



Program: Barry Wright

Prayer/Pledge: Jennifer Purdee

Health & Happiness: Kelly Morris

Sgt.-at-Arms: Monte Monteleone

Welcome to our December 11 meeting

We are glad you are here!



Daniel Stowe
Botanical Garden

Daniel Stowe Botanical
Garden

Patrick Larkin, Executive
Director

December Birthdays

Phillip Coyle – 15
David Deas – 8
Mark Epstein – 9
Chris McCallister – 3
Jason Ramey – 12
Terri Sanford – 9
Michael Scott – 18
Earl Tindol – 20



December Club Anniversaries (Years)

Daniel Boyd	22
Don Buckner	19
Steve Campbell	30
Ralph Dickson	5
Jay Falls	13
Walter Gray	32
Wil Neumann	3
Royce Robinson	39
John Sam	27
Jennie Stultz	27
Mike Stanforth	21
Wes Styers	19



Gastonia East Board Members

Morgan Rhoney, President	Jennifer Purdee, Sargent-at-Arms	Lindsay Nelson, Membership
Page Morgan, President elect	Julia Allen, Service Chair	Barry Wright & Mike Stanforth, Rotary Foundation
Jason Ramey, Secretary	Chris McCallister, Interact Chair	Kelly Morris, International Service
Steve D'Avria, Treasurer	John Pea, Club Programs Chair	Kent Huggins, Exec. Secretary
Sonya McGraw, Immediate Past President		

The individuals listed below are responsible for Rotary Meeting service on the assigned dates. **If you cannot attend on the date requested, please delegate your responsibility to another club member.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Prayer/Pledge</u>	<u>Bingo</u>	<u>Sgt.at Arms</u>	<u>Health & Happiness</u>
December 18	Jennifer Purdee	Barry Wright	Monte Monteleone	Kelly Morris

Upcoming Events

December 18	Christmas Event
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In Mexico's migrant shelters, a Rotary scholar puts his education into action

There are two inescapable elements of southern Mexico.

The first is dust – desert rock ground to a powder that finds its way into your every crevice: the backs of your knees, the folds of your eyelids. You cough it up as you drift to sleep and discover its brume settled across your bedsheets in the morning.

The second element is violence. I found both on the gritty tracks of the Beast.

Among those apprehended at the U.S.-Mexican border between October 2015 and January 2016 were 24,616 families – the vast majority of them from Central America.

Over the past half-century, millions of Central Americans have crossed Mexico from south to north, fleeing poverty, decades-long civil wars, and, most recently, brutal gangs. To escape, migrants used to ride atop the cars of the train line known as the Beast.

In July 2014, Mexican immigration officials announced a plan called the Southern Border Program; part of it entailed closing the Beast to migrants. Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto said the plan would create new economic zones and safeguard migrants' human rights by securing the country's historically volatile southern border. Instead, the number of migrants beaten, kidnapped, and murdered has skyrocketed. Some have even been victims of the black-market trade in organs.

In early 2015 I had just completed my studies as a Rotary global grant scholar, earning a master's degree in the anthropology of development. I had studied how trade and development initiatives in Mexico could make people's lives more perilous, not less. To learn about what was going wrong, I went to southern Mexico to use the skills I had gained through my global grant studies.

Southern Mexico is poor and rural, made up of small pueblos and subsistence agriculture. In some ways, I felt at home. I grew up in rural Georgia, and I became interested in immigration after teaching English to farmworkers harvesting cabbage, berries, and Christmas trees in the foothills of North Carolina. Many of the men I worked with were from southern Mexico. Their descriptions of the violence brought by drug and human trafficking led to my interest in the region.

Shelters house migrants including children traveling with family members as well as young people on their own. To understand how the Southern Border Program was affecting people's lives, I stayed in migrant shelters, which are not unlike homeless shelters or temporary refugee camps. They are often without reliable running water or electricity, but they do provide migrants with a warm meal and a place to rest before they continue north.

At first, shelter life was a shock to me. Sick or injured people arrived nearly each day. Severe dehydration was a big problem, and some people had literally walked the skin off the bottoms of their feet. I was there when a gang member entered the shelter to kidnap someone, but shelter directors stopped him.

For more, visit Rotary.org.



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