 miles per hour — and even faster as you draw closer to the equator. As we



rocket imperceptibly through space and hurtle irrevocably toward the future, consider a foray into the past. What stood where your home now stands and who inhabited this place before you? After several years of research, I can stand on my front porch and envision the houses that lined my block a century ago and identify the people who lived there. Or glance back even further and see the empty prairie stretching endlessly to the north or, a little to the west, track the route of the North Branch of the Chicago River, which follows a relatively straight course today but once curved back and forth and back again in a languorous, Stuworthy meander.

Amidst this remembrance of things past and anticipation of futures unknown — something that I, in Faulknerian fash-

ion, strive regularly to carry with me — it becomes ever more important to see, in the present moment, the signs that gauge our perpetual peregrination. In my case it's a septet of trees that, though a mile from home, I pause and contemplate nearly every day. I stop and observe them closely: the emergence of the pale green leaves in spring, the fullness of the verdant limbs at the height of summer, the changing cloak of autumnal color, and the forsaken black branches of winter. And always, the particular play of sunlight, or its stark absence, on my sylvan seven.

I see all this not with the eyes of another, but with eyes that are my own: vigilant, alive, and ever marveling at the wonders that each day appear, even so close to home. ■



TRUSTEE CHAIR'S MESSAGE

A season of lasting giving

December is a time for generosity and reflection when we think not only about our loved ones but about how we can make a difference in the world.

This year, consider giving a gift with an enduring impact, one that extends beyond these holidays, lasting for generations. Gifts to The Rotary Foundation Endowment are extraordinary gifts that create extraordinary change.

By supporting Rotary's Endowment, you help ensure that RI will have the resources it needs to develop and implement sustainable projects today and in the years to come. Members who include the Endowment in estate plans or make an outright gift support that mission.

Imagine your gift helping to fund the drop of vaccine that prevents the last case of polio, eradicating this devastating disease once and for all. Picture it supporting other health initiatives in 2034, 2044, and beyond.

If you make an outright gift today, you will have the opportunity to witness your support in action, working through clean water projects, literacy initiatives, and economic development efforts. These Rotary Foundation-funded projects touch lives across the globe, bringing hope to individuals you may never meet, but who will know you through your generosity.

Past President Arch C. Klumph, who

first proposed an endowment more than 100 years ago, would be amazed not only at the opportunities Rotary has to help today but also at the future possibilities Rotary's Endowment provides.

However, our Endowment is only strong when we all support it. Because it is essential to our success, we have set an ambitious goal: to build our Endowment to \$2.025 billion in net assets and commitments by 30 June 2025. This goal is not just a number; it is a reaffirmation of our belief in Rotary's enduring ability to do good in the world. A fully funded \$2 billion endowment will provide more than \$100 million year after year for Rotary Foundation activities.

I have asked district governors and club presidents to lead by example before the year's end, but each of us has an opportunity to secure Rotary's legacy of service. Please join Gay and me in planning your estate or outright gift today.

Remember, this is no ordinary gift. Your generosity will provide a legacy for future generations to find solutions in the areas we care about, while creating a ripple of positive change that extends far beyond our lifetimes. What better gift could there be?

MARK DANIEL MALONEY
Foundation trustee chair

Learn more and donate at rotary.org/endowment.

SERVICE ABOVE SELF

THE OBJECT OF ROTARY

The Object of Rotary is to encourage and foster the ideal of service as a basis of worthy enterprise and, in particular, to encourage and foster:

First The development of acquaintance as an opportunity for service;

Second High ethical standards in business and professions, the recognition of the worthiness of all useful occupations, and the dignifying of each Rotarian's occupation as an opportunity to serve society;

Third The application of the ideal of service in each Rotarian's personal, business, and community life;

Fourth The advancement of international understanding, goodwill, and peace through a world fellowship of business and professional persons united in the ideal of service.

THE FOUR-WAY TEST

Of the things we think, say or do:

1. Is it the **truth**?
2. Is it **fair** to all concerned?
3. Will it build **goodwill** and **better friendships**?
4. Will it be **beneficial** to all concerned?

ROTARIAN CODE OF CONDUCT

The following code of conduct has been adopted for the use of Rotarians:

As a Rotarian, I will

1. Act with integrity and high ethical standards in my personal and professional life
2. Deal fairly with others and treat them and their occupations with respect
3. Use my professional skills through Rotary to: mentor young people, help those with special needs, and improve people's quality of life in my community and in the world
4. Avoid behavior that reflects adversely on Rotary or other Rotarians
5. Help maintain a harassment-free environment in Rotary meetings, events, and activities, report any suspected harassment, and help ensure non-retaliation to those individuals that report harassment.

OUR CLUBS

VIRTUAL VISIT

Bons voyages

International Travel and Hosting Fellowship

Ligia Corredor, a devout globe-trotter, frequently travels solo, but she's rarely lonely. For her, travel is first and foremost a friend-making quest. Whether she's landed in Australia, Singapore, Taiwan, or California, she can easily find someone to meet for coffee, share a meal, show her around their favorite neighborhood, or host her for a few nights at their place — even if, as is often the case, they've never met before. Where does she find these instant besties? The International Travel and Hosting Fellowship.

"First of all, being a single person and a woman, I find I feel comfortable," says Corredor, a member of the Rotary Club of Miramar-Pines, Florida, talking up the benefits of the fellowship she's been part of for over 25 years. "It feels safe when I travel to ITHF friends" since they're Rotary members. Best of all, it feels like family, whether she's being hosted or hosting visitors at home along a meandering waterway just outside the Everglades.

With more than 850 members, the travel and hosting fellowship is one of the largest within Rotary. It allows its mem-

bers to enrich their travels through cross-cultural exchange by visiting local Rotary members for everything from quick meetups at cafes to several days in their home.

Though the fellowship was officially recognized in 1989, the idea was sparked a few years earlier. The group formed from a growing circle of connections that started with an American Rotary member and his wife, who were struck by the hospitality of Rotarians they encountered on an extended stay in Europe in 1986. When they, in turn, hosted a group of Australians who had the same interest in exchanging visits, they knew they were on to something.

"What we do is give you an opportunity to connect," says Madhumita Bishnu, of the Rotary E-Club of Melbourne, Australia, who logs on from her home in Kolkata, India, as the fellowship's current chair. Members can reach out to each other through the website and arrange to connect. "You make the connection and stay with the person or be invited to a club meeting. It could be local sightseeing, a visit for a cup of tea or coffee, any kind of hosting," Bishnu says.

"Connections can involve homestays over a few days but can also be as simple as just meeting for a meal," notes Sheila Hart, president of the Rotary Club of Nelson Daybreak in British Columbia and a past chair of the fellowship.

Tracey Wyatt, of the Rotary Club of Wynnun and Manly, Australia, calls the fellowship "the best-kept secret." "It's far deeper and more insightful than any tourist experience," she says. And the expert local knowledge is helpful. Wyatt, for example, regularly cautions travelers not to

underestimate Australia's vastness and set unrealistic travel plans.

Rick and Mary Ellen Harned, members of the Rotary Club of Louisville, Kentucky, note that some Rotarians lack room at home to accommodate guests. "In Japan, I would not necessarily expect home hospitality where they just don't have space," says Rick Harned, a fellowship past administrator. But a simple meetup can be equally enriching.

For their visit to Osaka, Japan, for instance, a Rotarian-hosted walking tour and dinner at a Japanese sports bar were memorable highlights. During a visit to Germany, the wife of a Rotarian stocked their rented apartment with light victuals, and Rick Harned delivered a presentation about Rotary life in Kentucky to the Rotary Club of Detmold-Oerlinghausen. On another trip, Australian Rotarians introduced the couple to the kangaroos romping on a friend's property. The landowner, it turned out, was a Rotarian the Harneds had met on an earlier fellowship group tour.

The fellowship also encompasses domestic exchanges; the Harneds visit Rotarian friends in Wisconsin and enjoyed a short trip to neighboring Tennessee in April to experience a solar eclipse with a Rotarian there. "We tend to do what they do in their communities," says Mary Ellen Harned. "In the smaller communities, you see things an average tourist wouldn't see."

Corredor has hosted visitors who were excited just to help tend to her garden, which is adorned with palm trees and lush greenery. On another occasion, a couple from Canada who arrived in time for a breakfast with Santa event for kids

↓
Fellowship members from Canada and the U.S. enjoy a swim in Brazil.



→
Madhumita Bishnu (left) at Mornington Peninsula National Park in Australia with Rotarian Peter Downes and his wife, Helen.



↓
On a 2021 hike, Tracey Wyatt (right) shows Australia's Blue Mountains to Nancy Fleming, a longtime U.S. Rotarian before her death.



↑
Rick Harned (left) and his wife, Mary Ellen (center), visit Chicago with Rotary hosts John and Jean Hendersen.

that she was attending tagged along and volunteered all day to hand out gifts. And when Corredor was staying with an Australian member near Brisbane, she went with her to check out a club project to teach teens and adults with disabilities how to sail. “I would have never seen anything like that if I had not been with Rotarians,” she says.

The fellowship also organizes group tours, including excursions around the Rotary International Convention. After the convention in Singapore last May, Corredor joined a fellowship tour in Bali, Indonesia. A Rotarian there arranged for

them to take a cooking class in which they even got to pick the vegetables and herbs from a garden. Another recent fellowship tour was planned for Patagonia and Antarctica. And the connections start even before the trips; members often get to know each other ahead of time through lively WhatsApp groups.

“The biggest takeaway is the long-term relationships that I’ve made,” says Corredor. “I have a lot of friends I’ve made that are not in the fellowship. But we convince them. Every time, you need to join us. It’s the camaraderie that you develop.”

— BRAD WEBBER

TIPS ON TURNING UP THE HOSPITALITY

On being a good host

- **Communicate well.** “Most of the time the complaints would be the host not responding, the host doesn’t check email, doesn’t telephone,” says Bishnu. Detail what you can and cannot offer Rotary guests and their partners.

- **Introduce visitors to neighbors and other locals,** especially members in your club, to foster new friendships and potentially even projects.

... and a good guest

- **Make contacts well in advance** and share your interests and purpose for the trip.

- **Inquire about the rules.** It might seem like an obvious consideration, but “always ask,” insists Corredor. “What can I touch? What can I not touch? I give guests a tour of the house” from the start.

- **Be flexible with your time and your plans.** “Consider the options presented by the hosts,” says Wyatt. “This is often the area that I have had the most rewarding experiences, as you see the location through a different perspective.”

- **Decide how you’ll express your gratitude.** “I always bring a token gift. I recommend a food item,” says Corredor, who finds coffee from her native Colombia is universally appreciated.

- **Consider lesser-known spots.** Harned remembers an Australian saying they never got visitors because of a lack of interest in their location off the beaten path. “I said, ‘OK, we’re coming.’ We had a wonderful time with them.”

HANDBOOK

Pack like a pro

Can't decide what to take? Take it all. Here's how.

Watching Jennifer Jones pull items out of her suitcase is a little like seeing a string of clowns peel out of an impossibly itty-bitty car. It seems to defy the laws of physics.

For her trip to Singapore in May — which included the Rotary International Convention and a Trustees meeting, preceded by a five-day vacation in Bali, Indonesia — Jones, the 2022-23 Rotary president, squeezed all her items into a carry-on and a personal item. Those two pieces of luggage held more than a dozen dresses, several jackets, pants and a skirt, wraps, four pairs of shoes, a curling iron, flat iron, hairbrush, electric toothbrush, computer, an iPad, jewelry, and other toiletries and necessities.

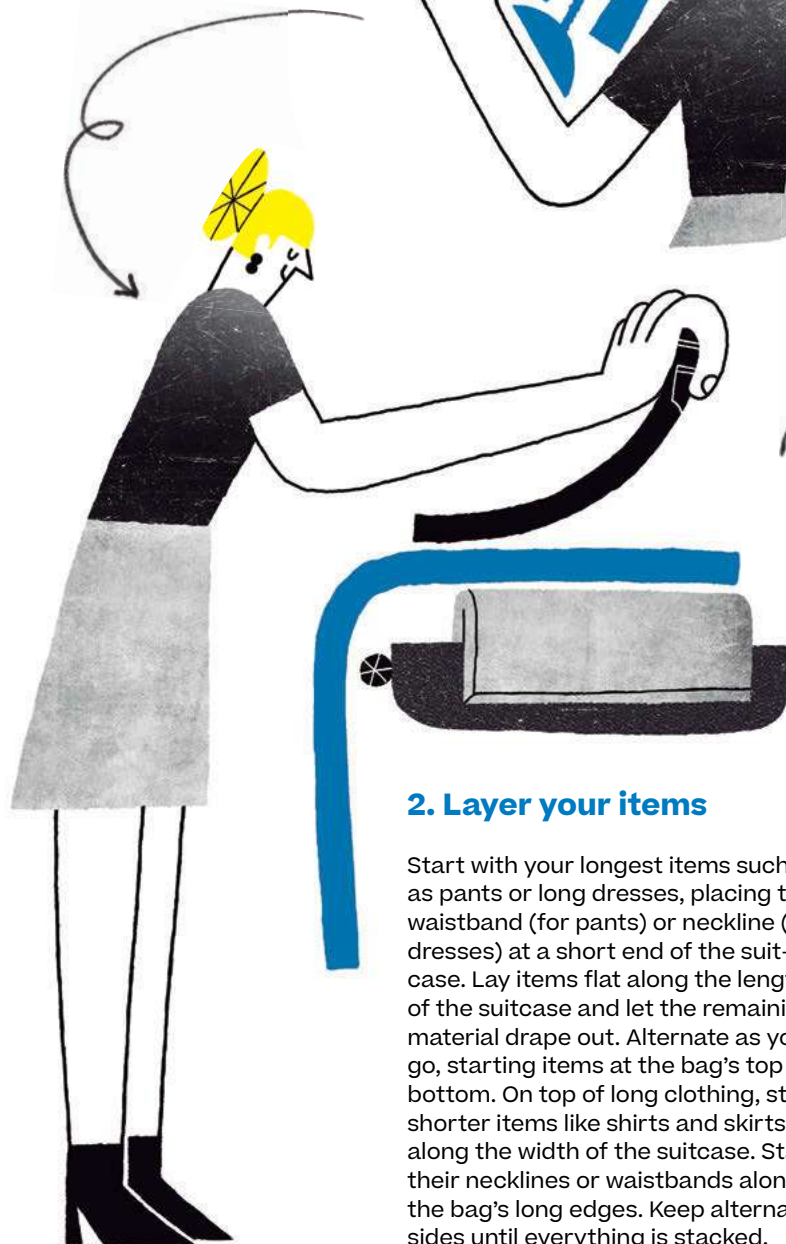
Jones learned her method about a decade ago from (where else?) a YouTube video. “It’s been the miracle packing mechanism from thereon out,” she explains, and she uses it not just for dresses but formal suits too. Countless aides have asked her for packing lessons over the years, wondering how she packs so lightly. “That’s all you have?” they ask. “This is all your luggage?”

Jones gave *Rotary* magazine a packing tutorial. Try the method on your next holiday travels or your trip to Calgary in June for the Rotary Convention, and drop us a note to let us know how you did at magazine@rotary.org.

— DIANA SCHOBERG

1. Pick your clothes and gather your luggage

Jones likes a two-sided hard-shell suitcase that unzips in the middle, and she swears by a trifold toiletry bag. “This thing takes up a lot of real estate,” she says, “but it’s all I need.”

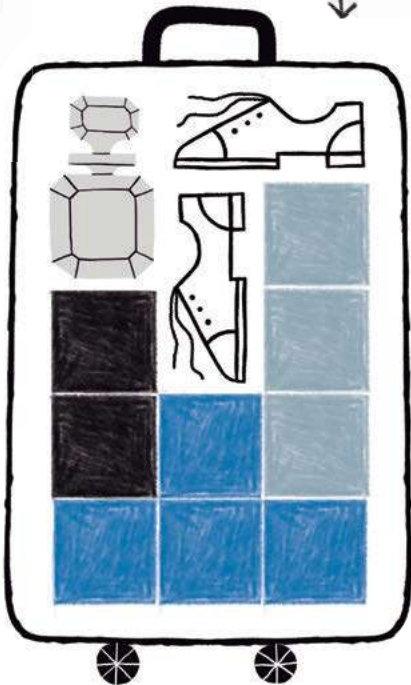
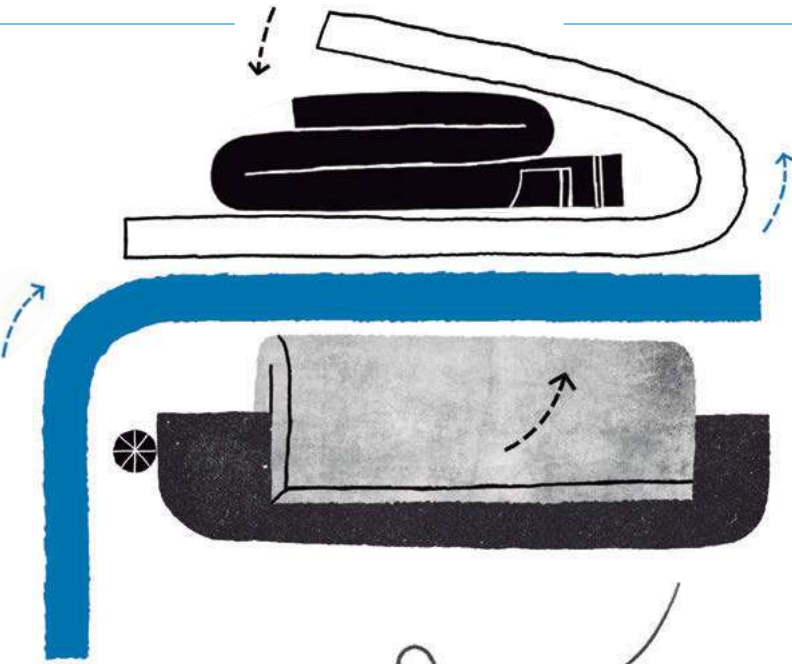


2. Layer your items

Start with your longest items such as pants or long dresses, placing the waistband (for pants) or neckline (for dresses) at a short end of the suitcase. Lay items flat along the length of the suitcase and let the remaining material drape out. Alternate as you go, starting items at the bag’s top or bottom. On top of long clothing, stack shorter items like shirts and skirts along the width of the suitcase. Start their necklines or waistbands along the bag’s long edges. Keep alternating sides until everything is stacked.

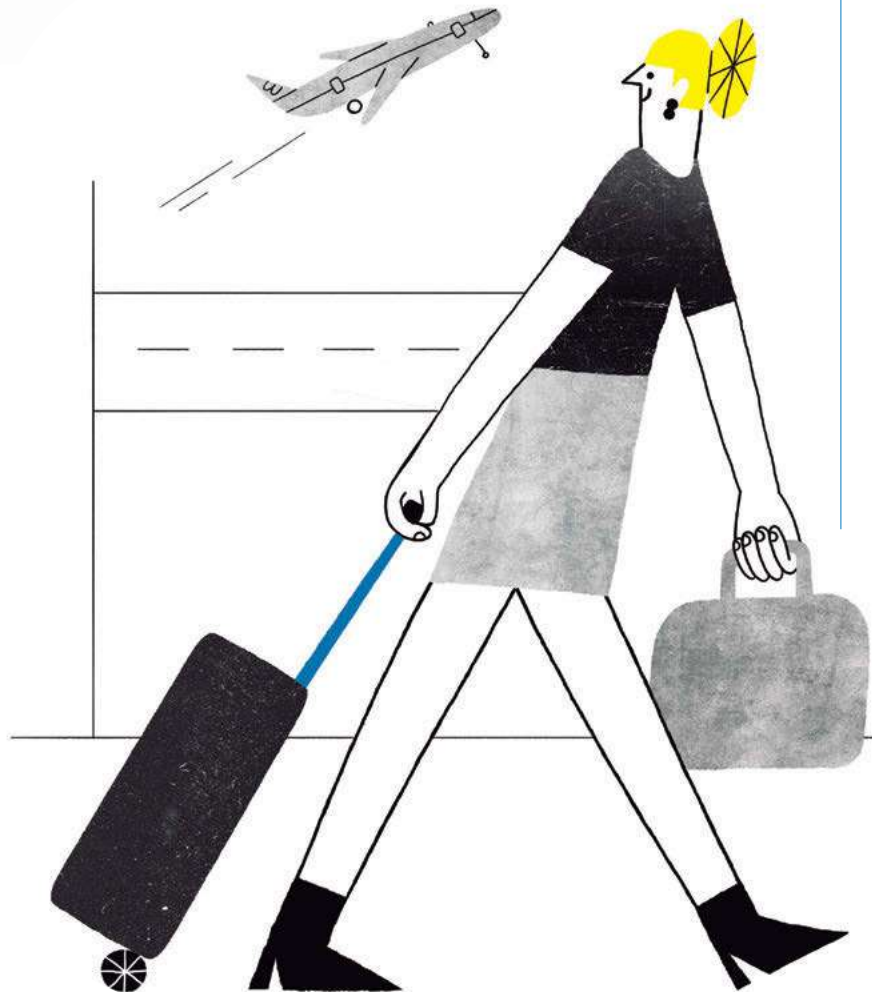
3. Interfold into a bundle

In reverse order, begin folding the draping material back into the suitcase one item at a time, once again alternating sides. As you fold the clothes back in, take care to stretch and smooth items so they lie flat. “Nothing wrinkles. It all comes out ready to wear,” Jones says. Once you bundle everything up, if you still have space, stack additional items on top. When you reach your destination, unpack everything. “It takes two seconds to put back in,” she advises.



4. Pack shoes and toiletries

Jones uses the other half of her suitcase for toiletries, a curling iron, full-size brush, shoes, an evening bag, and more. The smaller bag that serves as her personal item holds additional clothes, electronics, and medication.



BY
Terry
Ward

Crowd

Photo illustration by
MADISON WISSE



Throng of tourists are overwhelming the world's most popular destinations. Here's

control



how to rethink the way you travel — and an alternative bucket list to get you started.



E

Entry fees and increased tourist taxes in travel hot spots like Venice, Bali, and New Zealand. Temporary stoplights installed to deter selfies in crowded pedestrian zones in Rome and Florence. Protests against tourist overcrowding in Barcelona and Mallorca. Even a temporary barrier erected in a Japanese town to deter tourists from thronging the area to snap photos of Mount Fuji at a site popularized by social media.

When it comes to headlines about tourism over the past year, the message has rung out crystal clear from the people living in some of the world's most desirable travel locations: Enough is enough.

And while the lament that travelers are loving to death some of our favorite destinations on the planet appears to be reaching fever pitch of late, the trend's origins predate the COVID-19 pandemic. "There was this hand-wringing and hysteria during the pandemic," explains Paula Vlamings, chief impact officer of the nonprofit Tourism Cares. "And understandably, because it shut down many, many livelihoods — and not

just in the industry. Many communities were really suffering from the lack of tourism.

"But really, overtourism was already a problem in 2017, 2018, and 2019. You were seeing the same headlines back then."

With tourism not only rebounding to but exceeding 2019 levels — according to the U.S. Transportation Security Administration, summer air travel in the United States alone reached record heights in 2024 — the trend toward overtourism is a worrying one, admits Vlamings. It leaves conscientious travelers wondering not merely how best to see the world, but whether they should venture out at all.

With so many livelihoods dependent on global tourism, the answer is not to stop exploring the world. Rotary members in particular know the power of the bonds forged when people from different cultures meet and exchange ideas, hopes, and dreams. Rather than stopping travel altogether, it's time to rethink the nuts and bolts of travel — to consider, for instance, new ways to travel to new places, perhaps with an ecotourism or voluntourism slant, and always with the idea of meeting locals where they live in a way that benefits them as much as possible.

As a start, Tourism Cares strives to foster a more symbiotic relationship between travelers and the local communities and environments upon which the tourism industry is dependent, Vlamings says. The organization debuted a Meaningful Travel Map in 2018 that's grown to

spotlight more than 300 "impact partners" across some two dozen countries, tour operators and other tourist-serving businesses and organizations that prioritize social and environmental sustainability.

Though the map is primarily meant as a business-to-business tool to help tour operators integrate more meaningful experiences into their itineraries in destinations around the world, it is also a useful resource for travelers hoping to find inspiration for their own intentional, independent trips. Pinpointed on the map is everything from a beachfront rental apartment on Mexico's Pacific Coast operated by a local turtle rescue and conservation center to marine expeditions led by guides from the Indigenous Haida group in the remote Haida Gwaii archipelago off British Columbia to conservation-themed scuba dives, local cooking lessons, and multiweek volunteer opportunities in Malaysia's Perhentian Islands.

As you do your own research, Vlamings encourages conscientious travelers to look for companies with B Corporation certification, a reliable gauge of sustainable choices in business. "Those are the companies that have been through a pretty rigorous vetting and certification process," Vlamings says, referring to social and environmental performance, transparency, and legal accountability. "It's a very interesting and growing network of companies around the world."

Thinking outside of the box when planning your travels is one way to ensure you are benefiting the places you visit rather than potentially harming them. In addition, the care with which you choose your destinations should also be applied to any tour operators with whom you book your travel and excursions.

"It's more important than ever to go beyond the surface of a destination and seek off-the-beaten-path, authentic experiences," says Matt Berna, president of the Americas for the small-group adventure travel company Intrepid Travel.

When planning a trip, Berna urges people to carefully consider what kind of experience they are truly looking for, whether that's a



In Spain, visitors to Barcelona this summer were greeted by protesters, some of them wielding squirt guns. Previous pages: St. Peter's Square in Rome can sometimes be an overly crowded tourist hot spot.



PHOTOGRAPHS: (OPENING IMAGE) MATT COOPER/GALLERY STOCK; (LEFT) ZUMA PRESS INC./ALAMY



cultural experience, an outdoor adventure, or something else.

Next, dive deep into your research. “There are so many amazing alternative destinations that will give you a fresh take on the world if you’re willing to go beyond the classic bucket list attractions,” Berna says.

Traveling during the shoulder season — that is, the time between a destination’s peak period and its offseason — can be a win-win for everyone. Visitors will encounter fewer crowds and have more opportunities to connect with locals, while the people who live there have a chance to extend their earning opportunities.

“You will often luck out with the same or even better weather [in shoulder season] than that peak travel time,” says Abbie Synan, a freelance travel writer and blogger who also works as an adviser with the travel agency Fora Travel. If you are limited to traveling during high season, consider alternative destinations away from the crowds. That will spread the wealth from tourism dollars and likely provide a more enjoyable vacation experience.

“Amalfi in the summer can bring in hordes of beachgoers,” says

Synan. “Stay within Italy but move to another beach region like Puglia, which offers small towns and scenic seaside drives.”

You can go a step further, too, once you have decided on a destination. Contact travel professionals in the country you’re visiting instead of consulting a travel adviser in your home country for advice. Many mass travel advisers and tour operators sell the same itineraries over and over, says Alexis Bowen, the CEO and co-founder of Elsewhere, which brands itself as a “direct-to-local” travel company that taps on-the-ground experts to craft bespoke vacation itineraries.

Joel Krueger, 55, from the United Kingdom, used the services of Elsewhere this past summer when planning a vacation to Vietnam with his wife and their 19-year-old son. “We’ve traveled in many different places including several heavily touristed locations” — like Florence and Venice — “that have been over-touristed,” Krueger says.

This time around, the family was looking for a more authentic and meaningful way to travel. When Krueger reached out to Elsewhere

(which was acquired by the travel guidebook company Lonely Planet in 2022), he was put in touch with a local expert in Vietnam. They discussed places Krueger had visited on prior trips to Vietnam and what the family would ideally like to see and do during their upcoming exploration. “He listened and put together a nice itinerary in places that we hadn’t visited and which he thought would give us a good feel for the country,” Krueger says.

Among the highlights were a hike in Pù Luông Nature Reserve and a cooking class and dinner at the home of a family in Hanoi. “The cooking instructor and mother to the young family took us on a tour of the community vegetable and fruit garden where they raised produce for sale locally and to Hanoi restaurants and markets,” Krueger says. “We met some of her neighbors and got a real sense of the community and their daily life. We wouldn’t have been able to do that in any other way other than through someone who could make that local connection.”

Follow the Kruegers’ lead and get off the beaten path. Need some ideas? Turn the page.

In Venice, officials added day-tripper entry fees and installed stoplights to discourage selfies and control pedestrian flow.





The places to go (Shhh! Don't tell.)

In the Azores, on the island of São Miguel, the Vista do Rei viewpoint offers a breathtaking panorama of the Sete Cidades caldera, or volcanic crater.

Instead of *Hawaii*, try the

AZORES

Sometimes referred to as Europe's Hawaii, the spectacularly beautiful islands of the Azores belong to Portugal and include nine major volcanic islands located roughly 900 miles offshore from Lisbon. The Azores saw a record 1.2 million guest arrivals in 2023, but that number pales in comparison to the more than 9.6 million people who visited the Hawaiian Islands during the same period. You might start your trip on the largest island, São Miguel, known for its bubbling geysers and incredible caldera lakes, before catching a flight to the island of Pico or Faial to see sperm whales and 27 other species of cetaceans recorded in these waters. The Ocean Azores Foundation is a good resource for finding sustainable whale watching and scuba diving companies.

In West Africa, Sierra Leone is home to Bureh Beach, a surfing paradise, and the Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary.



Instead of South Africa, try

SIERRA LEONE

Atop the list of African countries making their first concerted efforts to court global tourism of late is Sierra Leone, with the World Bank among the organizations working to fund and propel the tiny West African country onto the global tourism stage. International tourism is nascent here, but the country's attractions include impressive waves for surfing near the capital city, Freetown, as well as diverse wildlife experiences, such as the Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary and its rain-forest eco-lodges. The endangered primates are rehabilitated on-site, and a community outreach program promotes wildlife conservation.

Instead of Nepal, try

PAKISTAN

Despite a U.S. State Department travel advisory, Pakistan's incredible natural beauty and hospitality continue to lure intrepid travelers, especially to more secure regions in the country's north. And thanks to a new visa policy that went into effect in August, it has become easier for most people to travel to Pakistan.

Travel writer Nellie Huang spent part of this past summer exploring the mountains and valleys of Gilgit-Baltistan, a region in northern Pakistan, with her husband and their young daughter. They hired a local guide, Hannan Balti, to show them his homeland and spent most of their time road-tripping along the Karakoram Highway. Huang says her expectations were exceeded by the area's "jaw-dropping views and some of the most welcoming people we've ever met."



The majestic 20,000-foot peak Tupopdan, or Passu Cathedral, rises above the Hunza River and the Karakoram Highway in northern Pakistan's Gilgit-Baltistan region.

Padar Island is one of the three major islands that make up Indonesia's Komodo National Park, which is home not only to the legendary "dragons," but to dolphins, whales, and the endangered dugong.



Instead of Bali, try other

INDONESIAN ISLES

Bali is on many a budget backpacker's and honeymooner's hit list, but the southern reaches of the island, around Kuta, Seminyak, and Canggu, are crushed with crowds. The Indonesian archipelago, however, is home to roughly 17,000 islands and hundreds of diverse cultures and ethnic groups. What's more, the region lies at the heart of the Coral Triangle, where the world's oceans are at their most biodiverse — and all you need to explore them is a mask, fins, and a snorkel. "Bali is a special island, but other places in Indonesia are just as lovely," says travel blogger and adviser Abbie Synan. "Lombok or the Gili Islands are nearby and gorgeous."

Get more adventurous and head further east in the archipelago to the island of Flores and the smaller neighboring islands that make up Komodo National Park to see even more unusual wildlife (Komodo dragons). Consider traveling in the region aboard a traditional wooden Indonesian sailing ship called a pinisi, handbuilt on the island of Sulawesi. You can stay on land to explore here, too, in the Flores fishing port town of Labuan Bajo, where accommodations range from budget hostels to overwater bungalows.

Instead of Costa Rica, try

PANAMA

On Panama's northern coast, the city of Portobelo, with its historic landmarks, lively music, and Caribbean cuisine, is a gateway to Afro-Panamanian culture. With its lush vegetation, the area is also an ideal destination for birding.

Craig Zapatka, who co-founded Elsewhere with Alexis Bowen, recently returned from a community-led, three-day hike through southeastern Panama's Darién National Park. Hosted by people from the region's Indigenous Emberá group, the hike's highlights included stunning jungle scenery and routes traversing clear rivers and dense jungles along ridgelines. There were also visits to several Emberá villages, where the travelers were warmly welcomed to meals with the locals. "This trip was particularly special due to the unique insights and direct interaction with the Emberá communities," Zapatka says.



Top: In southern Panama, Darién National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, bridges North and South America. Bottom: A group of young Panamanians perform a traditional dance at one of the former Spanish fortresses in Portobelo, a historic port on the Caribbean Sea.

Instead of Tuscany, try

UMBRIA

Nestled among the clouds, Trevi is a hilltop town in Umbria, a region of central Italy known for its churches, its food and wine, and its rolling green landscapes.

Umbria is a great choice for travelers looking to experience a region of Italy that has kept its traditional identity, says Taylor Lack, a specialist with the tour operator Audley Travel. In central Italy, roughly between Florence and Rome, the region known as the green heart of Italy for its fertile hills tends to be more of a bargain than destinations in Tuscany, and it has a similar appeal.

Visitors can see the Baroque churches in the regional capital Perugia or explore medieval hilltop towns and villages such as Orvieto, says Lack. “Food and wine lovers will enjoy the tastes of full-bodied wines from family-run vineyards, tasty cured meats and local cheeses, as well as taking the time to forage for truffles.”



PHOTOGRAPH: GETTY IMAGES



Instead of the Galapagos, try the

ANDEAN HIGHLANDS

Rather than follow Ecuador's more well-trodden path to the Galapagos Islands or the Ecuadorian Amazon, Elsewhere's Alexis Bowen opted for the Andean Highlands on a recent visit – a volcanic region that runs north to south through the center of this equatorial country.

Bowen recommends staying at a working ranch called Hacienda El Porvenir, near the Cotopaxi volcano, where she enjoyed meeting Ecuadorian tourists vacationing in their own country. "All the food was farm-to-table, and during the day we'd ride horses," she says. "Whereas I'd ordinarily be having conversations with other Americans at breakfast, here I was meeting Ecuadorians and having this authentic exchange, learning where they're from and why they love their country." ■



Situated beneath snowcapped Cotopaxi, an active volcano in the Andes Mountains, Hacienda El Porvenir is both a working ranch and a comfortable getaway with farm-to-table meals.

WHERE NO TIKTOKER

Samantha Cristoforetti
dreamed of space travel
since she was a kid.
Now, she's sharing
the cosmic awe with
her fellow earthlings.



A photograph taken from inside a space station, looking out through a large window. A person's legs, wearing dark pants and white socks, are visible in the foreground, resting on a ledge. The window shows a view of Earth from space, with blue oceans, white clouds, and brown landmasses. The interior of the station is dark, with various mechanical components and a control panel visible. The text "HAS GONE BEFORE" is overlaid in the top right corner.

**HAS GONE
BEFORE**

BY DIANA SCHOBERG

IN SOME WAYS IT'S JUST LIKE ANY OTHER ROTARY MEETING.

Dozens of members of the Rotary Club of Köln am Rhein gather on a pleasant Monday evening at one of the famous Kranhäus office buildings, architectural gems shaped like upside down L's over the Rhine River with the towers of Cologne Cathedral visible in the distance. The night's speaker, an out-of-this-world member of the club, is scheduled to give the Rotarians a virtual tour of her workplace. The Wi-Fi connection on her end is finicky, and they wait eagerly.

At last, she appears, and that's when this meeting takes a decidedly different turn. Because Samantha Cristoforetti, an astronaut aboard the International Space Station, is floating.

Cristoforetti is four months into her second stint on the space station, a research vessel about the size of a six-bedroom house that orbits the Earth every 90 minutes. Her hair set loose from the confines of gravity in a way that would make an '80s metal rocker jealous, she takes questions and wows club members with the cosmic views. "Most of the time I try to take meetings from the cupola, because then you can show people the Earth from the windows," she says in an interview with *Rotary* magazine.

Astronauts' personal items are rigorously monitored; they must meet a strict weight limit of only 3.3 pounds total. Among her select few items, Cristoforetti has included the red-and-white banner of the Köln am Rhein Rotary club. As the meeting closes, her fellow club members thank her with thunderous applause.

She rolls backward away from the camera, leaving the club banner on screen floating behind her.



Cristoforetti's journey to space began during her childhood in a tiny village in the Italian Alps, her taste for adventure whetted by summers spent roaming the woods with cousins and winters skiing. But it was her voyages in books, read in secret under the covers at bedtime, that primed her imagination for her meteoric rise. "I doubt I'd be an astronaut today if I hadn't climbed a ladder to the Moon many years ago, ... if I hadn't traveled all the way to China with Marco Polo or fought epic battles beside Sandokan" the pirate, she recalls in her 2018 book, *Diary of an Apprentice Astronaut*.

When she was 17 and a senior in high school, she traveled to St. Paul, Minnesota, as an exchange student. "I was fascinated by space flight already. I was a big Star Trek fan," she says. "All of that was centered in the United States." One day, while eating out with her host mother, the two saw an advertisement for Space Camp in Huntsville, Alabama. Cristoforetti was all in. At Space Camp, she studied the space shuttle and simulated a 24-hour mission. "I got to go and play astronaut for the week," she says. "It got me so much closer to the whole space thing."

When she returned home, she went on a second journey, that of acquiring the skills she'd need to apply to become an astronaut, should that rare opportunity present itself. She studied engineering and became one of the first female fighter pilots in the Italian Air Force. "I wouldn't say I was obsessed,"



Previous pages: Cristoforetti in the International Space Station.
 Clockwise from top left: A spacecraft approaches the station; Cristoforetti trains in a Russian spacesuit; she simulates a spacewalk underwater.



she says. “I always took pleasure in learning and doing what I was doing at that time. But I always kept the dream in mind.”

The European Space Agency had recruited astronaut candidates only twice before, most recently in the early 1990s, when Cristoforetti was a teenager. So when the agency announced it was accepting applications in 2008, she knew that was her once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

Along with 8,412 other qualified applicants, she toiled through the astronaut recruitment process, which included aptitude tests, psychological evaluations, medical exams, and interviews. She brushed up on her Russian language skills using a Harry Potter audiobook. (“I still have a small but enviable vocabulary of Russian magical terms,” she writes in her book.) Finally, she received the news she’d been waiting to hear — that she had fulfilled her childhood dream. “When you get that phone call that says you’ve been selected it’s like, Wow, what are the

chances of this really happening?” she says.

In September 2009, she began training for missions to the International Space Station. For spacewalk training, she practiced underwater to simulate weightlessness. She was fitted for both Russian and American spacesuits; the American gloves alone required 26 measurements. And she prepared for emergencies that she hoped would never happen — just little workplace mishaps like becoming untethered from the space station and floating away.

It was during one of these trainings that Bernd Böttiger, a member of the Rotary Club of Köln am Rhein, first met Cristoforetti. Böttiger, an internationally renowned specialist in emergency medicine, teaches astronauts resuscitation procedures in case of an emergency on the space station. “She impressed me as being extremely positive, extremely tough, extremely straightforward, extremely focused,” he says. “I can easily imagine how they found her among the thousands of applicants.”

In November 2014, after what may have felt like light-years of training, Cristoforetti was ready to rocket to space.

Pusk,” comes the voice on the radio at the launchpad in Baikonur, Kazakhstan. Start. Fuel begins to flow into the combustion chambers of the Soyuz TMA-15M Russian spacecraft.

“Zazhiganiye.” Ignition.

“Poyekhali!” Let’s go! the crew’s commander, Anton Shkaplerov, shouts. Cristoforetti and crewmate Terry Virts join in his cry as they catapult into the air with a sudden jolt. It’s the same thing cosmonauts have been shouting since Yuri Gagarin, the first human in space, did so in April 1961.

Crews flying into space perform rituals that surpass even the long-standing Rotary traditions familiar to members. In

the days leading up to liftoff, Cristoforetti details in her book, traditions include a screening of a Soviet-era film, a tree planting in Cosmonauts Alley, and a toast with fruit juice. Crew members sign their names on their hotel room doors, receive sprinkles of holy water from an Orthodox priest, and walk out to the bus that will take them to the launch site to the famous Russian rock song “Trava u Doma,” or “Grass by the Home.” And this will sound familiar to Rotary members: Once on board the space station, new astronauts may receive a pin, to mark their membership in an elite club.

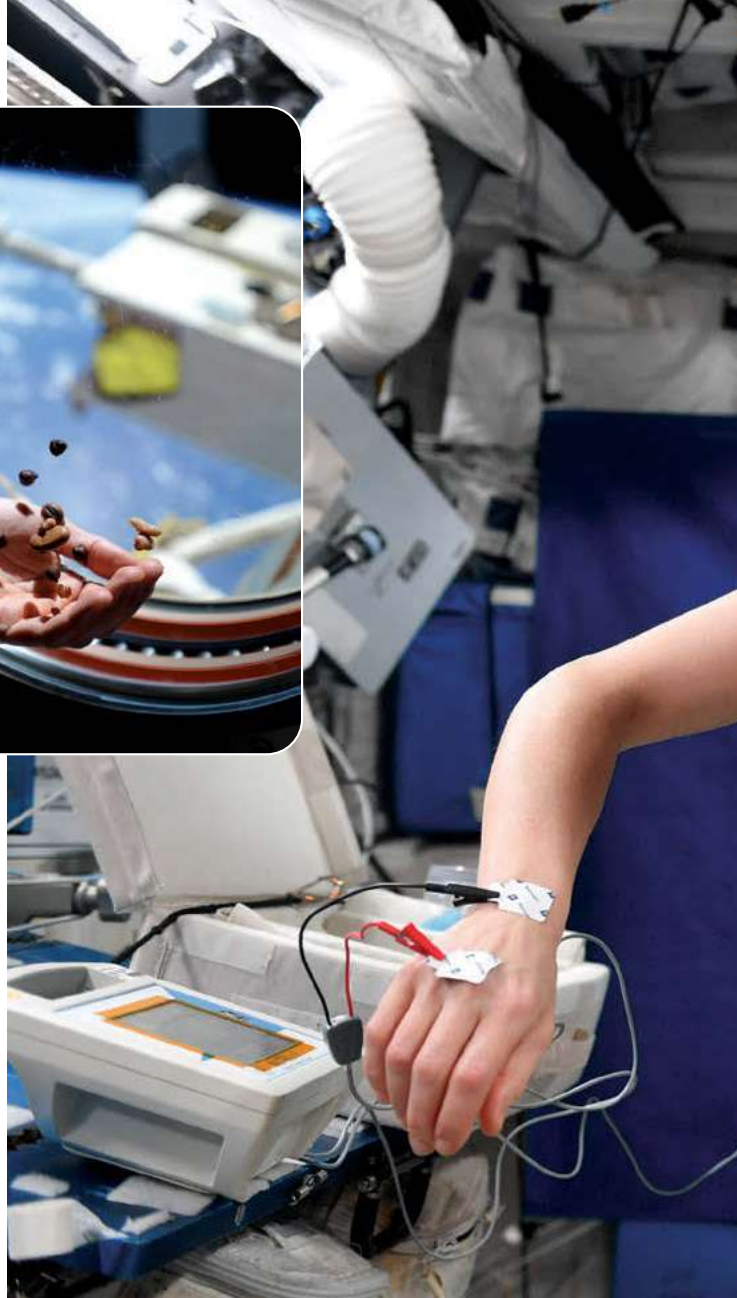
As the seconds tick by on the Soyuz, Cristoforetti and her crewmates are pressed into their seats with increased force until, about nine minutes later, the engines cut off as they reach orbit. “In their thick gloves, my hands are dangling at about eye level, as if they weren’t attached to me,” she writes in her book of that moment. “In an immediate flip that flies in the face of millions of years of body memory, I have to make an effort to hold them against my body.”

They reach the space station in about six hours and, after a couple of hours of procedures, the hatch between the Soyuz spacecraft and the research station opens. With a gentle push from Shkapterov, Cristoforetti squeezes through. It’s “like a second birth,” as she describes it, “one of those rare points of connection between past and future.” With that, she becomes the 216th person to live in the space station.

Since the first crew of one American and two Russians arrived in 2000, the International Space Station has been inhabited continuously by astronauts from 23 countries in something akin to a relay race, uninterrupted for 24 years. Cristoforetti has participated in two missions, her first from November 2014 to June 2015, at the time the longest ever for a woman in space at 200 days; the second from April to October 2022, which included a couple of weeks as space station commander, making her Europe’s first woman to hold the role.

Cristoforetti adjusted to all the space “firsts”: her first sleep (she opted not to tie herself to the wall with bungees and instead free floated in her phone booth-sized crew quarters); her first meal (scrambled eggs and oatmeal, which she set afloat so she could chomp it midair); her first trip to the bathroom (because of urine recycling, “yesterday’s coffee becomes tomorrow’s coffee,” she writes in her book). Then she got on with the business of being an astronaut.

Work hours run from about 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and start with a morning meeting. The station is first and foremost a scientific research vessel. During her missions, Cristoforetti



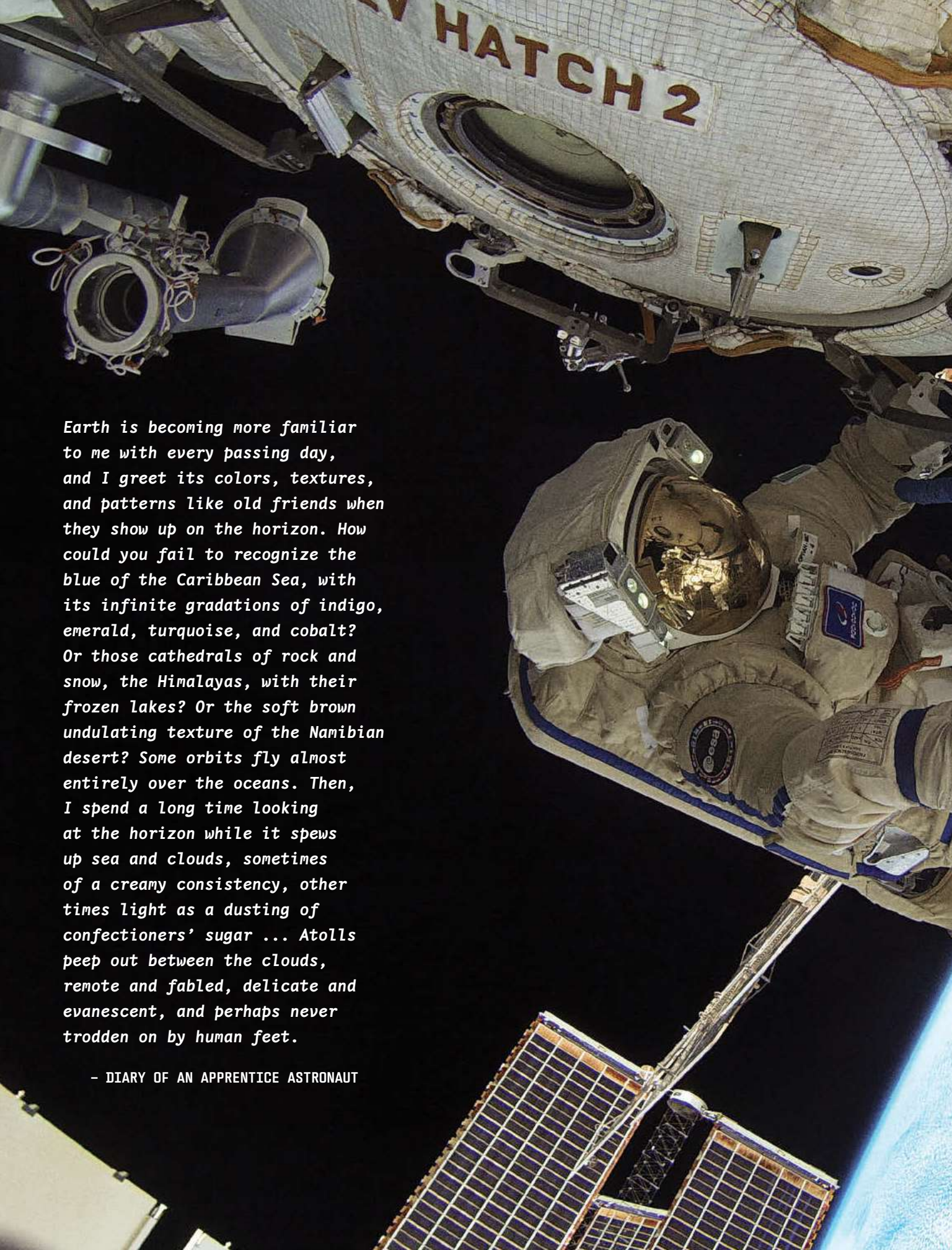
Clockwise from top left: On the space station, food floats away if it’s not secured; a device measures Cristoforetti’s fat and lean mass, part of scientific work to learn how the human body changes in space; planting a tree in Cosmonaut Alley is one of many astronaut traditions.

PHOTOS: (TOP) ESA/NASA, SAMANTHA CRISTOFORETTI; (BOTTOM) GCTC



Earth seems eternal when I see on its surface the scars of processes that have lasted for hundreds of millions of years: impact craters and volcanic craters, lines of collision and lines of separation, signs of erosion and deposition, ongoing changes too slow to perceive. Against this background, everything humans have produced, from pyramids to skyscrapers, from cave paintings to the works of Picasso – all of it seems to have been squeezed into a momentary pause between two gusts of wind.

- DIARY OF AN APPRENTICE ASTRONAUT



Earth is becoming more familiar to me with every passing day, and I greet its colors, textures, and patterns like old friends when they show up on the horizon. How could you fail to recognize the blue of the Caribbean Sea, with its infinite gradations of indigo, emerald, turquoise, and cobalt? Or those cathedrals of rock and snow, the Himalayas, with their frozen lakes? Or the soft brown undulating texture of the Namibian desert? Some orbits fly almost entirely over the oceans. Then, I spend a long time looking at the horizon while it spews up sea and clouds, sometimes of a creamy consistency, other times light as a dusting of confectioners' sugar ... Atolls peep out between the clouds, remote and fabled, delicate and evanescent, and perhaps never trodden on by human feet.

- DIARY OF AN APPRENTICE ASTRONAUT



PHOTO: ESA/NASA/ROS-COSMOS



Previous pages: Cristoforetti's first spacewalk. **Clockwise from top left:** Cristoforetti waves goodbye as her crew prepares to depart the space station; after a three-hour trip, she was back on Earth; working with crewmates to check water cooling lines on the space station. "How many astronauts does it take to change a light bulb?" she joked on social media.

has contributed to research on health topics such as the effect of noise on hearing, the maintenance of muscle tone, and osteoporosis, as well as other areas of science like the physics of emulsions and the properties of metals.

Keeping the space station up and running falls to the astronauts, with duties like housekeeping (even in space, you need to vacuum), maintenance, and the loading and unloading of cargo vehicles. They're also required to exercise 2.5 hours daily to prevent the loss of bone and muscle mass. Interspersed are meetings with their manager, flight controller, doctor, or psychologist. When their work is done, they might call home or enjoy the view from the cupola, one of Cristoforetti's favorite pastimes.

"Sometimes there are really busy weeks when you're working all the time and jumping from one task to the next. You literally forget that you're in space," she says. "Floating is your normal way of locomotion. You kind of forget about what it feels like to sit or to walk."

Still, she retained her sense of awe. On one of the final days of her first mission, she remembers spotting noctilucent clouds, a rare type of high-altitude cloud that thrills skywatchers with vivid blue wisps. "I'd been in space for over half a year, so you might think that you're kind of jaded by then, but it was like, 'Oh my gosh, here they are.'"

On her second mission, Cristoforetti participated in a seven-hour "extravehicular activity," what the rest of us know as a

spacewalk, the first by a European woman. She and a Russian crewmate deployed 10 nanosatellites as part of an experiment and did work on a robotic arm attached to the outside of the space station that assists astronauts with maintenance.

"It's overwhelming to carry out — demanding psychologically and physically, especially if you're a small female like me," she explains. "It's sheer concentration and willpower while you're doing it, and then once you're done, you can really let it sink in. It was such a feeling of accomplishment at having finally been able to do that. Just the experience going out, it was amazing."

In space, astronauts' days are programmed by others; there's no running to the grocery store or fighting traffic. Once they're back on Earth, they experience something akin to reverse culture shock. And there's that pesky thing called gravity. When Cristoforetti landed after her first trip, she details in her book, she borrowed a colleague's phone to call her partner, Lionel Ferra, who also works for the European Space Agency. As she finished, she began to push the phone back toward her colleague as if it would float on its own. A classic astronaut mistake. She caught herself just in time.

Cristoforetti is an astronaut, engineer, fighter pilot — and a TikTok sensation. Her biography on the social media platform reads, "European Space Agency

PHOTOS: ESA/NASA; (FAR RIGHT) NASA/KARL SHREEVES



Samantha Cristoforetti's new children's book, *The Astronaut Diaries*, will be published next month by Penguin Random House.



Left to right: Cristoforetti (center) returns to her hometown of Cologne after her second mission; exploring the ocean floor in preparation for astronauts' future missions to the moon and Mars. Following pages: Italy from space.

Astronaut boldly going where no Tiktoker has gone before 🚀”

Her TikTok feed runs the gamut from science experiments to space life tidbits. Videos include how to use the space toilet, floating 101, and flying into the aurora borealis. In a clip about how to drink coffee in space, a foil pouch floats beside her as a graphic reading “coffee please” flashes on the screen and the song “Coffee Break” by Jonah Nilsson plays in the background. Incorporating a bit of science into the video, she demonstrates why a regular cup won’t work in microgravity and how her gravy-boat-looking mug uses capillary action to guide the liquid toward her mouth.

“I wanted to try something new and to make sure that we reached the young audience. Everybody was telling me they’re all on TikTok,” she says. “I was like, ‘It’s going to be a problem. I don’t even know how to dance. I’m not sure you can dance in space.’” But she gave it a shot and ended up having a lot of fun.

While the space station work was exacting, Cristoforetti found other ways to spice up life in orbit. Her first mission, the quintessential Italian teamed up with Lavazza to bring on board the first space espresso maker, dubbed the ISSpresso machine. She celebrated its arrival on a Dragon cargo spacecraft by changing into a uniform from *Star Trek: Voyager*. The espresso maker served double duty as a study in fluid mechanics. And as part of a UNICEF initiative, she sang the John Lennon classic “Imagine” from the space station cupola, one of many renditions by people all around the world that were included in a video released on New Year’s Eve 2014.

When she’s earthbound, Cristoforetti lives in Cologne with her partner and two children. Impressed with her character, Böttiger invited her to join the Köln am Rhein Rotary club between her first and second missions. “I thought it was a good place to bond with people who want to maybe live life with purpose,” she says. And who doesn’t want to dine with an astronaut? “It is really impressive to sit together with her at a table and eat and drink with her,” Böttiger says.

Beyond space, Cristoforetti’s work has taken her from the ocean floor (she lived 19 meters below the Earth’s surface for nine days as commander of NASA’s NEEMO 23 crew) to Norwegian fjords, where she participated in a field expedition studying lunar-like geology. It was practice for someday soon when astronauts will again explore the moon’s surface.

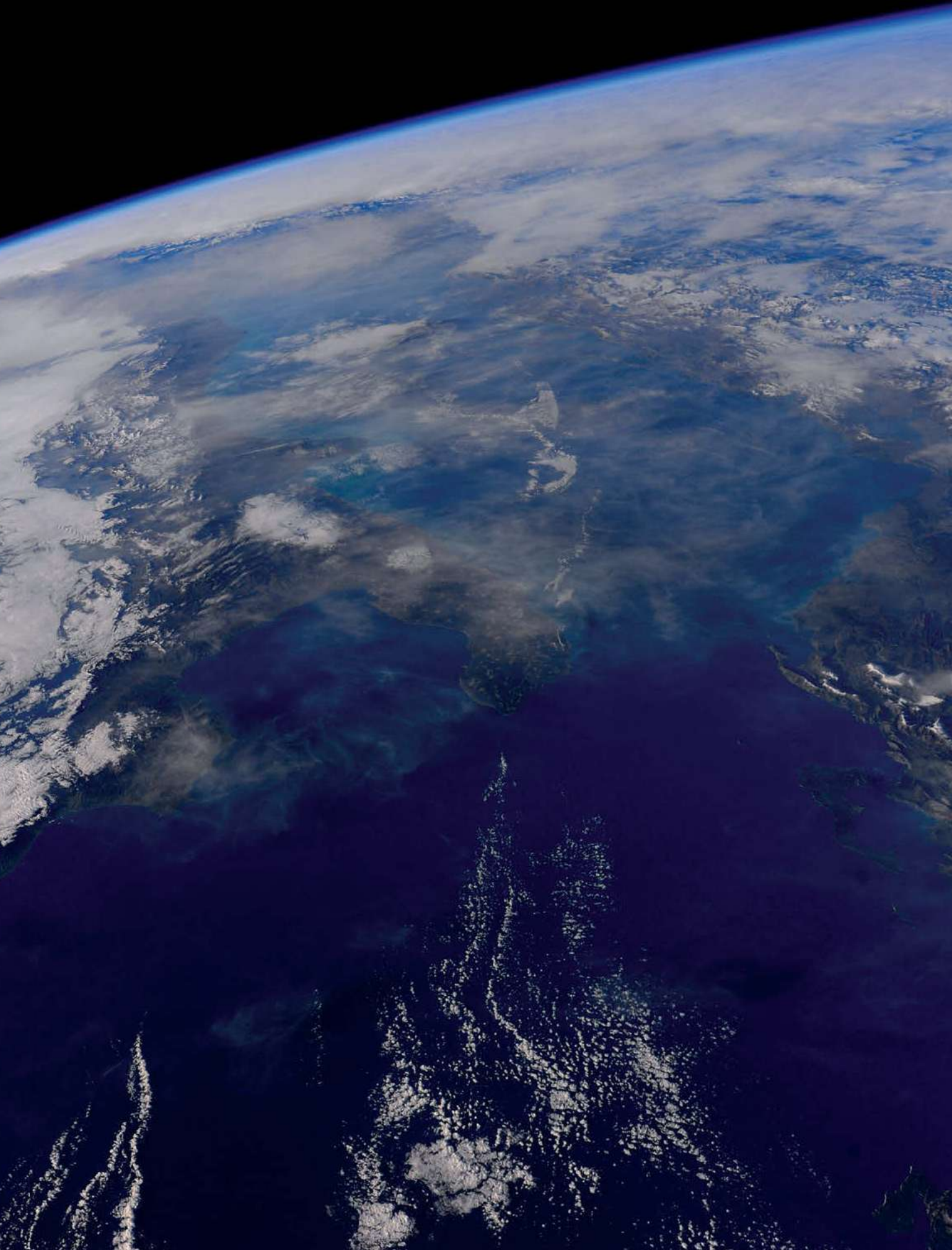
Having been everywhere from the ocean’s depths to outer space, where’s next for Cristoforetti? She ponders the question. “Will I ever go to New Zealand? I don’t know. It’s so far. It’s such an investment of time and effort. When I was on the space station, I flew over New Zealand every day. It was so easy, right?” she says. “I could just look out the window and, in a way, I was there.

“But at the same time, you’re kind of curious to see how it looks down there, so of course I’d love to go to Patagonia. I’d love to go to the mountains in Chile, all those places that become so familiar to you when you are in space. And yet, they are so far when you are on Earth.” ■

I want to start saying my goodbyes to Earth: to the regular geometries of the desert dunes; to snowy-white peaks; to the wind, which takes shape as clouds, and to the myriad green lights of fishing boats in southeast Asia; to the blinding sun-glint on a polished sea ... There are no rituals or verses for this, no gestures. This experience is too new in the history of humanity. Not a single poet has seen what I am seeing; not one has been moved by the spectacle I have in front of me.

- DIARY OF AN APPRENTICE ASTRONAUT





PRMFI and PCRG

Christmas Party

Rotary Center, Quezon City | 10 December 2024

2024

In a show of solidarity, the Philippine Rotary Magazine Foundation, Inc. (PRMFI) and the Philippine College of Rotary Governors (PCRG) held a joint Christmas party last December 10, 2024 at the D3780 Rotary Center in Quezon City.

More than 200 Rotary leaders and spouses gathered for more than four hours of fun, games, music and vintage fellowship as they exchanged stories on how they endeavored to uplift communities and edify lives through well-focused service projects.

PRMFI Chair Emiliano ‘Bong’ Joven observed that it was a gathering of “a family united by service, fellowship, and a shared commitment to making a difference in our communities and beyond.” PCRG Chair Rep. Odie Tariela conveyed his Christmas message through Vice Chair Ador Tolentino and Past District Governor Willie Serafica. He also gifted all the guests with full-sized Christmas-themed bed pillows to ensure that they sleep soundly all year round.

Gifts and prizes galore were brought home by everyone. It was truly a Christmas party like no other!

- ▶ Top row: Past Governors Bong Joven, Willie Serafica and Ador Tolentino.
- ▶ Second row: PRID Guiller Tumangan and Spouse Letty; RRFC Penny Policarpio and Spouse PP Joan.
- ▶ Bottom row: PDG Ambo Gancayco and Spouse Dot; PDG Josie Ang and Spouse John.





▲ Above: Rotary governors and their spouses manifest solidarity in the season of love and giving.

◀ Second row: (L-R): PRID Guillerm Tumangan, Spouse Celene Choa, PP Lilibeth dela Cruz and PDG Dindo Berino; Gov. Ariel Jersey with PRMFI Trustees Bong Joven, Sonny Coloma, and Mike Lirio.

◀ Bottom row: RPIC Ernie Choa, PP Lilibeth dela Cruz; PDG Lulu Aliño, PP Pleshy Wee, and PDG Oyan Villanueva; D3790 leaders Gov. Ariel Jersey and spouse with PDG Willy Serafica.

► Top row: Christmas fellowship is a high point of every Rotary year well spent in the service of God and community.



► Second row: (L-R): Governors' Spouses Tolentino, PP Chay Pagdilao and Ms. Garcia with Past Governors Edna Sutter, Lewi Tolentino and Sue Sta. Maria; (L-R) Party coordinators Past Presidents Megs Lunn and Susan Czudai with Past PRM Chair Chito Borromeo and Chair Bong Joven prepare to raffle grand prize.



► Third row: With childlike gusto, Rotary senior leaders enjoy camaraderie; PDGs Rey Castillo, Twinkle Gamboa and Lai dela Cruz.



► Bottom row: With PRID Guillerm Tumanagan and PDGs Mike Lirio and Bing Garcia at their back are PDGs Tito Enriquez, Manny Along, Jess Nicdao, EMGA Jun Farcon and PDG Jude Doctora — most of whom had served as PRM and PCRG Trustees; (L-R) Past PRM Chair Chito Borromeo with PDG Edna Sutter and DG Milo Lucenario





◀ Top row: A kaleidoscope of colors emerges from Christmas attire worn by PH Rotary leaders.



◀ Second row: Past Governors Gina Sy (second from left, inner photo) and Ed Ayento (extreme right, outer photo) join the action, too.



◀ Third row: Past Trustee Lyn Abanilla who serves as PRM marketing advisor joins RPIC Ernie Choa and PDG Lilo Aliño who flew in from Cebu.



◀ Bottom row: D3820 past governors' contingent is joined by Past PRM Chair Chito Borromeo; Past PRM Chair Sam Pagdilao is joined by party coordinators Megs Lunn and Susan Czudai.

THE SEARCH FOR **THE MOST OUTSTANDING ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS** 2024-2025

Philippine
Rotary
Media Foundation



Objectives

Rotary International has adopted as its Area of Focus: **Protecting the Environment**. Clubs and districts are now encouraged to apply for global grants to support environment focused activities.

The Rotary Foundation supports activities that strengthen the conservation and protection of natural resources, advance environmental sustainability, and foster harmony between people and the environment. It encourages interventions that have a positive, measurable, and sustainable impact.

Project pathways are envisioned to fulfill the following objectives:

- 1. Conserve nature and biodiversity**, from species to landscape-scale protection.
- 2. Mitigate climate change** by reducing or avoiding greenhouse gas emissions or ensuring that they are absorbed or stored in natural carbon sinks.
- 3. Facilitate sustainable and adaptable livelihood** with smaller ecological footprints that maintain people's social well-being in harmony with flourishing natural systems.
- 4. Strengthen environmental equity** by addressing socio-environmental issues that disproportionately affect marginalized communities.

Search

Rotary Clubs in each of the ten (10) Rotary districts in the Philippines are invited to present and nominate projects and programs that create and foster a sustainable environment through the foregoing pathways. These projects must involve partnership with communities, including public and private institutions, or local government units (LGUs), or national government agencies.

Such projects must be in consonance with Rotary's mission, goals, core values and principles. The projects must have been actively implemented for at least one year prior to the conferment of awards.

Criteria: I-M-P-A-C-T

Innovative (15%) The project should be characterized by an out-of-the-box approach both in terms of understanding the problem and in providing solutions.

Multiplicative (15%) The project should be replicable in other communities, while ensuring that the local context is sufficiently adapted in the project design.

Problem-Solution Fit (15%) Solutions should emanate from clearly-identified social-ecological needs. These should be demonstrably responsive to the problems identified and assessed needs.

Able To Be Sustained (20%) Interventions have a long-term view both in terms of continuity and impact.

Co-Production (15%) The project should be co-designed with the community that is engaged in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating it.

Transformative (20%) Verifiable and positive changes in social behavior and in the environment should be demonstrated. Project objectives are met satisfactorily. Safeguards are in place to deal with unintended consequences that could threaten project viability

Selection & Awards

Each District shall select the Most Outstanding Project from among those submitted by the Clubs. The Most Outstanding Project shall receive a cash prize of Fifty Thousand Pesos (₱50,000) and a Certificate of Recognition.

PRMFI shall form and constitute a Board of Judges that shall select the Top Three Most Outstanding Projects.

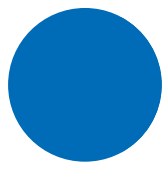
Cash prizes and appropriate tokens of recognition will be given as follows: Gold Prize, ₱300,000; Silver Prize, ₱200,000; Bronze Prize, ₱150,000.





Register and pay by 15 December 2024
before prices increase

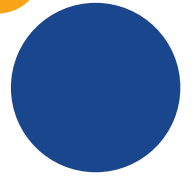
convention.rotary.org



**BUILDING
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