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**Kiwanis**  
CLUB OF ROANOKE

December 2025  
Vol. 107 No. 10  
*"Year of Inspired Action"*

### **In this Issue**

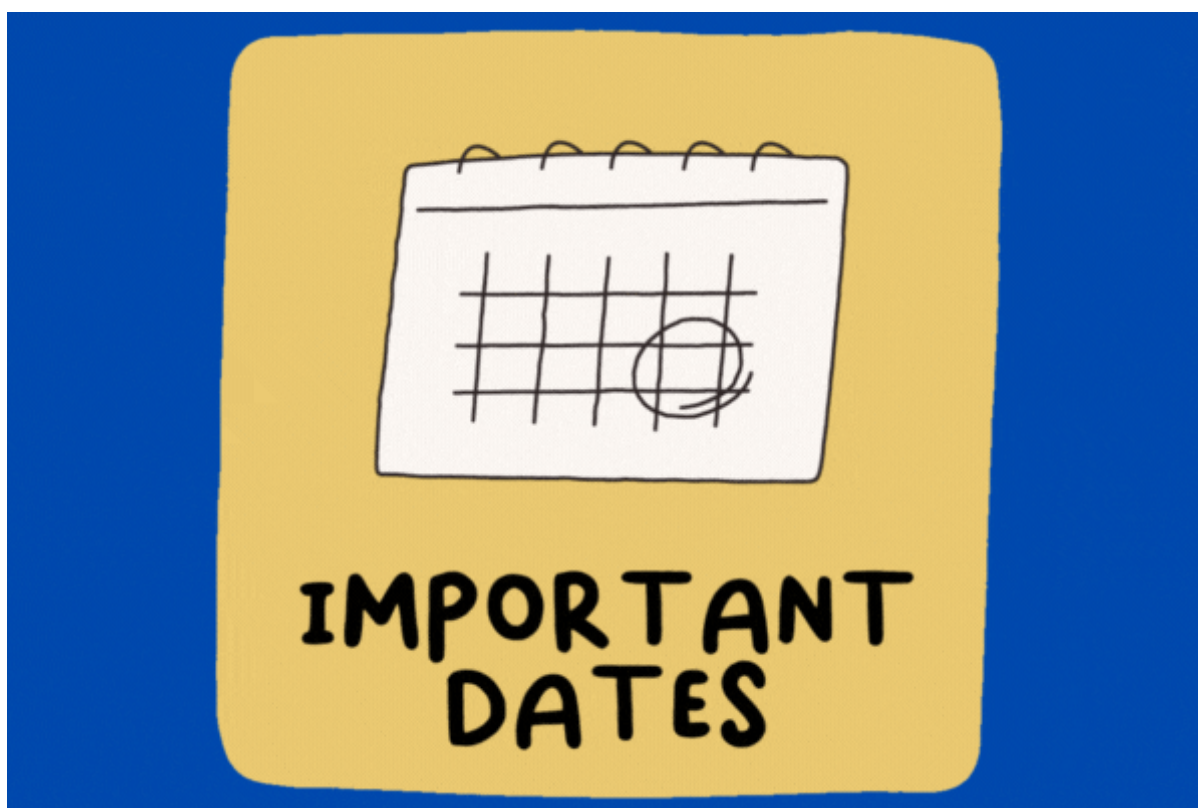
Important Dates

Speakers' Info

Feature Photos

Kiwanis Happenings

Kiwanian Birthdays



**December 8** - (12:15 - 1:30 pm) Board Meeting

**December 9** - (6 - 9 pm) Fun Social Party/Dancing CANCELLED

**December 10** - (12:30 - 1:30 pm) Club Meeting - Karen Pillis, West End Center

**December 12, 19** - (6 - 9 pm) Salvation Army Bell Ringing  
**December 14** - (5:30 pm) Book Club Meeting  
**December 17** - (12:30 - 1:30 pm) Club Meeting - Holiday Party  
**December 24** - NO MEETING  
**December 31** - NO MEETING

**January 8** - (6:30 - 9 pm) Fun Hockey Game  
**January 10** - (9 am - 2 pm) Habitat ReStore Spruce Up

You can always stay up-to-date by checking out the calendar on our [website here](#).

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## **December 10 - Club Meeting, Karen Pillis - West End Center**

Join us Wednesday for our weekly meeting in Charter Hall on the third floor of the City Market Building; networking and lunch begin at 12:00PM. We will listen to Karen Pillis, Executive Director of the West End Center for Youth. Karen will talk about empowering youth and strengthening community. She will provide a brief history and most recent updates of the WEC. Karen will be joined by Adrianna Mack, who will discuss her experience as a child growing up at the WEC.

Karen is a lifelong Roanoker graduating from Roanoke City Public Schools and the University of Virginia. After a career in retail, she became a PTA mom and leader, a girl scout leader, and an Odyssey of the Mind coach. She worked at Family Service of Roanoke Valley overseeing a variety of clinical and community based programs and became the Executive Director of West End Center in 2021. Karen holds a Masters Degree in Counseling Education from Radford University.

Adrianna is a freshman at Patrick Henry High School. She has attended WEC since kindergarten. Her mother also attended WEC when she was younger and was happy to be able to send both of her children to there. She is on the

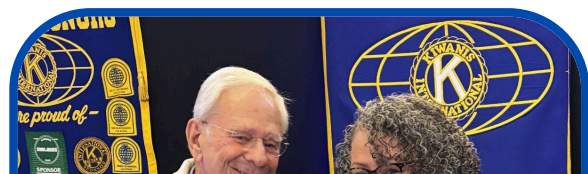
PH track team competing in shot put and still attends the West End Center each day that she can.



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## Highlights From Our Last Meeting

Most photos are taken by our resident photographer extraordinaire, Don Witt, who also adds the captions.





John Montgomery awards grant check to Emmanuel Wesleyan church



Lisa Spencer receives a grant for Local Colors



Restoration Housing receives grant check from John Montgomery



Joe Lemmer presents grant check to Montana Kimrey





Reif Kessler brags on his Duke Blue Devils



Armistead Lemon touts the accomplishments of North Cross school



**Kiwanis**  
CLUB OF ROANOKE

Happenings

### **Calendars are Needed**

2026 Calendars are needed for residents at the Salem V A. Please save all those free calendars you receive in the mail and bring them to our meeting. Deposit them in the box on the table near check in. Thank you for helping our veterans! Andree

### **Salvation Army Bell Ringing**

The snow and cold resulted in small attendance at Dickens of a Christmas on December 5. Our Kiwanis volunteers for that evening elected to stay warm at home.

We look forward to better weather on December 12 and 19. Below is our schedule of volunteers for those two evenings.

For December 12:

~ Chris & Bruce would welcome two more ringers starting at 5PM.

~ We have room for four volunteers from 8 to 9PM.

To volunteer, or for more information, please contact:

~ Mike Bell at 540-206-8211, or

~ Ken Briggs at 540-314-9616.

If you plan to financially support the Salvation Army this season, please consider giving your donation to one of our volunteers to be placed in the Kiwanis kettle.

**Kiwanis Club of Roanoke**  
**Salvation Army Bell Ringing, 2025**  
**Dickens of a Christmas**

**Friday, December 5---“Christmas Tree Lighting” Cancelled - SNOW & COLD!!!**

5 to 6PM — Bill Bestpitch, John Pendleton,

6 to 7PM — Will Dibling, Bob Rutherford, Betsy & Chris Bohannon.

7 to 8PM — Reif Kessler, Chris Woodrum,

8 to 9PM — Ken Briggs, Jeff Schweiger (A), JJ Harper (A)

**Friday, December 12—“The Christmas Parade”**

5 to 6PM — Chris Rouse, Bruce Swanson,

6 to 7PM — Joe & Sally Lemmer, Mike & Beth O'Brochta

7 to 8PM — Preston & Chauna Tyler, David & Margarita Bowers.

8 to 9PM —

**Friday, December 19—“The SPCA Pet Costume Contest”**

5 to 6PM — John & Joyce Montgomery; Will Dibling; Bob Rutherford

6 to 7PM — Rupert Cutler & Brenda McDaniel, Mike & Tiffini Bell

7 to 8PM — Joe & Sally Lemmer;

8 to 9PM — Ken Briggs, Jeff Schweiger (A), JJ Harper (A)

**Our location will again be outside the Market Square entrance to Center in the Square.**



### **Hockey Game January 8**

Fun Committee event. Socialize and enjoy a Rail Yard Dawgs hockey game on Thursday January 8; arrive by 6:30pm to grab some food and socialize, the puck drops at 7:05pm. We have a block of 22 seats reserved close to the ice where the action takes place. Club members and guests are invited. Non-refundable tickets must be purchased through our Club no later than December 29; \$24 each. Contact Mike O'Brochta to sign-up.



### **Book Club**

Hope you can join us in 2026 on January 14th at 5:30 pm at Mike Bell's office

at Anderson and Reed. Introduce us to one of the books you've recently read and wish to share. Thanks to Mike Bell for hosting us again!

No meeting this week - we are skipping December - so read on and save the date in January!

These books were discussed in November - thanks to those of you who joined the group that night: We enjoyed the contributions by our newly attending club member - James Matthews - welcome!

"The Afghan" by Frederick Forsyth - Fiction

"Marble Hall Murders, Moonflower Murders, and Magpie Murders" by Anthony Horowitz - fiction

"Code to Zero" by Ke "Secret of Secrets" by Dan Brown - fiction

"The Trial of the Century: The Scopes Monkey Trial" By Gregg Jarrett with Don Yaeger  
(nonfiction)

"The Gales of November: The Untold Story of Edmund Fitzgerald" by John U Bacon (nonfiction)

"Cutting for Stone" by Dr. Abraham Verhese MD (also wrote "Covenant of Water" - fiction

"The Woman in Suite 11" by Ruth Ware - fiction

"Hitler: the Ascent, 1889-1939" by Volker Ullrich (nonfiction)

Next Book Club session to be held on January 14th at 5:30 pm at Anderson and Reed...

Wishing you the happiest of holidays - see you in 2026! Happy Reading! (Or we might get to see you at our next club luncheon!)

Gratefully,

Cheri and Dave Hartman

## **Business Outreach**

Under the direction of our Membership committee, our Club has just initiated a series of business outreach efforts. We will be reaching out to the business community in a number of ways to spotlight our corporate membership option. Mike O'Brochta, who is leading this effort, is grateful for the Club members who have already volunteered to help and is looking for one or two more volunteers; please contact him to discuss.

## **Many Club Events On Calendar**

Members of our Kiwanis Club are busy. Much going on. That's great. On average for the next couple of months, beyond our weekly Club meetings, we have one additional event going on every week. Impressive. [Click here](#) to read the Club calendar on our website for details.

## **Research Report Kiwanis Nature Park**

By Dr. Rupert Cutler, co- chair of the Kiwanis Nature Park and Past President of the Kiwanis Club of Roanoke:

On Dec 3rd, at Heights Community Church, as part of its Star City Sustainability Series, the Clean Valley Council hosted a panel of Roanoke College students to present on the topic, "Portrait of a Park: Kiwanis Nature Park's Past, Present, and Future." It was a culmination of a semester's worth of intensive study of our club's park project on City-owned land between Melrose Plaza and Forest Park Academy. I salute Dr. Laura Hartman and the members of her environmental studies senior class for their astonishing discoveries, from land use history through neighborhood demography to documentation of the surprising diversity of plant and animal life on this small tract. On this property is a short stretch of Horton Branch, a creek that runs from the Roanoke Country Club to the Roanoke River, where Roanoke Kiwanis Club leaders in 2022 elected to move on from the Centennial Playground provided under Dr. Cheri Hartman's and Jackie Bledsoe's leadership to create a "nature park." As with the playground equipment, the

park infrastructure provided by Kiwanis--already including a pollinator garden, picnic table and benches, nature trail, newly planted trees, and the beginnings of an amphitheater—will become City property. Who knew this 2 ½ acre former mowed grass lawn would harbor so much life? Brenda and I had front-row seats at the presentation.

Cheri's footnotes:

And by the way - the Kiwanis Nature Park was Rupe's idea!!! Thank you for your inspiration!

Our project takes flight with its newest addition- a bluebird house donated by the Roanoke Valley Bird Club and installed by Don Witt! Thank you to Don!

You are a master of so many skills and possessing boundless energy!

Clean Valley Council furthers our impact in multiple ways. They reported on sharing our book, Larry the Roanoke Logperch, with dozens of audiences as well as sponsoring this Sustainability educational series. Thank you to Courtney Plaster!!!



## Meeting Recordings

Note that Club meeting recordings can be found on our YouTube channel [here](#).

## Club Meeting Zoom Info

Here is the [zoom link](#)

Meeting ID: 817 8581 5453

Passcode: 102906

*Please email any potential Kiwanian happenings by 7 pm on Monday to Alex at [abargell@gmail.com](mailto:abargell@gmail.com).*

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**Please consider sharing this email with a friend!**

 **Forward**

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## **Kiwanian Birthdays**

### DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Dec. 3 -- Fred Jeter  
Dec. 5 -- Jay Harlow  
Dec. 14 -- Jim Joyce  
Dec. 17 -- Mike McEvoy  
Dec. 21 -- Diane DeHaven  
Dec. 21 -- Randy Myers  
Dec. 22 --Shelia Bower  
Dec. 23 -- Chuck Baker  
Dec. 26 -- Lois James  
Dec. 28 -- Judy Clark

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# Kiwaniis® 2025-26

CLUB OF ROANOKE

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David Hartman, President-  
Elect

Reif Kessler, Vice President

John Montgomery,  
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Roanoke

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Greg Lionberger, 2026

Alex Barge, 2026

Preston Tyler, 2027

Bert Boyd, 2027

Chris Rouse, 2027

Jeff Vick, 2028

Steve English, 2028

Fred Jeter, 2028



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