



# ROTARY EXPRESS

Rotary Club of Harrisonville, Missouri | October 22, 2025 | **Service above self. One profits most who serves best.**

## Today's program



Our program today is a classification talk by **Abby Lowrimore**, financial advisor with Edward Jones.

## Future programs

**October 29** - District Gov. **Andrea Brady**'s official club visit

**November 5** - Jill Filer

**November 12** - Abigail Lowrimore

**November 19** - Doug Meyer

**November 26** - No meeting (Thanksgiving week)

**December 3** - Bill Mills

## Birthdays

**October 29** ..... Avelicia Rosales

**November 18** ..... John Foster

**December 5** ..... Brad Ratliff

## Officers & Directors

**President** ..... Grant Purkey  
**President-Elect** ..... Erik Winkler  
**President-Nominee** ..... Annie Knox  
**Secretary** ..... Dawson Dickey  
**Treasurer** ..... Jessica Junge  
**Sergeant-at-Arms** ..... Judy Franklin  
**Past President** ..... Jon Taber  
**Directors** ..... Jenna Giess, Larry Pfautsch, Cassie Wieberg, Jayden Love, Vanessa Hargrave  
**District Governor** ..... Andrea Brady  
**Asst. Gov.** ..... Bing Schimmelpfennig

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## Aron Wilburn finds success online with her flower bulb business

You never know when a chance encounter is going to spark an idea that changes your life. But that's what happened to Aron Wilburn in 2012 when she and her husband attended a Junk in the Trunk event on the Harrisonville Square. There, she met Elroy Knoche, who was selling day lilies. She bought three, and that was the beginning of not only a new business but also a long relationship. Later, Aron visited Knoche's five-acre garden — "the most beautiful thing I've ever seen." It turned out that the

Knoches the the Wilburns were neighbors.

Aron and her husband James have been Cass County residents since 2000. She worked for Harrisonville schools. James is a cyber security executive. They now live in Archie. Their daughter Abigail is retired Navy and lives in San Diego. Their son Anthony is serving in the Navy on the USS Harry S Truman aircraft carrier.

After visiting her neighbor's garden, the "seed" had been planted. James went home to their 10-acre property and



excavating what Aron describes as "my canvas" where she could start on her dream of developing flower seeds and bulbs. Her business, Sunshine Valley Garden, was born.

Things went very slowly at first — until she connected her business with the online retailer Etsy and then Walmart. Soon she was invited to have a booth earlier this year at the Kansas City Home and Garden Show. "I was terrified," she said. But she had flower varieties that many larger grower didn't. She didn't intend to return next year because the booth price was \$7,500. But they begged her to come back with an offer she couldn't refuse — a free booth.

Aron recounted many of the mistakes and misgiving she had along the way, like assuming that people ordering her products knew how to plant them and care for them.

Today Sunshine Valley Garden sells to all 50 states and has shipped over 10,000 orders. Her inventory has blossomed as well, now consisting over over 1,200 unique garden items. The saying, "Every bloom begins with a seed," certainly applies in her case.

## Announcements from last week's meeting

- Erik Winkler won the Secret Greeter dollar coin.
- Bing Schimmelpfenning reported that the Log Cabin Festival was a big success, drawing an estimated 11,000 people. He thanked the cit for its support. He said most vendors were happy with the event. He shared other cell phone tracking data indicating that 4,800 people attended the Quilt Show and 3,200 attended the Student Art Show at the Chamber offices. The carnival rides drew good crowds, generating money for the Chamber.
- John Foster contributed to the PolioPlus bank with a story about the origins of the mysterious toilet paper holder that keeps showing up on the brick wall that once was part of the Hotel Harrisonville before it burned in the 1980s. The story was covered in the Tribune & Times.
- Jill Filer announced that the Nov. 7 Classroom Partner activity will be led by John Foster. Students will write letters to Honor Flight veterans. The visit is at 10:45 a.m. at McEwen Elementary. Jill thanked those Rotarians who participated in the sensory box activity on Oct. 10.
- President-Elect Erik Winkler, presiding in the absence of President Grant Purkey, wished happy birthday (Oct. 16) to Chuck Weedman.



Guests last week were HHS Students of the Month for October, Amanda Gibbs and Trenton Shrout. Emily plans to attend Northwest Missouri State University in the fall. Trenton will be attending the University of Missouri.



Congratulations to Leah Lake, left, and Jedson Lucero, our September Service Above Self Award recipients at McEwen Elementary and Harrisonville Elementary, respectively.



## District Conference

Erik Winkler represented our club at the District Conference Oct. 18 in Springfield. One of the community service activities at the conference was a blood drive. Displaying their blue band-aids after donating, from left: Brad Martens of Columbia, district governor-elect, Kay Caskey of Butler, past assistant governor, and Erik Winkler, Harrisonville president-elect. Current District Governor Andrea Brady will make her official visit to the Harrisonville club next Wednesday.

## Club Calendar

Thursday, October 23

Monthly Social Hour - 4-5 p.m., El Puerto Restaurant.

Sunday, October 26

Trunk or Treat - 3-5 p.m. Harrisonville Square.

Monday, November 3

Monthly Board Meeting - 12 noon, Family Center Farm & Home.

Friday, November 7

Classroom Partner Visit - 10:45 a.m., McEwen Elementary School..

Friday, November 21

Rotary helps at Food Pantry - Two shifts: 9 a.m.-noon and 1-5:30 p.m.