

Nine Decades of 'Service Above Self'

By Rochelle McHugh



Hotel Sinclair in Sequim — site of the first Rotary Club of Sequim meeting. Photo from Washington State Library (North Olympic Heritage/Bert Kellogg Photograph Collection)

In February of 1930 several local dairymen, businessmen and farmers got together at the Hotel Sinclair in Sequim to form a local Rotary Club. The twenty founding members of the Rotary Club of Sequim received their Charter from Rotary International on June 13th, 1930 and celebrated the presentation on August 21st in an evening meeting attended by Rotarians from Seattle, Port Angeles, Port Townsend and Victoria. The 20 new Rotarians were described as “live wires in every sense”. The Rotary Club of Sequim joined over 2,000 Rotary Clubs spanning six continents with the intention of international and community service. The Rotary Club of Sequim was sponsored for membership and mentored by the Rotary Club of Port Townsend. Port Townsend’s President Claude Stevens attended the meetings quite regularly.

The first dinner cost 75 cents and was held at Hotel Sinclair, pictured above, which was famous for its electrification. Its location was on the SW corner of Washington Street and Sequim Avenue, the present location of US Bank.



The charter member's names of this founding club over 90 years ago will be recognized even today by 'Sequimites'. G.H. and J.L. Keeler of Keeler Rd, Keeler Park and the Hotel Sinclair. Frank Lotzgesell and Henry Lotzgesell (pictured at left), dairy farmers in Dungeness for whom Lotzgesell Road is named, Jess Mantle, Jess Taylor local businessmen with roads and subdivisions named for them. Some members were shop keepers, many farmers, hoteliers, School superintendents, just like the variety of members' occupations today.

The first Club event was a Tea honoring and entertaining Sequim-area students returning from studies abroad. This year as a celebration of our 90th anniversary we will host an Anniversary Tea in June 2020 and invite local Rotary Clubs in District 8, former members, exchange students and other dignitaries to join us.



*1936 USA Olympic Rowing Team
(Photo courtesy of HistoryLink.com)*

In 1933 the club helped Joe Rantz, a Sequim youth and the main character in the "Boys in the Boat", buy a new suit of clothes for a Competition he was attending on behalf of the Sequim School District. In 1934 the club wrote him a congratulatory letter for securing a spot on the University of Washington's rowing crew.

This same UW crew went on to beat Germany and win the Gold Medal for Rowing in the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games. Rantz went on to work as a Boeing engineer and retire in Sequim.



Some of the Sequim Boys & Girls Club members with new bus!

his family's financial support in the construction of this fine building that is so important to our community's youth.

Carroll C. Kendall, a local dairy farmer joined our Rotary Club in 1935. His name is on the front of the Boys & Girls Club at 400 W Fir Street to honor



Boy Scout Troop 490 (now Troop 1490) in 1949

administered by the Rotary Club of Sequim for the benefit of our local scout troops. Each year troops can submit a formal request for funding of activities such as travel and lodging to their Jamboree or assistance to individual scouts working on completing their Eagle Scout rank. Some of the Scouts pictured here later became Rotarians as well. Many Sequim boys have fond memories of hiking the Olympic Mountains, attending BSC Jamborees and recycling newspaper to support their activities in scouting.

The Rotary Club of Sequim was actively involved from the beginning with the Boy Scouts of America, later the Explorer Scouts and then included the Girl Scouts. Club members were troop leaders and liaisons with the Rotary Club. The club received the charter for Scout Troop 490. When Rotary Club of Sequim member C.W. McCall was doing his estate planning he left a gift of \$20,000 to be



Member Joe Hawe, Chief of Police for Sequim recognized the need for a safe place for kids to be after school hours and until parents were home from work. Rotarians along with Chief Hawe helped to establish the Boys & Girls Club of Sequim. Originally located in the old Masonic Lodge building, it is now the Carroll C. Kendall

Unit located on W Fir Street. Rotarians partnered with the Olympic Medical Center Foundation to put on a fund-raising Duck Derby. The Rotary net proceeds were used to support the operations at the Boys & Girls Club. The club also originally sponsored the Smilemobile to come to Sequim, park at the convenient location of the Boys & Girls club to provide dental care to kids who otherwise had no access.



Suzie Peric inbound Exchange Student from Australia and Sonja Frick outbound to Denmark.

Early in its beginnings, the Rotary Club of Sequim was actively involved with hosting of inbound foreign exchange students for the 9 months of the school year. Each student would live with three separate Rotarian families for 3-month periods. Being treated as one of the family, helping with family chores and travelling with them to events and vacations. Like all teenagers, the exchange students attend school regularly and are required to complete their homework. Over the years the Cy Frick family hosted 17 foreign students in their home and two of their 3 children were outbound exchange students. Cy was Club President in 1971-1972 and District Governor in 1979-1980. Cy

and his wife Ella and have had the pleasure of travelling to meet many of their exchange students in their home countries and had many who returned to Sequim as adults for a visit. Over the years the Club has hosted over 40 inbound students and over 35 outbound students to a total of

over 25 countries. The club remained very active in student-exchange until the year 2005 and continues to support programs focused on students in the Sequim School District.

Harry Brenn, a member of the Rotary Club of Sequim was District Governor in 1970.

The Great Depression hit in the 30's and WWII affected many clubs world-wide causing clubs to disband. In the minutes of a club meeting at the beginning of the Depression, it was reported the financial failure of the Bank of Sequim wiped out the new Sequim Rotary Club's funds and a comment was noted by the first President Archie Taylor that he thought he'd see a bunch of sad faces at the club meeting and was happy to see everyone's continued optimism. The club continued to be active with its 30 members and supported a local Civilian Conservation Corps camp filled with young boys that needed work. The CCC camp located near today's Louella Road had several hundred youth who built sidewalks and other public projects around town.



Former Club President Bud Frick

In the late 50's The Rotary Club of Sequim under the leadership of Cy Frick's father President Douglas "Bud" Frick, Frick Drug Pharmacist, began a 25-year long project of marketing "The Community Calendar" which many long-time 'Sequimites' will remember. Before the years of social media, community members would purchase the opportunity to include family member's birthdates, wedding anniversaries and other significant events on the calendar. Then individuals could purchase the calendars to display in their places of business and their homes. I remember as a kid it always hanging in the kitchen. It was always so interesting to look at the beautiful photos of our local area and read who was having a birthday or anniversary each month. Bud's son, Cy Frick went on to become our club's second Rotary District Governor in 1979.





Our club's International Service Director Lang Hadley administering Polio Vaccine in Africa.

When Paul Harris passed and the Foundation recognized him by creating the Paul Harris Fellow Award, the Rotary Club of Sequim joined in. Over the past 90 years our club members have contributed over \$335,000 to the Rotary Foundation. Many members are multiple Paul Harris Fellows and we have had several Major Donor members. Several of our members have traveled abroad with Polio Plus, including our own Cy Frick and Lang Hadley and have had the pleasure of personally participating in the administration of Polio vaccine to children around the

world. The club has also actively participated in clean water and sanitation grants over the years and has just completed a joint \$50,000 grant helping Mayan people in 3 Guatemalan villages.



In 1963, Sequim's Chamber of Commerce asked the Rotary Club of Sequim to plan, organize and stage the annual Irrigation Festival Grand Parade. Planning begins with the ringing of the New Year each January by preparing invitation packages for entries and concludes after distributing awards to parade participants and cleaning up the 1-mile parade route on Washington Street. Club members, Sequim Sunrise club members, spouses, friends, chamber representative and


many, many others come together for this longest, continuously running parade in the west, now in its 125th year. The club and the Irrigation Festival committee continue to work closely each year.



20+ year Parade Organizer/Director Alice Beebe getting ready to send units down the street.



10+ year Parade Starter George Gurr and Runner Ben Hughes review plan to bring parade units out.

The Rotary Club of Sequim has always had an interest in our school district and the youth. The tradition of recognizing Sequim High Students monthly for their academic achievements, their community service, participation in extra-curricular activities and their good “guy-ness” continues today. Students are invited to a luncheon and presented with Certificates of Recognition and letters for the  scholarship notebooks. Beginning at the club’s inception, The Rotary Club of Sequim presented graduating SHS seniors with academic and vocational scholarships until the early 2,000’s when the focus shifted to benefitting a wider group of students through the awarding of Teacher Grants to assist in the purchase of materials for learning projects for the entire classroom.

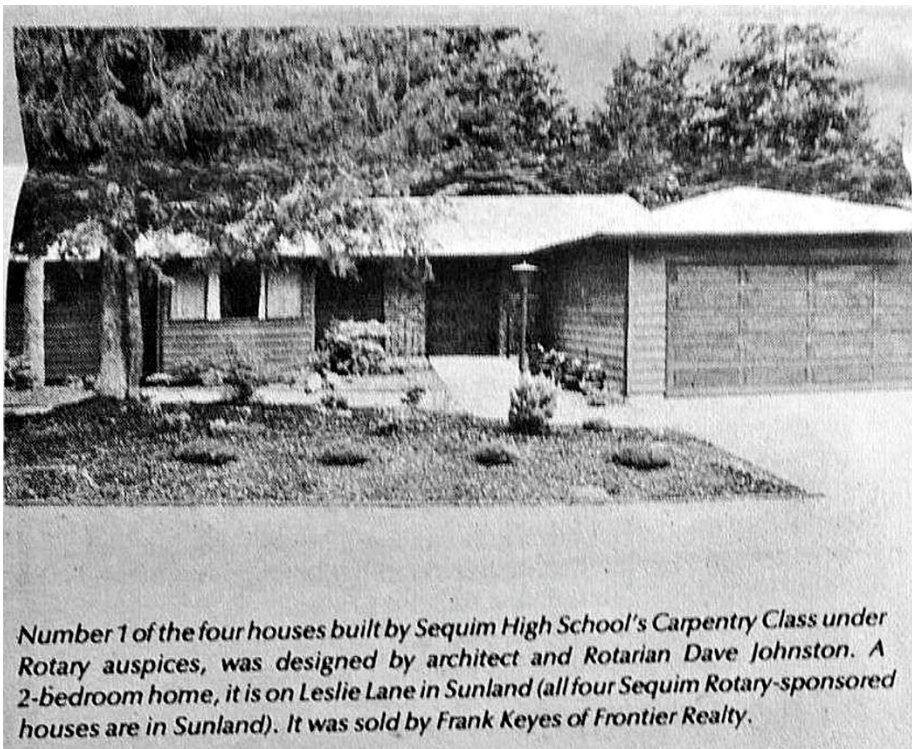


he 70's were very busy years for the Rotary Club of Sequim. Rotary's major fund-raiser, the annual Salmon Bake began with a bang! Literally! Club Service Director Cy Frick got the club's attention by shooting a blank from his pistol. WOW! The first bake was held on the beach at Pitship Point which is the present location of John Wayne Marina. The community turned out with great enthusiasm to enjoy freshly baked salmon fillets over an open fire, sending Rotarians scrambling to the grocery store for more supplies to feed the hungry crowds. The Salmon Bake moved from Pitship Point to Sequim Prairie Grange for 30+ years. Last year's 51st Annual Salmon Bake, now held at the Boys & Girls Clubs of Olympic Peninsula, 400 W. Fir in Sequim served over 500 delicious meals of either salmon baked over an alder fire or tender pulled pork sandwich.



THEN & NOW – *In the beginning salmon was cooked over an open fire Native American Style and served outside from big tents. Now, salmon is baked over an alder-fired BBQ and served indoors from a real kitchen.*

Funds from the successful first Salmon Bake were used to support Sequim High School in many ways, helping to purchase Marching Band Uniforms, paid \$10,000 toward the building of the current concession stand and restroom facility at the football field, headed and helped fund the current library building on N. Sequim Avenue provided graduating SHS students with scholarships and many other community projects. Annual Salmon Bake Fundraisers continue to help Sequim youngsters and local charities.



Club members thought big and were able to partner with the Sequim High carpentry class of 10 years and built homes in Sunland our local golf course community. Four homes were built by the carpentry class with the professional assistance of club members who were electricians, school administrators,

attorneys, architects, custom home builders and Realtors. Students were provided hands-on education for those wishing to pursue a trade. The homes were sold, and profits used to continue the club's community support. \$30,000 of the proceeds were used to establish a matching grant to help raise money to build the current Sequim Library.

Members organized and put on the first Career Day for Sequim High Juniors and Seniors with many of the membership and other local professionals talking with students about the benefits

of their personal professions like journalists, electricians, pharmacy, real estate professionals, attorneys, doctors, police, paramedics and many more.



School District Physical Therapist Cherry Bibler helps student Abby Johnson learn to ride her new bike. (D. Schwarz photo)

The Club, like many in recent years, has had challenges with retaining membership. However, club members are very excited about our new project to provide adaptive bikes to children in the Sequim school district with physical limitations. These “Trykes” have been gifted to children in the Special Needs Class at school and have been monumental to their physical and verbal skills. One child, formerly non-verbal has learned to say the word “bike” to indicate her desire the ride!

The most recent bike gifted was presented to the school itself. This bike will be used by trained faculty in the classroom with children ranging from middle school to high school.

These high-quality bikes are built to accommodate a variety of limitations and include foot straps on pedals, seat belts and a steering tiller for the faculty to assist. Bikes are also built to accommodate a child’s size and growth as they mature.

More information on our Rotary Club of Sequim is available on Facebook and our club website, www.sequimrotary.com.

###

