



ROTARY EXPRESS

Rotary Club of Harrisonville, Missouri | March 11, 2026 | **Service above self. One profits most who serves best.**

Today's program



Jayden Love's guest today is Supt. **Josh Chastain** speaking about the school district's April 7 ballot proposal, Proposition 1.

Future programs

March 18 - City Administrator and fellow Rotarian **Brad Ratliff** will speak on the "State of the City."

March 25 - Lori Watson

April 1 - Chuck Weedman

April 8 - Anne Hickman

April 15 - Erik Winkler

April 22 - Jason Winter

April 29 - Tina Wittly

Birthdays

March 23Vanessa Hargrave

Officers & Directors

President.....Grant Purkey

President-ElectErik Winkler

President-NomineeAnnie Knox

SecretaryDawson Dickey

Treasurer.....Jessica Junge

Sergeant-at-ArmsJudy Franklin

Past President.....Jon Taber

DirectorsJenna Giess, Larry Pfautsch, Cassie Wieberg, Jayden Love, Vanessa Hargrave

District GovernorAndrea Brady

Asst. Gov.Bing Schimmelfenning

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Retired FBI agent shares stories from a colorful 20-year career

Still in her 50s, Alex Menzel has already had several careers and he's by no means finished. A guest of Sam Styron, a fellow pilot, Alex shared some highlights from his 20-year FBI career as well as other pursuits before retiring to his home in northern Cass County. But retirement would be a misnomer in his case. He and his daughter have operated an agricultural drone business, and now he thinks he might want to become a crop duster like Sam.

Speaking of flying, Alex piloted a surveillance plane during his FBI days when he was assigned to the FBI's Kansas City field office, supervising its International Terrorism and Transnational Organized Crime squads. That work took him to more than a dozen foreign countries, including stints in northern Africa, Latin America and Europe.



But none of that seemed to be in the cards when Alex was growing up in a small North Georgia town near the Appalachian Mountains. "I wanted to be a farmer," he said. "I went to forestry school and worked to be a game warden." One thing led to another and soon he was pursuing a Ph.D. at the University of Georgia "so I could teach." Along the way, he met his wife, who has a Ph.D. in biology.

Then it was law school at West Virginia University, but when 9/11 happened Alex said, "I thought I needed to serve." So he applied to the FBI and went to its training facilities at Quantico, Va., to begin his new career — not exactly "farming."

Upon graduation, in 2005, he was assigned to Kansas City, a place he had never been.

One of the cases he worked was that of Khalid Ouazzani, a used car and auto parts dealer in Kansas City, who admitted to sending \$23,000 to Al Qaeda in 2007 and 2008, along with related charges involving money laundering and bank fraud. He also admitted swearing an oath of allegiance to the terrorist group. "We followed that guy for 14 months," Alex said.

Other cases he worked included an ISIS recruit from Columbia, Mo., extraditing a Guatemalan resident to the U.S., and his last case, the indictment of 19 members of rival motorcycle gangs. He was also involved in apprehending an escapee named

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Stories from an FBI career

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Trevor Sparks from the Cass County Jail. Among his most interesting assignments was a tour in Morocco, Senegal and Ethiopia in pursuit of terrorism suspects.

Alex commented on the trove of information available on the “dark web” where he said “everything is for sale.” His FBI service led to his appointment as a Special Assistant U.S. Attorney. He currently is affiliated with the Graves law firm.

Announcements from last week’s meeting

- Doug Meyer won the Secret Greeter dollar coin.
- Curtis Grimes was a guest of Sam Styron.
- Dan Stafford was a guest and prospective member from Reed Ford.
- Nancy Shelton contributed to the PolioPlus bank, celebrating the first signs of spring.
- Erik Winkler reported that the first email solicitation to flag program subscribers had been sent. A flag kickoff group photo is tentatively scheduled for noon Wednesday, April 15, at the new location for the flag shed at the USDA building.
- Jayden Love distributed flyers for Senior Day of Service on May 5. If you have jobs for HHS seniors, contact Jayden at 380-2727, ext. 1224. Rotary will serve lunch that day to participating seniors at the United Methodist Church.
- Jon Taber reported that Bill Mills had undergone surgery and all went well.

Club Calendar

Thursday, March 26
Monthly Social Hour - 4-5 p.m., El Puerto Mexican Restaurant

Thursday, March 27
Classroom Partner Visit - 10:45 a.m., McEowen Elementary School

Monday, April 6
Monthly Board Meeting - 12 noon, Family Center

Wednesday, April 15
Flag Program Kickoff - Group photo at flag shed at noon, then lunch at a nearby restaurant

Saturday, May 2
Rotary Community Garage Sale - Community Center

Monday, May 4
Monthly Board Meeting - 12 noon, Family Center Farm & Home

Tuesday, May 5
Senior Day of Service - Rotary serves lunch to HHS seniors at United Methodist Church



Welcome to Rotary

The club is pleased to welcome Thomas Ballard as the newest member of Harrisonville Rotary. He is an attorney working as a regulatory change consultant for software company Wolters Kluwer. A member of the Arkansas National Guard, Thomas is a recent graduate of the Army's Judge Advocate General school. He and his wife Danielle live in Harrisonville with their daughters Betty, 6, and Georgia, 4. Cindy Greenwell performed the induction ceremony with sponsor Larry Pfautsch.

MARCH 2026

CASS CAREER CENTER

YOUNG PROFESSIONAL OF THE MONTH

PEPIN BRAY

EMT Academy

Home School

Sponsored by Harrisonville Rotary Club

Congratulations to Pepin Bray, Cass Career Center's Young Professional of the Month for March. Pepin is a home schooled student enrolled in EMT Academy. The certificate and \$25 school store voucher were presented by Rotary Club President Grant Purkey.