

# Rotary

DECEMBER 2024

MAGAZINE

Removing the  
barriers to  
accessible travel  
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Where to go to  
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One Rotarian's  
out-of-this-world  
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## THE TRAVEL ISSUE

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known — and unknown





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# EXPLORE EGYPT

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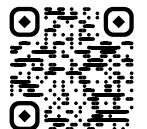
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## With heart and mind

**T**o 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).









**YOU ARE HERE:** Munnar area,  
Kerala state, India

**GREETING:** Namaskaram

**CLOUD FARM:** At an altitude of 6,500 feet, Cloud Farm is a popular campsite near the farming village of Yellapetty, on the edge of Kerala's border with the state of Tamil Nadu. Nestled in the Western Ghats mountain range, the site's green hills funnel mist into spectacular cloud formations.

**THE PHOTOGRAPHER:** Kameshwaran Paramasivam, a dual member of the Rotary and Rotaract clubs of Madurai North, snapped this photo in 2023. "When dawn broke, a waterfall of clouds, ethereal and majestic, seemed to cascade down from the heavens," he says.

**HONEYMOON HEAVEN:** Munnar, the area's largest town, was a British summer resort in the colonial era and today is a popular destination for Indian honeymooners. In addition to having pristine forests, lush green hills, and splashy waterfalls, it is home to some of the world's largest tea plantations. Neelakurinji, a rare plant that flowers once in 12 years, bathes the hills while in bloom.

**THE CLUBS:** Kerala is home to 362 Rotary clubs across three districts.

# Rotary

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DECEMBER 2024

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#GIVINGTUESDAY

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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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Throngs of tourists are overwhelming the world's most popular destinations. Here's how to rethink the way you travel — and an alternative bucket list to get you started.

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

# The world beyond

**W**hen I was 11 and growing up in central China, I was admitted to a boarding school that specialized in teaching foreign languages. Since the school was far from home, my mother was reluctant to let me go. But her brother, my Uncle Bao, convinced her it was for the best. As a parting gift he gave me a pet frog and told me the old fable of the frog in the well.

There once was a frog, said Uncle Bao, who lived at the bottom of an abandoned well. He felt like a king because he had this subterranean kingdom all to himself. One day, a nearby river flooded and a giant turtle was swept ashore and landed atop the well. The frog invited the turtle down into his kingdom, but the giant turtle couldn't squeeze through the opening.

"Why don't you jump out and I'll show you *my* world?" suggested the turtle.

The frog protested. Why should he leave a place where there were plenty of insects to eat, a small, muddy pool in which to swim, and where, at night, he could look at the stars through the narrow opening of the well?

"But if you leave the well," replied the turtle, "you will find that the world is vast, that its rivers and oceans are boundless, and that the sky and stars are limitless."

At this the frog fell silent. Stunned by this news, he did not know what to say. He had no idea that a place bigger than the well could even exist.

"So, what happened to the frog? How does the story end?" I asked Uncle Bao. "It depends on how you want to end the story," he replied. "There's nothing wrong with the frog staying in the well that provides security and comfort, but his life would be more fulfilling if he ventures out to see the ocean. In your case, leaving home to study languages is like building a ladder for you to step out and follow your dreams."

I thought of my uncle's fable, which I later learned was based on a parable by Lao-tzu, the founder of Taoism, as we prepared this month's special travel issue. No one knows better than members of Rotary the boundless benefits of travel. Since



The author graduates from boarding school at 17.

its inception, when club meetings rotated from one member's office to another's, Rotary has understood that the key to true connection and peace — whether sending students abroad, attending the Rotary Convention, or participating in international service projects — was the ability to step out of our homes and offices, our neighborhoods and countries, and learn how other people live their lives.

So enjoy this special issue, where we explore different modes of travel, the ethics of travel, and the connection between travel and Rotary. (We also suggest a few alternatives to popular and sometimes overcrowded destinations.) Then make plans to climb out of your well and explore the limitless world that lies beyond, where you will meet, befriend, and be befriended by the many wonderful people who live there.

You may wonder what became of my pet frog. At first, my father stored it in a special container, but after a few days, I recognized that the poor creature could not endure such confinement. When my mother suggested I give it to Auntie Pan next door who loved eating frog legs — a fate even worse than that small container — I snuck away from home with my frog and released it into a river. And soon after, off I went to my special language school and eventually traveled even further into the wide world that lay beyond.

Nowadays, each time I hear frogs croaking at night, I wonder whether Lao-tzu's frog might have found his way down the river to the wide ocean to see the world — just like me. And, we hope, just like you.

**WEN HUANG**  
Editor in chief



## STAFF CORNER

# Carla De Santo

*Travel manager,  
Operations and Administration*

**I became fascinated with travel** while growing up in a Chicago suburb. My aunt worked for the now defunct Pan American World Airways. She traveled to Europe and Africa and sometimes brought my mom and my grandparents on her trips. This inspired me to study French in high school and at the University of Illinois Chicago, through which I spent a year at Université de Paris IV, La Sorbonne. I learned so much — not just language but about other cultures.

**As a student worker, I staffed a multilingual information booth at O'Hare Airport**, providing directions or sometimes helping people fill out entry documents at the arrival hall. After graduation, I was hired by Alitalia, Italy's flagship airline. Four years later, I moved to Belgium's Sabena World Airlines as a passenger service manager out of O'Hare.

**Sabena promoted me to station manager** to open its U.S. gateway in Cincinnati soon after the airline started a code share arrangement with Delta in 1997. I became the company's first woman to hold that position. Sabena stopped operating in 2002, but the hub in Ohio had proved to be successful, taking travelers to Brussels where they could then fly to various smaller destinations in Europe. I met several heroes I admired, like astronaut Neil Armstrong, who autographed a boarding pass for me.

**The aviation industry can be volatile.** The Sabena-Delta partnership ended in 2000. The 9/11 attacks devastated the airline industry. When travel jobs at my level were scarce, I managed a furniture store and even sold cars for a while. I eventually moved back to Chicago to be closer to family, but I was focused on returning to the travel industry.



**I started with Rotary in 2008.** Our three-member team manages Rotary's funded travel programs, overseeing our contracted travel agencies that book reservations for Rotary volunteers and staff. Last year, we issued more than 7,000 tickets. Our primary agency is based in the U.S., and our six affiliate agencies are in New Zealand, Brazil, Japan, Korea, India, and the Philippines. Each agency has dedicated agents who are familiar with Rotary and our travel policy. Our biggest annual events are the International Assembly and the Rotary International Convention. I deal with a different situation every day and enjoy helping Rotarians.

**I come from a close-knit family of Italian immigrants.** While I raised my daughter as a single parent, my parents and siblings often came to Cincinnati to babysit when I needed to travel. During the COVID-19 pandemic, my ailing mother moved in with me and I took care of her until she passed away at 97. My daughter broke her leg in her teenage years badly enough to need a titanium rod, and the painkillers led her down a path of physical and emotional dependence on opioids. In 2022, she died at 32, one of too many people in the U.S. lost to this public health epidemic. Not a single day passes when I don't miss her.

**Now I'm applying for Italian citizenship.** Italy seems an ideal place for retirement. Travel is still my passion. Each trip you take changes you forever. ■

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## THE SPECIALIST

# Turning tourists into travelers

*A tour operator guides visitors toward a deeper exploration*

**I came to the United States from South Vietnam at age 12**, right before Saigon fell to the Communists in April 1975. As the U.S. military was pulling out, my family joined tens of thousands of refugees and fled the country. A refugee sponsor in Wisconsin welcomed us.

**In my 20s, I made myself a promise that I would retire at 55.** I got lucky with some stocks that I had purchased, sold them, and bought a property. With the profits, I invested in more real estate and then in hotels. In 2017, I was able to retire as planned. I still have my real estate business, but it's smaller. My business partner and I manage the properties together.

**My wife, Susan, a university administrator, shares my interest in food and travel.** So we decided, upon my retirement, to launch a tour business that's called

Cuisine Adventure Tours. The name contains three components — tasting local food, experiencing local cultures, and going sightseeing. Since I know a lot about Vietnam and have extensive contacts there, we focused on my native country. We recently expanded the tours to southern Africa, including South Africa, Botswana, and Zimbabwe, which I came to know and love while conducting my real estate businesses there.

### **My tour business is more of a passion than a job.**

I want to show people the beautiful Vietnam that has vastly changed from what it was 50 years ago. I organize three to four tours in December and March. Each trip is limited to about 10 people, who come from all over the U.S. I go on every trip, and the staff there plans the itineraries. Our goal is for each person to become a true traveler who explores local cultures instead of a mere tourist.

### **The trips include many spontaneous activities.**

When we come across anything interesting on the street, we encourage people to engage with locals. Sometimes we crash a wedding that happens to be taking place nearby. If we walk past a funeral, we'll talk with mourners to learn about the customs. Since Vietnamese food, such as pho and banh mi sandwiches, along with Vietnamese coffee, has gained in popularity, we have made the cuisine an important part of the expeditions. People enjoy cultural immersion and some have gone back with us multiple times. ■

**Tan Pham**  
Rotary Club of  
La Crosse-Valley  
View, Wisconsin

Tour operator  
and real estate  
investor



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## ACCESSIBLE TRAVEL

# No limits

*Long overlooked, travelers with disabilities  
are finding fewer barriers*

**O**n 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](https://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.

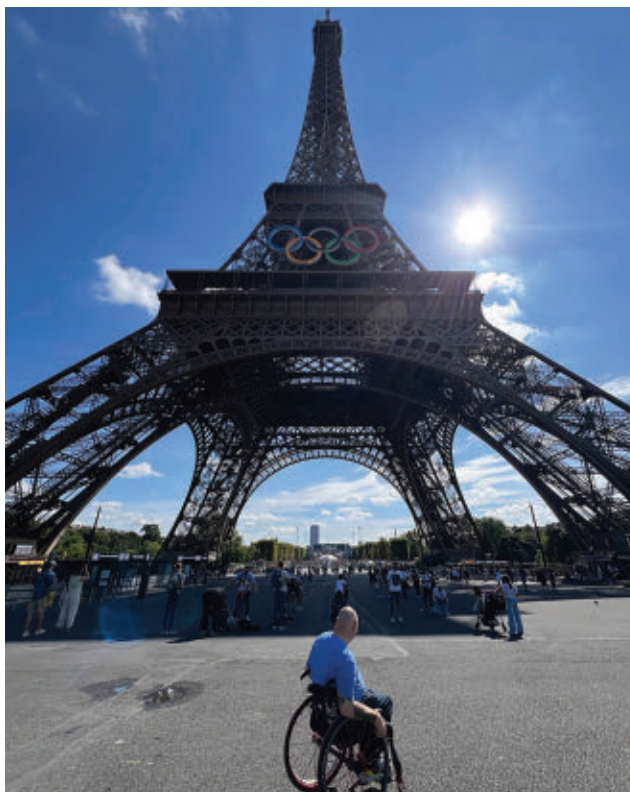
What makes a space accessible is different for each person, explains Ziv. "If you provide people with information, they know what works for them."

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



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

**N**aresh 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.

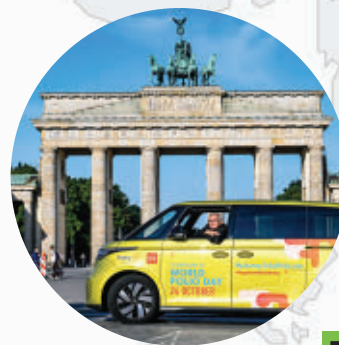
— MAGGIE GIGANDET

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

## 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).

## 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.

## 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.

In a guest book, Asfour notes the Rotarian hospitality.

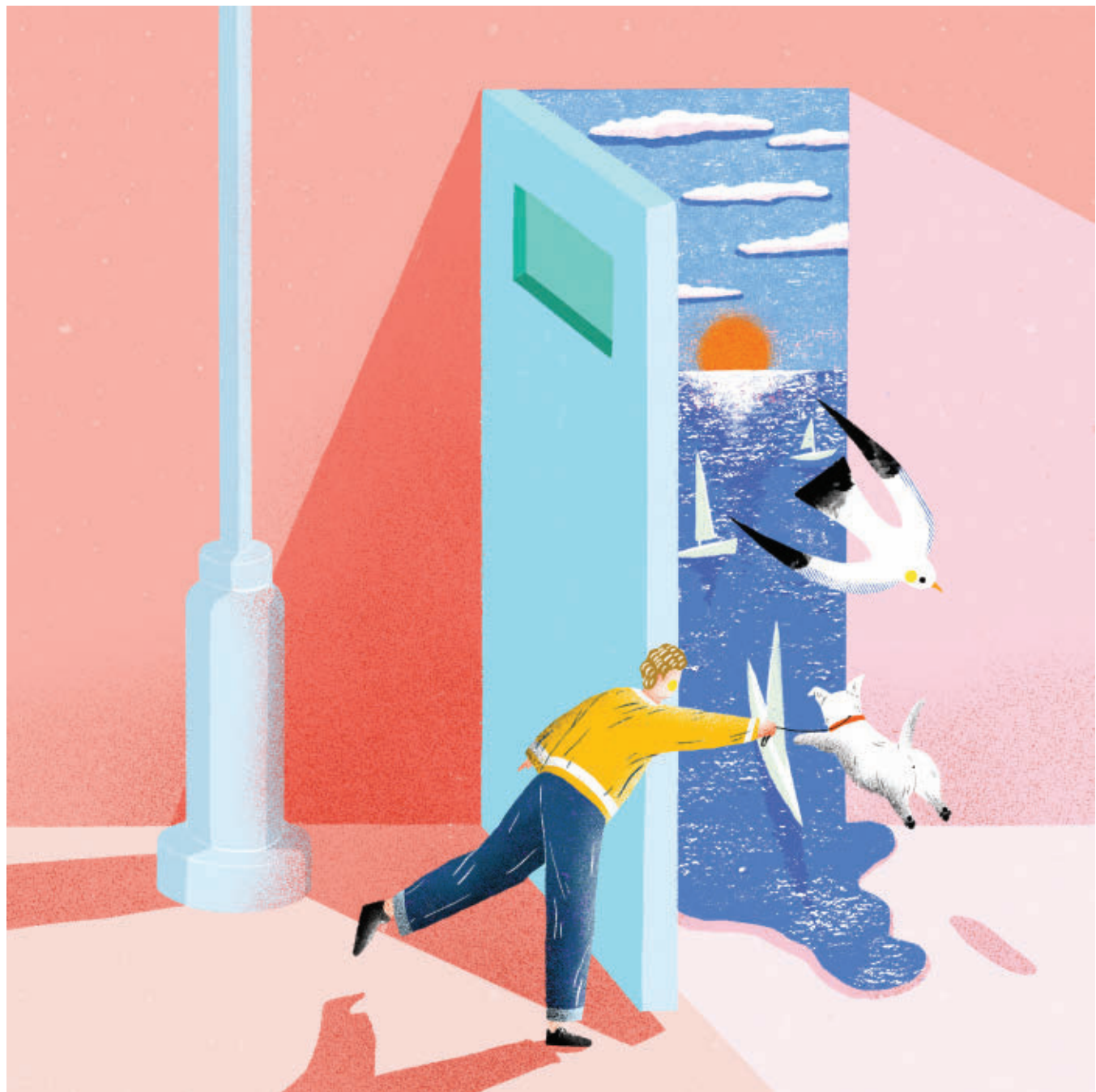


ESSAY

# The eyes of another

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

By Geoffrey Johnson





**M**arcel 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. ■





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BY  
**Terry  
Ward**

# Crowd

Photo illustration by  
**MADISON WISSE**



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



# control

A surreal collage of a European city street, likely St. Peter's Square in Rome, featuring the dome of St. Peter's Basilica on the left. The scene is populated with numerous white silhouettes of people engaged in various activities: some are walking, some are riding bicycles, some are pushing a stroller, and others are taking photos with cameras or smartphones. The silhouettes are placed in various locations, including on the rooftops, balconies, and in the street itself, creating a sense of constant movement and observation. The background shows the warm, golden light of a sunset or sunrise, with the architecture of the surrounding buildings clearly visible.

**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.







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 toured locations” — like Florence and Venice — “that have been over-touristed,” Krueger says.

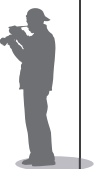
This time around, the family was looking for a more authentic and meaningful way to travel. When Krueger reached out to Elsewhere

(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 spacecraft, looking out through a large window. A person's foot, wearing a white sock, is resting on a control panel with various buttons and switches. The window shows a view of Earth's blue sky and white clouds. The interior of the spacecraft is dark, with metallic frames and equipment visible.

# 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.



**C**ristoforetti'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,"





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 audio-book. (“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.

**P**usk,” 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



**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.





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.

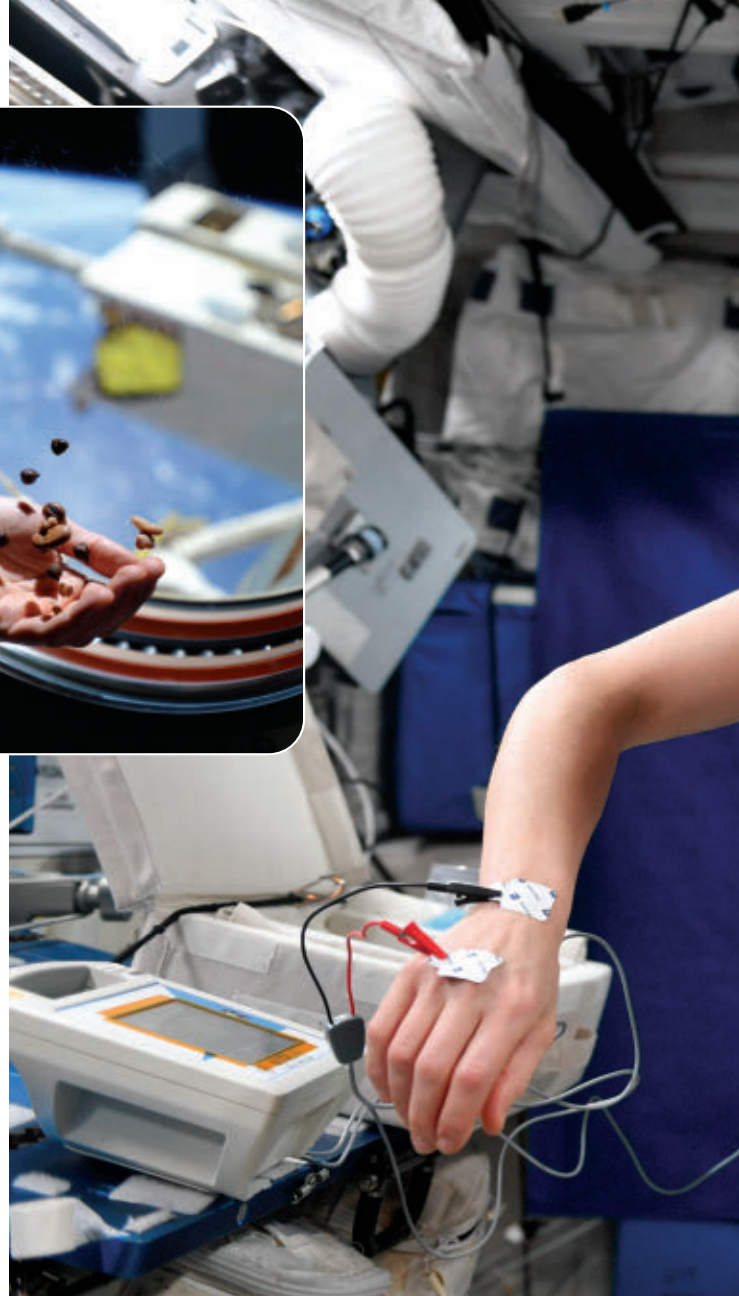
As the seconds tick by on the Soyuz, Cristoforetti and her crewmates are pressed into their seats with increased force until, about nine minutes later, the engines cut off as they reach orbit. “In their thick gloves, my hands are dangling at about eye level, as if they weren’t attached to me,” she writes 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 Shkaplerov, 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.

**S**ince 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

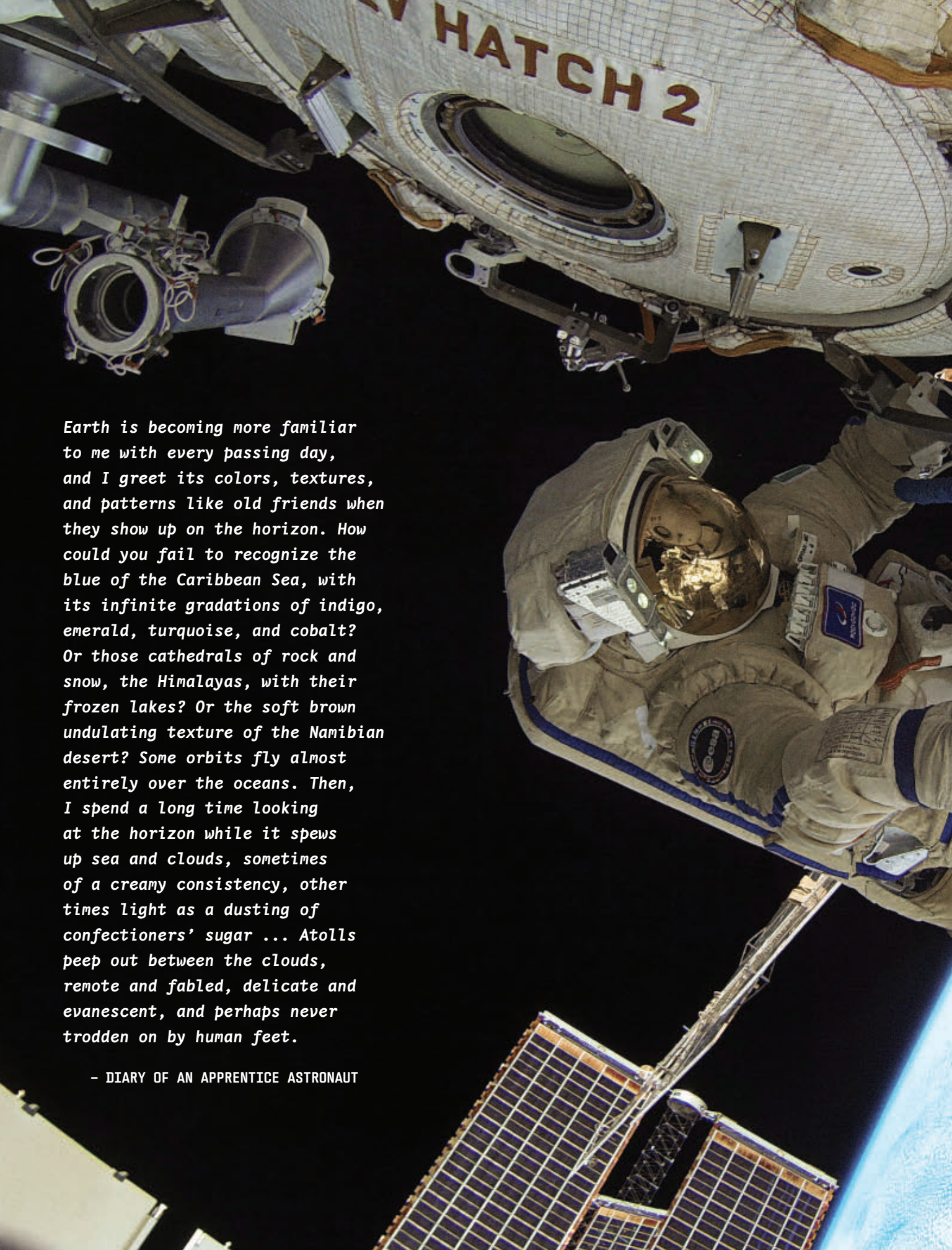




*Earth seems eternal when I see on its surface the scars of processes that have lasted for hundreds of millions of years: impact craters and volcanic craters, lines of collision and lines of separation, signs of erosion and deposition, ongoing changes too slow to perceive. Against this background, everything 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/ROSCOSMOS





**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.

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



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.

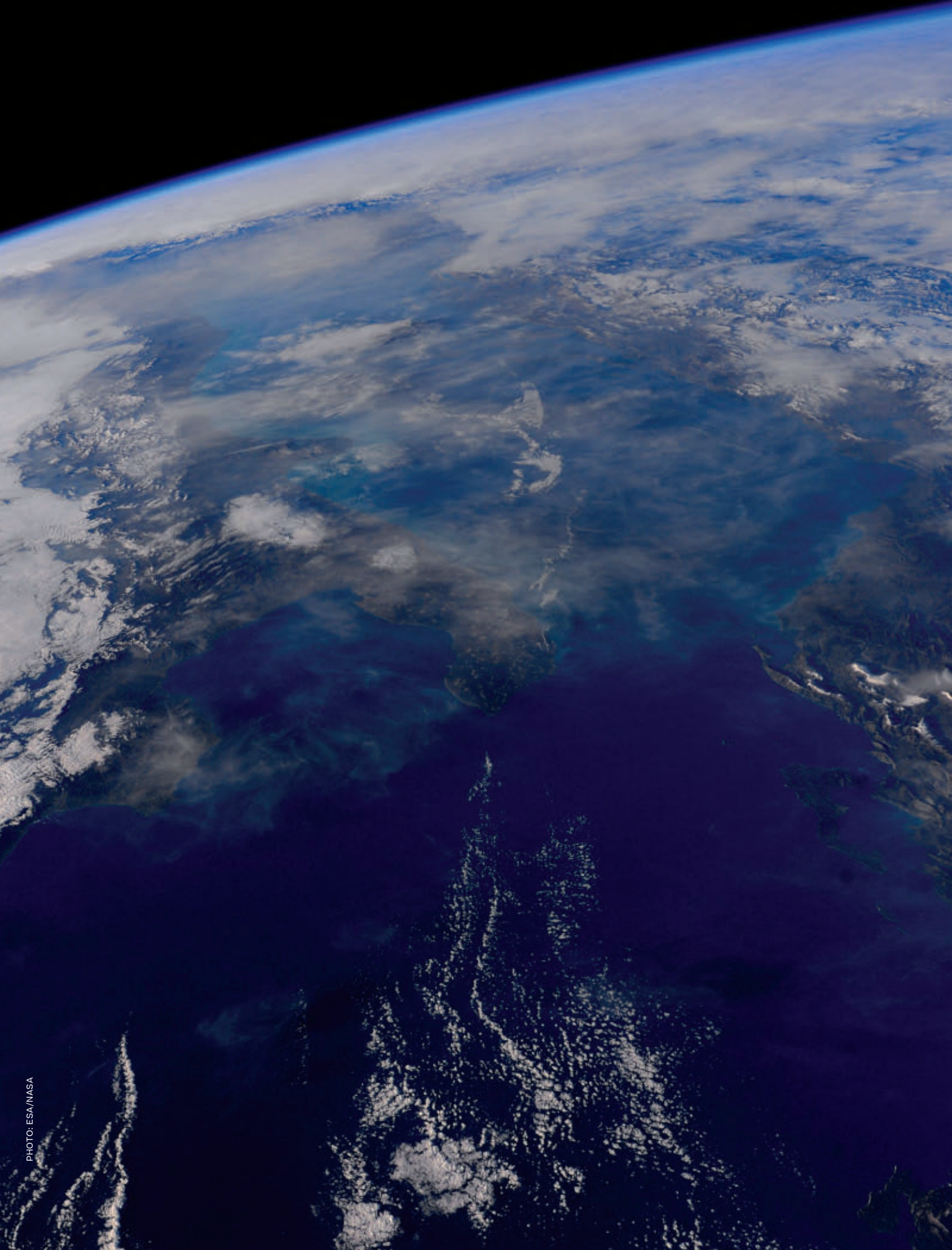
“But at the same time, you’re kind of curious to see how it looks down there, so of course I’d love to go to Patagonia. I’d love to go to the mountains in Chile, all those places that become so familiar to you when you are in space. And yet, they are so far when you are on Earth.” ■

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











Illustrations by  
DAVID HUANG





# Espresso in a war zone

*By Scott Simon*

Adventure or misadventure,  
a roving correspondent finds  
enlightenment in a life of travels

T

Travel is broadening, enriching, and sometimes a pain in the butt. Over the past few decades, I have been blessed to be able to see much of the world. I have ridden camels in India and donkeys in Jordan, and “flown” aboard the U.S. space shuttle simulator. But I cannot drive a car, an inconvenience at times and occasionally a downright pain in the rear. As the woman sent with me to Saudi Arabia as the producer for coverage of the first Gulf War resoundingly complained over the phone to our foreign desk, “You have sent me somewhere women cannot drive with a reporter who happens to be the one American male who doesn’t have a \*%# driver’s license!”

I did drive a Land Rover once, in the Serengeti. The guide of our expedition following a zebra migration invited me behind the wheel on my birthday. “What can you run into?” he said. “It’s empty and flat for miles.” Within minutes, I almost ran our vehicle into a gully and had a close call with an innocent wildebeest. The encounter only convinced me that the world is a safer place because I do not drive.

But I have bummed rides with many engaging people and been able to see all 50 states, the Hindu Kush mountain range, Bamiyan’s Valley of the Gods, the Eiffel Tower, the Great Wall of China, the Northwest Passage, and, no less awe-inspiring, the 1-ton fiberglass cow statue that presides over Janesville, Wisconsin.

I’ve endured innumerable flight delays and bumpy bus rides. I’ve had my winter coat stolen after an emergency landing in Halifax, Nova Scotia, during a snowstorm. I’ve slept on airport floors, thoughtfully carpeted, in San Francisco, Miami, Cleveland, and Newark, New Jersey, while waiting for flights to be rescheduled, and on the floors of train stations and hotel lobbies for various reasons.

Yet during all these years, despite occasional bumps in the road, I’ve also been welcomed by so many people, especially in war zones and areas contending with great suffering and strife. I’ve met inspiring people and seen extraordinary places, from the Taj Mahal and the bustees of Kolkata, to space shuttle launches and a tunnel of survival, dug by hand, shovel, and pick, under a field in Sarajevo that helped the Bosnia and Herzegovina capital survive its four-year siege. It’s time I put pen to paper on some of those tales.



# I got lost in a jungle...



in El Salvador. I was covering the civil war there when the production crew and I drove to an area called Chiltiupán, southwest of the capital, to try to see the Salvadoran military's bombings of jungle villages that harbored rebels. We came off the road to wander into villages and soon lost our way. This was before Google Maps, which may not show those villages to this day. It was also before mobile phones. One or two people in each village seemed to have a phone, but whom would we call? The Salvadoran military about which we were trying to report a story?

Getting lost is often the first in a series of unwelcome events, as was the case on this expedition. Our engineer fell below a waterfall, broke her arm, and caught a bad cold. We wandered through jungle for two days, slept on tall grass (not as blissful as it sounds), and grew so thirsty we finally drank pond

water, which is an essential ingredient of typhoid. Once when I interviewed villagers along the way, I felt a thousand small bites being taken out of my legs. Fire ants! The folks we were interviewing stripped off my pants — bless them (true hospitality can take many forms) — slapped off the ants with rags, and doused my burning legs with vinegar. “Don’t worry,” a woman told me. “I do it to my children,” which is not the kind of reassurance a grown man, bright red with embarrassment, wants to hear.

Finally, we somehow got to a road and hailed a ride on a truck carrying coffee plant workers, who thought our whole story was pretty hilarious. We went to an ER back in San Salvador, where the staff put our engineer’s arm into a cast and told us, “I think you are not cut out for life in the country.” About a month later, I was one of several journalists whose name was put on





an “enemies list,” and I didn’t even get a lousy T-shirt. As our engineer said, “You can’t even keep ants out of your pants.”



*I’ve stayed in a few five-star places, with crisp sheets and deep baths, and in a barely roofed hostel in the Tigray region of Ethiopia in the late 1980s toward the end of a long civil war. Truck drivers transporting vital relief supplies would overnight at the hostel, exhausted and thirsty, and wind down with a mug or more of traditional tella beer. Wind down *all night*, it seemed to me and my producer, as we heard the drivers singing mournful Amharic ballads as we tried to sleep. The blankets looked as if they’d been used to smother fires, which they probably had, and we*

were told to pull them over our heads. “Won’t it be hard to breathe?” we inquired. The roadside hostel proprietor told us, “Yes, but that way, the rats won’t bite your faces.” Well then, enough said.

Yet as we learned, the rats were drawn by the presence of food. Therefore, they were oddly welcome visitors. I remember hearing tiny steps scuttle overhead and calling out to my producer, “Reindeer, I’m sure.” But we did not have to fall asleep hungry, like so many Tigrayans, or fearful. Travel can often remind us of what we cherish at home.

A few weeks later, we traveled to a camp in Eritrea that sought to give refugees food and shelter. We were walking through lines of people, handsome and looking haggard and worn from long journeys. We smiled and quietly asked them to tell us their stories.

Soon, I smelled coffee. My mind is playing tricks, I thought. It’s an effect of

traveling in a war zone. I’ll just ignore it.

Then, I heard the distinctive gurgle of an espresso machine and was sure I heard pops of coffee-scented steam. “My nose and ears are playing tricks on me now too,” I told staffers from an international aid group who oversaw the camp. “I think I smell espresso.”

And so I did. The Zerai family had been forced to flee their home near Massawa, on the Red Sea, one night a few weeks before, carrying only the clothes they wore, a few family photos folded into pockets, small pieces of jewelry to offer as bribes to corrupt local officials along the way — and a small steel espresso pot.

“You must join us!” said the father, who pressed a small clay cup into my hands. The brew was sharp, dark, and fresh. Yes, I felt revived.

We sat down in the circle of their family: sons, daughters, an aunt and uncle, a



cousin or two. They ground a few more blackened beans into a small stone bowl and boiled water from a relief jug. They told us their stories: the roar of bombs in Massawa, the gashing of treetops by regime artillery, the quick consideration of what they truly needed to dash into a strange and dangerous night to survive.

But soon, they began to ask about us. Where were we from? Why would we come there from fat and peaceful America? Did we know a cousin of theirs who was said to be in Oakland or Indianapolis?

"The coffee — it's good?" they asked. I had another cup, and one more.

In a matter of minutes, our relationship changed. We were no longer reporters interviewing victims or refugees. We were guests being welcomed by a family. They were hosts, not refugees. We were travelers, sharing a few moments of — dare I suggest as much in the midst of a war, in the misery of a refugee camp? — rest, diversion, and even friendship.

TRAVEL CAN  
PUT PEOPLE  
TOGETHER,  
IN THE  
MOST  
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PLACES, AND  
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WE'RE ALL  
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THE SAME  
HUMAN CLAY.



Travel can put the most unexpected people together, in the most improbable places, and help them see how we're all made of the same human clay.



I was going through customs at the U.S.-Canada border one February night when we were told the facility had to shut down. *Immediately.* There was audible grouching, even from Canadians, who are famed for their extraordinary courtesies.

When we noticed on the overhead screens that it was the final minutes of the Canada-USA men's hockey gold medal match for the 2010 Olympics, grouching travelers became engrossed fans. Canadians and Americans went back and forth with each other. "That's a great shot," Canadians agreed as Team USA scored a goal to tie the game, forcing the match into sudden death. And then when Canada's Sidney Crosby took a pass to score 7 minutes and 40 seconds into overtime, Canadians cheered, and Americans smiled. "Whaddya gonna do?" we asked. "It's Sid the Kid." That stalled customs arrival hall had suddenly become a place travelers were all glad to be.



While making our way to Bosnia to cover the siege of Sarajevo, a recording engineer and I noticed that the border guards of one Balkan nation in particular would help themselves to several small items on the top of our cases. Not jewelry, which we would not bring into a war zone in any case, but razor blades, socks, or toothpaste, which were hard to locate during war.

In time, we learned to pack extras on top, all but gift wrapped for official pilfering. But on one trip in, my entire toiletries case was nabbed. I despaired at borrowing spare items from colleagues for months on end. I mean, do you think *reporters* are a reliable source of fine grooming supplies? And so we went into a Sarajevo street that had carefully been turned into an informal market for personal items. People opened bags and cases to offer old or half-used tubes of toothpaste and antiperspirant, quarter-full bottles of



shampoos and soaps, many of them likely left in the rubble of apartments shattered and bombed. A man looking to buy toiletries joked — at least I think it was a joke — “Hey, that’s my after-shave! It was a Christmas gift!”

For a moment, we felt less like travelers and journalists and more like Sarajevans, whom we so admired.



**Our family now often travels** across borders with our dog, Daisy, who rides in a carrier that fits under a seat. She is not a service animal, although that is honored service, but a member of our family.

Daisy, who is a French poodle, travels with a record of her inoculations in an EU document the size of a passport. As it includes her photo, we call it her EU passport. French border agents almost never fail to open Daisy’s passport and admonish her through the glass panel: “Look right, eh. Now left, eh. All right, it is you. You may proceed.”



**This is advice easier to dispense** than to live by, but unless you’re on your way to a wedding, funeral, or open-heart surgery, it is often wisest to see travel delays as spontaneous opportunities: to read a book, talk to those nearby, or simply take a breath and ruminate.

Our family missed a flight home from Arizona once because of a time zone mix-up. The airline booked us for the next day. But that meant a day of missed school, homework, meetings, work, memos, pickups, drop-offs, business email, and our whole array of quotidian responsibilities. We grumbled

and whined about losing a day from our busy lives and spent it ... well, by a pool. With a waterslide! Playing, laughing, eating nachos, imitating the arms-out pose of saguaro cacti, and feeling that, in fact, our daylong travel delay had somehow added a day to our lives.



**One of the most cherished** memories of my life is landing in Chicago after an overnight flight from China, with our (now oldest) daughter in our

arms, whom we had just adopted from an orphanage. We were dressed in stretchy gym clothes. The families alongside us in passport control, from Poland, Ireland, Nigeria, and elsewhere around the world, tended to dress in suits and dresses for the occasion. A man in a big-brimmed brown hat called out, “Simon family!” which was the first time we’d heard the phrase for the three of us. He checked and stamped our paperwork, then put his large hand under our daughter’s small, soft chin. “Welcome home, sweetheart,” he said, and we melted. ■



**SCOTT SIMON**, a writer and broadcaster, is the host of NPR’s Weekend Edition Saturday. He has reported from all 50 states, five continents, and 10 wars, from El Salvador to Sarajevo to Afghanistan and Iraq. His books have chronicled character and characters, in war and peace, sports and art, tragedy and comedy. In the August 2022 issue of *Rotary*, Simon, a die-hard Chicago Cubs fan, wrote about baseball’s growing appeal around the world.



FROM THE ARCHIVES

# Gulf

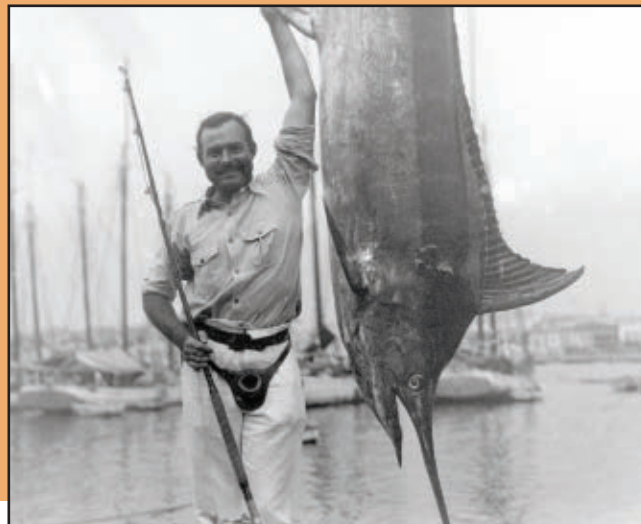


Ernest Hemingway sits in the sunlight aboard the Pilar, the boat he bought in 1934, using an advance from *Esquire* magazine as a down payment.

# Stream

In 1940, who better to reveal Cuba's best fishing spots to convention-bound Rotarians than Ernest Hemingway?

# dreams



In July 1934, Hemingway stands proudly in Havana Harbor beside one of the many marlins he would catch over the years.

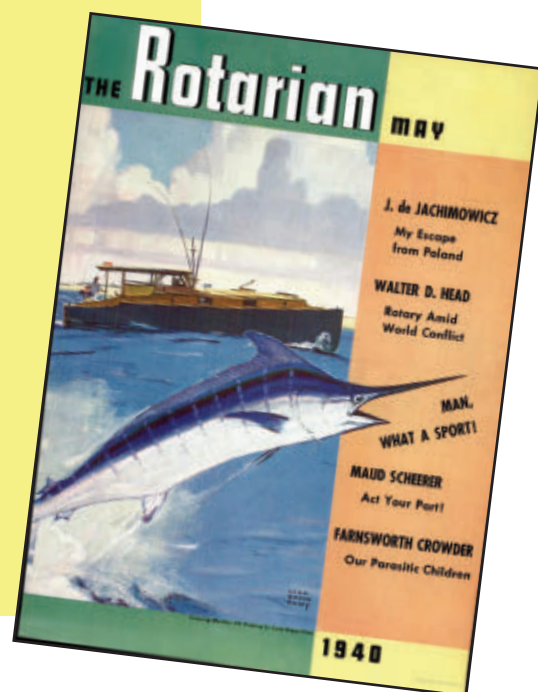
PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF ERNEST HEMINGWAY COLLECTION, JOHN F. KENNEDY PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM, BOSTON



**The protagonists of Ernest Hemingway's fictions** trace the trajectory of the author's own travels. Nick Adams up in Michigan. Jake Barnes in Paris, the Pyrenees, and Pamplona. Frederic Henry and Robert Jordan in, respectively, war-torn Italy and Spain. Harry Morgan in Key West. Francis Macomber and Harry, dying sans surname, in the green hills of Africa. And the broken but unbowed Santiago in the Gulf Stream far off the coast of Cuba.

In 1940, Hemingway had only recently begun living at Finca Vigía, the farmhouse on Havana's outskirts that was his home for 21 years. But he was already intimately acquainted with the Gulf Stream, having fished it frequently and written about those adventures for the fledgling *Esquire* magazine. So when Luis Machado — a recent president of the Cuban tourist bureau and, as a member of the Rotary Club of Havana, chairman of the 1940 host club convention committee — wanted to provide fishing tips for Rotarians heading to that year's convention, he knew where to turn.

Hemingway's angling advice, reprinted below, appeared in the May 1940 issue of *The Rotarian*, as this magazine was then known. The cover image, painted by Hemingway friend and frequent *Rotarian* contributor Lynn Bogue Hunt, depicts the author at the helm of his boat, named Pilar — an enticing lure for what appeared on the pages inside.



**B**eneath the vast glitter of the Gulf Stream off the coast of Cuba lurks the greatest challenge in the world to anglers who love to fight the big ones. And no authority on the subject ranks higher than author Ernest Hemingway, friend of artist Lynn Bogue Hunt who limned Hemingway's boat, the Pilar, in the background of the "Leaping Marlin" cover on this month's *Rotarian*.

So to Hemingway went Luis Machado, of Havana, chairman of the 1940 host club convention committee, with the question: "What can we tell prospective visitors?" Hemingway answered in part as follows:

"In May and June there is a run of white marlin off Havana which provides the finest marlin fishing in the world. On days when the fish are running heavily, it is not uncommon to see 20 or more fish in a day. On May 20, 1933, I caught seven marlin within an hour's cruising range of Morro Castle at trolling speed ...

"There is also great tarpon fishing easily available at Batabanó some 30 miles from Havana ... I think you could almost guarantee that any Rotarian who wished to catch a tarpon could do so at Batabanó, as the fish are thicker and less finicky in their feeding habits there than they are anywhere in the United States.

"In the Gulf Stream off Havana during May and June there are usually plenty of dolphin, bonito, small tuna, and albacore as well as wahoo, barracuda, and sailfish. Conditions change in the Gulf Stream from day to day, and while the convention is on it could be possible that fish might not be running in the Gulf Stream as they might have been a week before or a week later. But fishing in the Gulf Stream for the last 10 years, I have never known a year in which there was not a fine run of white marlin several times during May and June ...

"There is a great variety of bottom fishing to be had along both coasts of Cuba for fishermen who do not care for trolling ..."

The size and strength of the marlin are almost past belief. The largest caught in the 1939 tournament weighed 370 pounds. One big fellow, hooked from a drifting rowboat off Havana, towed the craft 50 miles down the coast when he headed out to sea. At 10 miles out the discouraged fishermen cut the line — and the old warhorse may be going yet.

About 50 miles by boat from Batabanó is "The Enchanted River," where tarpon exist by the thousands — and strain the old adage that "seeing is believing."

Guides, boats, and tackle can be hired in Havana or at Batabanó. Prices seem reasonable at the moment and are never remembered with regret, not if one has even fair-to-middling luck! ■



¡Salud! Hemingway clinks glasses with Joe Russell, the bar owner (Sloppy Joe's) and rumrunner who introduced Hemingway to marlin fishing in 1932 when they traveled aboard Russell's boat, Anita, from Key West to Havana. They repeated the trip in 1933 — and Hemingway was hooked on the sport.

# 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 Wynnum 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

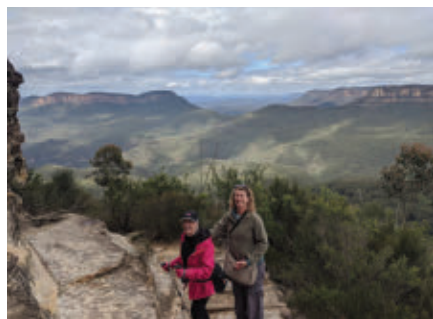


↓  
Fellowship members from Canada and the U.S. enjoy a swim in Brazil.

→  
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 Henderson.

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."

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

## Finding family in France

Rotary Youth Exchange alum Athena Trentin shares her advice for young travelers

Athena Trentin's experience as a Rotary Youth Exchange student showed her "what life could be." "It was the most amazing year of my life," she says.



**Athena Trentin had a boring childhood** — at least, according to her. She grew up in Escanaba, Michigan, a port city in the Upper Peninsula with a population of 14,000 at the time. "Most people were expected to grow up and graduate from high school, work for the paper mill, work in the skilled trades," Trentin says. "My parents never really gave me any other option than to go to college and see the world, become who I want to be."

When Trentin was in junior high, her mom became active in recapturing her family's Indigenous identity and helped create a community center for Native Americans living in Escanaba, which was 20 miles from the closest reservation. But there was pushback from members of the City Council, and Trentin says she was retaliated against at school. This first encounter with racism sparked a realization in her. "There's a world out there, and I wanted to see it," she says. "I belonged somewhere I could meet people from everywhere."

She found out about Rotary Youth Exchange and wanted to participate but was too young to meet the age requirement. Trentin felt stuck and that feeling compounded the following year when her family couldn't afford the trip amid her parents' divorce. The Rotary Youth Exchange representative in her town came back to her family and said, "She is the person we want to send." Trentin didn't let it go.

She got a job at a fast food restaurant to help pay the travel costs not covered through the program. She received a grant from United Way to host her own international summit. She invited exchange students from various organizations in the Upper Peninsula to Escanaba to discuss their perceptions of the United States and their views of the world.

She remembers thinking, "If we can exchange this information, imagine what we could do to change the world." United Way sent her to a national leadership conference at Indiana University. "That's probably the first time I had ever been out of Wisconsin and Michigan —



the first time I ever met people of color other than American Indians.” She needed more experiences like that one. And the summer after her junior year, Rotary Youth Exchange sent her to France.

“I don’t think I realized that I was leaving for a year. I remember my parents having to pick me up from overnight camps because I was homesick,” she says. She was excited but also nervous about things like unfamiliar food, her grasp of the language, and if her host family was going to be nice. “What do I do then? How am I going to last a year? What if I don’t like it? What if I want to go home?” she thought.

When her plane landed, her host father met her at the gate. Outside of baggage claim, a huge group of people were waiting to welcome her. “This is your family,” he told her. Trentin felt alone growing up, like she didn’t fit in. “This is my family,” she thought as her host family came in to embrace her.

Trentin’s first host family lived on the French-Swiss border near Geneva in a beautiful house in the country. Life was much different than back home. “My father was a millwright, and he was on and off unemployment. We didn’t have a lot of money. We didn’t have economic stability,” she says. “I got to experience that for the first time. And that stability made all the difference in the world for me. It showed

me what life could be.” She still cherishes the dinners and holidays shared with the family.

School was another eye-opening experience, especially learning world history from a European perspective. She began to understand that American education favored one side of history, one that often neglected her Indigenous roots.

Trentin also learned an important lesson about travel that she carries with her today. When her third host family took her to the City of Light, she was excited to finally see the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre, and other attractions she’d heard so much about in her French class in the U.S. But visiting those spots wasn’t as satisfying as she’d imagined.

When she returned to America, she made it her goal to go to a new country every two years with two stipulations: travel inexpensively and immerse yourself. “You’re not going to learn anything about the culture just going up the elevator in the Eiffel Tower,” she says.

For many years, Trentin worked in international student affairs at various American universities. Here’s her advice for Rotary Youth Exchange students: Allow travel to change you for the better. “This experience will change your view of the world. You will grow in ways you’ve never imagined,” she says. She urges young travelers to follow the “platinum rule”: Do unto others as they would want done

unto them. That is, show respect for other cultures and learn their unwritten rules.

“Ask yourself, ‘What am I willing to negotiate as I’m trying to fit in this new culture?’” she says. “It can be something as simple as tasting new foods. It can be as complex as one of those core values you thought you would never compromise.” This openness led Trentin to newfound confidence when she returned home.

Before her trip, Trentin was reserved. But when she came back, she decided to let her guard down. “That’s something Rotary gave me: the confidence to just be me,” she says. “Since then, I’m more comfortable and pay more attention when I’m the minority in the room. I can learn from everybody else and that ended up helping me in my career.”

Trentin also returned to the U.S. with a bigger family. “The first host family I had is still my family. They will always be my family,” she says. “I’ll say, ‘my French family’ and people are like, ‘What? You’re French?’” Most exchange students Trentin knows are still very close with their host families.

“It was the most amazing year of my life,” she says. At the time she shared these thoughts, Trentin was looking for plane tickets to Mauritius, an African island country in the Indian Ocean where her host brother, Raphael, had just moved.

— JP SWENSON



#### Athena Trentin

- **Rotary Youth Exchange, 1990-91**
- **Master’s in teaching English to speakers of other languages,** Michigan State University, 1997-2000
- **Doctorate in education,** University of Southern California, 2003-08
- **Executive director,** National Alliance on Mental Illness North Texas, 2019-24

Athena Trentin speaks about mental wellness with the India Association of North Texas; Trentin (center) during her exchange in France in 1990-91.

## 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](mailto:magazine@rotary.org).

— DIANA SCHOBORG

## 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.”



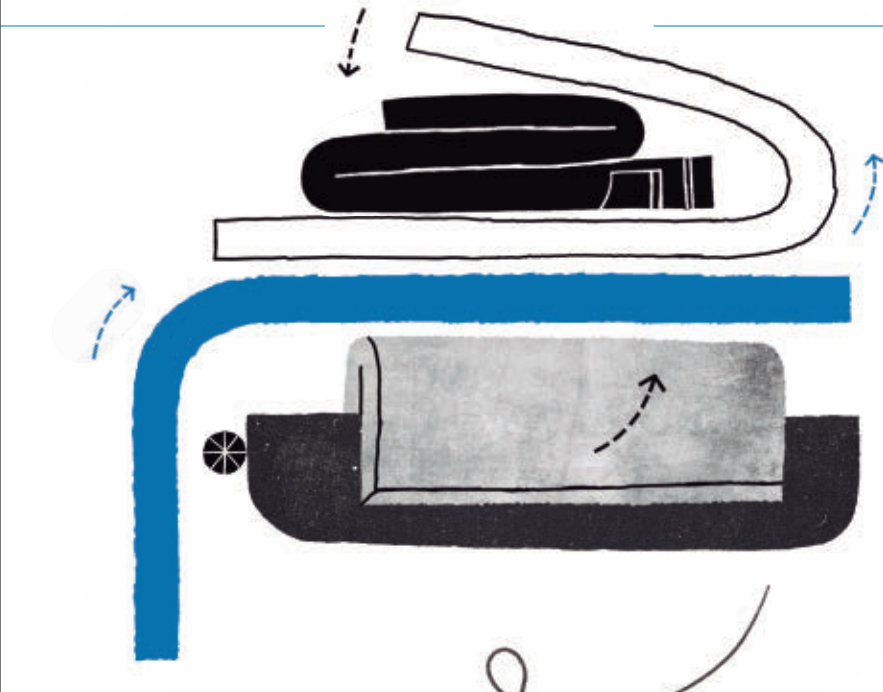
## 2. Layer your items

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.



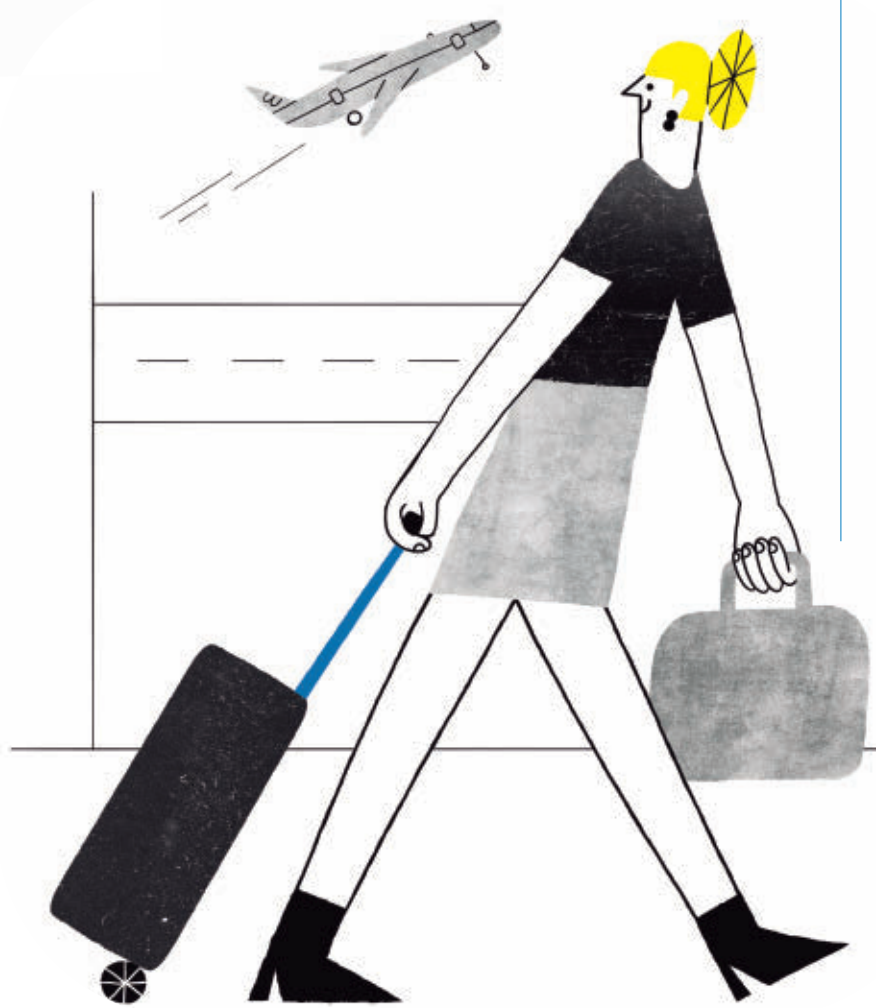
### 3. Interfold into a bundle

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.





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](https://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.



## CALENDAR

# December events

### YULETIDE CHEER

**Event:** Festival of Wreaths and Wine  
**Host:** Rotary Club of Battle Ground, Washington  
**What it benefits:** Local and international projects  
**Date:** 7 December  
Holiday spirit returns to the Battle Ground Community Center for the club's biggest annual fundraiser, a dinner and wine tasting accompanied by live music. A silent auction includes, among other items, holiday wreaths created by club members and local artisans. Online bids will also be accepted starting 4 December.

### GRAB A BOWL

**Event:** Chili & Soup Festival  
**Host:** Rotary Club of Fort Morgan, Colorado  
**What it benefits:** Rotary Youth Leadership Awards and other local youth programs  
**Date:** 7 December  
At this annual cook-off, attendees can sample a range of soups and chilis prepared by both professional and amateur chefs. Judges select grand prizes in several categories, and People's Choice awards are given for the entries that receive the most votes from the public. The family-friendly event includes musical and dance performances, cookie and gingerbread house decorating, and a wagon ride around downtown Fort Morgan.

### A GOOD NIGHT FOR A PARADE

**Event:** Apex Christmas Parade  
**Host:** Rotary Club of Apex, North Carolina  
**What it benefits:** Local nonprofits  
**Date:** 7 December  
The annual Christmas parade in Apex began in 1957, and the club has orga-



### SAUSAGE, SYRUP, AND SANTA

**Event:** Breakfast with Santa  
**Host:** Rotary Club of Slinger-Allenton, Wisconsin  
**What it benefits:** Local projects  
**Date:** 7 December

Each year on the first Saturday of December, the club hosts a festive pancake and sausage breakfast with Santa Claus at the Slinger High School cafeteria. Live reindeer greet people outside the door. Inside, kids can decorate ornaments, write letters to Santa, get their faces painted, and listen to Mrs. Claus read stories. Children ages 5 and under are admitted for free.

nized it since 2009. Held in the evening, the procession features more than 100 units, including marching bands, dance teams, classic cars, and colorful floats sponsored by local businesses. The event typically draws more than 25,000 people, and volunteers hand out about 300 pounds of candy to children along the route.

### TO YOUR HEALTH

**Event:** Run for Tomorrow  
**Host:** Rotary Club of Weston, Florida  
**What it benefits:** Local and international projects and nonprofits  
**Date:** 8 December  
In its 27th year, the Run for Tomorrow welcomes hundreds of runners to compete in a half-marathon, a 10K, or a 5K. There is also a 1-mile family walk in which the club awards a trophy to

the elementary school with the highest student participation rate. A free health fair, with fitness activities and more than 50 vendors, is held after the races.

### RING OUT THE OLD

**Event:** New Year's Eve Millbrook  
**Host:** Rotary Club of Millbrook, New York  
**What it benefits:** Local projects  
**Date:** 31 December  
Starting in the afternoon, this New Year's Eve celebration is intended for the whole family. Highlights in past years have included circus acts, a puppet show, a model railroad display, and live musical performances from blues, jazz, and classical ensembles. Each year, local students enter a contest to design the event's logo, which is placed on buttons and stickers sold as admission tokens.

**Tell us about your event.** Write to [magazine@rotary.org](mailto:magazine@rotary.org) and put "calendar" in the subject line. Submissions must be received at least five months before the event to be considered for inclusion.





# GIVE THE GIFT OF ROTARY





When you give to The Rotary Foundation, you're supporting the work of Rotary members who are working with communities around the world to find sustainable solutions to their needs. Rotarians and Rotaractors are taking action to make a difference, but we need your help.

A gift today can accomplish great things from delivering polio vaccines that protect children for a lifetime to providing medical equipment that gives newborns a healthy start.

**Take  
Action:  
GIVE  
NOW**

**Your gift today can make a difference.  
Visit [my.rotary.org/givethegift](https://my.rotary.org/givethegift)  
to donate and learn more.**

[rotary.org/donate](https://rotary.org/donate)

*Your gift does not purchase a specific item but will support projects like those shown here.*

**\$15**

**POLIO VACCINES**

Fighting disease



**\$50**

**WATER FILTER**

Providing clean water



**\$100**

**VOCATIONAL TRAINING**

Community economic development



**\$150**

**HAND WASHING STATION**

Hygiene practices



**\$200**

**REPLACING LIVESTOCK**

Providing goats or bees to families



**\$320**

**PEACE LEADERSHIP TRAINING**

Violence-prevention strategies



2025 CONVENTION

# A traveler's convention



The Tofino coast

When you're already traveling to the **Rotary International Convention**, why not add on a side trip? Members say they often double up on their travel to visit part of the world near the convention host city. And don't miss the chance to register by 15 December before the price goes up.

The timing of the convention in Calgary 21-25 June is just right to see an iconic Canadian event: the Calgary Stampede. Take a vacation or business trip after the convention and return to the city for the rodeo 4-13 July that celebrates the country's West and Indigenous cultures. The Host Organization Committee curated easy-to-book getaways ranging from a one-day tour of Banff and Lake Louise in the neighboring Rockies to 12 days through the mountains to Vancouver with a train ride on the return trip to Calgary for the Stampede.

For a coastal experience, Tofino near Vancouver has surfing vibes and rugged landscapes. French-speaking members, in particular, would enjoy Québec City to see its beautiful buildings and hear the locals' distinct take on the language. Beyond Banff, quaint towns in the Rockies with picture-postcard main streets seem endless.

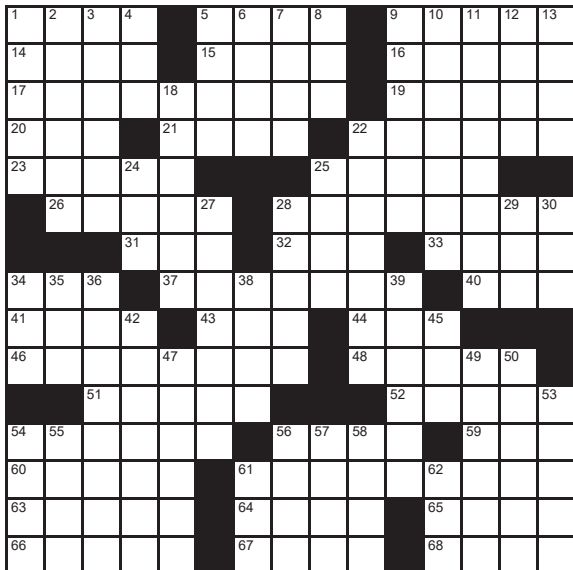
Visit a famed vacation spot accessible from Calgary, like Toronto, New York City, the Grand Canyon, the Caribbean, Cancun resorts in Mexico, or Los Angeles and Disneyland. Beyond big-name tourist stops, try Oregon's redwoods, Mexico's Baja California Sur for ecotourism, sites that inspired *Anne of Green Gables* on Prince Edward Island, or the Canadian Arctic for wildlife and the midnight sun that doesn't set. Whatever type of trip you prefer, Calgary is your gateway to North America. ■

Learn more and register at [convention.rotary.org](https://convention.rotary.org).

CROSSWORD

## Move it

By Victor Fleming  
Rotary Club of Little Rock, Arkansas



Solution on **opposite page**

ACROSS

- 1 Word after extension or umbilical
- 5 Kellogg's All-\_\_\_
- 9 "\_\_\_ it!"
- 14 In \_\_\_ of
- 15 Accrue, as interest
- 16 "Sexy" Beatles gal
- 17 \*Cash given a child by a parent
- 19 Baltimore NFLer
- 20 Place to recuperate
- 21 Calligraphers' supplies
- 22 Soundness of mind
- 23 With "on," audited, as a class
- 25 Fuels
- 26 Bay sound
- 28 End zone feature
- 31 Long of *Soul Food*
- 32 Car industry labor org.
- 33 Vicinity
- 34 Papa
- 37 \*Movie preview
- 40 Hankering
- 41 *Young Frankenstein* aide
- 43 Purge (of)
- 44 Daybreak deity
- 46 Apple videotelephony product
- 48 Ding-\_\_\_ (kooky sorts)
- 51 \_\_\_ *Gold* (1997 Peter Fonda film)

- 52 Aesop fable's message
- 54 Send back, as to a lower court
- 56 Hardly pro
- 59 "\_\_\_ Baba and the Forty Thieves"
- 60 Able one
- 61 Urge to go places, the first word of which may precede the answers to the starred clues
- 63 Present or past, e.g.
- 64 *Black Beauty* writer Sewell
- 65 Country walkway
- 66 Bought into a hand
- 67 *The Wind in the Willows* animal
- 68 Marginal "leave it"

DOWN

- 1 \*Graduation group
- 2 Crankcase component
- 3 Give an account of
- 4 Half a quartet
- 5 Lima, e.g.
- 6 Assign places to
- 7 Ball trajectories
- 8 Little Rock-to-Chicago dir.
- 9 Haifa's home
- 10 The Kettles of film
- 11 \*Nonbinding, as suggestions

- 12 Food-intake regimen
- 13 "\_\_\_ meeny, miney, mo"
- 18 Manage somehow
- 22 Kelp, e.g.
- 24 "There's no \_\_\_ team"
- 25 Babe in the stable
- 27 Stressed out
- 28 \*Signpost, say
- 29 "What did I tell you?"
- 30 Camel hair color
- 34 "What's the \_\_\_?"
- 35 Old Turkish title
- 36 \*Contract, deed, or lease, e.g.
- 38 Aspirations
- 39 College cohabitant
- 42 Backslide
- 45 \_\_\_-Caps (movie candy)
- 47 Like some circuses
- 49 Reach for rudely
- 50 General acknowledgment?
- 53 \*It's emitted by lamps and lanterns
- 54 Pro \_\_\_ (proportionally)
- 55 Garden in Genesis
- 56 Tuscan river
- 57 *Peter Pan* dog
- 58 Commercial
- 61 Bit of body art, for short
- 62 33 $\frac{1}{3}$  rpm records





# Healing in a Divided World 2025 PRESIDENTIAL PEACE CONFERENCE

Connect with others committed to peacebuilding at this special, one-time event led by Rotary International President Stephanie Urchick in Istanbul, Türkiye, 20-22 February.



Register today at [rotary.org/istanbul25](https://rotary.org/istanbul25)

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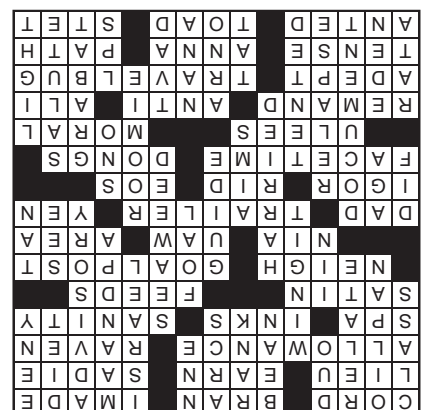


Wen Huang, editor in chief

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## That warm glow

The signature drink of Germany's Christmas markets heats up the holidays

**Germany's Christmas markets** are beloved for their sweet treats, handcrafted trinkets, and festive ambiance. But the real secret to their warm glow? Glühwein. The rough translation for this spiced red wine says it all: "glow wine," which some sources attribute to glowing irons once used to heat the drink. While the Christkindlesmarkt in Nuremberg is the most famous, the markets are found in communities large and small across the country. "People meet there and have fun," explains Thilo Bollenbach. "You get something to eat and drink, especially the glühwein."

Papenburg's Christmas market takes place in a large square in front of a 19th century mill during two weekends in the Advent season. There, the Rotary Club of Papenburg hosts a stall that sells glühwein and feuerzangenbowle, a version where a rum-soaked loaf of sugar is set aflame and allowed to drip into the wine.

**PROST!** The Papenburg club sells about 10,000 glasses over the two weekends of its city's Christmas market. That's more than 2,000 liters, or about 530 gallons, of glühwein, made according to an old family recipe using red wine imported from the south of France. Club members rely on help from family and friends to pull it off. "It's around 400 hours of work," Bollenbach says. "We can't manage it on our own."

**SPICE IT UP:** While glühwein is often a feature of the Christmas markets, Germans also make it at home to serve to visiting family and friends. Bollenbach's recipe includes a bottle of red wine, the juice of two or three oranges, sugar, and a sachet of cinnamon and cloves. Once the mulled wine is hot, he pulls out the spices before serving, tasting and adding sugar as needed.

— DIANA SCHOBURG

**Thilo Bollenbach**  
Rotary Club  
of Papenburg,  
Germany

What food is your region famous for? Tell us at [magazine@rotary.org](mailto:magazine@rotary.org) and you may see it in an upcoming issue.





# 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](https://rotary.org/photoawards).

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





Register and pay by 15 December 2024  
before prices increase

[convention.rotary.org](https://convention.rotary.org)

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