Rotary Club of Sarasota Bay

BAY BREEZE

CREATE LASTING IMPACT

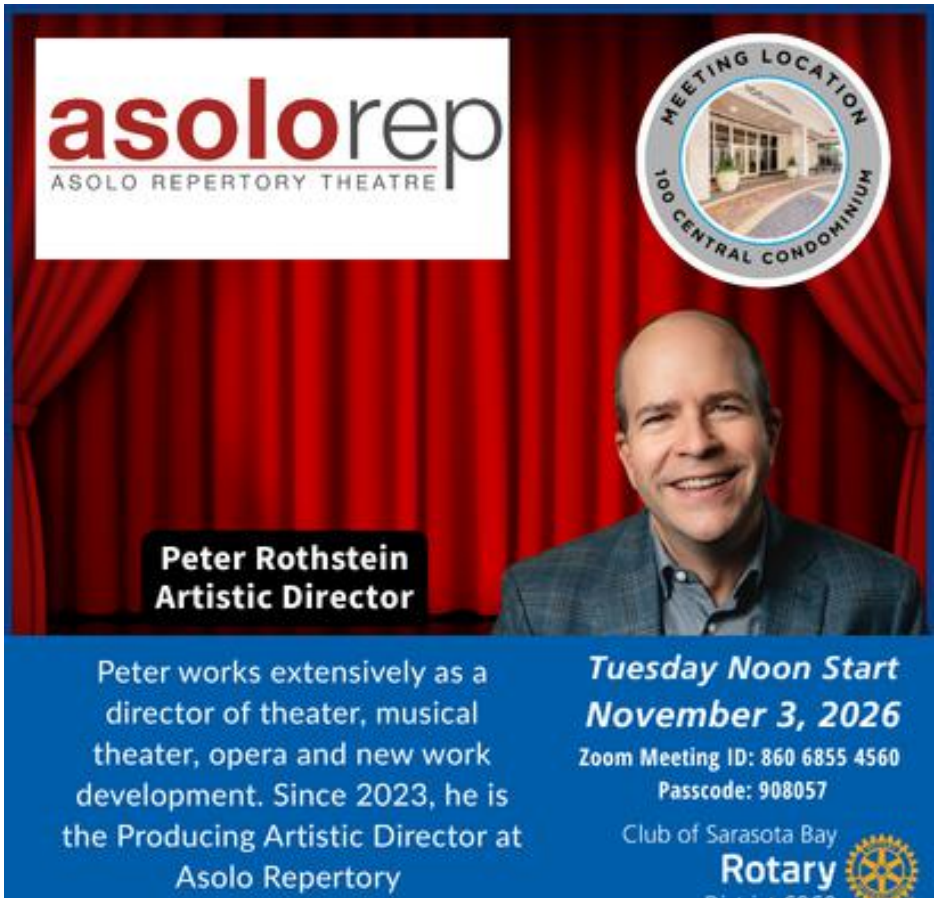
Enabling our Members for Fun, Fellowship and Service to the Community and the World

Publication of the Rotary Club of Sarasota Bay © | Issue #18 Volume 68 | November 3, 2026 | Todd Morgan President 2026-27



UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

Nov 17th	100 Central	Teresa Taft, Sunrise Rotary Club: *"Tree of Joy"*
Dec 1st	100 Central	Dr. Stephen Guffanti | Helping Children Say "I CAN Read"
Dec 4th Friday		Holiday Party Home of Leslie & Lindsey Glass



Join the Rotary Club of Sarasota Bay on Tuesday, November 3 at noon as we welcome Peter Rothstein, Producing Artistic Director of Asolo Repertory Theatre, as our featured speaker. Peter directs extensively across theater, musical theater, opera, and new work development, and has led Asolo Rep since 2023. He co-founded Theater Latté Da in the Twin Cities, serving as Artistic Director from 1998, directing 92 main-stage productions, including 14 world premieres.

His directing credits span the Guthrie Theater, Minnesota Opera, Seattle's 5th Avenue Theatre, and the Children's Theatre Company, where his hits included *Annie*, *The Wizard of Oz*, and the world premiere of Disney's *High School Musical*. Sarasota audiences may already know his work: Peter created *All Is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914*, staged locally at Sarasota National Cemetery and honored with a 2019 Drama Desk Award.

Come hear how Asolo Rep is shaping its next chapter — and bring a guest who loves great theater.

New Palmer Ranch Microforest Takes Root Through Community Effort

Save the Date
November 14th
Planting Day

BY ANDREA MARTONE · SARASOTA EVENTS CALENDAR · OCTOBER 27, 2026



What do you get when you bring together a passionate ecologist, a crew of enthusiastic volunteers, a bunch of trees and a vision for a greener Sarasota? *The makings of a little environmental magic!* A dense, multi-layered patch of native trees and shrubs, the microforest is taking root in Palmer Ranch's Promenade Estates, proving that big changes can grow from small spaces.

Thanks to the tireless efforts of Sarasota resident and Rotarian Dr. Charles Reith, along with a community willing to get its hands dirty, this tiny forest has a mighty mission: helping Mother Nature breathe a little easier, one tree at a time. And this is just the beginning of a much bigger story! There's a new microforest is taking root in Palmer Ranch, bringing together students, residents and community volunteers in a collaborative effort to protect the environment and create a greener future for Sarasota.

Located in the Promenade Estates area near Honore Avenue, the new microforest is part of a growing regional movement to restore natural habitats, improve stormwater absorption and increase biodiversity in developed communities. The initiative reflects the ongoing work of Dr. Reith, an ecologist and environmental advocate who has dedicated himself to establishing microforests throughout the Sarasota area.

The initial planting attracted an enthusiastic group of volunteers from Pine View High School Interact Club, Promenade Estates residents and Rotarians from the Rotary Club of Sarasota Bay. Their participation demonstrated how environmental stewardship can unite people of different ages and backgrounds around a shared purpose.



Dr. Charles Reith is an ecologist with experience restoring ecological productivity to distressed land and waters. His reforestation and restoration efforts have applied to deserts, wetlands, alpine, and urban circumstances where highly disturbed land required rehabilitation into lands that will harbor wildlife, prevent pollution, and provide other ecological services to the Watershed.

In greater Sarasota, his work has focused on reforesting parks and neighborhoods where turf, which is ecologically barren, can be transformed into fast-growing forest habitats using a combination of Miyawaki planting strategies and permaculture-inspired soil management.

Besides facilitating the planting of high performance microforests along the Suncoast, Charles has worked with communities to improve their landscape management, especially along the boundaries of their retention ponds or nearby natural waterways. Additionally, he serves on the boards of the Atlanta- based Southface Institute, Solutions to Avoid Red Tide (START), and the Sarasota Bay Rotary Club, as well as the Palmer Ranch Master Association and his home community of Mira Lago. He also lectures extensively abroad about ecological and other global issues.

Microforests are densely planted collections of native trees, shrubs and other vegetation designed to recreate the characteristics of a natural forest within a relatively small space. The technique, inspired by Japanese botanist Akira Miyawaki, encourages rapid growth and the development of diverse ecosystems. Once established, microforests can provide habitat for birds, butterflies and other wildlife, capture carbon, improve air quality and help cool surrounding neighborhoods. Their root systems also help absorb rainwater, potentially reducing runoff and easing pressure on stormwater systems.

For Reith, the Promenade Estates project represents another step in a continuing effort to make environmental restoration part of everyday community life. Rather than allowing open spaces to remain underused, his vision is to transform them into thriving natural areas that deliver lasting ecological benefits.

Reith has helped advance microforest projects across the region through collaborations involving Sarasota Urban ReForesters, the Sarasota Bay Rotary Club, Solutions to Avoid Red Tide and Florida Veterans for Common Sense. Among the regional projects associated with these efforts are microforest plantings at Sarasota's Celery Fields, Heritage Harbor in Bradenton and Heron's Nest Nature Park in Lakewood Ranch. His environmental work also includes the Jacaranda EcoPark initiative in Venice, which incorporates microforest habitats alongside native prairie and wetland plantings.

These projects illustrate how relatively small areas of land can contribute to broader environmental goals when thoughtfully planted and maintained. They also provide opportunities for students and residents to learn firsthand about native plants, local ecosystems and the importance of protecting Florida's natural resources.

At Promenade Estates, the first planting is only the beginning. As the young trees and plants mature, the microforest has the potential to become a valuable neighborhood asset, offering ecological benefits while inspiring future generations to become environmental stewards.

Through Reith's continued dedication and the commitment of community volunteers, Sarasota's microforest movement is growing—one planting, one partnership and one tree at a time.

If any community is interested in participating in this effort, or wants to explore having microforests planted near or in their communities, contact Dr. Reith at: **charles.c.reith@gmail.com** or the Rotary Club of Sarasota Bay: **rotarysarasotabay@gmail.com**

Andrea Martone



Andrea Martone is aformer Arts & Entertainment Editor for the Sarasota Observer Newspaper Group, as well as a former Editor-in-Chief of a Long Island (New York) newspaper chain. She moved to Sarasota 14 years ago after working as an executive in NYC in public relations and marketing. She is currently a Public relations & marketing consultant and President of Insightful PR. She lives and breathes all things art, culture, music, food and wine and is proud to be the Executive Editor of Sarasota Events Calendar.



2026 Rotary Club of Sarasota Bay. Article and photos courtesy of Andrea Martone.

Click anywhere on this to get a time: open slots



Rotary Club of Sarasota

POLIO PLUS BLOOD DRIVE

Join us as we celebrate

WORLD POLIO DAY

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 4TH, 2026

1:00 PM – 7:00 PM

WITH A COMMUNITY WIDE BLOOD DRIVE

Suncoast Blood Centers
Give Blood. Save Lives.

Rotary Club of Sarasota

END POLIO NOW

WEDNESDAY
NOVEMBER 4TH, 2026
1:00 PM – 7:00 PM

MARINA JACK
Sarasota, FL

Blood Donations Save Lives

Suncoast Blood Center will donate toward the Rotary International Polio Plus – End Polio Now Campaign.

Together We Can End Polio

Public is Invited...