explore!

PACK YOUR BAGS: IT’S THE TRAVEL ISSUE
Kiwanis magazine is filled with great stories, but only Kiwanis members get to see the magazine. So how about we spread our Kiwanis stories all over social media?

Visit kiwanismagazine.org to read about great Kiwanis projects, then share those stories and photos via social media buttons found right on the page. It’s that easy.

When you read something you love, pass it on.

#kidsneedkiwanis #kiwanis
Kiwanis is a global organization of volunteers dedicated to improving the world one child and one community at a time.

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FUTURE CONVENTIONS
Toronto, Ontario, Canada, June 23–26, 2016
Paris, France, July 13–16, 2017
Las Vegas, Nevada, USA, June 28–July 1, 2018
Orlando, Florida, USA, June 27–30, 2019

KIWANIS (ISSN 0162-5276) is published monthly except February, May, July and November by Kiwanis International POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Kiwanis, 3636 Woodview Tr., Indianapolis, IN 46268-3196. Periodicals postage paid at Indianapolis, IN and additional mailing offices. CPC Pub Agreement #40030511 Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to Kiwanis, 2835 Kew Drive, Windsor, ON N8T 3B7. Member’s annual subscription is US$8. Nonmembers may subscribe for US$12 per year. The information in this magazine is for illustrative and discussion purposes only. It is intended to provide general information about the subject matter covered and is provided with the understanding that Kiwanis is not rendering legal, accounting or tax advice. You should consult with appropriate counsel or other advisors on all matters pertaining to legal, tax or accounting obligations and requirements. Copyright © 2016 by Kiwanis International

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< ON THE COVER
EXPLORE! THE KIWANIS MAGAZINE TRAVEL ISSUE.
PHOTO BY KASEY JACKSON
I was a shy girl. I didn’t like talking in front of groups or meeting new people, but I loved community service. I decided to face my fears when I walked into a meeting of the Alpena (Michigan) High School Key Club in 1977. It turned out to be the best decision of my life.

Key Club, and then Circle K, helped me develop abilities that I didn’t know I had. Other members gave me the confidence I needed to become a leader, not only in Kiwanis, but across my personal and professional life. I don’t know where my life would be today if I hadn’t walked into that meeting.

Kiwanis’ greatest achievement isn’t the tens of millions of lives we saved through The Eliminate Project. It’s not the millions of children protected from the leading cause of preventable mental disability—iodine deficiency—which was our first global campaign for children. Rather, our greatest achievement continues to be creating the next generation of leaders who will have the ability and confidence to knock out other great world problems. Our greatest achievement is Kiwanis’ Service Leadership Programs.

A few weeks ago, I asked a Key Club member why she joined our Kiwanis family. Katie replied that she loved Kiwanis because of the opportunities for a person to make a difference from the time they are in elementary school to the end of time with estate giving through the Kiwanis International Foundation.

Katie isn’t the shy girl that I was. She has the confidence needed to be a good leader. Her Key Club is connecting her to like-minded individuals. As our accomplishments have shown us during the past 100 years, we can accomplish more together than individually. By creating the Kiwanis family, Kiwanis is providing the space these kids need to find the solutions for issues plaguing themselves, their communities and the world. Kids need Kiwanis.

One of the wisest things Kiwanis did as we celebrated our 100th anniversary was to create a strategic plan that would kick off our new century of service. It’s called the I-Plan, which you can find online at kiwanis.org/iplan. During the development of the I-Plan, the needs of our members and clubs were paramount. So Kiwanis surveyed, talked with and listened to members worldwide.

One of the things they said was that they favor maintaining the organization’s financial health while reducing dependency on dues. That may seem a daunting challenge for a 100-year-old membership-based organization. But our research also revealed that through partnerships, Kiwanis can offer revenue-generating products that support clubs’ activities and members’ interests.

Kiwanians, for example, like to travel. Our partnership with AHI created Kiwanis Travel to offer premium global adventures. “Viva Cuba” (page 12) describes the experiences from Kiwanis Travel’s maiden journey. Members also are interested in specialty insurance plans—cancer care, accidental death and hospital income coverage, term life and travel accident plans. Beginning this past February and continuing through July, U.S. members will receive in their mailboxes information about Kiwanis Insurance products that offer these plans at group rates.

Many members also said they’re interested in a Kiwanis-branded affinity credit card. The Kiwanis Rewards VISA® card, which will become available in April, will allow members and clubs to support Kiwanis International programs and earn rewards by using the card for personal and club-related purchases.

Our new partnership programs add new value to what it means to be a Kiwanis member. Check them out at kiwanis.org/iplan.
Kiwanis Travel invites you to join three exciting travel opportunities this summer!

In May, embark on an Irish adventure. We’ll begin in the Gaeltacht, the region of Ireland where people still speak Irish and preserve age-old island traditions, on Ireland’s rugged western coast. Explore spirited Galway, travel through rugged Connemara, marvel at the Cliffs of Moher and admire the beauty of the Ring of Kerry. Step back in time on Inishmore, one of the Aran Islands, and explore prehistoric forts. The program concludes in Dublin, Ireland’s vibrant capital. (Trip dates: May 8-18, 2016)

This July, we’ll set sail on the mighty Danube River for a luxurious journey through Eastern Europe on the exclusively chartered MS Amadeus Silver II. Your journey begins with two nights in Sofia, Bulgaria, and concludes with three nights in Prague, Czech Republic. Visit old-world capitals, ornate cathedrals, medieval castles and more in eight countries. Enjoy the flexibility of choosing from a variety of excursions during your port calls. (Trip dates: July 1-16, 2016)

In August, take a deep breath of pristine Alpine air in Switzerland. Stay in the charming towns of St. Moritz and Villars-sur-Ollon, while you explore one of the most beautiful countries in the world. Hop aboard the Bernina Express and the Glacier Express for two unforgettable train rides through the Swiss Alps. Travel to Zermatt to witness the imposing Matterhorn. Admire Lake Geneva and the pretty town of Lausanne. (Trip dates: August 17-28, 2016)

Learn about all our exciting programs at kiwanis.ahitravel.com or call our travel experts at 877-572-5159.
Voices

LETTERS

ACK! A SPIDER!
Although the cover of the January/February 2016 Kiwanis magazine nearly made me jump out of my skin when I opened the mailbox, I greatly appreciated the article “Fear Itself.” Useful information that I hope a lot of people will use to help them overcome their fears. Great job on the article and the entire issue.

Robin Robinson
Kiwanis Club of Palatka, Florida

Please explain the point of running the article on fear and the cover photo of the spider. I could find no justification for the article’s inclusion in the magazine, let alone the lead position.

The rest of the magazine showed there is much to be written about the good Kiwanis is doing throughout the world. Or you could have explored in greater depth some answers to the challenges Kiwanis clubs face, from membership decline to membership costs.

But spiders, clowns and needles?

Bill Eddy
Kiwanis Club of Lincoln-Cornhusker, Nebraska

EDITOR’S NOTE:
Kiwanis magazine has a history of publishing feature articles of general interest with topics such as gardening, cooking, travel, potatoes … and fear. Also, Canadian Astronaut Chris Hadfield will talk about conquering fears when he appears as a featured speaker at the 101st Annual Kiwanis International Convention in Toronto, Ontario, June 23–26.

K Corps
Global Community Service Exchange

Invite the World into your Home
K Corps, Kiwanis International’s new two-week international exchange program for Kiwanis-family teens (15-18), is looking for members to serve as host families this summer.

• Provide a bed and three meals a day.
• Encourage the visiting teen to engage in the everyday life of your country.
• Participate in the regular activities and fellowship of your Kiwanis club.
• Make a new friend and learn about a new culture.

Become a K Corps host family today!

800.721.7474 • www.kiwanis.org/youthexchange

In cooperation with PAX Eurasian Exchange

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Voices

ADVENTURE TIME

“So, where would you like to go?”

Since as far back as I can re-
member, I have been in awe of the
multi-screen flight monitors strewn
through the busiest of airports. In
fact, I’ve been known to stand and
gaze at them at the expense of miss-
ing that day’s particular connection.
Appleton. Saskatoon. Ho Chi Minh
Lucia. Pasco.

Decades ago, cartographers
mapped the length of time it would
take to travel anywhere in the world
from London. At the time, ships
made coasts the quickest to reach,
and the further inland one wished
to travel, the longer it would take.
Various colors covering a particular
country corresponded to the num-
ber of weeks it would take.

Today, that map looks almost as
colorful, yet instead of travel time of
weeks, the key shows half days. In
about 2.5 days, a vast majority of the
world can be reached not only from
London, but practically anywhere.

Enter a couple of three-letter airport
codes into your favorite online book-
ing engine or talk with a travel agent
and no matter where you’d like to go,
you can get there. We live in a world
where a new experience is merely a
plane ride away.

Three things in particular excite me
about the prospect of travel:

Traveling is a party for the
senses. There’s a way to get to
East Africa in just one day’s time to
see hills upon hills of rolling green
canopies and deep red clays. There’s
a way to get to a roadside stand and
sample a home-cooked masaman
curry in the northern mountains of
Thailand. There’s a way to watch a
silencing snow fall on the steeples
poking Prague’s skyline. There’s a
way to kayak amidst sun-thirsty seals
in the south of New Zealand. Each
of these particular experiences is
etched clearly in my mind, and I’m so
grateful to have had them.

Traveling forces me to abandon
my comfort zone. When an entire
menu can’t be read or a bus map
makes no sense, that’s where the real
fun begins. In the end, there’s genera-
ally no option but to figure it out. Some
of my most memorable and tasty
meals are ones whose name I can’t
recall. In being disconnected from so
many of the comforts we easily come
to take for granted, travel reminds me
how small I am in a world that spans
thousands of miles and is inhabited by
7 billion people.

So if you see me gazing at a flight
board, come stand next to me. I’ll be
the guy asking, “Where would you
like to go?”

ABOUT BUILDING TOMORROW:

George Sroun has traveled to nearly 50
countries and is founder and chief dreamer
at Building Tomorrow, a nonprofit that has
constructed classroom space for more than
4,400 children in Uganda while engaging a
college-based chapter network of students
at more than 25 universities across the US.
In 2007, Key Club members helped break
ground on the Lutisi school in Uganda. For
more on the Lutisi school, check out the
photo essay on the Kiwanis magazine app.

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FIRST PERSON

GEORGE SROUR • FOUNDER AND CHIEF DREAMER, BUILDING TOMORROW

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News
TRENDS, TIPS, FACTS AND FIGURES FROM KIWANIS INTERNATIONAL

Are you a Travel Insider?

Brian MacLearn is. The Waverly, Iowa, Kiwanis Club member signed up for the Travel Insider program and won a European trip for two during Kiwanis Travel’s special sweepstakes.

If you’re interested in keeping up with all of the Kiwanis Travel news and taking part in our next sweepstakes, become a Travel Insider. You could win an iPad, iWatch or Nikon camera. Learn more about the benefits at kiwanis.ahitravel.com.

Send us your videos!

What’s your club planning for Kiwanis One Day on April 2? We want to see it. Show the impact your club is making in your community with a short, fun video shot with your phone or a fancier camera. Your little (read: short) video could earn your club a GoPro camera! Learn more about the video contest at kiwanis.org/onedayvideo. And show your Kiwanis pride by wearing the new One Day T-shirt (above), available at kiwanis.org/store.
MNT UPDATE:
We did it! Kiwanis achieves goal

The Eliminate Project has reached its goal. This past February, Kiwanis International announced that members, clubs, districts and supporters have donated and pledged US$110 million for the campaign to eliminate maternal and neonatal tetanus. Learn more at TheEliminateProject.org.

“I am so proud to call myself a Kiwanian,” says Kiwanis International President Sue Petrisin. “More than 55 million mothers and babies will be saved from this cruel disease because of Kiwanis.

“But our work isn’t done. We must now turn our attention on fulfilling our pledges and continuing to work with UNICEF to fund MNT-elimination projects in 21 nations where tetanus still threatens the lives of babies and their mothers.”

Legacy of Play Contest

Start planning now for the Legacy of Play Contest, brought to you by Kiwanis International Vision Partner Landscape Structures. Legacy of Play celebrates our shared belief that investing in your community through playground projects is important to the success of a Kiwanis club.

It’s easy to enter! Beginning April 4, submit your club’s playground proposal on the Legacy of Play Contest tab on Kiwanis International’s Facebook page and then ask for support from your network of friends for their online votes. The 10 submissions with the highest number of votes by May 26 will become finalists. A panel of judges will select the winning club, which will receive US$25,000 in playground equipment to be installed in conjunction with the club’s 2017 Kiwanis One Day plans. Good luck!
News

Board action
When it met this past October, the Kiwanis International Board revised an interpretation of the bylaws to extend the existing dues waiver for new clubs to include clubs formed on or between January 1 and September 30. This program began January 1, 2016, and will expire on September 30, 2018.
The Board also adopted a new policy providing standards for Kiwanis International subsidiaries and related organizations.
For more information, visit kiwanis.org/2015octpolicy.

Signature project toolkit
Does your Kiwanis club have a signature project? Not sure? Here are the criteria for a signature project:

Recurring. At a minimum, the event takes place annually.
Brand-enhancing. The project should elevate the Kiwanis brand in your community. (See "Brand Guide," featured on the next page.)
High-impact. The project should demonstrate significant positive impact on the community.
Membership-focused. The project should strengthen membership and develop new partnerships.
Learn more about the criteria and click through the signature project toolkit today by visiting kiwanis.org/sptoolkit.

Protect yourself
The theme of this Kiwanis magazine is travel, and with all this talk of faraway destinations (and some close to home), we suspect you’re making plans for how you’ll spend your next vacation. If so, we have exactly what you need. Kiwanis International offers a new travel-assistance program, which is available exclusively to U.S. Kiwanis members. Emergency Assistance Plus is a "24-hour emergency back-up plan" that offers more than 20 benefits and can help Kiwanians handle almost any crisis while traveling. Learn more at emergencyassistanceplus.com/kiwanis.
Strength in numbers

In October 2014, the Kiwanis Club of Hammonton, New Jersey, sprang into action. The club, which turns 94 in April, dropped to 14 members in July 2014 and had only a few dedicated members attending its meetings. But two club members with a family legacy in Kiwanis shook up the club’s trajectory. Butch Rodio, a past club president, and Bob Schenk, membership and program chairman, decided to hit the streets to find younger members. They also invited their friends. And their efforts paid off.

At the end of 2015, the club had reached 49 members. But they aren’t stopping there. They’ve set a goal to get 60 members on their roster by the end of 2016. While they are flexible about member attendance at meetings, they say bringing in engaging speakers helps reinforce the value of membership.

Their formula for success?

“Personally ask each member to be involved,” says Schenk. “Two years ago, our club was ready to close. We brought it back.”

News

Corrections

Key Club opened a club in the United Arab Emirates, not Saudi Arabia (December “News”).

To clarify a December “News” story: Inspired by his 57-member Gimli and District, Manitoba, Kiwanis Club, Sam Sekhon shares our child-focused service with other communities by helping to open new clubs. The new 17-member Selkirk and District, Manitoba, Kiwanis Club, for example, initiated a project to collect baby items for new families.

Niagara Falls is the destination of Kiwanis Travel’s pre-convention tour. The post-convention tour will explore the province of Québec. A January/February “News” item reversed the tours’ order.
FROM THE ARTS TO EDUCATION, RELIGION TO THE ECONOMY, THIS PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE EXCHANGE HAS TRAVELERS WANTING MORE.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY KASEY JACKSON
A few light bumps of turbulence don’t seem to disturb passengers a bit as the airplane bounces through the last wisps of cloud. For those lucky enough to snag a seat with a view on this short trip, their noses are glued to the windows. Passengers in the middle and aisle seats are leaning in as far as possible and handing off cell phones, asking complete strangers to snap a photo of the first glimpse of land below.

For seasoned travelers, this might seem odd if you didn’t consider the circumstances. On most flights, in the final moments before landing, people are securing tray tables and putting away magazines. Tightening seat belts. Storing large electronics. Some even sleep through the landing. There’s not that much to fuss about, since it’s the exploring once you arrive that you look forward to most when traveling. To be honest, just getting somewhere isn’t all that exciting.

Unless it’s to a land you’ve never seen before.

Everyone’s still leaning. Phones and cameras are snapping and the chatter is intensifying when the flight attendant’s voice breaks through the excitement.

“Welcome to Havana, Cuba.”

THE ADVENTURE BEGINS

Once through security at the José Martí International Airport in Havana, 18 wide-eyed Kiwanians and guests, all part of this inaugural Kiwanis Travel trip, hop on a bus and are swept away to begin a week-long journey around this island of many extremes—and one that was more or less off-limits to most American travelers for several decades. (While only Americans signed up for this first trip, all Kiwanis Travel trips are open to Kiwanis members from any country.)

Jorge, our tour guide, was born and raised here. He’s slightly short and sports a wide smile as he stands at the front of our bus. Within minutes we can tell he’s an encyclopedia of knowledge—explaining this, that and the other with great ease and detail while pointing out landmarks left and right.

“On your right is the U.S. Embassy, which many of you probably saw on television as your flag was raised on August 14,” he says, explaining the moment the United States and Cuba took a visual and historic step forward after the December 17 announcement that the two countries would begin to ease relations.

A few moments later: “On your right is the Hotel Nacional” … which, he points out, many of us probably know from “The Godfather Part II.”

During these first moments on the bus, everyone snaps photos. Some are taking notes. Jorge assures us that we’ll see much of this and more over the next several days, so there’s no need to rely on blurry photos taken through a bus window.
There are smiles all around. The mission we’re on isn’t about tourism, though we could be seen as tourists. But Jorge is quick to point out—more than once—that we aren’t tourists. We’re *travelers*. And there’s a difference. This is, after all, a people-to-people exchange. We are here to learn and absorb the culture. Meet people. Talk about life and music and art and education and, yes, maybe even politics. We are supposed to ask questions. We are supposed to touch and be touched. We are supposed to make new friends. We do all of this and more, while exploring the country most of us only know of through the news.

The agenda is full of interesting people and diverse activities. A tour of the Museo de la Revolución; a visit to an elementary school; a trip to Finca Vigía, Ernest Hemingway’s home; an intimate performance followed by conversation with Afro-Cuban group Havana Compás Dance; a quick stop at a cigar factory; a long drive through stunning countryside and the Sierra del Rosario mountain range to visit the rural community of Las Terrazas. There’s even a surprise stop at “Fusterlandia,” the colorful, sculpted world of artist José Rodriguez Fuster. “That’s Fuster,” Jorge says of the man who just drove onto the property as we tour. Fuster steps out of his tiny car, sucking from a straw jabbed into a coconut. “He’s quiet and doesn’t like much attention.” We continue to tour his workshop and take in the endless colorful mosaics of roosters, mermaids, fish, palm trees … the art covers every last inch of his home and surrounding homes in Jaimanitas, located a short drive outside of Havana. This trip is proving fascinating in every way—each twist and turn brings something new, something intriguing, something educational and eye-opening.

“I’m amazed at the enthusiasm and the energy and the ingenuity that the young people we’ve met have shown,” says New York traveler Richard Freeman. “The (Compás) dancers were extraordinary. What they do with so little is ingenious and imaginative. I was also so impressed with the lecture at the University of Havana. I was blown away. This whole trip, I want to get as much out of it as possible. And it’s so much more than I expected.”

**HAVANA: CITY OF CONTRASTS**

It’s well into the upper 90s (Fahrenheit), and we have been walking on cobblestone for an hour with not much shade in sight, but nobody is complaining. In fact, it’s quite the opposite. Everyone is actively involved in what is happening. Asking questions. Learning about architecture, food, religion. A street performer approaches with his guitar, singing a song in Spanish. Jorge tells him who we are, and the musician doesn’t miss a beat as he quickly changes the lyrics to sing about Kiwanis.

There are centuries of history around us. We walk through Plaza de San Francisco, which dates to the 1600s and is home to the stunning basilica and monastery of San Francisco de Asís. We stop for a restroom break and cold drinks at one of Hemingway’s favorite hideaways: the Hotel Ambos Mundos. We ooh and ahh over art sold on side streets and watch children playing in Plaza Vieja.

“We’re getting to see the integral parts of Cuba because of the people-to-people exchange,” says John Maxwell of the Kiwanis Club of Bayonet Point, Florida. “When you travel as a tourist, you only see the highlights.”
But this is more than a “Top 10 things to see in Cuba” tour. Each day, there’s something new and surprising. Petersburg, Illinois, Kiwanian David Turner says that “with each new experience, it leads to more questions and more excitement about what’s coming next.” And there’s a consensus: Cuba is beyond explanation. A study in contrasts. There is stunning beauty in the countryside and along the coastlines. This is the Caribbean, after all. It’s as aquamarine in color as you could ever imagine. But at the same time that Havana has ornate buildings, architect Miguel Coyula tells us that each day, an average of three buildings crumble to the ground here. It’s like the prince and the pauper, he says, reminding us that 80 percent of Havana was built in less than 60 years. And while it’s well past time for a face-lift, “we need to do everything we can to preserve Havana as a Cuban city.”

HEADING TO PARADISE
Venturing out of the capital city, we head to Cienfuegos in central Cuba. Along the way, we get a sweet treat at a sugar cane factory and visit Playa Girón, site of the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961. But it’s a visit to a Cuban health clinic, where we meet several nurses who answer countless questions from our inquisitive group, proving just how informative and different a people-to-people exchange can be from an average vacation. We have another intimate opportunity to talk with Cuban citizens again when we get a personal concert by the Orquesta de Cámara de Cienfuegos de Cuba. One person in our group is moved to tears during the group’s rendition of “Shenandoah.” Talking with members of the orchestra after the performance, we learn that most of them have been playing since they were very young and that caring for their instruments in the humidity of Cuba can be challenging. We vow to look for them the next time they tour outside of Cuba.

Using Cienfuegos as a perfect launching point, we take a day trip to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Trinidad. Once there, we are welcomed into the home of a local artist, where we

---CONTINUED ON PAGE 48---

Kiwanis and AHI Travel have partnered to bring you Kiwanis Travel, offering several incredible destination packages exclusively for Kiwanians and their guests. Visit kiwanis.ahitravel.com to book your trip today.
AROUND THE WORLD IN 80* WAYS

*OK! WE DON’T HAVE EXACTLY 80 WAYS, BUT WE DO HAVE NUMEROUS IDEAS TO HELP YOU GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR NEXT VACATION. BY KELSEY NOWAKOWSKI
WANT TO TRAVEL? START BY ASKING YOURSELF A FEW KEY QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR GOALS.

What’s important for me to see now in my life? Is there a place that speaks to me culturally or historically? Or one that’s on the brink of great change?

What’s my price range? Surprisingly, traveling close to home isn’t always the most economical. And some places cost more to get to, but my money might stretch farther once I’m there.

Can I adapt to a place with cultural norms that are unlike ones I’ve ever known? Culture shock is real, so I should know what I’ll encounter.

5 TIPS FOR MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR TRAVEL

1. Setting up alerts that let you know when a flight cost drops below a certain price is a clever way to save on your next trip. Sign up at airfarewatchdog.com.

2. Do your homework: Research the best time of year to go and off-the-beaten-path activities. Travel reviews from tripadvisor.com are useful.


4. Research if you’ll need to rent a car on your trip, since many cities are walkable and offer reliable public transit. Riding the subway can be a cultural experience too.

5. Consider an itinerary with lots of stops so you can see more. Many airlines, including Icelandair, Emirates and Japan Airlines, allow passengers to do short stopovers.

5 PACKING TRICKS FOR TRAVELING LIGHT

If you’re on a multi-destination trip and in charge of carrying your own bags, then traveling light is your best bet. (Bringing less also leaves more space for souvenirs. Bonus!)

Compression bags
Compression bags cut down on space by removing the air as you roll them—and they’re convenient for storing dirty laundry.

Quick-dry clothes
Clothes that dry fast are useful for more adventurous trips. Those made from synthetic materials dry easily overnight. And yes, there are fashionable brands.

Lightweight, versatile shoes
Shoes are heavy and take up a lot of space in your bag. Pack lightweight walking shoes that can be dressed up.

A week’s worth of clothes
Most hotels offer a low-cost laundry service, so consider only bringing enough clothes for a week. Choose attire that doesn’t wrinkle easily and coordinates well.

Multipurpose items
Think in terms of multi-functionality: A sarong can be beach cover-up, blanket, pillow or shawl. A reusable bag can be a beach tote or a place to stash your purchases.

“LIFE IS EITHER A DARING ADVENTURE OR NOTHING.” — HELEN KELLER

“ONE’S DESTINATION IS NEVER A PLACE, BUT A NEW WAY OF SEEING THINGS.” — HENRY MILLER
The tastes and aromas of local markets are often the most authentic experiences a country has to offer. They’re also the ideal place to buy interesting gifts.

### Buenos Aires’ San Telmo Antiques Market, Argentina
Old-fashioned tango dancers and street performers transport this market’s visitors back to early 20th-century Argentina. Situated in a vibrant, bohemian neighborhood, here you’ll find local art, hip clothing and lots of good people-watching.

### The Danube River’s Christmas Markets, Central Europe
During the holiday season, picturesque markets along the river sell locally made crafts, such as ornaments, carvings and ceramics. Visiting them on a cruise is a great way to explore the quaint villages that line the river as it winds through Central Europe.

### Istanbul’s Grand Bazaar, Turkey
As one of the world’s oldest and largest covered markets, the Grand Bazaar is a cultural must-see that attracts ten of thousands of visitors every day. Intricately patterned Turkish carpets, ceramics, jewelry and clothes fill its colorful stalls.

### Bangkok’s Chatuchak Market, Thailand
This weekend market is a labyrinth of alleys and stalls with bargain-priced Thai goods including antiques, plants, food and ceramics. Visitors can expect to see a great deal of live music and dance.

### Toronto’s St. Lawrence Market, Canada
Ranked by National Geographic as the world’s top food market, this farmers market is the best place to sample Toronto’s varied culinary scene—a reflection of the city’s high cultural diversity. Peameal bacon sandwiches are its famous staple.
“THE WORLD IS A BOOK AND THOSE WHO DO NOT TRAVEL READ ONLY ONE PAGE.” – ST. AUGUSTINE
“TRAVEL IS MORE THAN THE SEEING OF SIGHTS; IT IS A CHANGE THAT GOES ON, DEEP AND PERMANENT, IN THE IDEAS OF LIVING.” – MIRIAM BEARD
REFLECTIONS ON TRAVEL AND APPRECIATION

Shrouded in misty clouds and perched on a peaked, green mountaintop, Machu Picchu looked more like a mysterious floating city than a well-known World Heritage Site that draws tourists from around the globe. The place didn’t just demand my respect—it naturally drew awe and admiration.

In the Andes mountains, the ancestors of the Inca people who built this mesmerizing city revere it as the pinnacle of a long, sacred journey. They honor the ruins by teaching visitors about its historical and spiritual importance for their people still today. Even with that knowledge, it was difficult to capture all of Machu Picchu’s essence: its magnitude, precision, beauty and energy all continue to mystify me. Visiting these ruins and other sacred places like it isn’t just about crossing them off my travel list, though. It’s more symbiotic in that they refresh and expand my perspective by giving me a new lens through which to see my surroundings.

But you can’t always verbalize what these experiences evoke in you. Anthony Bourdain, a world-renowned chef and traveler, grasps occasions that leave us speechless: “It’s an irritating reality that many places and events defy description. Angkor Wat and Machu Picchu, for instance, seem to demand silence, like a love affair you can never talk about.”

Machu Picchu is just one place that calls for such genuine pause. Seeing it made me more appreciative of our complex world, though I can’t say much about the experience, at least not eloquently. For me, this is traveling at its best—an educational process whereby we learn about the world and what others value through quiet reflection.

ABOUT KELSEY

Kelsey Nowakowski is a freelance writer based in the U.S. Virgin Islands covering all things food, environmental science and travel. After receiving her master’s degree in economic geography from the University of Toronto, she reported for National Geographic magazine’s maps and graphics department as well as its food blog, The Plate, before leaving to work from the field. An avid traveler, Kelsey has spent a lot of time exploring—with China, Vietnam, South Africa, Peru, Panama and many parts of the Caribbean being a few of her favorites.
In Ratzeburg, a quaint town with a population of about 14,000 located in Schleswig-Holstein, Germany, there are nearly 250 refugees living among the locals. They are mostly young, motivated individuals from countries such as Syria, Afghanistan, Armenia, Eritrea and Iraq. Places most of us have only seen on a map or read about in news reports. They came here looking for a better life. And the Kiwanis Club of Ratzeburg is welcoming them and helping them find their way. These are a few of their courageous stories.

After serving half of a mandatory two-year military service in Syria, Ebrahim Alakil found himself in the middle of an increasingly unstable war zone. And like so many others—statistics show nearly half of the members of the Syrian Armed Forces have fled since the start of the civil war in 2011—he wanted to get out. So he headed for Turkey, where he worked for one year in various construction and welding jobs. But since it’s completely illegal to just up and move to and work in Turkey, he decided he needed to move on. Again.

“Word got out that you could become legal in Germany,” he says, so that was the plan. To make it to Germany. His one-month journey included getting caught by police and fingerprinted in Bulgaria. He got caught again in Hungary. But he continued to make his way. Bulgaria. Serbia. Hungary. Austria. Germany. He traveled by foot and train. He even hitchhiked. As if this journey weren’t difficult enough, once in Germany, 24-year-old Ebrahim faced another hurdle: the law known as Dublin III, which states that all asylum seekers must remain in the country through which they first entered the European Union. For Ebrahim, that was Bulgaria, not Germany.

Find out what happened next in Ebrahim’s story at kiwanismagazine.org.
Unlike many refugees forced to leave their countries to escape war, persecution or even natural disaster, Amalya Abgaryan was in no real danger back home in Armenia. Instead, she says, she and her husband fled their country in March 2014 because of corruption. And according to the United Nations Development Programme, corruption in Armenia is a “serious challenge to its development.”

Amalya and her husband paid 6,000 euros on the black market to get a Schengen visa, which at the time allowed them to travel internationally within the 26 European countries that are part of what is known as the Schengen Area. This is how they made their way to Germany. Schengen countries currently have relaxed borders with one another—meaning moving about is easier. But there is talk of strengthening security at the borders because of the migrant crisis.

Now in Ratzeburg, Amalya is taking the necessary steps to be able to stay. She’s learning the language, looking for a job and showing effort—which she hopes will help in her asylum process in Germany. But there are no guarantees. Refugees are given a deadline to get everything in order; and if they don’t, they may face deportation. There are no clear, written rules. But one thing is for sure: Amalya’s dedication to her studies is paying off. She’s a “top B1 student” in her German language classes in Ratzeburg. But as with many of the refugees in Ratzeburg, she’s not taking all the credit, not even for the progress she’s made so far. In fact, she’s quick to thank her teachers and Kiwanian Werner Büttner for helping her.

“Every day, I want to learn something different, and he’s always trying to make it happen,” she says.
Farhad Heidary misses his mom. The 26-year-old hasn’t seen his family in a year, and he never had the chance to say a proper goodbye. As an employee of the United States Agency for International Development, he worked in his home country of Afghanistan, often in extremely dangerous areas. But it was while traveling in Italy for a Model United Nations conference that his life took a surprising turn.

“I received a warning email from my supervisor in Afghanistan that four of my colleagues who were traveling in a district of Herat had been kidnapped by the Taliban,” Farhad recalls. “My supervisor advised me to ‘Stay wherever you are. It’s better not to come back.’ So I stayed two more weeks in Italy to make a good decision.”

His decision: He would head to Germany, where several of his family members (sisters, an aunt and uncle and some cousins) were living. This was his best option. He longed for closeness to family.

“We grow up in a community where family is always together; it’s like this in Afghanistan,” he says. “This is my first time being apart.”

Since finding refuge in Ratzeburg, his German language skills (both writing and speaking) have become quite impressive. He recently received great news: His academic degree in computer science from Herat University will now be recognized in Germany, meaning he can apply for a master’s program. But there’s a catch: He needs a residency permit. This is the next (and very big) step in allowing him to stay in Germany. But there’s no way to know how long the process will take. So he’s still unsure what the future holds.

“I’m grateful for the help of everyone here,” he says. “The people around me are so kind. They are a blessing.”

But Ratzeburg isn’t where Farhad wants to stay. At least not forever. “Afghanistan is home. I want to go home.”
Eritrea is a small country in the Horn of Africa. It may be small in size, but its Eritrean Defence Forces are not. They are among the largest in all of Africa, in fact. All able-bodied men and women upon reaching age 18 must serve, and proof of military service is also required in order to attend university.

Abdurauf Adam, 25, was worried he wouldn’t make the cut to attend university after serving his mandatory military service. He didn’t want to become a permanent reservist, which is also required. So he decided to set out to find a better life outside of Eritrea. His journey would not be easy.

His trip began on foot and bus, taking him a week to reach Sudan. But Sudan posed a problem. There was a desert to cross, plus a strict patrol at the border with Libya. It would take him another five days to get that far and cost him quite a bit. A trafficker offered to “get you wherever you need to go” for US$1,100. Then in Libya, that trafficker abandoned him and took the money.

“I had to work in Libya for a year to come up with more money,” he says. “I worked in Benghazi and had a few relatives in Saudi Arabia and back home who helped.”

Once he had more cash for the journey, he paid a second trafficker US$1,300, this time to spend three days on a three-level boat with 200 other refugees, all crossing the Mediterranean Sea in hopes of reaching Italy. But the boat stopped halfway, and by pure chance, a second boat plucked all 200-plus refugees out of the sea and took them to Italy. Abdurauf took a bus to Rome, then a bus to Milan and then hopped on a train, hoping to reach Sweden.

“I had a telephone number from a refugee from Eritrea who now lives in Sweden,” he says. This man was his lifeline, offering guidance over the phone. Abdurauf used technology a lot on his journey—apps, prepaid phones, maps, schedules, bus routes. But he was taken from a train during a police raid in Stuttgart, Germany. He never made it to Sweden.

Abdurauf is building a new life in Ratzeburg. What happens now?

“I need an apprenticeship in carpentry,” he says. “I need to learn German better. But good things are next.”
Ratzeburg Kiwanian Werner Büttner sits at a large wooden table during a quick lunch break, his three-ring binder open to reveal information about many of the refugees he has come to know. As he talks of how the asylum process works (and doesn’t) in Germany, he flips through the pages, showing examples of just how much back-and-forth needs to happen to do things most of us would consider commonplace: finding an education, a house, a job. None of this is easy for a refugee.

“You need good friends for stuff like this to work,” he says. He apologizes as he makes a phone call and sets up meetings, all in an attempt to make some sort of progress for the young people who have become central in his life. He does more than just talk about what’s needed—he sits down with refugees and figures out how to make it happen. He helps with language tutoring. He finds companies willing to offer internships. He hunts down paperwork. And it’s all in his mobile office—his binder.

“These are motivated young people, and they are well received,” he says, mentioning Germany’s Willkommenskultur. “It’s no use looking over the fence and criticizing them for not integrating. We have to do something. You can’t hate them. Once you know them, and they have a face, you can’t hate them.”
Learn more about the refugees—and the work being done by the Kiwanis Club of Ratzeburg—at kiwanismagazine.org.
SUB-CLUBS

COMMON INTERESTS, OCCUPATIONS, EVEN NAMES FORM THESE UNOFFICIAL ‘CLUBS’ WITHIN CLUBS.

Take your normal Kiwanis club. There may be an attorney on the roster, an insurance agent, a couple of teachers, a retired CEO, a dentist, a truck driver and the local newspaper reporter whose impressive Kiwanis résumé includes Builders Club and Key Club membership, along with a term as a Circle K club president. A good mix of community leaders.

The stories on the next five pages have nothing to do with “normal.” We’re talking “special” here. Maybe even ... “unusual.” Whether by design or by accident, special groups sometimes form within Kiwanis clubs or districts.

There are, for example, a garage band in California, a bunch of Bobs in Nebraska and a cluster of canal workers in Panama. There’s even a leather-jacket-wearing motorcycle gang in Switzerland.

A good mix of community leaders.
As many as 14,000 ships pass through the Panama Canal every year. Each is lifted up three steps of locks and lowered down three steps of locks for the 50-mile, cross-isthmus transit. The process operates, National Geographic reported in 2014, “with the precision of a Swiss watch.”

It’s comforting to know that behind the scenes—while tourist-laden liners, grain-hauling cargo ships and luxury yachts are guided through the locks—Kiwanians are among the 10,000 canal employees making it happen.

When the Canal de Panama Kiwanis Club opened in 2001, nearly every member was employed by the Panama Canal Authority. Today, the roster is more representative of the community at large, but a core of employees maintains the club’s canal connections. “The Canal de Panama Kiwanis Club was formed out of a desire to channel the efforts of community service through a group of people who, though they work in different professions and different job sites, could be brought together in one general area to strengthen individual efforts,” says Kiwanian Margie Alvarez. “Working in the same company facilitates our communication and coordination for community activities.”

That synergy has built the La Tosca School in a rural area 85 miles from Panamá City, founded a home for teenage mothers and, every year, organizes a day of yesteryear games—hopscotch, marbles, jacks—for local families.
They had all the necessary ingredients right there: the talent, the equipment. It took but a single suggestion to make it all happen. What happened was music.

Instead of hiring entertainment to perform at its new-officers installation a few years ago, the Kiwanis Club of Simi Valley, California, looked inward. The result was rocking.

“My wife, Elaine, and I used to play instruments, but they had been gathering dust for years,” says member Lee Hintlian, who plays acoustic guitar and fiddle. “Three other club members also played instruments. The five of us got together and developed a short playlist for the officers installation.

“We so enjoyed playing music, we continued to meet in a garage to play.”

The Simi Valley musicians are a diverse group. Elaine Hintlian plays hammered dulcimer. Dena Kauffman handles keyboards. Dale Kauffman plays ukulele, as does Larry Cox. Don Pepiot builds ukuleles and learned how to play one just to join the band.

The group within the club never thought about naming itself, but after an assisted living facility requested a concert for residents, the troupe got serious and started practicing on Tuesdays.

“At one practice session, we batted around names as we tuned up,” Hintlian explains. “Someone said, ‘My instrument is still in tune from last week.’ We decided that Still In Tune would be a funny name for our group of aging musicians.”

John Taylor rounds out the eclectic lineup on electric bass. The band has more than 300 songs in its repertoire, including “Hello Mary Lou,” “Island in the Sun” and “I’d Like to Teach the World to Sing.”

These days, Still In Tune plays senior centers, club events and parades. The group does not charge for performances, but requests donations go toward its Model Club pledge for The Eliminate Project.

“We truly enjoy getting together to play music,” says Hintlian. “Over time we’ve become better musicians, singers and friends.” — Story by Nicholas Drake
A one-time gig for their own officer-installation party turned into a legit garage band within the Simi Valley Kiwanis Club. Once-dusty instruments now stay polished and in tune for weekly practices and regular performances around the California community.

Photos by Christina House-Skalij
To the south of Villach, Austria, and the astonishing natural beauty of the Julian Alps lie trendy Ljubljana and Slovenia. Beyond are Croatia and its ancient Opatija seaside. Then, through the spectacular Dolomites, is Cortina d’Ampezzo, as famous for its music as it is for winter Olympic games. And finally, a 2,470-meter climb back into Austria for Arlberg.

The motorway beckons. Roll on.

This past year, 12 Kiwanians, straddling 11 motorcycles, set out on a five-day excursion of sightseeing and fellowship through southern Europe.

It all started about 12 years ago when Limmatzell-Zürich, Switzerland, Kiwanian Theodor Klossner realized that several Kiwanis friends were two-wheeler enthusiasts. So, he organized a ride and sent invitations to area clubs.

“After that initial outing, everybody asked him about the next tour,” says Zürich-Glattal Kiwanian Eugen Mossdorf. “So Theodor established a group of friends to prepare the rides. Each year, we make three rides from one day to five or six days.”

Riders from as many as 20 clubs have joined the fun.

“We’ve enjoyed rides through the famous wine regions of Italy’s Barolo and Barbaresco, as well as to the French Alsace and Vosges,” Mossdorf recalls. “We once visited Audi, BMW, Mercedes and Porsche plants as part of a three-day tour of Germany.”

ROAD RIDERS

TWO WHEELS AND AN OPEN ROAD ARE ALL THESE SWISS KIWANIANS NEED FOR ANOTHER ADVENTURE.
Before we were Kiwanians, we were Bobs. It’s true.

Back in 1915, Kiwanis Founder Allen Simpson Browne initially dubbed his new organization the Benevolent Order Brothers, which bothered member Harry A. Young.

“It seems to me,” the young Detroit, Michigan, tailor proclaimed, “that Benevolent Order Brothers is a mighty peculiar name for an organization of businessmen. Who wants to be a BOB?”

Quite a few Bobs, it seems, in Omaha, Nebraska. Eleven Roberts are members of the Omaha Golden K Kiwanis Club. That’s more than 13 percent of the club’s roster.

Yet, the Bobs didn’t realize the irony of their belonging to an organization once named with their name until this past year, as the club celebrated Kiwanis’ 100th anniversary. When then-President-elect Norm Marfice shared the story of Browne’s BOBs, another Golden K’er, Ray Grove, noted that their club was bursting with Bobs. There’s Bob Balzerick, Bob Decker, Bob Dowell, Bob Hasebroock, Bob Huber, Bob Jones, Bob Kully, Bob Rohde, Bob Rohrbough, Bob Shropp, Bob Van Meter and Warren Williams, who has always been called Bob.

That’s when Grove—a non-Bob—suggested the club put the Roberts to good use by organizing a Bob group dedicated to organizing “fun functions of fellowship.”

With generous assistance from Bob Decker, the Bobs arranged the club’s first official function: a night at the ball park with the AAA Omaha Stormchasers. “And just in case you think we spend too much time on fun-ctions,” says Bob Hasebroock, “it should be noted that our club leads the Nebraska-Iowa District in dedicated volunteer service hours.”

From left to right or right to left, front row or back: Bob, Bob, Bob, Bob, Bob … and Bob. • Photo by Daniel Johnson
showcase

TRAFFIC STOPPER
SEATTLE KIWANIANS AIM TO STOP HUMAN TRAFFICKING.
STORY BY SAM STALL

Seattle, Washington, Kiwanian Amin Haq knows that human trafficking happens everywhere—even, potentially, right down the street. He and his wife, Jessica, also a Kiwanian, spearheaded development of a phone app designed to battle this form of modern slavery, which affects some 5.5 million children globally.

How can a mere phone app help? By providing a safe, secure way for witnesses to report suspicious activity to authorities.

Amin first discovered the scope of the problem at a Kiwanis club luncheon, where police detectives spoke about trafficking. The couple decided to help. Given Kiwanis’ mission to aid children, the couple turned to the Seattle Kiwanis Memorial Fund for backing. On the day they met with the board, news broke about a major human trafficking ring spanning five US states, Mexico and Canada that operated right in the Puget Sound area.

“I walked in and said, ‘Guys, this is happening in our own backyard,’” Amin recalls.

The Haqs helped assemble a development team that completed the app in months. Unveiled in October 2013 at the inaugural Dignity Gala in Los Angeles, Redlight Traffic is a free download available in all English-speaking countries for Apple and Windows operating systems. Users can report suspicious activity safely and anonymously to local police and even use an interactive map to pinpoint where the incident took place.

The app has since been utilized by communities throughout the world. That explosion of interest was unexpected, but welcome. And it’s motivated the Haqs and their team to use technology to do even more.

“I’ve dedicated my life to the protection of children, and Kiwanis only magnified that effort,” Amin says. “I’m so grateful for that.”

He’s not the only one fired up about the project’s impact. Key Club members from the Pacific Northwest District have rallied support. And Ken North, president of the Seattle Kiwanis Memorial Fund, thinks it could become Kiwanis’ first shot in a wider battle against human trafficking.

“Human trafficking is happening under our noses, and people who notice it don’t know what to do and how to do it safely,” North says. “Technology gives us a way to fight this battle, both in our neighborhoods and across the globe.”
GIFT OF SIGHT
SENSORY BOARDS BOOST DEVELOPMENT FOR BLIND BABIES.
STORY BY TAMARA STEVENS

Imagine being deprived of your primary sensory connection with the rest of the world: your vision. Not only could you not see, but the development of the rest of your senses would be hindered. The Blind Babies Foundation helps families with blind babies by providing “sensory board” kits. But many families don’t have the tools or skills to assemble the kits. That’s why the Kiwanis Club of San Jose, California, steps in to help 40 blind babies and their families every year.

Since 2003, the Kiwanis club has committed to donating US$5,000 a year to help cover the cost of the materials for the sensory boards. They also cut, sand and nail wooden boards to build a base for these purposeful playthings. They cut plastic pipes to create a “toy ladder” from which squeaky toys hang.

“We learned that families with babies born blind would develop motor and sensory skills by being placed on these plywood boards that have PVC-pipe frames above them, which are strung with soundful or tactile objects,” says Wendy Wong, immediate past president of the Kiwanis club.

Lying on the boards, babies wave their arms around and touch the small toys hanging overhead, explains Kiwanian Greg Landers. Eventually, the babies squeeze the toys and hear the sounds they make. When they squirm around on the cushioned plywood board, it vibrates, which they feel in their backs.

“This develops a cause-and-effect sensory perception;” Landers says. “Stimulating these senses helps organize the blind babies’ brains to recognize the world around them, and often shows marked improvement in response, feedback and communication.”

Landers is proud of this program, the idea for which came from a dinner party where he met a member of the Blind Babies Foundation staff who asked, “What does Kiwanis do?”

From that conversation, the partnership between the Kiwanis club and the BBF blossomed.

“Bragging about Kiwanis’ achievements certainly can be effective;” Landers says.

Kiwanis and Key Club members assemble toys that are designed to help blind babies learn to use other senses to “see.”
showcase

MOD SQUAD

ON THIS RUNWAY, EVERY MODEL IS STYLING.
STORY BY CATHY USHER • PHOTOS BY SCOTT DUTHIE

The glitz, the glamour and the thumping music are dazzling, but it’s those beaming faces that make Louisville, Kentucky’s Kids Center for Pediatric Therapies’ annual fashion show the runway to watch.

The Kids Center helps children with developmental delays—and their parents—discover the “ability in disability.” One avenue where the kids sparkle is during the annual fashion show, where members of the Key Club of DuPont Manual High School in Louisville, Kentucky, act as fashion consultants, backstage wranglers and the occasional Disney princess.

“The members help out extensively in preparation of the event,” says Julie Kim, DuPont Key Club’s service projects chairwoman. “The process starts when the students reserve the stage and auditorium for the event. Beyond that, the Key Clubbers make crafts and autograph books for the Kids Center kids.”

As the event gets closer, it’s time to think about style.

Corporate and individual sponsors provide financial support, which allows participants to keep the clothes they model and helps the center throughout the year by funding the children’s speech, physical and occupational therapies.

“The kids go to Macy’s and can pick out any outfit they want,” says Becki Rucker, the center’s community engagement manager. “Key Club members go along and help them pick out their clothes.”

The night before the big show, a dress rehearsal features the high-fashion models, as well as Disney and other familiar characters (mere high school students by day).

Come show time, the DuPont students are backstage or ushering to keep everything flowing.

“Our kids have various degrees of ability and some are nonverbal,” Rucker says. “The Key Clubbers work at the kids’ level to communicate with them by whatever means it takes.”

“Every time I get to see the kids up on stage it’s a whole new feeling,” Kim says. “Seeing their smiles really makes me happy and makes it worth the effort.”
Think about what you love about Kiwanis. The service. The impact. The fellowship. Then think about people who would love those things too—and the impact they could help us make. That’s where you come in. And that’s why your story matters.

Share what you love. So you can live what you love. Make your story a part of your formula for the future.

kiwanis.org/theformula

LOVE IT. SHARE IT. LIVE IT.
JESTER’S JOURNEY

NO JOKE: KIWANIAN HOOF IT FROM NEW YORK TO SAN FRANCISCO TO RAISE MONEY FOR THE ELIMINATE PROJECT.
STORY BY MATT GONZALES

Two years ago, Jester Jersey stumbled upon a book that would change his life.

“The Long Walk Home,” a 1990 memoir by Matt Mattingly, documents the author’s cross-country walk to commemorate Kiwanis’ 75th anniversary. Jersey was so taken with Mattingly’s story that he decided to plan his own walk for Kiwanis’ 100th anniversary in 2015. He made his trek a fundraiser for The Eliminate Project—a joint effort by Kiwanis International and UNICEF to eliminate maternal and neonatal tetanus.

After readying his supplies and mapping out his route, Jersey (a Davis, California, Kiwanian) hopped a train for New York City, where he launched his journey. One hundred and nine days and roughly 3,800 miles later, a group of Kiwanians welcomed Jersey home at the Japanese Tea Garden in San Francisco, California.

What possessed the 29-year-old to subject himself to the rigors of a cross-country walk?

Jersey offers no revelatory explanation, simply saying, “I wanted to find ways to help out the community.”

Modesty aside, Jersey had little trouble meeting the demands of long-distance foot travel. Although he says he suffered bug bites and blisters along the way, Jersey mostly downplayed the difficulty of the task.

He raised more than US$2,000 during his walk, and news coverage has helped him net an additional US$1,500.

To learn more about Jersey’s story, visit his blog at thedaviskiwanian.wordpress.com.
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showcase

BIRTHDAYS

These clubs celebrate 25th, 50th and 75th anniversaries in April 2016. For a complete list, visit kiwanis.org/birthdays.

75TH—1941
Mount Vernon, Illinois, April 4

50TH—1966
Downey-Los Amigos, California, April 1
Wenatchee-Apple Valley, Washington, April 7
Evansville-Green River, Indiana, April 13
Suncrest Area, Morgantown, West Virginia, April 13
Spencer-Daybreakers, Iowa, April 16

25TH—1991
Boracay, Philippines, April 13
Izegem Mandeldal, Belgium, April 17
Pintung, Taiwan, April 28
Hengelo, Netherlands, April 29

see paintings and sketches from various Cuban artists hanging on the walls. Everything is for sale and a few of us take home a piece of artwork. We visit a Santería temple and then some of us brave the many steps of the bell tower of the San Francisco Convent to take in the awe-inspiring views of brightly painted homes set on a backdrop of the Escambray Mountains. We purchase souvenirs. Since it’s our last full day in Cuba, it’s the perfect time to spend our remaining Cuban convertible pesos (known as CUCs).

As the trip winds down, it seems most of us are left with a similar impression of what we’ve seen, who we’ve met and what we’ve learned. Our tour director, Natalia, is Russian. She leads us on a discussion of why it’s important to travel, why we need to open our hearts and minds to other cultures, people and places. Why we do this—why we travel.

“When people ask me, ‘Where are you from, where do you live?’ I tell them I live on planet Earth,” she says. “I think this people-to-people program helps to change people’s views of what’s going on on the other side. No matter where you’re from or where you go, meeting and talking with people changes your views of the world.”

Kiwanian Paul Hutchinson of Gig Harbor, Washington, agrees.

“As Natalia says, the true gem of Cuba isn’t the beautiful beaches and architectural plazas, but rather the Cuban people,” he says. “I see why so many people are drawn to go back. I can’t wait to go again.”

— VIVA CUBA CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18 —
It’s time to turn commitment into impact.

Thousands of Kiwanians have joined the fight to eliminate maternal and neonatal tetanus—by pledging a gift to The Eliminate Project. Now it’s time to honor that pledge. Fulfill your promise to save the lives of mothers and babies. Make your gift...and your impact.

Be a proud part of the moment when we make history.

Give now at TheEliminateProject.org/give.
I’m one of the lucky ones. Lucky not only to have a job, but to have a job I love (for a decade now!) that takes me on fantastic adventures. Sometimes those adventures come with souvenirs. In addition to my growing collection of foreign money, I have a speeding ticket from Australia (I was barely over the limit!), a police report from Switzerland (lost my passport), honey with healing powers from New Zealand, one-of-a-kind art from Japan and a husband from Austria whom I met while at the Kiwanis International convention (also in Switzerland).

But collecting things (except the husband, of course) isn’t as important as collecting experiences. And making connections with people during travel is the most rewarding experience of all.

This is Miguel. He asked me to dance on my last night in Cuba. At first I said no, trying to explain to him through our different languages that I don’t dance. At least not in public. I could feel my face turning red because I was so nervous. But he was persistent. I said yes. Because while in Cuba, the Kiwanis Travel group was on a people-to-people exchange, meaning we met locals to talk about anything and everything Cuba. So in this moment, in this true people-to-people exchange with Miguel, I did my best to fake some salsa moves. (I was absolutely horrible.) He was a good and kind coach, constantly saying, “Lento, lento” (which I quickly realized means “slow down”) as he patted my shoulder. We laughed and exchanged kisses on each cheek.

And you know what? This ended up being one of my favorite memories from the trip. I got past my insecurities and decided to just have fun, no matter who was watching. It’s exactly what traveling is all about: collecting memories, opening yourself to new experiences and making new friends. Can’t get much better than that.
WHAT'S YOUR STORY?
If your club has a success story, simply email a summary and a few photos to shareyourstory@kiwanis.org to be considered for possible future use in Kiwanis International publications.

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