

# Jim Gustin

## Memories of a Kona Rotarian





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November 1, 1945 - December 22, 2023



I was born in Melrose Park, Illinois in 1945. My father had severe arthritis and it was recommended that he move to a warmer climate. So when I was 3, we moved to Tucson, Arizona.

At the age of 5 I developed polio and thus began lots of rehab and lots of missed school. But I was lucky in the extent of my polio and through all the rehab and hard work, I was thrilled to be able to be a pole vaulter and a long jumper in my senior year of high school, and I won the award for the most fit non lettering student.

My father worked at the YMCA and some of my rehab was through the YMCA, so it flowed naturally that I would become involved with YMCA as a counselor for camps and I taught archery, swimming, rifle range, and crafts as an all around staff member. After one semester at university, I knew I needed to do something else. I went down to the recruiting offices and met with the different services branches, and decided to join the Marine Corps.

I entered boot camp in January 1965, and if boot camp wasn't hard enough, my Mother passed away during that time, making it really hard because you are never given time to grieve. In the later part of my 3 years in the Marines, I would also lose my Dad. After boot camp, I was sent to Kaneohe Marine Base for pre Vietnam training. My time at Kaneohe Bay counted as overseas time, so I only had to do 9 months in Vietnam. I entered Vietnam by dropping from a helicopter, and would later be very sorry for showing off how well I could swim. Since my superiors knew I

could swim well, I had to lead and move equipment across a river while being shot at. I was lucky that my time on the front ended up being short. The fact that I had typing in high school was that unforeseen piece of luck. My Sargent, who was transferred to the supply station, took me with him because of that typing class.

My strong interest was photography, so after serving my time in the Marines, I used the GI bill and went to Brooks Institute of Photography in Santa Barbara, California and earned my BA of Fine Arts. During those years in Santa Barbara, Janice and I met and married in 1970 and moved to Long Beach, CA. In 1971 I went to work in a local camera store, in Long Beach. I managed their photo lab, processing all aspects black and white film. My photography interest was focused around commercial photography, not portrait or wedding photography. When the opportuni-



ty came in 1972, I went to work for a company that produced slide presentations for TV commercials, lectures, and training programs for large corporations. It was a fun job, but computers were changing the photography world. Corporations were turning to Powerpoint instead of slide presentations. To stay in this field, I would need to live in San Francisco or New York and we decided we did not want to live in a “big city”.

We moved to Sacramento 1975 and I began my search for a job in something other than photography. I am mechanically inclined so, initially went to work for the U-Haul company. My job was to establish new dealers and to service the equipment at the dealers I represented. In 1979 I went to work in the parts department, for a Mazda and Volkswagen dealership. I spent some of my time at the parts counter in the dealership, and some time outside the office doing sales to establish new accounts for the parts department. I was employed there for 10 years until the business sold.

At that time Janice and I lived on our boat in the San Francisco Bay, so I took a one year job at the parts department of an auto dealership in San Francisco. At the end of the one year time, Janice and I left on our boat to cruise the South Pacific Ocean for 6 years. We ended our cruise on December 24th, 1996 on Guam. During our 6 years on Guam, I returned to working auto parts. I worked at a dealership for a couple years, then switched to a company that did wholesale tires and batteries. I represented several facilities on island selling and maintaining their supply of batteries and tires. The most enjoyable and biggest account was keeping the Navy Commissary supplied with batteries and tires.

We moved to the Big Island in March 2003, where I completed my courses to become a Personal Trainer and went to work for Gold's Gym. My mechanical abilities also helped with repairing the fitness equipment at Gold's Gym. Occasionally people and resorts would call Gold's Gym for someone who could look at their fitness equipment and I would agree to go look. I started looking at resort equipment in 2004 and the Fairmont was my first client.

When Gold's Gym went away, I went to work for Lex Brodie's and did Personal Training for clients in their homes. The fitness repair business continued to grow and I established contracts with manufactures to install equipment and do their warranty work. Since I was the only person on island repairing and installing fitness equipment, the business steadily grew and I was able to leave Lex Brodie's to go completely on my own. I would see personal training clients early in the morning and repair equipment the rest of the day. Eventually Janice would leave her employment to help me as well. I was an avid cyclist, but have been hit by cars twice, once in 2010 and then again in December 2014. Due to those accidents it was challenging for me to continue to work, so my nephew and his Air Force buddy purchased the business and took over January 1, 2018.

I am now officially retired from the fitness repair business, but still do a bit of Personal Training. Now I have time to give back to the community that has served me well. I do still enjoy hearing about my old business and sharing with my nephew. I think it will always be a part of me.







05/19/2018: The Rotary District Convention in Honolulu





08/01/2019: Just Another Meeting









10/07/2019: Guess who won the door prize?









01/28/2019: D5000 Gathering at Linda Jane's





10/31/2019: Halloween Fun!





01/13/2020: At the Mitsubishi Golf Tournament



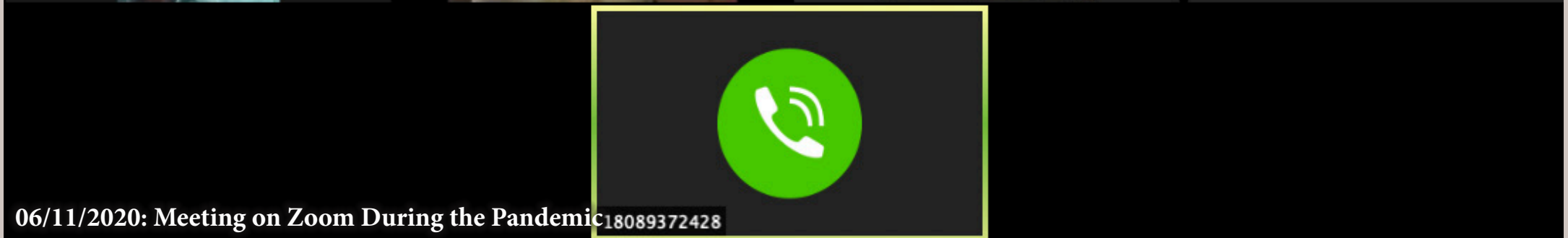


03/03/2020: Sharing the "Great Sailing Adventure" with the Club



03/03/2020









07/11/2020: Repainting David's Deck , Railings, and Trim





07/27/2020: Repainting David's Deck , Railings, and Trim





08/06/2020: Meeting at Old A During the Pandemic



08/06/2020: Volunteering at Meet 'n Eat







08/24/2020: Meeting at Old A During the Pandemic



11/05/2020



12/14/2020: Ringing the Bell for the Salvation Army







03/30/21: Helping Out at Meet N' Eat





04/26/2021: Cleaning Up at the Queen Liliuokalani Walking Path



05/20/2021: Presenting Sponsoree Alysia Dinneen with Her First Paul Harris











07/23/2021: Enjoying Pizza and Wings at a Regular Meeting



11/24/2021: Exchanging Flags with a Visiting Rotarian





12/12/2021: The Christmas Party at  
Linda Jane's

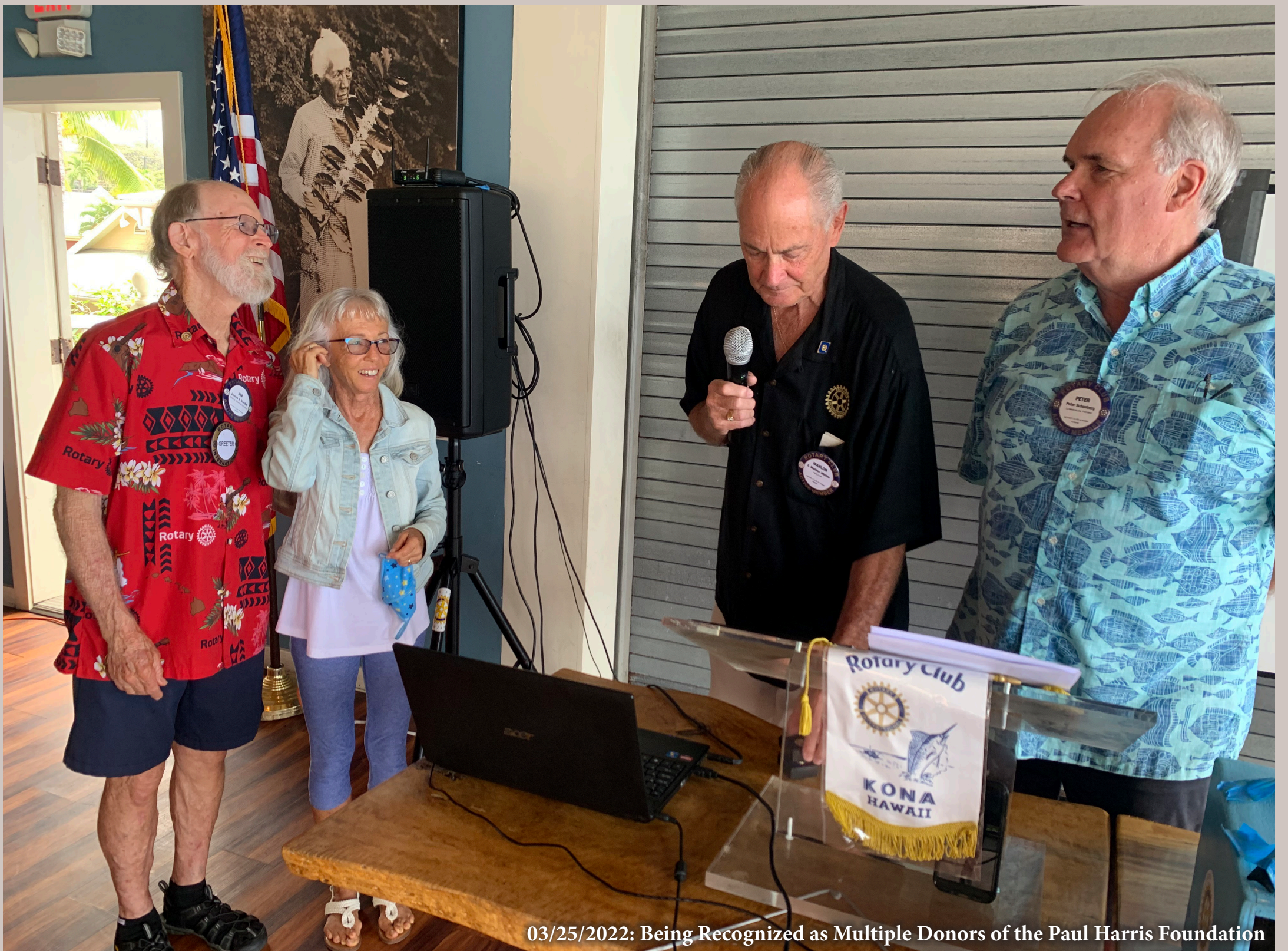






01/11/2022: Exchanging Flags with a Visiting Rotarian





03/25/2022: Being Recognized as Multiple Donors of the Paul Harris Foundation









08/15/2022: Welcoming a Visitor





12/05/2022: Christmas Party at Linda Jane's

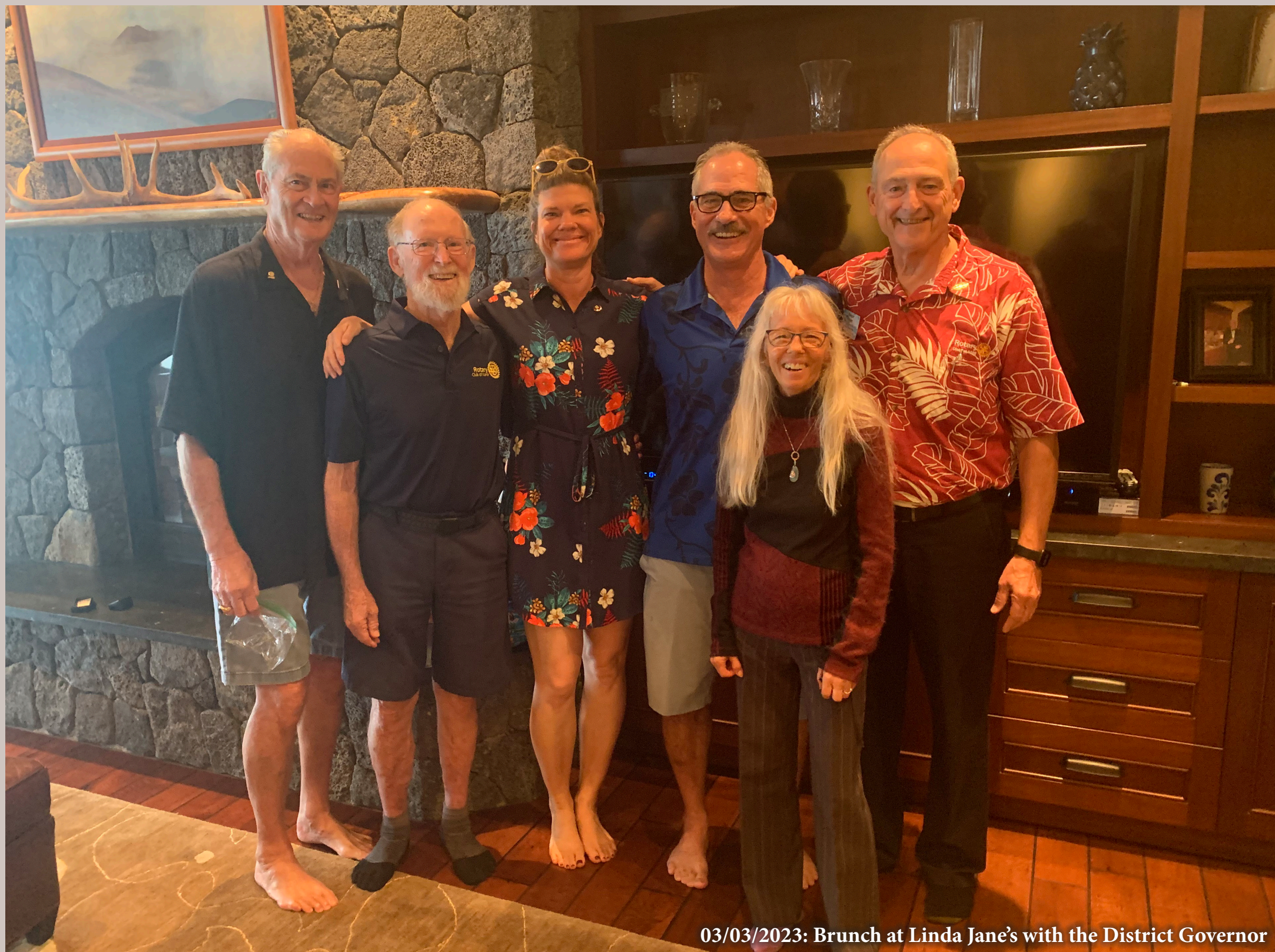




01/02/2023: Meeting at the Keiki Museum







03/03/2023: Brunch at Linda Jane's with the District Governor













11/01/2023: Happy Birthday Jim





12/12/2023: Peter Schonberg visiting Jim at Nakamaru Hale



12/13/2023: Victoria Morse visiting Jim at Nakamaru Hale





*Jim, my soulmate, was funny, sensitive, loving, and supportive. He was very smart, with a can-do attitude and a strong determination to accomplish whatever he was trying to do. This included, near the end, climbing over the bedrail to get out of the bed and try to find me!*

*He was always positive and claimed to be “doing well” even as his brain and body were failing him. He was entertaining and loved by all his nurses. There are no words to describe the hollow void his passing has left.*

*Likewise, there are no good words to describe how grateful and blessed I am to have the loving support of this Rotary Club. I know you will hold me and guide me as I process and accept the adjustments I now need to make in my life. I am eternally grateful!*

*Yours in Rotary with Love,*

*Janice*