

Executive Director Sarah Kelly



Greetings my fellow Ruritans!

I want everyone to sit a little taller and hold their head up a little higher and be proud, because you are important. You are most important to Ruritan National. Thank you for all you do for our incredible organization.

We can only create thriving communities through your efforts. And we can only create thriving communities by thriving ourselves.

You should be encouraged by reviewing the statistics. We have welcomed six new clubs into our family. We have had the lowest net loss of members in 15 years, so your bar is set for next year.

I point out that we do a good job bringing new members into our family. We gained over 2300 members in the last 12 months, so we just have to find a way to retain those new family members.

I commend the board and committees for meeting more frequently. The more time you work on the health of the organization the greater the chance that you will have a healthier organization.

I commend my team at the National Office for being reliable, responsive, empathetic and competent.

I commend the Budget and Finance Committee for meeting each month. The team continually looks for opportunities to reduce expenses to propose a balanced budget, but there are no longer expenses to be reduced without affecting the benefits that our members see/receive/experience. I challenge all of us to flip our mindset and focus on income generation. The only thing that fixes our budget is opening new clubs, welcoming new members into our current clubs and retaining the members that are in our clubs. Not only will that solve budget issues, which are just the tip of the iceberg, it also ensures that we will be a healthy, stable, thriving organization creating thriving communities for years to come.

We still miss Carroll Lowe's IT help daily at the office. He was instrumental in keeping MMS stable. We would be dead in the water if our membership database breaks down, so we are currently researching ways to ensure our membership database continues to function as needed.

The BSA bankruptcy case may be behind us, but the effects are still coming. The Methodist church has made the decision to pull all their charters from the boy scouts. That provides opportunity but also risk for Ruritan. Many clubs have been approached to take over being the charter organization for existing scouts. I advise every club considering being a charter organization to do their due diligence and ensure that a full understanding of what the roles and responsibilities of a charter organization entail.

Ruritan National is now the proud sole member of two 501(c)(3) charities. Ruritan National Foundation is our education arm, and the newly established Ruritan National Project FOCUS is our disaster relief and humanitarian aid arm. Project FOCUS received funds from the dissolved OWC to continue disaster relief for Ruritans. To support disaster relief in the future, please make checks payable to Project FOCUS. FOCUS stands for Funding Our Communities Under Stress.

Rudy turns 35 years old this year! We will be celebrating his birthday with special promotional items through Shumsky online. Ruritan National will be 95 years young. A special celebration is planned for Founders Day in May where the National Board will be on hand for its Spring meeting.

At the 2023 convention we tried something new by offering Ruritan apparel items by special order. Everyone received an order form in their registration bag. Selling apparel by special order ensures that we do not carry unsellable inventory or have to sell inventory at a loss, which is not fiscally responsible. Additionally, offering merchandise by special order will allow us to offer a larger variety of items in the future.

Ruritan will be turning 100 years old before we know it. Only together can we ensure that our incredible organization will be here to Create Thriving Communities through our first 100 years, and for many years to come.