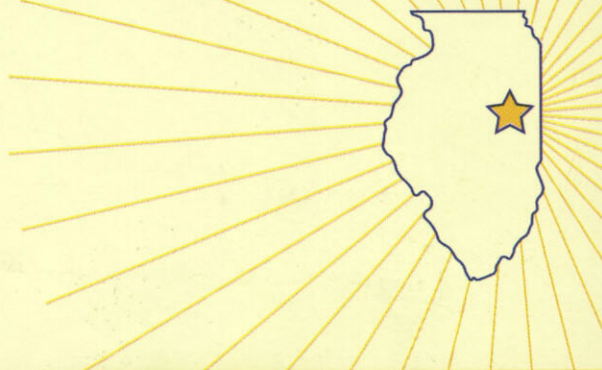
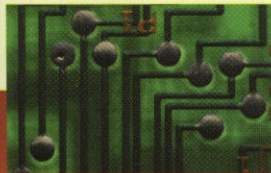
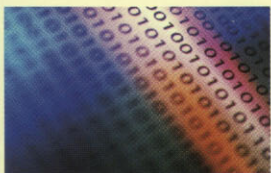


CHAMPAIGN ROTARY CLUB



# THE STORY

1916 - 2001



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2008-09: President Joan Dixon

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2010-11: President Robert Driver

2011-12: President Bill Malone

2012-13: President Fay Rouseff-Baker

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CHAMPAIGN ROTARY CLUB

THE STORY

1916 - 2001

Champaign Rotary Club: The Story, 1916-2001  
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*Champaign Rotary Club: The Story* incorporates two books in a single volume. The first, *Steps Going Up: A Selective History of the Champaign Rotary Club*, was first published in 1988, and is reprinted here as the first segment of this volume.

The second, *Champaign Rotary Club: The Story Continues, 1988-2001*, is first published as the second segment of this volume.

## **Dedication**

*“History is Philosophy teaching by examples.”*

— Thucydides (c. 460–400 B.C.), Athenian historian

*“Service is the rent that you pay for room on this earth.”*

— Shirley Chisholm (b. 1924), African American politician

*“A Rotarian’s life is one that really counts. It is a life of commitments made and commitments kept. Mankind Is Our Business.”*

— Richard D. King (b. 1938), RI president, 2001-2002

Champaign’s oldest — and, may I say, most distinguished — service club, the Rotary Club of Champaign, will celebrate the 85th anniversary of its charter on 1 February 2002.

The history of our Club — a Rotary club steeped in tradition and committed to excellence — is filled with stories that demonstrate our strength, our dedication, and our willingness to tackle (and ability to solve) the problems of our community.

In *Steps Going Up* (1988), Edward E. (Bud) Roderick aptly dedicated “this legacy of Champaign Rotary’s past to the men and women who represent our future.” In keeping with this theme, it is my privilege to dedicate this latest installment of our Club’s history to two distinct yet irrevocably linked groups:

(1) The hundreds of members, past and present, of the World’s Greatest Rotary Club since the inaugural meeting on 11 December 1916, whose “commitments made and commitments kept” have created this history; and

(2) The quality men and women who are Rotarians, but not yet members of a Rotary club. As RI President Richard D. King observed, “They too are the business of Rotary if our organization is to reach its destiny in the 21st century.”

George H. Scheetz

President, Rotary Club of Champaign

2001-2002

## PREFACE

*The problem with a history of a living organization is that it stops the day it goes to press, while the members of the organization go on to make more history.*

—Edward E. Roderick, 1988

With those words from his dedication of *Steps Going Up*, Bud Roderick handed Champaign Rotary's historians an ongoing assignment: keep recording the accomplishments of this Club "...as new generations of Rotarians broaden the horizons of service." Since 1988, Champaign Rotarians have indeed broadened their horizons. Unquestionably, it is time to update the progress of our Club.

The challenge: should we rewrite *Steps*, incorporating 14 more years of Champaign Rotary history? That would produce a single volume covering 1916-2001, and might be a desirable solution. However, cogent arguments support the approach we have chosen — an addendum covering 1988-2001, providing (along with *Steps*) a history in two segments. Anticipating future updates, we have entitled the addendum *Champaign Rotary Club: The Story Continues, 1988-2001*. In *The Story Continues*, references to *Steps Going Up* provide essential background.

This approach has spared the writers and editors of *The Story Continues* the daunting challenge of stuffing a wealth of new information into the complete-unto-itself *Steps*. We could justify neither the labor nor the expense of recreating the layout of nearly every page, especially when we envisioned how cumbersome that task would become with future updates. Since no more copies of *Steps Going Up* existed, the Club directors voted to reprint *Steps* and print *The Story Continues* in one combined book — a logistically prudent decision that should convenience both present and future members.

A last consideration justifying separate update volumes is this: what Champaign Rotary undertook 30 years ago pales in comparison to what WGRC now accomplishes.

*The Story Continues* stands as the more relevant paradigm, the platform from which the Club will launch its service projects in the ensuing years. We envision that other addenda will serve similarly.

# INTRODUCTION

Because Champaign Rotary is intrinsically a cog in the wheel of Rotary International, we cannot portray WGRC's activities and achievements outside their primary context — the district and international framework of Rotary. The men and women of Rotary, 1.18 million strong, carry their good works over four broad Avenues of Service that reach into 163 countries – into every inhabited region of the world. The steps of Champaign Rotarians stray not from those four paths, nor can this narrative.

Week by week, year by year, Champaign Rotary (still referred to by insiders as WGRC, the World's Greatest Rotary Club) has generated a steady flow of modest achievements, highlighted here and there by something rather grand. Over 14 years the compendium of works grows unwieldy, and reducing it to a representative, yet readable chronicle becomes a process not of compilation, but of elimination. Because people breathe life into pages of words, we have included hundreds of names and faces. In so doing, we inevitably omit worthy individuals. Many members assume important Club responsibilities, serve selflessly (and sometimes invisibly), then step aside to be replaced by others. That their names appear infrequently, if at all, in *The Fizz* and this history does not diminish the benefits their work brings to people in the far-flung community of Rotary, from Champaign to Uganda.

A thorough review of records from 1988-2001 suggested organizational guideposts. We needed to correct a few errors in *Steps Going Up*; we needed to revisit the international reach of the Rotary Foundation, as well as ongoing Club projects; and we needed to describe the Club's most significant new projects and achievements. In Rotary, as with any successful organization, implementation is accomplished by the many, but vision and inspiration come from the top. Through the years, Champaign Rotary Board members have selected their presidents based on demonstrated abilities and commitment to the Object of Rotary, looking past political or social connection, town or gown, years in the community or WGRC, gender or ancestry, popularity or income level. The "character" of each July 1-June 30 Rotary year stems from the distinctive leadership style of the Club president. This annual cycle establishes a useful chronological structure that we have adopted.

Inevitably, a Club the size of Champaign Rotary loses members, each year, to death. In the course of recapping the high points of presidential years, we find no appropriate place to record these losses. With one exception, this supplement will salute our lost members by listing them in a special memorial section as Appendix I. The exception, an excerpt from an exemplary memorial resolution read to the Club and presented to the family, is included in the recapitulation of Dan Crispin's presidential term. May it honor all our departed members.

*The Fizz* reports what members see and hear at weekly luncheon meetings; Board of Directors minutes include memos, reports and letters from officers and committee chairs — documents that not only disclose the quantity and quality of work occurring behind the scenes, but that reflect the human side of Club management. While the overriding mission of Rotary imparts motivation and a communion of effort to our committees, conflicts of opinion and disputes over policy arise. Generally, the service-focused, positive energy of Champaign Rotarians prevails, propelling WGRC to achievement of most of its goals.

That said, we believe that a chronicle of this nature should be more than a litany of self-congratulation. In Part VI: Whither Rotary? we examine not just winds of change, but winds that blow clouds of concern across the landscape of Rotary International and of this Club. Disquieting issues exist, and to ignore them would do a disservice to WGRC, as well as to Rotary. If we are to resolve current and impending problems, we must first acknowledge them and analyze their underlying causes.

With apologies for errors and omissions, we offer you *Champaign Rotary Club: The Story Continues, 1988-2001* – and hope you find it a worthy addition to Steps Going Up.

*For The History and Archives Committee*

Peter T. Tomaras  
Club Historian and Author

William D. Krahling, Lott H. Thomas and  
George H. Scheetz, Editors

Contributing Photographers: Robert A. Atkins and  
Scott Anderson Jr.

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Joseph H. Smith	

# **PART I**

## **Updating Steps Going Up**

[Sections and page numbers refer to Steps Going Up]

### **Section I: The Founding of Rotary International (p. 1)**

Since its founding in 1905, the world's oldest service club has grown from 4 men in Chicago to 1.18 million men and women in nearly 30,000 clubs in 163 countries and 35 geographical areas. U.S. Rotarians currently account for a third of all members; Japan has 10.5 percent; India, 6 percent; Brazil, 4.5 percent; England, 4 percent, and Australia, 3.2 percent. First admitted in 1989, women are the fastest-growing segment of Rotary membership. There are an estimated 103,000 female Rotarians, including 2,000 club presidents.

The numbers change, of course, from moment to moment. What does not change is the Object of Rotary (p. 4), now supported by Rotary International's Mission Statement (adopted in 1992):

The mission of Rotary International is to support its member clubs in fulfilling the Object of Rotary by:

- Fostering unity among member clubs;
- Strengthening and expanding Rotary around the world;
- Communicating worldwide the work of Rotary; and
- Providing a system of international administration.

While this “just-the-facts-ma’am” version describes an enabling framework, it fails to reflect the intangible human links – the Rotary International presidents and their worldwide network of district governors – who turbo-charge the engine of Rotary and steer the various programs to ever-higher levels of achievement. The expanded statement more fully reflects Rotary:

The mission of RI is to assist Rotarians and Rotary Clubs to accomplish the Object of Rotary and, at this particular time in Rotary's development, to focus primary emphasis upon service activities by individuals and groups that enhance the quality of life and human dignity and create greater understanding among all people to advance the search for peace in the world.

The Rotary Foundation (RF), first mentioned on p. 4 and then more extensively on pp. 57-58, rates a serious update. First, we incorrectly stated in *Steps* that the Foundation began in 1947. We should have said that, because of two World Wars and the Great Depression, *prior* to 1947 the Foundation had barely scratched the surface of its espoused mission. The actual history of RF goes like this:



Arch C. Klumph,  
6th RI President

In 1917, Arch C. Klumph, Rotary's sixth president, proposed to the Rotary International Convention in Atlanta the creation of an "endowment fund for Rotary . . . for the purpose of doing good in the world in charitable, educational, and other avenues of community service."

In 1928, when the endowment fund had grown to more than \$5,000, the fund was renamed The Rotary Foundation, and it became a distinct entity within Rotary International. Five Trustees, including Klumph, were appointed to "hold, invest, manage, and administer all of its property. . . for the furtherance of the purposes of RI." Two years later, the Foundation made its first grant of \$500 to the International Society for Crippled Children. The ISCC — created by Rotarian Edgar F. "Daddy" Allen — later grew into the Easter Seals organization.

The need for promoting world peace generated great post-war interest in the Foundation and, following the death of Rotary founder Paul Harris in 1947, Rotarians around the world made gifts to the Foundation in his memory, totaling more than \$1 million by June, 1948. That same year, the first Foundation program was established: Fellowships for Advanced Study, the forerunner of today's Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarships program.

In 1957, Paul Harris Recognition began for donors giving at least \$1,000 to the Foundation. By 1965 annual contributions enabled the Foundation to establish three new programs: Group Study Exchange, Awards for Technical Training, and Matching Grants. The Health, Hunger and Humanity (3-H) program was launched in 1978; and in 1979 the Foundation trustees approved a \$760,000 3-H Grant for a five-year immunization plan for the polio-racked Philippines.

Next came the Rotary Endowment for World Understanding and Peace. By 1985, annual contributions to the RF reached \$24 million, and PolioPlus officially became a Foundation program. The PolioPlus goal was to immunize 500 million children and help eliminate polio by the year 2000, with official certification in 2005, Rotary's 100th anniversary. [Learn of WGRC's key role in PolioPlus on pp. 59-61 in *Steps*; see p. 104 in *The Story Continues* for more.]

In 1986 came Rotary Grants for University Teachers; the first Peace Forums were held in 1987-88, leading to the establishment of Rotary Peace Programs. Then in 1989, 1963-64 RI President Carl P. Miller and his wife, Ruth, donated \$1 million to establish the Discovery Grants program. The Trustees initiated the Foundation's Permanent Fund in 1994, as a source of income to support RF programs in perpetuity.

By 1998, with contributors to the Foundation exceeding one million and annual revenues topping \$60 million, total contributions to the Foundation since its inception surpassed \$1 billion. Contributions to the Annual Fund are invested for three years, and earnings generated pay for the all administrative, program operations and fund development costs. This cycle approach has enabled the percent of available funds actually spent on programs to grow from 78% [of funds contributed three years earlier] in 1995-96 to 98% in 1998-99.

Since 1947, the Foundation has awarded more than \$1.1 billion in humanitarian and educational grants, which are initiated and administered by local Rotary clubs and districts.

We considered this RF background necessary to full understanding of most of the significant Club and individual service projects described in pages following. Please refer to p. 115 of *The Story Continues* to learn about the Foundation's marvelous new initiatives and their impact on the quality of life and world understanding.

\* \* \* \* \*

## **Section II: The Founding of Champaign Rotary (p. 7)**

\* \* \* \* \*

**Section III: The Early Years (p. 11)**

\* \* \* \* \*

## **Section IV: Projects and Activities: Community Service (p. 19), and Section VI: Post-War Projects and Activities (p. 35)**

[These sections in *Steps* are updated below. For projects and activities the Club and Rotary International have undertaken since 1988, see *The Story Continues*, Parts III and IV]

### **Community Chest/United Way (Steps, p. 20)**

The pattern of support continues. In 1992, WGRC bought the United Way a computer, and Champaign Rotarians regularly serve as annual campaign leaders. All executive directors and many campaign chairmen have been members of Champaign Rotary. As an example, Gary Wackerlin was campaign chairman and James Vander Klok was in his first of five effective years as executive director in 1989 when the campaign exceeded its \$1.8 million goal by 11 percent. Tom Costello, Greg Lykins, Zelema Harris, and Dave Beckerle all served as campaign chairmen during the 1990s; Gary Wackerlin served two terms as board president, while Joe Beard and Dave Beckerle each served one term as board president.

The one significant departure from the leadership form of support came in 1997-98, when accounting irregularities resulted in a critical shortfall in funding promised to agencies. Local Rotary clubs came together to support the United Way and restore community confidence in the institution. The clubs essentially made up the shortfall, with Champaign Rotary picking up \$20,000+ toward shortfalls for eight community agencies. Under the leadership of Rotarian William J. Kitson III, the newly-appointed executive director, the United Way recovered quickly, attaining record-breaking years in both Campaign 1999 and Campaign 2000.

### **Boy Scouts (Steps, p. 21)**

The Prairielands Council of the Boy Scouts of America serves more than 7,400 youth in seven counties in Illinois and two counties in Indiana. After ten years of outstanding contributions both to Champaign Rotary and as Executive Director of the Prairielands Council, Bob Rydell received a promotion in BSA. His successor as executive director is the energetic Tim Manard.

The Prairielands Council has benefited, aside from ongoing leadership by Champaign Rotarians, from two Action Auctions. In 1995, a renovation of the water treatment facility at Camp Robert Drake was the primary goal of Action Auction VII. The Auction's success provided \$37,500 for the purpose, and the new facility was dedicated (to the Champaign Rotary Club) on June 15, 1996. Among the many WGRCers present were BSA Area Vice President and Council President Ken Gunji,

the keynote speaker; Treasurer Steven Carter; and Executive Director Bob Rydell. Although not the lead beneficiary of Action Auction IX in 2001, Prairielands Council did receive \$8,500 for a new lawnmower to tend its extensive grounds at Camp Drake.



Stanley J. Rankin

Champaign Rotarian Stan Rankin is widely recognized for his long-time leadership in Scouting. In fact, he sponsored all 57 Eagle Scouts of the class of 1998 at the Council's March 1999 Recognition Dinner.

### **McKinley YMCA (Steps, p. 25)**

With the addition of a second facility, McKinley YMCA became Champaign County YMCA. The original building retains the name: McKinley Family Center. Champaign Rotary continues to support the YMCA, primarily through leadership on its Board of Directors. As far back as one can recall, executive directors of McKinley/CC YMCA have been Champaign Rotarians. Frank Burns was succeeded by Dick Knieriem; Tom Feller succeeded Dick, and Doug Lindner followed. Champaign Rotarian Wade Hampton is the present executive director.



David W. Hood

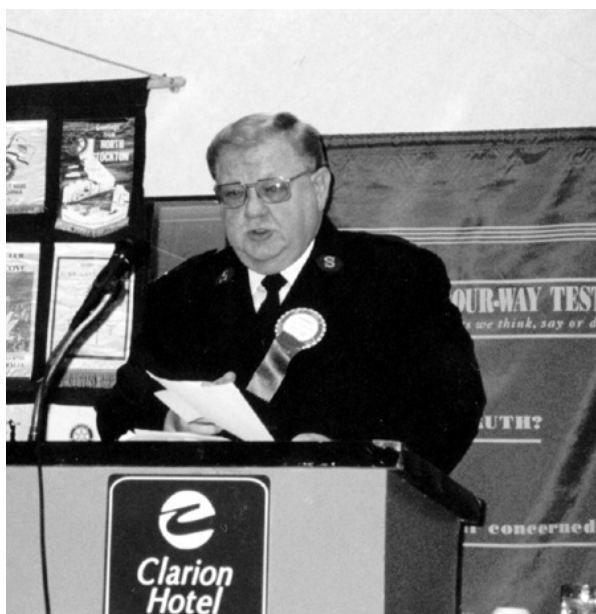
David Hood is finishing his second two-year term as president of the Board of Directors; his Board includes Champaign Rotarians Kay Machula, John Comet, and Jan Bahr. Kyle Robeson, who with his wife, Phyllis, are long-time champions of the Y, is presently vice president of the Foundation Board of Directors.

Major funding support from WGRC includes a \$5,000 project grant in 1989, \$6,000 for pool repairs in 1992, and \$5,000 for computer linking of the two facilities in 2001.

### **The Salvation Army (Steps, p. 26)**

The Salvation Army (SA) remains the only agency to receive annual support from Champaign Rotary. The SA Advisory Board always includes WGRCCers, including the following current Club members: John Ady, Larry Carney, Tod Dawson, Bernie Dunn, John Elder, Ken Gunji, Steve Hamburg, David Hood, Frank Keck, David Lawrence, Art Lewis, Bill Riley, and Art Skelton.

The tradition of Club members ringing bells during the Christmas drive continues, although in 1995 the Club Board considered discontinuing the bell-ringing and simply holding a fund-raising meeting in December. We speculate that the importance of hands-on involvement through ringing bells, and the gratification received by those who ring, overruled the fact that less than half the money raised for the SA comes from the kettles.



Major George D. Windham

In recent years, kettle collections have increased dramatically, especially since the format changed in 1998.

SA Commanding Officer George Windham suggested switching the ringing period from an hour following the Monday Club meeting, to several hours, worked in shifts, on a Saturday. John Elder had already concluded that today, few people shop on weekdays. The change proved serendipitous: not only did receipts climb, but the weekend format allowed spouses, children and grandchildren to join members in ringing bells. We don't have an accurate record of each year's receipts, but we have these totals:

1989 - \$9,100

1991 - \$9,694 - "A new record in caring," said SA Chairman John Elder.  
1992 - \$10,550 - "Truly WGRC!" - John Elder  
1993 - \$10,669  
1995 - \$12,500  
1996 - \$12,300  
1999 - \$12,917  
2000 - \$15,223 (late donations brought this to nearly \$16,000)



John H. Elder

Since serving as Salvation Army Capital Fund Campaign Chairman in 1987, John Elder has headed WGRC's SA Committee more times than he can remember. In 1998, John had the pleasure of accepting on behalf of the Club's members, the Salvation Army's Outstanding Community Service Award. WGRC was the only organization to receive this award at the Army's annual meeting. For 2001, John has passed the baton to Larry Carney.

### **Scholarships/Vocational Service (*Steps*, p. 35)**

WGRC remains committed to raising career awareness and providing vocational scholarships. Following a 1995 study by President-Elect Jim Keene, Local Scholarship Committee Chairman Joseph Smith, and former Parkland Financial Aid Director Ken Gunji, the Club Directors revised Policy Statement # 17 of 1980 "...to provide for closer administrative relationship with the Parkland College Scholarship Committee, to add Judah Christian High School graduates to possible recipients, and to change the name to "Champaign Rotary Vocational Scholarship." Candidates are now selected by Parkland faculty and staff based on four criteria: (1) enrolled in a degree program; (2) entering the second year of the program; (3) excellent grade-point average; and (4) special relevant considerations. Despite occasional problems in

identifying candidates, the program (re-energized in 1999 by President Tom Costello) is again on track. Recent recipients of the \$500 awards included students in information technology, manufacturing technology, restaurant management, automotive technology, and construction technology.

WGRC has paid continuing attention to career awareness and development. In 1994, the Club won a District Achievement Award for the High School Career Development Night developed jointly with Champaign West Rotary. And when 1995-96 Club President Jim Keene made continuing career mentoring one of his goals, Vocation Awareness Committee Chair Clarence “Tommy” Thompson swung into action. Already, in the Spring of 1995, a large number of Centennial High School students had responded to his inquiry concerning visits to area businesses. Thompson first organized two pilot trips, and their success led to many more student visits to businesses and shadowing opportunities.

In the Spring of 2000, Marc Changnon, Centennial’s Education to Careers and Professions Program Coordinator, presented a program to the Club on the ECP Program. Club members approved a resolution on Monday, June 5, 2000, commending the Board of Champaign Unit 4 School District for developing the ECP Program at Centennial, and urging that the ECP program be expanded to all high schools throughout the School District at the earliest opportunity. The Illinois Board of Education recognized the ECP Program as an innovative way to bring students to a realistic understanding of career opportunities. Support of ECP complements the Club’s Career Development/Vocational Awareness mission.

### **Developmental Services Center (*Steps*, p. 51)**

Ever since DSC was the primary recipient of Action Auction IV in 1986,<sup>1</sup> Champaign Rotarians have honored its mission, primarily through serving on its Board. The indefatigable Bud Roderick set the standard, serving four three-year terms in all. At DSC’s 1997 annual meeting, Bud was named the Outstanding Individual in Supporting Persons with Disabilities. In addition to his long Board service, Bud’s company, Chemical Maintenance, Inc., regularly employs ten or more severely disabled persons.

But Patrick Kovar is coming on strong. Pat served two full terms from 1986 through 1992, then returned to the Board in 1995. He put in two years as treasurer, then two as vice chair before serving as board president from July 1998 through June 1999. By the time Pat’s Board tenure ends in 2002, he will be one year up on Bud. Tony Peressini’s Board term ran 1997-2000, and Rabbi Norman Klein served five years,

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 52, *Steps Going Up*.

1996-2001. All worked with several committees during their Board terms.



Dale A. Morrissey

In terms of funding support, DSC has received the proceeds of two monthly Rotary Cup collections (\$963); a \$2,500 grant in April 1996 for computer equipment and software; and \$1,200 in April 1998 to purchase a communication device for DSC client Ryan Stewart. In August 2001, the WGRC, Inc.<sup>2</sup> board approved a request from DSC for \$4,341 to provide software for training 60-70 individuals with disabilities to use the computer lab. Rotarian Dale Morrissey has been CEO of DSC since 1987.

### **Boys Club (*Steps*, p. 38)**

Before an update comes a clarification as to how the Boys Club came to be. We are informed that, in 1967, Clarence Thompson, as a Boys Club National Associate Board Member, was the inspirational catalyst, bringing together Paul Kent, Don Moyer Sr., Hal Dawson, and other citizens to organize the Champaign club. According to Dave Lawrence, “the first check to hit the table was signed Thompson,” and Champaign had a Boys Club.

At about the same time Rotary admitted women, the Boys Club changed its name to the Don Moyer Boys and Girls Club. Champaign Rotarians actively support the DMBGC through funding and service as directors. The Boys and Girls Club was the second recipient of Rotary Cup proceeds when that practice began in 1994. In the early 1990s, Executive Director Tim Sheahan, with considerable input from his Board and others, launched the Great American Duck Race as the DMBGC’s major fund-raiser. The 2001 Duck Race netted \$80,000.

A major boost from Champaign Rotary came in 1998, when WGRC designated \$33,000 from Action Auction VIII to the DMBGC to initiate and continue a teen center. Elisabeth Barnett, DMBGC Executive Director from 1997-2001, reports: “The Teen Center is definitely a reality. The \$33,000 was key to leveraging grants from the state which

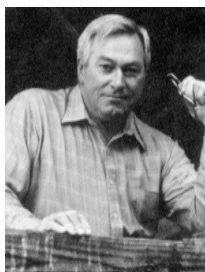
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<sup>2</sup> WGRC, Inc. is Champaign Rotary’s 501(c)(3) charitable organization. See p. 50, *Steps Going Up*.

were used to further develop the teen center, add daily teen-only hours, and broaden the number of programs available to teens.”

The importance of the DMBGC to the youth of Champaign-Urbana cannot be overstated. On March 31, 2000, a News-Gazette article carried this quote from Jenell Hendrix, a 14-year-old high school freshman, named DMBGC’s Youth of the Year for 2000:

I look at the club like another home. It’s like a big family, except they are your friends. You can hang out with your friends here and you’re going to learn something with all these programs. I learned to be a better person, not to get into conflicts, and to respect people.



David B. Lawrence

All DMBGC Executive Directors have been Champaign Rotarians. Barnett was preceded by Fred Paulke, who served after Tim Sheahan. André Arrington took the reins in August, 2001. Many WGRCCers have served on the DMBGC board, no less than eleven in 1997, including the president, vice president, and treasurer. Board presidents during the 1990s include Don Moyer Jr., Mark Stolkin, Dave Lawrence, and Steve Hamburg. Those four continue as Board members in 2001, along with Vice President Carl Meyer, Secretary Deloris Henry, Don Judy, and Jill Wagner. And of eight Lifetime Honorary Board Members, four are Champaign Rotarians.

The gratification that comes from seeing positive change in young people may be what draws so many Champaign Rotarians to volunteer their time and support to the DMBGC. Dave Lawrence, whose energetic leadership as Executive Director during the club’s first ten years set it firmly on the road to success, has never stopped working with and for the DMGGC despite moving on to several new career and community service roles. In 1999, Dave was named Boys and Girls Club Volunteer of the Year for the State of Illinois. And a year later, he received the Silver Medallion for long and meritorious service to the Boys and Girls Clubs of America at the annual meeting of the DMBGC.

### **Interact and Rotaract (*Steps*, p. 42)**

In Champaign’s galaxy of youth-related activities, the star of Centennial High School’s Interact Club shines brightest. *Steps Going Up* credits Stu Clark and Dick Knieriem for establishing WGRCC’s first Interact Club in 1978. Actually, the first District Interact Club started

in 1967 under WGRC President Bobby Eisner. That one did not last and was later re-started at Centennial in 1978.

Steps correctly reports Centennial Principal Al Davis' approval of Interact as a co-ed group in 1988. It was in *that* year that new Champaign Rotarian Chris Moyer was named co-chair of the Interact Committee. This proved a marvelous match, because Chris continuously chaired or co-chaired that Committee until 2001-02. Under his guiding hand, Centennial Interactors have consistently over-achieved, establishing themselves as the aspiration group of their school as they unselfishly serve both school and community. Here are some of the highlights:

- 1991-92: Interact conducts or participates in 28 different service projects during year.
- 1992-93: By March 1993, club members raise \$4,000, engage in 40 service projects, and ring up 1,500 hours of service.
- 1993-94: At the April 11 Rotary Club meeting, 59 of the 60 Interactors delight Rotarians by ending their presentation in musical form (see p. 45, *The Story Continues*).
- 1995 fall: Negotiations continue for a second year with the Central High School principal about forming an Interact Club. Faculty concerns about conflict/competition with Central's Key Club ultimately doom this initiative.
- 1997 spring: Interactors describe to Rotarians their year's activities, which total an astounding 3,865 service hours, 1,000 more than any previous Interact Club. One special event: they host a mass naturalization ceremony in the school's auditorium during which, under direction of U.S. Magistrate Judge David Bernthal, 107 immigrants are naturalized. They again conclude their presentation with a stirring rendition of their anthem, "We Are Interact."
- 1998-99: Interact participates in 38 service projects, 28 of which are off-campus community projects.



Interactor Works Alongside WGRcers John T. Schumacher and Scott Moe on 1998 Habitat for Humanity House

The role of Interactors at the Club's January 26, 1998 meeting is noted elsewhere, as are other special projects undertaken by Interact, such as helping with the Club's 1998 and 2001 Habitat for Humanity construction projects; participation in WGRC's prize-winning 1998 Freedom Celebration float; and a 1999 book drive for Kathe Keck's Uganda schools project. A summary of Interact's 2000-2001 year is on p. 86.



Chris Moyer Honors Janet Ellis-Nelson for Five Years as Interact Sponsor

Art Skelton is "Mr. Rotary"; we could properly refer to Chris Moyer as "Mr. Interact." Principally for his work with Interact, Chris was named

the Club's Outstanding Rotarian for 1996-97. That slowed him not a whit, and he was praised at the January 1999 Club Board meeting, as well as on other occasions, for his ongoing work with Centennial's Interactors. Ultimately, everyone must move on, and after nearly 14 years, Chris Moyer has handed the reins of Centennial's 2001-02 Interact Club to Bob Aldridge.

Interest in service through Interact is blooming in Champaign-Urbana. Moving into the 2001-2002 Rotary Year, Urbana Rotary has established an Interact Club at University High School, and Savoy Rotary hopes to do the same at Champaign Central High School. As George Scheetz observed in the April 9, 2001, *Fizz*: "We have seen the future – and it is Interact."

WGRC's sponsorship of the Rotaract Club at the University of Illinois is also a success story. By 1990-91, Rotaract merited a committee of its own, and in stepped the energetic Brad Booton. Already named co-New Rotarian of the Year for 1989-90, Brad infused Rotaract with his brand of enthusiasm for the next three years. Pat Dorsey then assumed the reins for four effective years. Here are a few Rotaract highlights:

- August 1990: Club Director and Coordinator of Youth and Student Affairs Tom Cornell reports Rotaract is "up and running" under Brad Booton and Jerry Denen. Vocation at Work Committee Chair Steven Carter – in cooperation with Rotaract – develops a mentoring program for UI students on course work, résumé preparation, job interviewing, and career planning. Fifteen Champaign Rotarians sign on for career counseling.

- 1992-93: Rotaract activities include support of the Orchard Downs Day Care Center and charity-oriented walks and 10-K runs.

- 1996: Club President Gary Wackerlin proposes a second Rotaract Club (as his year's key Community Service project), to be comprised of urban-based older teens and young adults. Urban problems as well as traditional service projects and fund-raising activities are to be addressed. A Community Rotaract Committee is formed to address questions of recruitment and dues, identify youth leadership, and involve others from the police department, city administration, and churches who might have an interest in working with group. The ultimate decision is that the time is not favorable to proceed with the effort.

- 1997-98: Kay Machula steps in as UI Rotaract Committee chair. Typical Rotaract service projects on Kay's watch include: cleaning up Busey Woods in Urbana; serving as chaperones at a Daddy-Daughter Valentine's Day Dance at an elementary school; sorting donated food for the Eastern Illinois Food Bank's Food for Families Program; and cooking food and cleaning at the Men's Emergency Shelter. The Community Rotaract Committee fails to establish a club.

- 2001: Denton Brown joins the District Rotaract Committee. The idea of a Community Rotaract Club, like a seed falling on fertile ground,

germinates within Denton's inventive and determined brain. The Club Board waits to hear.

In late 1999, because of the strong UI presence in Urbana Rotary, Champaign Rotary leaders inquired as to the Urbana Club's interest in sponsoring Rotaract at the UI. Urbana President Chris Scherer and his Board reacted favorably, and in March 2000, a letter of transition was drawn and the Champaign Rotary Board transferred the Club's sponsorship of the Rotaract Club to Urbana Rotary.

We should point out that, in some parts of the world, Rotaract is a more important program of Rotary than Interact. Consider this example of a project of the Rotaract Overseas Program, which each year sends mixed teams of Rotaractors from Great Britain and Ireland to remote locales for two-week service projects. In 2000, they built a dormitory for the Michinji Orphanage in Malawi, a nation with an estimated 300,000 orphans whose parents have died from AIDS, malaria, and malnutrition.

As *The Story Continues* goes to press, Rotary International reports 7,292 Interact Clubs with 167,716 members in 108 countries and geographical regions, and 6,903 Rotaract Clubs with 151,900 members in 146 countries and geographical regions. We believe that, if Interact clubs competed among themselves, Centennial's Interactors would consistently finish at or near the top. Considering that the members are invariably leaders in every phase of school life, their service accomplishments – as well as their eager involvement – are truly gratifying.

A representative of Rotary International has observed: "It has been said that youth is wasted on the young, but youth is not wasted on the young who participate in Interact, Rotaract, and IYE [now RYE]." Well said. Nor is youth wasted on the participants in Rotary Youth Leadership Awards. But that's another story (see p. 107).

### **WGRC, Inc. and Action Auction (Steps, p. 45)**

The men who dreamed up the first Action Auction knew not what they did. Never could they have envisioned the phenomenal success that the triennial auctions were to achieve. As mentioned in *Steps*, the first four auctions (1977, 1980, 1983, 1986) all rang up revenues in the \$30,000 to \$33,000 range, enabling the Club to fund major projects through WGRC, Inc., its 501c(3) foundation. Then in 1989, a strange thing happened. Under Chairman Larry Adams and spurred by the goal of providing \$25,000 to the City of Champaign to launch a project to beautify the main entryways to the city, Action Auction V raised \$46,895. Admirable at the time, that record lasted only until 1992.

For Action Auction VI, the Project Planning Committee recommended as lead recipient the Frances Nelson Health Center, stating this goal: "Raising funds so that FNHC can better assist thousands of people in

our community who seek their basic health care from the center, not least by providing a computer operating system, hardware and software.” Bill Creswell pointed out that the breadth of FNHC’s services is not always known; for example, it provides health services for 1,000 foreign students and many American graduate students. Apparently people considered the FNHC a worthy recipient, because AA Chair Dave Kuhl and his Committee (with Greg Lykins as acquisitions chairman) achieved a record \$63,000 in Auction revenues.

Heads shook, gray beards were stroked: surely, some predicted, this auction bubble will burst one of these times. Indeed, with non-profit organizations throughout the community staging copy-cat auctions, how long could or should Club leaders depend on Action Auction to channel significant funds to WGRC, Inc.?

In 1995 Action Auction VII Chairman Tod Dawson faced a different challenge: the primary chunk of Auction proceeds would go not to some tangible building project or well-known cause, but to fund ideas incubating in the minds of local school teachers. The Champaign-Urbana Community Schools Foundation (CUCSF), had been born in 1988 with this mission:

To enrich its community, The Champaign-Urbana Community Schools Foundation is committed to encouraging educational initiatives and facilitating excellence in education in the public schools of Champaign-Urbana, Illinois. We seek to inspire, encourage and support the creativity of teachers and to extend the benefits of that creativity to as many children as possible.

Perhaps because CUCSF puzzled some members, Dawson’s team also listed a much-needed water renovation project at the Boy Scouts’ Camp Drake as a main recipient. Then Rick Stephens came up with an enhancement to the Auction itself that proved to be a booster rocket to this and ensuing auctions: the raffle of some attractive “thing.” For WGRC’s 7th Triennial Action Auction, the “thing” was a brand-new Harley-Davidson motorcycle, and when Stephens, in full leathers, rode the “hog” through the west door of the Chancellor Hotel’s Iowa Room, smack into the middle of a Monday Club meeting, its guttural growl drowned out any doubts about the Auction’s outcome. The result surpassed even the wildest expectations as revenues topped \$129,000: \$78,050 from auction lot bids; outright contributions of \$2,130; \$26,420 from the Harley raffle; and \$18,720 from 468 paying guests for dinner.

Two things helped immensely: first, the motorcycle was donated; second, the board members of the recipient agencies were encouraged to promote the Auction, and that brought in more bidders. All this resulted in a final net of \$114,392, enabling WGRC, Inc. to award \$37,500 to CUCSF, provide \$37,500 for the Camp Drake water project, and bank another \$32,000+ for worthy projects during the three years before the next Auction.

For the record: CUCSF took flight, and through March, 2001, had distributed almost \$250,000 in grants to teachers in Champaign and

Urbana public schools. Here are just two recent examples of projects enabled:

**Polly Hill: Multi-Media Digital Technology Lab: \$2,810**

This collaborative project links 2 local businesses (WILL-TV and Springfield Graphics) and Parkland College with the students at Columbia, an alternative program for children in grades 6–12. Grant money provides a small multi-media lab in the school to enhance the students' knowledge and hands-on applications of graphics software, as well as speakers, tours and tutorials about the graphics and communications business.

**Ellen S. Baranowski: Boast Academy Science and Enrichment**

**Project: \$1,830**

The *BOAST Academy* supports at-risk grade school students, while providing hands-on lessons that build on the enthusiasm, curiosity and knowledge they already have. Children are to be matched with UI undergraduates, faculty, and Kenwood School staff; parents will be encouraged to interact on a regular basis. Over a year's time, kids in the program will be mentored, taken on trips, conduct research and demonstrate new skills through presentations and a poster session.



Tom Good with Ford Escape for  
Action Auction Raffle

For 1998, Tom Good inherited the daunting task of matching Action Auction VII. President Scott Anderson Jr. didn't make it easier, making "the best Action Auction in WGRC's history" one of his "measurable goals" for the year. In July, 1994, outgoing Club President Terry Davis had introduced his successor, Tom Good, as "an excellent man." Tom lived up to Terry's words, leading Action Auction VIII to \$128,000 in revenues – \$78,000 from the auction itself, and \$42,000 from the raffle of a Chevy Blazer (provided at dealer cost by Mark Stolkin, and half of that cost donated anonymously).

To corrupt a cliché, "the past was prelude" to the astounding success of Action Auction IX. Club President Mark Stolkin set the example. He donated half the value of a new Ford Escape, then handed the raffle responsibility to – who else? – that excellent man, Tom Good.

The Auction hype never let up, crescendoing in May with a Kip Pope-inspired song-writing contest. Invoking the spirit of Guy Duker, no less than five WGRCCers (Pope, Mark Neville, Dick Knieriem, Bob Aldridge, and Peter Tomaras) wrote Action Auction lyrics and set them to familiar tunes such as "There's No Business Like Show Business," "When the Saints Go Marchin' In," "School Days," and "Oh, What a Beautiful Morning." The songs were fine fun, but rather than slight four "lyricists" by naming one

winner, we prefer to recall the Action Auction song penned by the one and only Duke of Doggerel, Guy Duker, in 1992 (the tune is obvious):

**A** is for the articles we'll donate,  
**C** is for the cash we all will spend;  
**T**'s a trip to fish where they say it's great,  
**I**'s our eyes on pleasures without end.  
**O** is for the object of this Auction,  
**N**'s now get-the-lead-out time has come.  
Fill a table, if you're able, brother, and come and ha-av-ve some fun!!!

**Au** is for the auctioneer's exhorting,  
**C** is for the condo far away;  
**T** is for the treasures that are waiting,  
**I** is for this ineluctant day;  
**O** is opulence which we can bid on,  
**N** is never quit until you've won.  
Spell this out and you will know what's 1st-rate, the Happening on May-y-y the eighth!!!

Ineluctant??? Ah, no; only *ineluctable* (adj.) is in the dictionary. But as Lord Guy elucidated, "ineluctable did not fit the melodic rhythm, so I used my doggerel license."

With Gary Wackerlin as AA chair, Gary's wife, Karyl, arranging the dinner, Greg Cozad heading up acquisitions, Tom Good ramrodding the raffle, and Mark Stolkin applying the whip at each weekly meeting, the bubble that some kept expecting to burst simply kept expanding. And speaking of whips: if there has been one constant through all the auctions, it has been Jim Acheson. 1991-92 Club President Dave Thies made reference to Acheson as "our relentless organizer of tables" for the 75th Anniversary Banquet, and 1990-91 President Mike Martin characterized him as "unmoved by love or mercy" when it comes to pushing table sales for major Club events – such as the 1993 Sweetheart Ball. But the Action Auctions inspire Jim's best work.

The 2001 Action Auction team rounded up a record attendance of 530 and an incredible \$190,707 in total receipts. Of that, the net \$146,911 enabled full funding of the Auction Grants: \$25,000 to Crisis Nursery<sup>3</sup> for playground equipment at its new location; \$15,000 for improvements to the Men's SAFE House<sup>4</sup>; \$8,500 to Prairielands Council, Boy Scouts of America, for Camp Drake grounds maintenance equipment; and \$6,750 to CASA<sup>5</sup> for volunteer advocate training. The \$91,661 balance went to WGRC, Inc. to fund worthy causes over the three years between auctions.

Could this incredible auction have set one of those "never-to-be-broken" records?

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<sup>3</sup> Crisis Nursery's mission is primary prevention of child abuse through short-term care and stabilization of the family. Services are available to any parent who temporarily cannot cope with life stress, and the Crisis Nursery can serve 12 children in residence. In addition to that safe haven for children, parents receive information, referrals, and reassurance from this addition to their support system.

<sup>4</sup> SAFE = Substance Abuse Free Environment.

<sup>5</sup> CASA = Court Appointed Special Advocates.

## **Other Service Projects and Activities (Steps, p. 52)**

Champaign Rotarians have involved themselves in many new projects and activities since 1988. We have chosen to touch upon dozens of Club activities within the main segment of *The Story Continues*, PART II – The Presidents, 1988-2001. The most significant new projects follow in PART III – Principal Projects. The 14 sections in Part II comprise a continuum within a continuum, reflecting the Club’s service reach and the unique blend of character and leadership that each president brings to the table. With necessary digressions to highlight the notable achievements of WGRC in both District and International activities, The Presidents and The Principal Projects take the place of two *Steps Going Up* sections: Inside Rotary (pp. 69-76),<sup>6</sup> and Inside WGRC (pp. 77-92).

We chose the “presidential” format of PART II both for its chronological expediency and as recognition of the enormous portions of time and self that each Club president invests in discharging the responsibilities of the office. The presidents themselves are ever the first to deflect the spotlight, commending instead their officers, directors, committee chairmen, and individual members. In truth, Champaign Rotary is WGRC thanks to both: the individual inspiration by the few and the collaborative contributions of the many.

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<sup>6</sup> One quick update: on p. 76, *Steps Going Up* refers to C-U Sunrise Rotary with some uncertainty. Happily, 14 years after its chartering, C-U Sunrise is thriving.

## **Section V: The WW II Years (p. 29)**

[These sections in *Steps* require no updates.]

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## **Section VII: International Service and The Rotary Foundation (p. 57)**

[This section in *Steps* is updated in *The Story Continues*, PARTS II, III and IV.]

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## **Section VIII: Inside Rotary (p. 69) and Section IX: Inside WGRC (p. 77)**

[With the three exceptions immediately below, these sections are updated mostly in *The Story Continues*, PART II.]

Correction of error on pp. 72-73: Champaign Rotary has sponsored 11 new Rotary Clubs in the District, not 12. Charleston Rotary sponsored the Oakland Club.

### *The Fizz*, **pp. 88-92:**

While *Steps Going Up* covered the history of *The Fizz* rather well, 2001-02 Club President George Scheetz (*Fizz* editor 1993-2001) has thoroughly researched our Club bulletin and we add the following information:

- The volume number covers all issue of *The Fizz* published within the Rotary year of July 1st through June 30th, beginning with Volume 1 for the 1919-20 issues. As *The Story Continues* goes to press, we are well into Volume 83. Since *The Fizz* is published weekly except for occasions when Club meetings are cancelled (federal holidays, etc.), 48-50 issues are published each year. A rough estimate suggest that more than 4,000 issues have been written and published. However, we cannot be sure that editors prior to 1950 published the newsletter every week.
- The original title was *The Champaign Fizz*, although it was often referred to as *The Fizz* in print. The title was officially changed to *The Fizz* for the 1967-68 Rotary year.
- During the period 1988-2001, *The Fizz* earned the District Achievement Award for Club Bulletin (Large Club) in 1999, 1998, 1997, 1995, 1994, and 1992.
- George has created an inventory of all extant issues of *The Fizz*, and has also compiled a complete list of *Fizz* editors. This list may be found as Appendix IV.

### **Addendum**

For many years, possibly more than a half-century, incoming presidents of the Champaign Rotary Club have received – on loan (and with the admonishment not to lose it!) – a Rotary lapel pin with a diamond at the center of the wheel. This is known as the David Kinley president's pin. David Kinley<sup>7</sup> was an active Champaign Rotarian who is mentioned several times in *Steps Going Up*. In a nutshell, on June 9, 1930, at a special Rotary banquet on the occasion of his retirement as president of the University of Illinois, the Club made Kinley an honorary member and presented him with the diamond lapel pin.

Upon Kinley's death in 1944, the pin came back to the Club and, ever since, has been worn by serving Club presidents.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> See p. 17, *Steps*.

<sup>8</sup> The earliest known reference to the pin is in the July 9, 1951 *Champaign Fizz*.

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## **Section X: Rotarian Profiles (p. 93)**

[This section is expanded in *The Story Continues*, PART V.]

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## **Section XI: Changing Times, Changing Faces (p. 109)**

[This section is replaced in *The Story Continues* by PART VI: Whither Rotary?]

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## **PART II**

**The Presidents: 1988-2001**

## Calvin L. Owens, 1988-89



*Steps Going Up* was published during Cal Owens' term and covered nothing of his remarkable year in office. The 1988-89 Rotary year began with the first-ever Rotary Float in the Champaign-Urbana July Fourth Freedom Celebration Parade. The float was built on John Edwards' farm, with the help of Champaign West Rotarians. In the same month, WGRC learned that San Pablo City, Philippines, had named one Little League team for WGRC, honoring the equipment sent the year before through the efforts of Bob Prath<sup>9</sup>.

1988 marked the completion of the Rotary International's Model Club PolioPlus campaign, but not of PolioPlus, the global program. You will recall that Champaign Rotary had been chosen as one of just ten Model Clubs throughout the Rotary World, and Scott Anderson Sr. responded in true "WGRC – you betcha!" fashion.<sup>10</sup> Assigned a goal of \$120,000, WGRC pledged \$210,290 in that first year. That October, RI sent a certificate of commendation to the Club, and a PolioPlus artwork to Scott for his individual leadership. At the time, the world-wide campaign had hit \$220 million. For a current status report on the remarkable PolioPlus Project, see p. 98.

Rotary is ostensibly apolitical, but 1988-89 brought a number of events that had political implications. In September 1988, before the fall of the Berlin Wall, an Australian Group Study Exchange (GSE) team went to Warsaw. On May 16, a Rotarian urged Rotary International to suspend International Youth Exchange (IYE) activities between South Africa and other Rotarian Countries. RI did not: "Rotarians are prohibited from adopting statements with a view to exerting any corporate pressure on governments or political authorities." However, in this same year the Rotary Foundation launched its newest initiative, the Rotary Peace Forums, conceived as international conferences to examine peace-related issues, as a two-year pilot program.

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<sup>9</sup> *Steps*, p. 68.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 67-8.

In the year following the 1987 Supreme Court decision that opened Rotary to women in the United States,<sup>11</sup> women brought positive and far-reaching changes, both at the national and local levels. 1988-89 saw formation of the first all-women GSE teams, and the number of women members in WGRC increased from two to eight – just 3% of the total membership, but what an impact they were to make. Early in 1988, Bud Roderick proposed the Club's third woman member, Jan Bahr, who would become Champaign Rotary's first woman president (see p. 37). Bonnie Kelley, WGRC's first woman member, also became the first woman elected to the Parkland College Board of Trustees, as well as the first trustee to cast a dissenting vote on the budget. Captain Marietta Pane, a new Rotarian, set the example for her UI NROTC Cadets by rappelling down the side of Memorial Stadium.

On October 30 1988, Nina Wanchic-Eisner, administrator of Carle Pavilion (and a non-Rotarian), presented a program to the Club entitled "Drugs and the Conspiracy of Silence." Nina's key point: "The problem of substance abuse inundates the American workplace, resulting in 10 times more workdays lost, 5 times more workmen's compensation claims, and a loss in overall productivity of 25-33%. Ignoring the problem – the conspiracy of silence – does no one any good, especially the addicts."

A case could be made that Nina's talk led to two pivotal events. Three months following her hard-hitting address, sponsor John Hecker re-introduced Nina to the Club as "...the intelligent, articulate and charming" newest member of WGRC. *The Fizz* reported her introduction as "the newcomer in the sequel series, 'The Eisner-Hecker Legacy: Part 7, 8 or 9,'" because Nina was the wife of fourth-generation Rotarian Rob Eisner – a distant cousin of Morry and John Hecker. Ten years later, Nina (*sans* the Wanchic-) would step in as the second woman president of Champaign Rotary (see p. 76).

But in a more immediate response to Nina's October presentation, Cal Owens named Bill Creswell to head WGRC's first Drug Abuse (DA) Committee. In his keynote speech at the Friday Luncheon of the District 649 Conference the following June, Cal featured WGRC's Teacher Training in Drug Education, a sub-project of the DA Committee. "This program has already trained more than 25 Unit 4 teachers and counselors to identify and assist teenagers in skills to deal with peer pressure," said Owens. He then commended Bill Creswell: "Under his quiet and deliberate leadership, much has been accomplished to ameliorate this frustratingly complex and tragic problem of extraordinary dimensions." The project to train Unit 4 teachers won the District Award for best Community Service Project.

If Nina Eisner inspired Cal Owens' and Bill Creswell's Drug Abuse initiative, this was not bad for "a li'l barefoot gal from the bluegrass

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11 For a broader perspective on the disappearance of gender barriers in Rotary, see **Women in Rotary**, p. 97.

country around Lexington, Ky.” And if y’all swallow that, stay tuned for much more on Nina Eisner, including an enduring and endearing niche she carved out in our Club’s history.

In December 1988, at a cost of \$4,224, *Steps Going Up* was published, and copies were distributed to all Club members and to many former members. Said Club Historian Oscar Dodson, who directed the history effort: “Read your history and live your history...this recording of members’ unselfish efforts to improve the quality of life in their community, their nation, and around the world.” Peter Tomaras, who edited, expanded and fine-tuned Matt Kaufman’s manuscript and oversaw the production process, said this: “I feel I’ve come to know people who are great Rotarians...great Americans.” The Club History and its writing/editing team (Dodson, Kaufman, Tomaras, Bill Krahling and Art Skelton) would earn Outstanding Project recognition at the June District Conference.

During the year, the Club provided financial support as follows: McKinley YMCA, \$5,000; Unit 4 Drug Abuse Program, \$2,700; C-U Speed Skating Club, \$1,000; Champaign-Urbana Crimestoppers, \$2,500; Central High School sound system, \$3,500; University High School Russia Trip, \$1,000.

Of interest is this note: in February of 1988, the Club Board acted to discontinue school-year youth exchanges because of the difficulty in securing host families. But Dick and Anne Tryon agreed to host Malena Omoldi, a student from Azul, Argentina, for the 1989-90 year – even if no other host families could be found. Dividends to the both Azul and Champaign Rotary Clubs continue to accrue from that exchange.

With three months remaining in his term, President Cal delivered a “State of the Club” address to the members that stands as one of the most eloquent commentaries on Rotary the Club has ever heard. We can include but a few excerpts:

Ethical performance of one’s daily obligations, personal and professional, is one of the key premises upon which Rotary was founded in 1905...There can be no greater investment in our community than that we make in our young people...We have not created or even substantially encouraged the development of the outstanding character traits of the students we honor each month, or who belong to our Interact Club. What is important is that...to these students, we represent perhaps the first positive reinforcement they receive from adults other than their teachers and parent...Rotary literally builds bridges of goodwill. Understanding the point of view of your adversary is the first step towards turning that adversary into a trusted friend. As our country is learning that it must compete in a global economy, our international scholarship programs can do nothing but help make our nation more competitive. We are losing a real opportunity if we do not take better advantage of the Rotary Scholars that are in our community every year...Rotary gives us an outstanding opportunity to interact with these people – if we so choose.



F. Dwyer Murphy

At the May 2, 1989, Club meeting, Olympic Gold Medallist Bonnie Blair was inducted as the first female Honorary Rotarian. She immediately became a Paul Harris Fellow, along with six regular Club members, while five other members added jewels to their PH pins, including Dwyer Murphy and Dick Tryon who became WGRC's first 5-sapphire Fellows (minimum Foundation contributions of \$6,000). Tryon's challenge pledge to WGRC's PolioPlus campaign would soon propel him to a collection of diamonds and rubies.



Brad Booton

As Cal Owens' year ended, he cited a number of WGRC accomplishments, including starting an informal "Presidents Council" that invited the four C-U area Rotary Club presidents, past presidents, and president-elects to meet and share information and coordinate projects. This was a first step toward what would be, by 2001, a functioning consortium of the leadership of Rotary Clubs in Champaign and Piatt Counties. He took pride in: 28 new Paul Harris Fellows and 19 new Sustaining Members; record Salvation Army support, and \$19,729 in funding to 14 other worthy projects; and Action Auction V, chaired by Larry Adams, that garnered \$46,895.

Cal pointed to a strong class of 20 new members that had swelled the ranks of WGRC to 267 (attendance base of 215),<sup>12</sup> probably an all-time high. In addition to outstanding new women members, that class included Brad Booton and Jim Leffelman, who would share the

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<sup>12</sup> The attendance base excludes these members: honorary, emeritus, and senior active excused.

Robert Eisner Jr. Award for outstanding new member, and another future Club president – Tom Costello. In introducing Tom, David Thies made reference to his reputation as a “jokemaster, toastmaster, and roastmaster,” talents Costello would exhibit many times over. Thies, by the way, when named 1987-88 Rotarian of the Year, had become the first WGRCer to receive both the Eisner Award and Rotarian of the Year recognition – and this in just six years of membership. Not surprisingly, David, too, would stand before the Club as its president.

In his July, 1988 inaugural address to the Club, Cal Owens had said: “Rotary is a selfless organization, a builder and doer of good things, and asks nothing in return.” Cal’s year in office stood as testimony; but he also might have been speaking of his choice for 1988-89 Rotarian of the Year, Frank Keck, “who exemplifies the best of what it means to be a Rotarian,” or of Art Skelton who stepped down as the Club’s first executive secretary after “13 Golden Years.” Happily, Art’s “retirement” would be temporary.

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## Dan M. Crispin, 1989-90



As he took up the gavel, Dan inaugurated the Crispin Awards, memento (of sometimes dubious value) presented periodically to recognize Club members for “above self” contributions. And along with stating his goals for the year, he made a unique pledge: during his term, he would join a national weight-loss organization and lose weight.



WGRC's 1989 Freedom Celebration Float

The Champaign Rotary Fourth of July Freedom Celebration float, “Champaign Rotary Helps Turn the World,” featured a floral globe, a Rotary wheel, and four smaller wheels depicting the Four Avenues of Service. Mike McClellan chaired the effort, with big boosts from John Parkhill, Lin Warfel and 1988-89’s outstanding corps of new members.

On July 19 the Club Board authorized \$10,000 (40% of the total cost) to bring a 2,000-year-old Egyptian mummy to the World Heritage Museum<sup>13</sup> at the UI. This was the only mummy in Illinois outside of Chicago, and would be used in teaching and research by six colleges of the University. The Board also began funding Project Drug Free (PDF), a new initiative of Bill Creswell’s Drug Abuse Committee, with Jefferson Middle School as a demonstration site. With 24 6th and 7th grade teachers now specially trained, the program moved to its dissemination and implementation phase. Cal Owens, director of the UI Film Service,

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<sup>13</sup> Now the Spurlock Museum

took on the responsibility of producing a PDF video. During a WGRC-hosted PDF panel, Cal commented: “Champaign Rotary’s commitment to PDF is to promote this model for local implementation and support by other Champaign-Urbana and District 649 clubs.”

By September, membership had slipped from 267 to 258. No one was concerned; most considered 230-250 the optimum size range. That month, the Club authorized \$1,000 to ship medical equipment that had been acquired through the efforts of Dick Tryon to Azul, Argentina.<sup>14</sup> Ken Gunji requested that the Club start an annual exchange with its sister club in Yanai, Japan, by hosting a Japanese student for three months, sometime in 1990-91. Each host club would fund the student’s visit. The Board was hesitant to commit to the exchange unless more host families could be identified. The exchange began, however, when a UI student went to Yanai in summer, 1990.<sup>15</sup>

Meanwhile, Gunji continued his deep involvement with GSE, hosting a team from Finland in October. Also that month, WGRC co-sponsored, with Urbana Rotary, the new Savoy Rotary Club, which would meet at The Windsor of Savoy. At the January 21 Charter Presentation Dinner, Past District Governor Kurt Schmidt gave special thanks to Frank Keck for his help in launching the new Club. Half of the 30 charter members were women, including Charter President Sandra Broadrick-Allen.<sup>16</sup>

District Vocational Service (VS) Chair Tom Woodley and Club Vocational Awards Chair Frank Keck established WGRC’s Rotary Vocational Service Award (later simply “Vocational Award”) to be presented to deserving C-U citizens at meetings throughout the year. The October 30 *Fizz* reported the criteria:

Recipients would be people (not necessarily Rotarians) who: consider their vocation to be an opportunity to serve; demonstrate faithfulness to the letter and to the spirit of the ethical codes of their vocation, the laws of our country, and the moral standard of our community; do all they can to dignify their vocation and to promote the highest ethical standards in their chosen vocation; are fair to employer, employees, associates, competitors, customers, the public, and all those with whom they have business or professional relationships; recognize the honor and respect due all occupations which are useful to society; offer vocational talents to provide opportunities for young people, to work for relief of special needs of others, and to improve the quality of life in our community.

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<sup>14</sup> For the full, fascinating story of the Azul-WGRC link, see p. 100.

<sup>15</sup> For the history of the WGRC-Yanai connection, see pp. 64-66 in *Steps*.

<sup>16</sup> Broadrick-Allen is the 2001-2002 District 6490 Governor, the first woman to hold that office.



Dan Crispin Honors Tom  
Woodley

Said Frank, “We can encourage good vocational standards by recognizing those who exemplify them.” Tom, who had been recognized for outstanding contributions to Vocational Service as District VS chair, said he had joined Rotary to associate himself with people who could help him be a better person, and had been especially attracted by the emphasis on Vocational Service through Rotary’s unique classification system.

On November 6, Kathy Kessenich, coordinator of the Rotary Foundation’s Peace Forum pilot program, addressed the Club and reported the results of the first seven Forums. Interestingly, the Toronto Forum urged Rotarians to support development of alternative energy sources, suggesting that individual clubs could initiate energy-audit and efficiency-improvement programs. No one could have imagined that, a dozen years later, California would encounter energy shortages.

By November 27, “His Rotundness,” President Crispin, was down “25 pounds and 10 inches.” What we cannot describe, mainly because certain things are “ya-gotta-be-there” indescribable, is the irreverent and often self-deprecating Crispin humor. Many presidents generate fun from the podium, but few will ever be as quick with a quip as Dan Crispin. Perhaps because members wondered “what will he do or say next?” Club attendance stayed at about 84% from January to June.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Attendance in the 85% range has long been the Club target.



Dick Burwash and Lyle Grace  
Farmer Leaders for Every Year

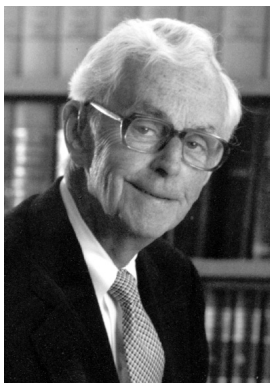
Club bell-ringers helped push the 1989 Salvation Army collection to a record \$9,100, and Gary Wackerlin chaired the United Way campaign over its \$1.8 million goal, an 11% increase. *The News-Gazette* named Lin Warfel 1989 Farm Leader of the Year, citing his commitment to family, community, education (as a Parkland College Board member), church, and conservation. Lin joined previous Farm Leaders of the Year and WGRCers Dick Burwash and Lyle Grace. In January, Champaign citizen Karl Smith, the second-generation president of Tile Specialists, Inc., became the first recipient of the Vocational Award established by Frank Keck and Tom Woodley. And through the efforts of Director Mike Martin and Kip Pope, the first Rotary International billboard went up: "Smile – Rotary Pledges a Polio-Free World."



Lin Warfel

Not every Rotary moment bring smiles. A sad aspect of researching history is recalling the passing of Club members who have been outstanding Rotarian citizens. No less than seven members (plus former-member Ben F. Harris III, Club president 1950-51), died during this Rotary Year. Of those, two had more than 50 years of service to Rotary, while Stephen Hotsinpillar had been a member just 28 weeks when he died at 42 years of age. To honor all Rotarians lost during the years documented by *The Story Continues*, consider these excerpts from

the commemorative resolution prepared by Leonard Flynn for James G. "Glad" Thomas, who died January 17, 1990:

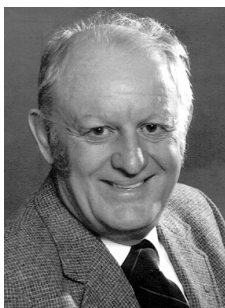


Glad Thomas

J. G. Thomas was a member for nearly 57 years, and served as Club president in 1961-62. His professional and civic leadership included many presidencies, including the Illinois State Bar Association, the UI Law Alumni Association, the UI Foundation Board, the University I-Men's Association, the McKinley YMCA, the Carle Foundation Board, the Community Chest, and the Champaign Chamber of Commerce. He was a respected member not only of Rotary, but of his community and profession. Glad Thomas was a doer and achiever; he lived a personal standard of conduct reflective of a true professional who never lost the common touch. He was a courtly gentleman, a trusted businessman and a loving family man.

Glad Thomas' life is a legacy and a standard to which all Rotarians may aspire. For a list of Rotarians who departed this world during the 1988-2001 period covered in *The Story Continues*, please see Appendix I on p. 163.

Chronology, rather than the cycle of life and death, prompts insertion here of the next event. On February 13, 1990, new member Nina Eisner carved out her aforementioned "enduring and endearing niche" in Club history, becoming the first Champaign Rotarian to give birth. And that's one "first" that will never be eclipsed. Only time will tell if Robert Eisner IV will someday become a fifth-generation Champaign Rotarian.



Dick Foley  
Club President 1965-66

On February 19, the second WGRC Vocational Award was presented to WGRCer Dick Foley. In his nominating remarks, presenter Bill Stallman mentioned how Dick propelled his Paris high school basketball team to a state title, and then (following a U.S. Army “scholarship” in Europe), re-enrolled at the UI...

...where he starred on the 1949 Big Ten championship and Final Four team. Dick provided equivalent leadership to his church, to the Unit 4 School Board, as 1965-66 WGRC president, and throughout his long career with Felmley-Dickerson (of which he is president), including his 45-month tour as project manager of the 45-month construction of the UI Assembly Hall. Throughout, Dick has been concerned with people and principles. He believes in good relations with his employees, because that's what motivates them best.

The Board approved sponsorship of \$500 each for three hearing-impaired students to participate in Aspen Camp School for the Deaf's 1990 Summer program. A group of high school students from Corbeil, France, visited Champaign from April 19 to May 2. This began as an exchange with Centennial High School, but the group was hosted and the project supported by WGRC. Moscow Rotary became the first service club in the USSR. Don Bresnan received a Citizen Board Member Service Award from the National Recreation and Park Association, which he had served for 12 years as a trustee. And David Thies became the Club's first “triple crown winner” by adding the Crispin Award to his Eisner New Rotarian and Rotarian of the Year Awards.

Meanwhile, Project Drug Free was rolling, with planned expansion in the 1990-91 school year to Arcola, Urbana, and Danville High Schools, and Franklin and Edison Middle Schools in addition to Jefferson. The Board authorized \$5,000 (and later another \$7,500) for production of the PDF video by WGRC's Drug Abuse Committee and Champaign's Prairie Production Group. The video would be the key information/instructional tool for program presentations to school officials, community groups, Rotary clubs, and so on. The Board also approved \$3,000 to send ten additional Unit 4 teachers for special Anti-Drug Abuse training.

For his dedicated PDF leadership, Cal Owens nominated Bill Creswell for District Rotarian of the Year. He did not receive the award, but 1990 was still a big year for Bill. He was named to the Centennial Alumni Hall of Fame at the University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, where he graduated in 1948. He received the Crispin Award for “going far beyond the call of duty to the community” in chairing WGRC's Drug Abuse Committee and working with schools, community agencies and other organizations to support all worthy substance abuse initiatives, and seeking a coordinating superstructure for them.

By April 1990, WGRC contributions to the Rotary Foundation reached \$270,000 (more than 20% of District 649's cumulative total), earning a plaque from the RF as one of just 1,500 clubs (the top 7.5%) to achieve that level. The Club boasted 225 Paul Harris Fellows and 150 Paul

Harris Sustaining Members, and Don Moyer Jr. was cited for achieving the Paul Harris 5-sapphire mark.<sup>18</sup>



Bill Creswell,  
ROY 1989-90

At the District Conference, WGRC's Project Drug Free was chosen Best Community Service Project, and the establishment of the Club's Vocational Award was named Best Vocational Service Project. Special citations went to Bill Creswell, Frank Keck, Dave Thies (for accompaniment to all Conference events), and Terry Davis (the District treasurer and all-around governor's aide). At his final meeting, President Dan named Bill Creswell WGRC Rotarian of the Year and Nancy Eisner Martin as winner of the Eisner Award (honoring her father) as the outstanding new member "...because of her professional and Rotary leadership, including chairing the Public Relations Committee and coordinating the *Les Miserables* night out for WGRCers and spouses."

In a year of unusual attrition, membership on June 30 had fallen to 244: seven were lost to death, two had moved away, seven cited business pressures, two resigned as "disinterested," and the Club dropped three for non-attendance. But the most crucial statistic we have saved for last: as he stepped down, "His Jovial Rotundness" looked much as he had on July 1, 1989. To the question, "How much weight have you lost?" came a characteristic response: "I lost a lot. But people commented I was looking too thin, so I put some back on."

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<sup>18</sup> In August, 1989, Rotary International had 250,000 Paul Harris Fellows (Rotarians who have donated at least \$1,000 to the Foundation. It took 27 years to reach 100,000, only five more years to increase to 250,000, fueling the expansion of RI's global influence. Each additional \$1,000 contribution adds a jewel to the donor's PH pin.

## **J. Michael Martin, 1990-91**



As Mike Martin took the gavel, he called for increasing awareness of opportunities for community service, and improvement in member commitment and involvement. His challenge to WGRC: “Let’s make a difference in the ’90s,” and referred to “the knife and fork Rotarians, the checkbook Rotarians, and the all-stars. We need all types, but the all-stars can be counted on for fellowship and financial support, while also giving of that most important commodity: their time.” He equated this to “a tithing of time: four hours a week would be about right; could we try just two?”

He mentioned volunteering to aid Crisis Line, the local Park Districts, or the Champaign Country Forest Preserve District. He called on members to “think – and do something – about” the many homeless people, perhaps by volunteering at the Men’s Winter Emergency Shelter. Mike, a CPA and former Club treasurer, asked members “to view Rotary as though we must file a ‘tax return’ at the end of the year. Commit a certain amount of time along the way for good works (tax estimates), so that when we audit the results at the end of the year, we won’t find ourselves behind that level of involvement we should have achieved. Let’s roll up our sleeves as well as reaching for our checkbooks.”

The Project Drug Free video premiered at a press conference preceding the July 23 meeting. The video was also shown to the Club, then later sent to all District clubs, along with an offer from Champaign Rotary of assistance in developing similar programs.



Mal Nygren

Individual Club members continued to make news. Mal Nygren retired after 38 years in the ministry of Champaign's First Presbyterian Church, and Chuck Flynn wrote this glowing tribute in *The News-Gazette*:

Mal has had an impact on the lives of thousands of people who have heard his sermons, been comforted by hospital visitations, gladdened by a wedding ceremony, helped by quiet personal counseling.

Mal says more with fewer words than almost anyone. His succinct Sunday columns continue today, and 2001 is Mal's 16th year as assistant editor for *The Fizz*.

In other media coverage, Glen Wensch became the first Illinoisan to win the Man of the Year Award of the five-state Great Lakes Region of the Air Force Association. He also received the Distinguished Merit Award of the UI Department of Materials Science and Engineering Alumni Association.<sup>19</sup>

For 1990-91, the UI hosted 12 Rotary Scholars and four former Rotary Scholars who were continuing their study here. President Mike pointed out that this translated into 16 opportunities for International Service. Rotary International added the word "Ambassadorial" to Rotary Scholar, emphasizing their role in furthering understanding and friendly relations between people of different nations. For 1991-92, this program would fund, at an average cost exceeding \$18,000, a year of study abroad for 100 graduate students from 63 nations.

Typical of the Rotary Scholars sent abroad with the sponsorship of Champaign Rotary is Elizabeth (Brownie) Davis, who had already been the District winner of the International Teacher of the Handicapped Award when she was selected as an Ambassadorial Scholar. Of all WGRC-sponsored Scholars, Brownie proved to be the most dependable correspondent. She spoke to 25 Rotary clubs, played piano for chapel services, volunteered at a hospital during a snowstorm, typed and proofread papers in English by international students, and developed an interest in looking for the other side of a story. To fully appreciate Brownie Davis and the value of the Ambassadorial Scholar program, see p. 102.

This comment from the Rotary Basic Library certainly applies to Ambassadorial Scholars: "The chief momentum behind the growth of Rotary's youth activities comes from the satisfactions of watching young people develop a strong sense of themselves and their place in the world as they "benefit from new experiences." Scholars could be seen as an important bridge between the International Youth Exchange (IYE) for high-school students and the Group Study Exchange (GSE) for young adult professionals.

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<sup>19</sup> For more on Glen, see p. 126.

On that subject, efforts to organize the first all-woman GSE team from District 649 began in the fall of 1990. WGRCer Terry Davis and his wife, Nancy, were chosen to lead the team to Australia from April 6 to May 10, 1991. And on the subject of cultural exchanges, in the spring of 1991, the board addressed the Yanai exchange. Directors felt this Club-specific exchange competed with other short-term Rotary Exchanges, and finding host families was not easy. However, they also wanted to make the sister-club exchange work. They arranged to work with the UI Study Abroad office in selection of the UI student that would go to Japan, and in April, they voted \$2,000 to host a Yanai student to spend a month in Champaign in the summer of 1991. This exchange has continued ever since.

With the December election of Jan Bahr to lead the club for 1992-93, Champaign Rotary named its first woman to the Club presidency. Bill Krahling announced he would edit *The Fizz* through that year, his 20th. On February 25, Bill Stallman presented the WGRC Vocational Award to Bud Roderick, citing (among many others) these qualifications:



Bud Roderick Congratulated  
by John Elder

Bud is liked and respected by his CMI employees because he recognizes accomplishments with awards, provides incentives and bonuses, and encourages employee family involvement. He is liked and respected by his customers, because he serves them fairly and honestly, and supports their activities. He actively supports community organizations such as DSC and the YMCA. Bud has his own 4-point Code of Ethics – Rotary's 4-Way Test; he is fair to all regardless of race, religion, or occupation, and works to improve the quality of life in the community.

More Club members received honors: *The News-Gazette* recognized Kyle and Phyllis Robeson for "...leadership in giving time and money for the betterment of the community" (land for Robeson Park and Robeson School, for example). Past WGRCers Hi Gelvin, Phil Gelvin, and Donald Lindsay were similarly cited. Dick Ensrud received the American College of Physicians, Illinois Chapter's Laureate Award as the ACP Fellow who "demonstrates commitment to excellence in medical care, education or research." Dick's accomplishments include helping organize the UI College of Medicine at Urbana-Champaign. Vic Feldman was named recipient of the Allen Instructorship Award (known as the Golden Apple Award) by the 1991 graduating class of the UI College of Medicine at the

Urbana campus. The award honors “that faculty member who provides distinguished instruction and represents the highest professional ideals.” We include these non-Rotary awards because they illustrate how Champaign Rotarians honor the Object of Rotary in their professional and personal lives.

During 1990-91 the Club: continued its support of The Reading Group, assisting students with congenital or trauma-induced reading disabilities; funded a new \$2,500 exhaust hood at the St. Jude Catholic Worker House; and provided washer-dryer sets for new homes constructed by the City of Urbana for needy families. By March, WGRC had provided \$15,557 during the two-year experimental phase of Project Drug Free. PDF, now operated by the UI as part of a cooperative governmental effort, had been implemented with schools in Champaign, Urbana, Danville and Arcola. Three other service clubs and the Illinois Department of Public Health had come aboard to lend support.

The Club received the Service Club of Year Award from the Developmental Services Center for “enhancing the programs and services dedicated to developmentally disabled people by donating the Vocational Services Building.” That building had been funded in 1986 by Action Auction IV. At the District 649 Conference, among other awards, WGRC received the District Attendance Achievement Award for its 85% attendance. President Mike accepted the award on behalf of “our top gun attendance chair, Glen Wensch.”



Kyle Robeson Congratulated  
By Don Moyer and Mike Martin

In May, Kyle Robeson received WGRC’s Vocational Award. “He’s most deserving,” said Don Moyer in making the presentation, citing Kyle’s extensive list of accomplishments, honors, and community-service involvements.

Kyle has many interests, but his real love is people. His love of his family (wife Phyllis, son Eric and daughter Kim) carries over to his “family” of associates. He saw to it that an associate received treatment at Mayo’s for a serious problem; he makes sure that young people of promise are encouraged to continue their education. He’s fair with people and always ‘at the ready’ to help those in need.

On June 3, the Club's next Vocational Award honored Joe Hamburg. Presenter Carl Greenstein cited Joe's significant contributions to his vocation and his community.



Joe Hamburg

Joe's aptitude for business and caring customer relations helped Garber's [dry cleaners] prosper and grow. As with his family and customers, Joe has carried on a life-long love affair with Champaign-Urbana, supporting civic activities and serving as president of Sinai Temple and B'nai B'rith. His keen awareness of the ideals of Rotary, and his daily practice of them in his vocation, are the basis for this award.



Bill Stallman,  
ROY 1990-91

Mike Martin ended his "Presidency of the Conscience" with a budget surplus, and named Bill Stallman, director-coordinator of Club meeting programs for the year, 1990-91 Rotarian of the Year. *The Story Continues* makes no evaluation of the Club and member achievements of one presidential year versus another. However, Mike Martin issued his own report card. He summarized the year as "good, but not great." He gave the Club an "A" for meetings that inspired, informed, and entertained; a "B" for awareness of opportunities for community service; and a "C" for the level of improvement over past years' involvement and commitment.

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## David C. Thies, 1991-92



David Thies began his year at the WGRC helm with a membership of 246 and great anticipation. "Chapter 76 in the unfolding saga of Champaign Rotary," he said, "is rich in challenges and features two major events: the Club's 75th anniversary in the fall, and Action Auction VI in the spring." One of WGRC's youngest-ever presidents, David reported on the RI Convention in Mexico City where his wife, Jodie, and their 2 1/2-month-old son, Adam, the youngest of 15,000 attending, accompanied him to every session and function.

David lauded Past RI President Carlos Canseco's Rotary Foundation report, which brought Preserve Planet Earth (PPE) into the spotlight. With the 1990s designated as the decade of the environment world-wide, Dave added the Environmental Committee (chaired by Tom Costello) to WGRC's plan of work. At the Convention, outgoing RI President Paulo Costa had asked Rotarians to "Think Globally, Act Locally," and David named Tom Good to head a task force to identify paths to improve individual Rotarians' approach to environmental challenges.

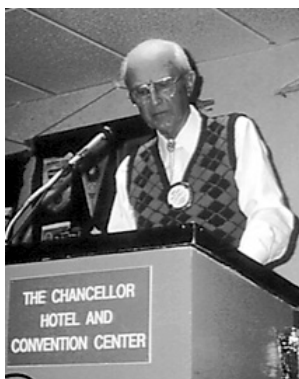
Calling for member involvement, David quoted Paulo Costa:

I have discovered that in the grand diversity of Rotary, there is unity. Like so many of life's most wonderful creations, Rotary is greater than the sum of its parts...just as single notes arranged in harmonious composition are transformed into beautiful symphonies...so are the individual and harmonious efforts of Rotarians transformed into Service Above Self.

He made three promises: weekly meetings would end by 1:10; new song books by year's end; and, upon the advice of Bobby Eisner, not to rename our Club West Urbana Rotary [David's law office being in Urbana]. Behind the scenes, David launched a project to place Club policies on computer, and assigned each policy to a committee or a director for review and update.

At the outset of the 1991-92 Rotary Year, District 649 became District 6490, as RI added a zero to each District's designation. David announced that the Club had passed \$300,000 in Rotary Foundation giving (ranking 58th in the world among 25,000 clubs). In August, Scott Anderson Jr. returned to Champaign Rotary after nearly four years in North Carolina; much more on Scott later. And after an astounding

performance at the September 23 meeting, Guy Duker was dubbed not just "Lyricist Laureate," but "Duke of Doggerel," "Virtuoso of Versatility," and "Tyrant of the Trombone." Duker remarked that he "never let truth get in the way of fun" when laboring on lyrics for his adaptations of popular tunes.



Guy Duker,  
Club President 1962-63,  
As Duke of Doggerel, September  
1991

Just a week later, the 75th Anniversary Ball was a celebration in every sense of the word: the setting at Krannert Center; the fellowship of nearly 400 WGRCCers and guests; the first-class food (by Michael's Catering); flowers and gifts; and the entertaining performance of the Chenille Sisters in the Tryon Festival Theater. RI Director Richard H. Kendall represented RI President Rajendra K. Saboo; seven Past District Governors, plus current Governor Gary Trimmell were on hand; and President Hiromasa Jinde of our Yanai, Japan, Sister Club sent greetings. And lest we forget, Guy Duker commemorated the occasion by penning "Seventy-Five Great Years," lustily rendered by those assembled to the tune of Meredith Willson's "Seventy-Six Trombones." Terry Davis headed the Anniversary Committee, with Jim Acheson (who else?) coordinating table sales, and 18 other WGRCCers playing key roles. Three months to the day later, Terry Davis was elected to the Club Board of Directors.

Later that fall, Cal Owens was named leader of the District 6490 Group Study Exchange to São Paulo, Brazil between March 27 and April 20, 1992. John Elder announced that the club had set "a new record in caring" with \$9,694 collected in its December Salvation Army effort. Over several months, the Directors approved \$2,025 for scholarships for the Central Illinois Children's Chorus (three \$225 scholarships annually for three years); \$6,000 to McKinley YMCA for pool repairs; a grant to the Make-a-Wish Foundation; \$5,000 to Lifeline Pilots (volunteer pilots who fly seriously ill people to receive special health procedures); and sums to the Community Day Care Center and to the United Way for a computer.

The five C-U-area Rotary clubs agreed to assist implementation of the Model Community Program for local businesses, dealing with environmental efforts such as waste prevention, elimination of toxins, and recycling. Tom Costello enlisted four or five businesses to participate, and the Club leadership endorsed the “battle cry” of environmental awareness: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. Attendance Chair Glen Wensch announced the Club attendance year-to-date through March was an eye-popping 86.5%. Peter Robson, the school-year Youth Exchange student hosted by WGRC in 1975,<sup>20</sup> visited with his wife, Lynn, staying with his original host family, Art and Bets Perkins.



Clarence Thompson,  
Club President 1964-65,  
with President David Thies

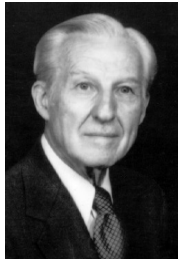
Frank Keck's Vocational Awards Committee honored two WGRCers, Clarence Thompson in January and Mark Hindsley in April. Consider these excerpts from Jerry Johnson's nomination of Clarence:

No one more fully puts into practice Rotary's vocational service ideals...his credo is basic: "Give back more than you take out – in business, community, and life...employees are really associates; they are greatly responsible for any success you have." It's almost impossible to find a community issue about which Clarence is not well informed....He believes Rotary is at its best when taking in new people who are alert and active; he also thinks Rotary may shy away from controversial subjects...that now and then it is good for listening and learning to have debates and discussions. Clarence has the rugged individualism, loyalty and inner strength of John Wayne, and exudes the smooth savoir-faire and class of Cary Grant. He is the most loyal, trustworthy, thoughtful, compassionate and supportive person I know.

No less eloquent and on the mark was Jim Keene's nomination of Mark:

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<sup>20</sup> See p. 64, *Steps Going Up*



Mark Hindsley

He surrounded himself with excellence...he provided guidance, motivation and professional opportunity which gained the admiration and respect of his staff...more than once, he refused a salary increase so that his staff could receive a raise. Enshrined in the National Hall of Fame of Distinguished Band Conductors...he has authored seven books and more than 45 articles on instrumental music, while his manuscript transcriptions for concert band are performed and acclaimed around the world. Mark wrote a declaration of principles for the College Band Directors National Association that was accepted, as written, by the entire membership...the declaration follows the precepts of Rotary right down the line...Mark's philosophy comes from his innate sense of high principle, fairness and honesty which is the essence of the man himself.

At an April 30 breakfast celebration of National Volunteer Week, county organizations honored and hosted 14 Champaign Rotarians: Vern Barkstall, Bob Cochran, John Doctor, Bill Gleason, Zelema Harris, Rolland Kelley, Dick Knieriem, Bill Krahling, Dale Morrissey, Kip Pope, Tim Sheahan, Dave Thies, James Vander Klok, and United Way President Gary Wackerlin.

Action Auction VI, chaired by Dave Kuhl, netted a record \$63,000, and that earned the Club the Community Service Award at the District 6490 Conference. Champaign Rotary's 14-member delegation, led by Governor-Elect Ken Gunji, brought home many other awards: International Service for work with International Youth Exchange (Tom Good, chairman); Vocational Service for the Vocational Awards program; Highest Attendance Percentage among large clubs; Club Bulletin, for *The Fizz*; Club Service Award for the 75th Anniversary Celebration; and, to cap the avalanche of awards, Art Skelton became the Club's first inductee to the newly established District Hall of Honor.



David Kuhl,  
ROY, 1991-92

At his last regular meeting as Club president, David Thies named Dave Kuhl Rotarian of Year for leading the record Action Auction effort.

He announced that Art Skelton had agreed to step back into the role of executive secretary. Said Thies: "Like many predecessors, I have learned that Champaign Rotarians do not say no." He read a letter from the Rotary Club of Istanbul, Turkey, expressing congratulations on the Club's 75th anniversary, with assurance that we have 88 friends in Istanbul who wish us well. "Yet another reflection," said David, "of how Rotary transcends political and cultural boundaries."

On June 30, David presided over his final event: the Inaugural Celebration for new District Governor Ken Gunji, coordinated by Bud Roderick. The Chancellor vibrated with music and magic, but the 200-plus guests awarded their strongest applause to the man who described himself as "delighted, honored, and humble" – Ken Gunji [for more on Ken, see p. 141]. Six Past District Governors attended with their wives. Keynote speaker Rick Kendall, RI vice president, shared personal moments from his Rotary background, much of which mirrored that of Art Skelton. Gunji received the new District 6490 banner; the 649 banner now resides in a Rossville antique shop. Guy Duker's musical/lyrical creativity produced original tunes for the crowd to sing in honor of both Ken and outgoing Governor Gary Trimmell. Then Duker, Kip Pope, and the full WGRC "chorale" delivered a spirited rendition of this year's Rotary presidential song, "Real Happiness is Helping Others," by 1992-93 RI President Clifford L. Dochterman:

To be young is to swim in pools you did not dig.  
To be a Rotarian is to dig pools in which you may never swim.  
To be young is to dance to music you did not write.  
To be a Rotarian is to write music to which you may never dance.  
To be young is to sit under trees you did not plant.  
To be a Rotarian is to plant trees under which you may never sit.  
To be young is to seek benefits from a city you did not build;  
To be a Rotarian is to build a community from which you may never benefit.  
This is what Rotary is all about...  
"Service Above Self, Lighting the Way...  
Taking Time to Serve, Discovering a New World of Service...  
Bringing Hope, Promoting World Understanding and Peace...  
Building Bridges of Friendship...Looking Beyond Yourself...  
Real Happiness is Helping Others."

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## Janice M. Bahr, 1992-93



Wrote Bill Krahling in *The Fizz*: “The Rotary Wheel turns, and up pops Janice M. Bahr, the first woman to accept the WGRC gavel, and the first UI professor to lead Champaign Rotary since Guy Duker 30 years before.” WGRC’s first president from the distaff branch of the Rotary family followed Champaign Sunrise’s second president, Peggy Thompson, and Sandra Broadrick-Allen, Savoy Rotary’s inaugural president.

Jan noted that Club members were living in “a marvelous era as the fall of the Iron Curtain allows the light of Rotary to incubate clubs in Albania, Bulgaria, Latvia, Estonia, Romania, and the Ukraine.” She urged members to “expand our services and radiate this year’s RI theme, ‘Real Happiness is Helping Others.’” She called for continuing our environmental emphasis through participation in the joint five-club project working towards a Model Environmental Community, which had published the *Model Community Training Manual* to increase the number of local businesses practicing “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.”<sup>21</sup>

Jan renamed the Drug Abuse Committee the Substance Abuse Committee, charging it to develop a directory of substance abuse services and to support such local programs as DARE<sup>22</sup> and Safe Rides for Teens. She appointed Mick Moore and Beth Beauchamp to head a new Literacy Committee charged with boosting the self-worth of individuals by helping them become productive citizens. And she appointed past Club Presidents Bud Roderick, Cal Owens, Dave Thies and Art Skelton to the first President’s Advisory Committee.

Among her goals: earning a RI Presidential Citation for Balanced Club Achievement, a new award created by RI President Cliff Dochterman. To earn consideration, a club must have at least four accomplishments in each of the Four Avenues of Service. Another goal was adding 25 new members to the 240 as of July 1. Jan’s Board provided report binders for all committee chairs to include mission statement, minutes as taken, and records of committee activities. These would also provide future committee chairs a historical guideline for their undertakings.

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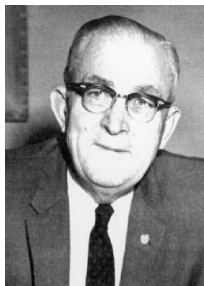
<sup>21</sup> Later in the year, WGRC’s board approved a \$3,000 grant to the Central States Education Center to develop a Model Community training manual on waste reduction.

<sup>22</sup> Drug Abuse Resistance Education

The Club's first "Madame President" launched a couple of other firsts. She set into motion the Rotary Minute, wherein chairs updated the Club on their committee's mission and progress – an excellent vehicle to ensure that service projects meeting the criteria for a Presidential Balanced Club Certificate are underway. And she inaugurated a periodic "From the Desk of the President" column in *The Fizz*, updating members on Club progress and her appreciation of their efforts.

An early Club activity was WGRC's August 30 welcome picnic for the school year's Rotary Ambassadorial Scholars at the UI. Between September and year's end, the Board agreed to support the first local Make a Difference Day, and when International Youth Exchange co-chairs Tom Good and Bob Rydell asked that the Club host a full-year IYE student for 1993-94 (the first in several years for WGRC), the Directors approved. WGRC again lent its support to the Community Thanksgiving Dinner staged by members of the Urbana High School Student Senate, who served 511 senior citizens, international students, homeless people and others who would have been alone that day. The Club approved another \$2,000 grant to the C-U Community Schools Foundation's Endowment Fund, supporting special programs and initiatives by teachers.

Kicking off the second half of the year, John Elder announced a Club record \$10,550 in Salvation Army collections. By mid-year, the Club had already met the Presidential Balanced Club Citation requirements. On January 11, Bill Froom presented the WGRC Vocational Award to Eugene Mellon:



Eugene H. Mellon

Gene is enjoying his golden anniversary of WGRC membership...a good time to honor him for his golden example of service ...during Gene's 25-year tenure as superintendent of Champaign schools, his modus operandi was a firm hand in a velvet glove...he listened carefully to suggestions, then formulated a plan; those who worked with him never realized that it wasn't their very own idea... the hallmark of a great leader...His relationship with faculty and staff was legendary...He had a vision of the future of education, and was one of five people who took the first steps that resulted in Parkland College. His vocational service advice is simple: "Cooperate," and his guideline was his concern for everyone, including developmentally and physically handicapped children. When you combine intellect, motivation, acumen, warmth, and administrative know-how with a keen sense of humor, you aptly describe Gene Mellon.

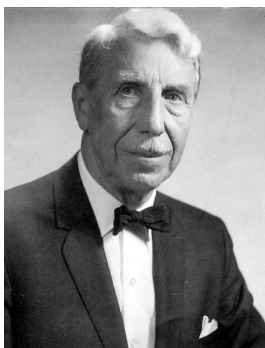


Dean Cavey

Under Dean Cavey, the Project Planning Committee evaluated requests and the Club Board approved: \$1,200 to Crisis Nursery for a printer; \$1,500 to Edison Middle School for a Handicapped Listening Center (this request via the Club's former Ambassadorial Scholar Brownie Davis); and funds to cover paper charges for a February-June Rotary billboard program, with several sites donated by Kip Pope. While Kip, Dan Crispin, and Mike Martin share credit for the first Rotary billboard, President Jan inspired a joint effort of the five local Rotary Clubs that resulted in the appearance about town of several billboards promoting Rotary International.

Another Jan Bahr initiative was the first Valentine's Day Sweetheart Ball, held at the Champaign Country Club and attended by 65 couples from WGRC and other local Rotary clubs. For this "senior senior prom" (so named by Committee Chair Bonnie Kelley), those present danced to the Parkland College Big Band, enjoyed a dessert buffet, and heard the Other Guys from UI serenade President Jan, whose birthday happens to be February 14.

On March 1, Walt Lewis presented the WGRC Vocational Award to Alan Laing, along with these blooms from his verbal bouquet:



Alan K. Laing

I discuss with my architectural ethics students universal values like honesty, integrity, fairness, compassion and trustworthiness. Alan K. Laing is the epitome of these values...an outstanding Rotarian, educator, scholar and public servant...He is a humanist in the best sense of the word...directs his efforts toward unselfish service to others...The object of intrinsic trust, he admires

optimism, purpose, and commitment to improve society around us...The dining room at Clark-Lindsey Village is dedicated to Al "in grateful recognition of his leadership in the development of the Village – the epitome of what a senior-citizen residence should be." On the educational value of travel, Al has said: "Travel ought to come before everything else for a student of human affairs...human societies cannot be understood apart from their environment, and that cannot be apprehended at second hand." Al Laing has built a lifetime of understanding wherever he has been, and we are all the richer because of it.

In April, 20 French students arrived with their three chaperones for the fourth Corbeil/Champaign exchange. The Board questioned continuing the exchange, as expenses would be \$2,000. They asked IYE Chair Tom Good to review the costs, and investigate obtaining District support. In any case, the exchange went well and President Jan commended Tom Good's work. The Club discontinued its Junior Achievement support because high schools had incorporated a major part of JA's goals into their programs. The delightful Tadesse Tamrat, UI visiting professor of African studies, was designated a Rotary Visiting Professor and invited to Club meetings for April through May. \$25,000 from the 1989 Action Auction was finally released back to WGRC, Inc. after the City of Champaign failed, despite three years of prodding, to produce a coherent written plan for beautifying the entryways to the city. Quipped an anonymous member, "If you truly seek eternal life, join a government bureau or department."

The Yanai, Japan, Rotary Club, WGRC's sister club, sent six members plus a spouse to the District 6490 Conference to honor First Family Ken and Kimiko Gunji. WGRC was among 28 District 6490 clubs qualifying for the RI Presidential Citation for Balanced Club Achievement. Because 58% of the District's clubs qualified, versus a world-wide average of just 23%, Governor Ken received a special citation for his work in encouraging this impressive showing. The Club won three District awards: Club Service for the Club roster; Public Relations for the Rotary billboards; and Club Project for involvement with the C-U Head Start Library Project. During the Conference, Champaign Rotarians hosted 51 visiting Rotarians and guests for dinner, an outstanding display of Rotary hospitality.

In her final meeting as president, Jan Bahr looked back: "Never have I experienced such support," said Jan of the entire membership, before aptly describing Rotary leadership as "...a continuum, with each president adding something." Noting more awards than ever had been given and received, she took pride in the Club's strong support of C-U's younger citizens, as well as of the "super" District Conference, chaired by Bill Stallman, in honor of (now) Past District Governor Ken Gunji. She commended Bill Krahling for his 1000+ consecutive weeks of editing *The Fizz*, and thanked retiring Club Secretary Gene Oliver for five exemplary years in that role.



Steve Hamburg, ROY 1992-93  
with Dave Lawrence

She named Stephen Hamburg Rotarian of the Year, as much for his long record of service with community organizations as for his three years as a Club director. In particular, his leadership in organizing the Salvation Army's day shelter for area homeless people was cited as "a noble cause, reflecting the highest credit upon Rotary, his family, and himself." Under Steve's guidance, the shelter expanded its work beyond shelter and meals to include emotional and job counseling, health screening, and referrals for drug and alcohol treatment.

Finally, Jan presented a WGRC Meritorious Service Award to Bob Wright,<sup>23</sup> reading this citation written by Glen Wensch:



Coach Bob Wright

Since 1968 Bob has served Champaign Rotary with devotion and distinction. This year, with unique sensitivity towards his comrades, he has volunteered to pick up members afflicted by illness and drive them to Rotary, where he brought them their food and sometimes cut it for them. He then helped them back to the car and drove them safely home. His dedication to humanitarian service reflects the principles of Rotary and this past year's RI theme, "Real Happiness is Helping Others."

In one last "first," Jan became the first outgoing Club president to *sing* her "swan song." Her version of "Getting to Know You" emphasized how a year of work and fun deepened her knowledge and appreciation of able and supportive Club members. In response, the Club delivered a farewell serenade penned by Guy Duker and set to "Jingle Bells":

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<sup>23</sup> With John W. Wright and John W. Wright II as 2nd and 3rd generation WGRC members, could the Wright family be setting its sights on the Eisner "dynasty?"

We thank you very much, for those words so eloquent.  
We've all enjoyed your term, as Rot'ry president.  
In just a few short years, we hope that you will say:  
"Because they sang this song to me they really made my day."  
Oh – Janice Bahr, Janice Bahr, Jan you are O.K.  
Oh what fun we hope you've had on each no-holds-Bahred Monday.  
Janice Bahr, Janice Bahr, here's our wish for you:  
Take a trip, upon a ship, how about a Kruse<sup>24</sup> for two?!?

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<sup>24</sup> Reference to Don Kruse, Jan's "significant other."

## Ivan W. Davis Jr., 1993-94



“The difference between mediocrity and superiority is effort...there are three types of Rotarians: those who make things happen, those who watch it happen, and those who don’t know what’s happening. Let ‘93-94 be a ‘happening’ year in which we, our community and our world benefit from our commitment to fellowship and service.” With those opening remarks, Ivan “Terry” Davis kicked off another active Rotary year. One of the first Club events of every Rotary year is the WGRC Corn Roast. Here is the last stanza only of Guy Duker’s tribute to this tradition, set to “Oh, What a Beautiful Morning”:

Dick throws a beautiful cor-rn roast,  
Food that would please a gour-mand;  
He and Stu’s active com-mit-tee,  
Feed us the best in the land, so...  
Let’s give them all a big hand!!!



Dick Burwash Explains  
the Difference Between  
Field Corn and Sweet Corn  
to “the City Folks”

District Governor Paul Luedtke (Urbana) visited early and recapped some RI numbers: more than \$30 million devoted to Health, Hunger and Humanity grant program projects; 20,600 Group Study Exchange participants; \$240 million to PolioPlus. He then posed questions: “Why should we undertake the awesome goal of attaining world peace? Because it’s attainable. How can we achieve this goal? By coordinating

our efforts with the 1,173,000 Rotarians throughout the world...It is the function of salt to purify and preserve, and of light to illuminate the darkness and eliminate ignorance. If we see Rotarians as the salt of the earth and the light of the world, it is our mission to preserve what is good, to purify the human condition, and to enlighten all dark corners in our world."

Guy Duker then ratified the Governor's message by leading the members in another of his songs, this one set to the tune of "Is It True What They Say About Dixie?"

Can we test all our thoughts, words and actions,  
With the test that is four-square and true,  
Can we carry out the ideal, at home at work at play,  
Can we meet the goal before us, and will we always say:  
Is it true, is it fair, is it building..  
Friendship's bond, and good will, every day,  
When we benefit all thru, our proven Four Way Test,  
We will know, we have done our best.



Bob Rydell

On August 18, the Club's school-year IYE student arrived from Turkey, slated to stay first with Tom Good's family, then with Bob Rydell's family. Short-term IYE visitors would also be arriving during the year from Brazil and Europe. At the September 13 meeting, members and spouses were invited to an informational presentation on Rotary Youth Exchange. To encourage broader participation in hosting foreign visitors, Bob Rydell moderated a program entitled "Veteran Exchangers Tell Us Why They'd Do It Again" featuring six WGRC spouses who had hosted literally dozens of IYE students, both school-year and short-term, from many countries. Donna Anderson, Nancy Davis, Beverly Friese, Katie Good, Kathe Keck and Sheryl Rydell attested to the special gratifications derived from the experiences.

The Club provided counselors for seven of the 17 Rotary Ambassadorial Scholars at the UI, then hosted a picnic for all the scholars, counselors and families. Scott Anderson Jr., International Hospitality Committee chair, produced and mailed a flier with pictures and biographical sketches of the visiting scholars to all District 6490 clubs. Tony Peressini, Attendance Committee chair, designated

September 27 as the Club's first-in-a-long-time 100% attendance day. We would say "first ever," but the Club achieved 100% attendance during Jim Acheson's 1976-77 presidency and there have doubtless been other 100% efforts along the way. This time WGRCCers fell short, reaching just 94%. There was no shortfall when it came to food donations for Make a Difference Day, however, as members contributed 1,487 pounds.

Attendance hit 88% for the month of November, and a new sideline to the annual Fall Football Guessing Contest made its appearance: the small college alma mater rivalry between Tom Costello's John Carroll University Blue Streaks and Bill Krahling's Mount Union College Purple Raiders. Mount Union won, 21-0, completing another unbeaten and untied season. Three playoff wins later, the Purple Raiders captured the NCAA Division III championship. And another football note: University agencies involved with the annual UI Football Banquet requested a format change for 1994 that would open this Rotary tradition to the general public.<sup>25</sup>

As the first half of the year came to a close, Bob Rydell reported continued difficulty in locating host families for IYE students. Having spoken with other local clubs, he said four of the five would join forces in supporting two inbound and two outbound students each year. But that did not solve immediate concerns. The directors urged inclusion of spouses in future indoctrinations of new members, with emphasis placed on the international nature of Rotary and the importance of supporting international programs.

On December 29, the Brazilian short-term students arrived and were placed throughout the District. In April, the Corbeil exchange came off well, with 15 students visiting from France and 11 American students slated for a summer trip to France. The Club hosted three Group Study Exchange team members from Italy, and sponsored a successful candidate for the GSE team to Italy – Brownie Davis (our 1990-91 Ambassadorial Scholar to England).

Salvation Army bell-ringing sparked collections to another new record, \$10,669. The Club awarded \$1,000 to the C-U Coalition for the Homeless for food transportation equipment, and participated in a District 6490 World Community Service project in Malawi, helping the project to receive a \$20,000 Rotary Foundation Matching Grant. Early in 1994, Champaign Rotary meetings went smoke-free. Whether this had anything to do with bumping year-to-date attendance (through March) to 86.6% is unknown. The Rotary billboard program featuring the Four Way Test continued, and, by listing the names of all five community Rotary Clubs, President Terry hoped to foster increased inter-club cooperation.

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<sup>25</sup> This change did not take place until 1997.



Jack Pollard, Dick Tryon, Tom Good  
with Medical Equipment for Azul

Jack Pollard played a key role in obtaining used but highly serviceable ultra-sound diagnostic equipment from both Carle and Covenant<sup>26</sup> Hospitals to send to a pediatric hospital in Azul, Argentina identified by Dick Tryon. Jack also was instrumental in increasing public awareness of this and other Rotary community projects. Directors approved another \$1,000 for Safe Rides for Teens, and seven Club members volunteered as adult supervisors for the program. The Board granted: \$5,000 for the new Champaign-Urbana Side by Side<sup>27</sup> playground in Urbana; \$2,750 to help Matthew House remodel a neighboring building; and \$425 to the Reading Group for a One-on-One Scholarship. Beth Beauchamp received approval of up to \$1,600 for a local literacy project, contingent on the response of cooperating clubs. Jan Bahr prepared the first new member orientation/indoctrination manual, *The Wonderful World of Rotary*, which proved most helpful to new-member sponsors and the Indoctrination Committee.



Centennial Interacters Sing "We Are Interact!"

On April 11, 59 of 60 members of Interact delighted the Club members by presenting a musical summary of their year's accomplishments, with individuals intoning each of 15 projects and the whole group chorusing the refrain of their Interact hymn, adapted by

<sup>26</sup> In October 1997, Covenant Hospital became Provena Covenant Medical Center.

<sup>27</sup> This later became Prairie Play in the 130-acre Meadowbrook Park.

Doug Nelson from the original song, “We Are Family”:

We Are Interact! We'll do service for you,  
We'll help you if we can! For the school and community,  
We're here to take a stand! We Are Interact!

At the District 6490 Conference in Urbana, the Club won Achievement Awards that included: Club Bulletin for *The Fizz*, co-edited by Sandra Norlin and George Scheetz; Community Service for participation in the Prostate Cancer Prevention Trial; Public Relations for Terry's Rotarian of the Month program and the continuing Rotary billboard project; Club Service for Jan Bahr's new indoctrination manual; and Vocational Service for the high school career development night developed jointly with Champaign West Rotary. For the second year in a row, WGRC earned the Presidential Citation for Balanced Club Achievement. Scott Anderson Sr. became the second WGRC member inducted into the District Hall of Honor, and Steve Hamburg, WGRC's 1993 Rotarian of the Year, was named District 6490 Rotarian of the Year.



Scott Anderson, Sr.

As Terry Davis ended his presidential year, he presented the Eisner Award for outstanding new member to George Scheetz, and announced that the Rotarian of the Year Award would be shared by two deserving members: Glen Wensch, for coordinating Club Service committees, preparing applications for District Awards, and “always thinking of Rotary”; and Scott Anderson Jr., for chairing the International Hospitality Committee, creating an innovative brochure to publicize the availability of international students as program speakers, planning a successful Ambassadorial Scholar picnic, and leading the “On to Urbana” District Conference effort. He also recognized Art Skelton, Club executive secretary, “for his legendary knowledge and dedication.”

Terry described the Club as “an incredible organization. He referred to an observation by Jim Simpson, long-time friend of Art Skelton and RI President Bob Barth's personal representative to the District Conference earlier that month: “Rotary International is comprised of 10% Rotarians and 90% members of the club.” Terry assessed WGRC as 51% and 49%. “This Club,” he remarked, “is truly where you find Rotary. But I hope we

translated some of the rhetoric about how good we think we are into a bit of humility, recognizing that there are plenty of ways we can improve to give ever greater attention to 'Service Above Self.'" In turning over the gavel to incoming Club President Tom Good, Terry then adapted a remark from 1931-32 Club President Cliff Northcott: "He's better than 'Good,' he's an excellent man. It's our job to make him great."

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## **Thomas M. Good, 1994-95**



That “excellent man,” Tom Good, opened his year at the rostrum by presenting his Three Fs: Fundamentals – youth, community, and vocations; Friendship – the RI President’s 1994-95 theme is simply “Be a Friend”; and Fun – “Let’s have fun.” He announced a new activity: The Rotary Cup, a mug placed on each luncheon table to which members contribute \$1 each week. From these collections, 75% would go to a worthy cause recommended by the Charity and Salvation Army Committee, with the other 25% retained for special disbursements, such as emergency relief for national or international disasters. The first month’s Cup went to Crisis Nursery of Champaign County, and the second to the Don Moyer Boys and Girls Club.

Tom asked Club members to consider ways to make the Rotary Youth Exchange (RYE replaced the IYE acronym) program better known in community. As of August, four local Rotary clubs (Champaign West excepted) were working together on two long-term high school exchanges: girls from Thailand and Brazil were in Champaign-Urbana, and a local boy had gone to the Netherlands. Although it was not a RYE program, Tom mentioned that the Yanai annual exchange continued, with a young lady from Japan visiting July 24-August 20.

Early on, Tom also asked members to support the District’s Rotary Foundation goal by announcing special events or milestones in their lives and making a donation to RF. He announced the newly created Transportation Committee (Gene Rose, chair) that would transport members to weekly meetings as needed. During his year, Tom made recognition and awards a frequent happening. Guy Duker received his 40-year pin, and Beth Beauchamp received a certificate from the Club Awards Committee for her leadership of the Literacy Committee (for more on Beth, see p. 130).

With Tom Good as the self-proclaimed “Singing President” and Jan Bahr as Music Committee chair, the singing segment of weekly meetings was rejuvenated. Jan announced that new song books, promised three years earlier by Dave Thies, were “ready to print.” Meanwhile, she organized the Rotary-Aires chorale, a changing cast of strong singers who came forward to help energize group singing. Kip Pope, who shared

piano duty with Thies, gave “music lessons” and led new songs, as well as old ones with flair.

District 6490 was hosting 22 Rotary Ambassadorial Scholars at the UI, several of whom had WGRC counselors. Roger Martin, chair of the International Scholarship Services Committee, proposed two UI students as outbound ambassadors, one of whom was later selected by the District committee. By October, three school-year RYE outbounders had been identified for 1995-96, one each from Centennial, Urbana, and Judah Christian high schools. Two inbounders would be arriving, one slated for Urbana High School and one for Centennial.

During his visit to the Club, District Governor John Hieser announced a new District program: Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA). He projected its launch for the summer of 1996 and asked for an organizational volunteer from WGRC. President Tom named Dean Cavey, Youth and Student Affairs Committee chair, to this post. Meeting attendance was excellent: 84.8% for August, 89.7% for September, and 87.8% for October. But the gradual decline in membership caused mild concern. Development and Classification Committee Chair John McGill reported on the 23 members lost during 1993-94: 12 had moved, 7 had died, 2 were terminated for poor attendance, and 2 cited business reasons.

President Tom asked Tod Dawson to head the 32-member Action Auction VII Committee. Because \$25,000 had been reclaimed from the never-accomplished city entryway project, funding was approved for two lead recipients: the Champaign-Urbana Community Schools Foundation Endowment Fund, and a renovation of the water system at Camp Drake for the Prairielands Council, Boy Scouts of America. On October 10, Don Bresnan became the latest recipient of WGRC's Vocational Award,



Don Bresnan

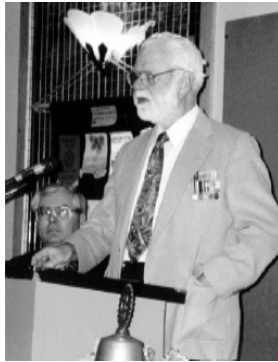
...for his superior service to his profession and his community. First appointed to the Champaign Playground and Recreation Board in 1959, Don became a Park District stalwart, in the forefront of the stunning growth of the district from 12 parks and no buildings to 52 parks, 11 new physical facilities, 80 flower islands, and more than 100 programs for residents of all ages. Between 1974 and 1994, the CPD has won the National Recreation and Park Association's Gold Medal twice, and made the “final four” in 14 other years.



Steve Hamburg with  
Jonathon Kerns

At the November 17 Board of Directors meeting, Steve Hamburg and two Unit 4 Schools speech and language teachers demonstrated a Liberator communications device and told of the need for one to enable seven-year-old Jonathon Kerns to “really talk.” On November 28, Nina Eisner, Project Planning Committee chair, updated the Club on the Liberator need. Two public funds had raised \$800; she recommended that WGRC, Inc. contribute \$1,200, and this was approved by acclamation. She then said the device would cost \$4,000, and called for pledges from individual members toward the \$2,000 needed. Within minutes, 20 members had pledged the entire balance.

Later in the year, *The News-Gazette* featured Jonathon Kerns, the Garden Hills student using the 123-key Liberator, and the Club received a letter of thanks from the Board of Education and the staff of Champaign Community Schools for enabling the purchase of the Liberator. More important, Jonathon attended a Club meeting with his Liberator and punched in these words: “Thank you for the Liberator. It helps me talk.” On December 19, Nina Eisner received a Club award for her charitable work on the Project Planning Committee and her ability to inspire generosity in giving.



John Frothington, Here  
Speaking on Iwo Jima

President Tom presented a resolution to the Club nominating Frank Keck to be District 6490 Governor for the Rotary Year 1997-98. By resoundingly approving the resolution, Club members started the wheel turning for a history-making chapter in the story of Champaign Rotary. Club attention to substance abuse continued with a January 30 program featuring this panel, moderated by John Frothingham: Nina Eisner, administrator of the Carle Pavilion; Topper Steinman, consultant to the Illinois Institute of Dispute Resolution; Larry Wilms, executive director of the Prairie Center; and Stephen Reynolds, DARE officer, Champaign Police Department.

In March, the time came to honor the Club's previously-approved pledge of \$5,000 to Prairie Play at Meadowbrook Park (formerly C-U Side by Side Playground). With all city approvals and the design finalized, volunteers were requested to help with construction of the park's unique wood recreational equipment. The Board also approved a WGRC, Inc. recommendation of \$5,000 for the Krannert Center for Performing Arts for installation of Sennheiser equipment in the Great Hall for the hearing impaired.

The first of two Piker-Artis ultra-sound scanners had been crated for shipment via air freight to Buenos Aires, from where it would be moved by truck to the pediatric hospital in Azul, Argentina. This first shipment of equipment acquired from Provena Covenant Medical Center was scheduled to arrive in March, and a second shipment was due to leave C-U by the first week of April. For a World Community Service project, the Board voted \$450 (later hiked to \$517 for exchange-rate reasons) to support a drinking water project in Bidar, India,<sup>28</sup> with the contribution being matched by other local clubs and a Rotary Foundation Matching Grant.

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<sup>28</sup> A Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar first brought this project to the attention of District 649.



President Tom with Corbeil RYE Students

Kip Pope received another Club award for his contribution of three billboards promoting Rotary International, and Tom Costello was recognized for his contribution of space for inside signs on 75 C-U Mass Transit District buses. The World Affairs Seminar at University of Wisconsin-Whitewater sent a recognition patch for our Club banner recognizing WGRC sponsorship of one or more domestic students to each of the past 16 World Affairs Seminars. In recent years, the students had been members of Interact. On the exchange front, 14 Corbeil students and two sponsors arrived from France in April, and 12 District 6490 students were to return the visit during the summer. The Group Study Exchange team from Thailand arrived in the District and, after objecting because it was initiated outside prescribed channels, the District approved a club-to-club student exchange with Azul, Argentina, arranged by Dick Tryon.

The highlight of any presidential year has to be the triennial Action Auction, and so it was in 1995. Confronted by an ambitious \$75,000 net goal, Tod Dawson's committee netted approximately \$114,392 from record receipts of \$129,235.<sup>29</sup> For the lead recipients this meant \$37,500 to the C-U Community Schools Foundation Endowment, and \$37,500 to Prairielands Council, BSA, for its Camp Drake water renovation project.

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<sup>29</sup> See p. 13 for details.



Ken Gunji,  
Club President 1984-85  
District Governor,  
1992-93

On to the District 6490 Conference in Urbana, where WGRC won a third consecutive RI Presidential Citation for Balanced Club Achievement. Ken Gunji became the Club's third inductee into the District Hall of Honor. The Club earned five District Achievement Awards: Community Service, for the seventh triennial Action Auction; International Service, for the ongoing exchange with Corbeil, France; and Club Service for (1) development of *The Wonderful World of Rotary* new-member indoctrination manual, (2) *The Fizz*, under editor George Scheetz, and (3) WGRC leadership in the multi-club cooperative literacy project.

When the 1995 RI Council on Legislation increased RI Zones from 31 to 34 and realigned them, WGRC found itself in Area F of Zone 29. This placed the District in a zone comprised mostly of districts in southern states, with possible negative consequences for RYE efforts. A request to restore District 6490 to Zone 27 was denied. Meanwhile, the RI President named Ken Gunji to represent Area F (Districts 6460, 6490) of Zone 29 to nominate a director from the zone at the 1996 RI Convention.



Tod Dawson,  
Club President 1984-85  
Rotarian of the Year, 1994-95

At the June 19 meeting, President Tom wrapped up his year by thanking members who had enabled WGRC to surpass the District goal for RF contributions of \$33 per member by contributing \$8,944, or an average of \$40.47, to lead the District once again. He named Tod Dawson Rotarian of the Year for spurring Action Auction VII well past its goal. Doug Nelson and Ivor Emmanuel shared the Eisner Award for outstanding new member.

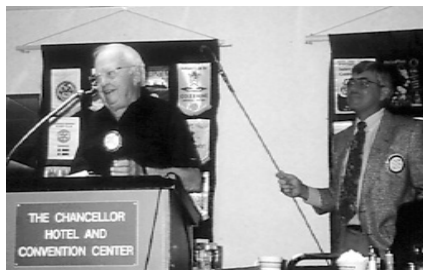
In a fitting send-off, Doug Nelson on guitar and Dave Thies at the keyboard led members in a musical farewell to President Tom, leading off with "Bye, Bye Tom" (to the tune of the Everly Brothers hit "Bye, Bye Love"), and then "Tommy B. Goode" to the tune of "Johnny B. Goode" (immortalized by Chuck Berry). As the lyrics "Go, Go, Go Tommy Go," faded, Tom quipped: "I'm going as fast as I can."

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## James F. Keene, 1995-96



Jim Keene took the gavel exuding a no-nonsense, get-things-done attitude. Indicative of his apparently all-business approach was his announcement of a new initiative: the Rotary Hook for those who tarry at the podium. Jim seemed to be eyeing Bobby Eisner – who knows why? Their verbal fencing was to entertain members throughout the year, as the ever-droll/never-dull President Jim proved himself the “Ace of Acerbity.”



Jim Keene Prepares to “Hook” Bob Eisner

Jim placed emphasis on members’ wearing their Rotary lapel pins. He also set an ambitious attendance goal: “95 for ‘95.” Never had the Club attained even 90% attendance for a year. Then our purposeful, peripatetic president promptly disappeared for two weeks – off on one of his many “business” trips (never without golf clubs). President Jim would always return to the helm and guide the Club in a year of admirable accomplishments. He appointed John Ady to head the Attendance and Member Retention Committee, charging him with gaining a net four members, in order to satisfy that criterion set by RI President Herb Brown to qualify for the Presidential Citation for Balanced Club Achievement. He named Glen Wensch to chair the Transportation and Visitation Committee, which would become known as the Sunshine Committee. Glen devoted incredible energy to his new job, earning numerous commendations from the Club Board, President Jim, and his peers.



Bill Froom

A school-year Rotary Youth Exchange student arrived from Turkey in August, and one of the Ambassadorial Scholars attending the UI was from WGRC's sister-club city, Yanai, Japan. Bill Froom received the Certificate of Merit at the Illinois Community College Trustees Association convention, honoring his "present-at-the-creation" and long-term "lead godfather" roles for Parkland College. We include this particular extra-Rotary honor because WGRC's connection to Parkland College stretches back to 1967 when Bill Froom served as its founding board chairman. That board hired Bill Staerkel as Parkland's first president, and Bill immediately became a Champaign Rotarian. Ten years later came the Fred Turner Vocational Scholarships, targeting local high school graduates pursuing their education at Parkland. Ken Gunji headed both the financial aid office and the Parkland Foundation; Bonnie Kelley and Lin Warfel have followed Froom onto the Parkland Board. Parkland's current president, Zelema Harris, became a Champaign Rotarian in 1990, and Parkland administrators Carl Meyer and Sarah Tufte are more recent WGRCers.

On the occasion of District Governor Tim Gover's official visit, Club leaders agreed to update *Steps Going Up*, the Club History, each ten years – or in 1998 (perhaps publication in our 85th anniversary year justifies our tardiness). Governor Tim also requested long-term involvement with the District's Rotary Youth Leadership Awards initiative, so President Jim appointed Denton Brown and Frank Keck to the District RYLA Committee. Later in the fall, Ken Gunji hosted a well-attended District Foundation Workshop at Parkland College at which Gene Rose, Tom Morgan, and Roger Martin made presentations.

Lest anyone think Guy Duker had lost his lease on lyrics, here's his ode (set to "Farmer in the Dell") to new UI Women's Basketball Coach Theresa Grentz when she addressed the Club:

Hello, Theresa Grentz, hello, Theresa Grentz,  
We know your coming here will make a differentz.

We hear, Theresa Grentz, you're smart and you're intentz,  
And teach the rudimentz  
as basic round ball sentz.

You stress obedientz, then build a good offentz.  
Next comes a strong de-fentz (and use of linimentz).

Now all we ask of you, is this, Theresa Grentz:  
Take this Illini team and lead the conferentz!

With attendance slipping, John Ady scheduled two 100% attendance days. The first, in November, achieved 98.59%, with 210 of the attendance base of 213 present or furnishing evidence of make-ups. Meanwhile, Rotary International extended the make-up period to 28 days (14 days prior to and 14 days after a scheduled meeting). In a departure from RI guidelines, the Club Board revised Policy 20 to give consideration for service to the Club when considering attendance credit. Ady vowed to succeed with the April 100% attendance day.

On the retention front, Development and Classification Committee Chair Peter Tomaras “cleaned up” the Club’s inconsistent classification categories and compiled the first computerized membership database, including classification, birth date, and year of membership for each member. Considering that 92% of the 252 members on January 1, 1996 were 40 years of age (150 older than 50, and 100 older than 60), he asked the Board for guidance in evaluating member proposals. The Board’s response: interest in Rotary is the criterion, not age.

On January 29, based on the theme, “WGRC – You Betcha!”<sup>30</sup> President Jim presented “The State of Our Union – The Rotary Club of Champaign.” His outline grouped activities within the Four Avenues of Service:

- Club and Community Service: WGRC maintains 81% attendance for the year and enjoys an active program of fellowship and music. Thanks to the Action Auctions, the Club disburses \$20,000 in grants each year to community agencies, as well as \$350-\$500 per month from the Rotary Cup in discretionary gifts to local charitable causes. The Salvation Army collections hit another new record in December: \$12,500. The Club continues to support community literacy efforts through tutoring programs and resources provided to reading centers.

- Vocational Service: the Club promotes the Four Way Test with an attractive new 3’x5’ banner, and continues supporting vocational awareness and career mentoring.

- Youth and Student Affairs: WGRC continues its strong vocational scholarship program, recognition of outstanding high school students, sponsorship of both Interact and Rotaract.

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30 See p. 60, Steps Going Up



Jim Leffelman

- **International Service:** with \$13,500 in Rotary Foundation giving, WGRC has already surpassed the District goal of \$33 per member (\$8,316). President Jim credited this to the unique raffle devised by James Leffelman, chair of the Foundation Relations Committee, by which he sold four \$10 tickets for \$33, each ticket qualifying for a drawing for Paul Harris Fellowships worth \$1,000 each. Tickets sold enabled PH Fellowships for two winners, Pat Dorsey and David Hood. To top it off, President Jim completed his own PH Fellowship.

- **Membership Services:** Jim cited the continuing excellence of The Fizz and the Club roster, the review and revisions of the classification structure, and the active Sunshine Committee that transports members to weekly meetings and coordinates visits to ill and infirm members and families.

WGRC did not rest on the laurels outlined in Jim's "State of Our Union" summary. On February 26, Community Awards chair Bob Cochran presented a Community Service Award to Ellen McDowell "...for 16 years of effective volunteer work on behalf of the St. Jude Catholic Worker House, from working in the soup kitchen to helping raise \$220,000 to acquire and completely remodel the facility." Dave Beckerle was recognized as 1995 Volunteer of the Year by the United Way of Champaign County. Among other things, Dave led the community in donations of foods for charitable events, including Interact's Annual Chili Fest

The Project Planning Committee recommended, and the Board sent on to WGRC, Inc., a request for \$3,350 from PACE<sup>31</sup> for a Braille Computer. Also approved: \$4,000 to Los Trabajadores, a C-U center for migrant workers serving 800 or more Spanish-speaking U.S. citizens from the Southwestern states; and \$1,660 for a laser printer and fax machine for a local Alzheimer's support group. The Club's Matching Grant project with the Rotary Club of Bidar, Karnatka, India, to build a drinking water fountain in Bidar was completed; WGRC also supported a malaria project in Malawi.

Project Planning also approved \$3,500 to cover expenses of a nurse for Operation Rainbow, marking the Club's first tangible involvement

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<sup>31</sup> Persons Assuming Control of their Environment.

in a project WGRC would later champion. Operation Rainbow is a local medical team that travels to the Philippines to perform cleft lip and palate surgery on indigent children. The Club directors voted to seek a sister club in the Philippines, where Carle Maxillofacial Surgeon Michael Goldwasser would again lead the Operation Rainbow team in 1996. At the Club's February 27 meeting, Dr. Goldwasser and Operating Room Nurse Regina Ross presented slides of their 1995 trip to the Philippines. Please refer to p. 106 for full information on this most special WGRC project.

At the end of February, Frank D. Keck II received the official nomination for the office of Governor of District 6490 for 1997-98. After President Jim was "in absentia" in March, he was welcomed back by "The Five Bottom-Line Reasons Why Jim Keene Has Been Absent for Two Weeks." This was the second such list conceived by Scott Anderson Jr., who was to make it a regular feature of his 1997-98 presidency. John McGill, Frank Keck, Nina Eisner, Mike Martin and Bob Wedgeworth recited the reasons:

5. He much prefers singing in Irish pubs with Gene Wicks<sup>32</sup> to hearing the Club sing under Tom Cornell
4. Despite numerous swings during his first week away, he never heard his caddy say, "Nice shot, Jim."
3. It took longer than he anticipated to learn a second song.
2. He ran out of ways to criticize the food served at our meetings.
1. He's counting on memories fading so that we won't notice he's been using Grecian Formula while away.

Despite uncertainty as to where President Jim might be on a given Monday, WGRC did achieve 100% attendance on April 22, its second try at a perfect attendance day. What seemed to make the difference: "encouragement" the week before by Attendance Committee chair John Ady, who appeared hooded and bearing an executioner's axe.

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<sup>32</sup> Rotarian Gene and his wife had moved to Ireland in 1994, but returned in 1998.



The Executioner (John Ady) Cometh

Meanwhile, Covenant Medical Center donated additional equipment (warming tables for newborns) for the pediatric hospital in Azul. In April, these were packed by Bud Leister for shipping to the Argentine Embassy in Washington, the first leg of their bureaucracy-complicated journey. A special April 29 Rotary Cup gathered \$1,186 for the Illini Prairie Chapter of the American Red Cross for tornado relief for hard-hit Urbana and Ogden.



Scott Anderson Jr. Congratulates  
Clarence Thompson on His Election  
to the District Hall of Honor

In May, Jim Leffelman chaired the 1996 District Golf Outing, attracting 60 players and raising another \$1,500 for the Rotary Foundation. That WGRC's two teams finished first and third was a bonus. At the District Conference June 7-9, six WGRCers made presentations, and WGRC received a Club Service Award for Glen Wensch's Transportation and Visitation Committee, as well as the Attendance Award, thanks to John Ady. Jim Leffelman's Rotary Foundation Raffle won an International Service Award. Four Champaign Rotarians received individual awards for chair leadership at the District Committee level: Doug Nelson, World Community Service

and International Exchange; Ken Gunji, District Foundation; Scott Anderson Jr., International Hospitality; and Roger Martin, International Scholarship Service. Clarence Thompson, 1992 WGRC Vocational Awardee, became the Club's fourth inductee into the District Hall of Honor, with these words excerpted from his citation:

Throughout his distinguished career, Clarence has exemplified the precepts of Rotary...has quietly enhanced the quality of life for many employees...in turn, his dedicated staff has facilitated his service to vocation and community...It's hard to end this, because Clarence Thompson simply doesn't quit. Ever concerned and caring about issues and people, ever the gentleman, Clarence's positive outlook and generosity of spirit sets an exemplary standard of citizenship. Everything he says or does is offered with sincerity, integrity and a touch of class. It is precisely this – the Thompson Touch – that we honor today by electing Clarence to the District 6490 Hall of Honor.

June 15 was proclaimed Family Day at Camp Robert Drake, and featured dedication of the new water treatment facility to "Champaign Rotary Club," which had provided \$37,500 from the 1995 Action Auction. Keynote speaker Ken Gunji, president of the Prairielands Council, reminisced on scouting and Camp Drake.



Bob Atkins

In *The Fizz*, George Scheetz described the highlight of Jim Keene's swan-song meeting in this way: "Bob Atkins presented a breath-taking, ten-minute paeon to the Rotary Club of Champaign during President Jim's term, including narration, music and 100-plus slides." Atkins' professional production featured the soaring voice of his daughter, Peggy Atkins Stuckey, and launched a new Club tradition. As if that weren't enough, Tom Cornell, Dave Thies, and the members serenaded the retiring president with Guy Duker's "For Jim Keene," set to the tune of "Till We Meet Again."



Nancy Martin,  
ROY 1995-96 with  
Past President Tom Good

For his part, Jim remarked on the fellowship and the privilege of serving the World's Greatest Rotary Club, and cited as highlights the projects that provided medical equipment to Azul, fresh water to Bidar, and a nurse for Operation Rainbow. Among the many plaudits he passed around, Jim named Nancy Martin Rotarian of the Year for her ongoing work as Club secretary and Membership Roster Committee chair. And as Jim Keene stepped down, he also stepped up: to a two-year term as president of the National Band Association.

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## **Gary G. Wackerlin, 1996-97**

One wonders if Montague Bear, who designed the Rotary emblem as a wheel in 1905, ever realized the genius of his design. Yes, the rotation of meetings gave rise to the organization's name, but the later addition of the cogs was equally prescient. Certainly with Champaign Rotary, as the rotating wheel ratchets up a new president, its momentum never slows. As Gary Wackerlin took the gavel, ongoing work and projects, such as the annual summer Yanai exchange, continued apace.



While coordinating that WGRC-specific exchange, Doug Nelson's World Community Service/International Exchange Committee began looking at the proposed re-creation of the Japan House on the UI campus. The long-standing cultural link of the Yanai-WGRC sister club relationship was to open the door to an even stronger cooperation. When he wasn't doing yeoman's work on international scholarships, Roger Martin presented the UI Japan House project to WGRC's Project Planning Committee, and Ken Gunji alerted Yanai Rotary. The ultimate result: WGRC, Inc. and the WGRC Board each provided \$2,500 towards the new Japan House, and the Yanai Rotary Club pledged an equivalent amount.



Roger Martin

Gary asked that Operation Rainbow be the Club's primary international project, and he suggested increased support in three areas:

involvement of Rotary clubs in the Philippines; assistance and matching funds from Rotary International; and direct support from WGRC for the current year's trip. From its year-end surplus, the Club Board earmarked \$5,000. But Gary made a significant personal contribution, as well – his Rotary spouse, Karyl, as a volunteer on this "Mission of Mercy."<sup>33</sup> He also appointed John Parkhill and his Rotary spouse, Page, to the Operation Rainbow project.

Under co-chairs Jane Chiappinelli and Maria Dowd, Rotary Youth Exchange was blooming. Five families – the Denton Browns, the Chiappinellis, the David Gaffrons, the Dan Holders, and the Bob Rydells hosted inbound students. Meanwhile, District 6490 (which has oversight of RYE activities) became affiliated with the Central States RYE Consortium involving four states and Ontario. All districts must follow a set of rules and procedures, and the main thrust of the local clubs' consortium would be to help smaller clubs get involved in hosting inbounders and sponsoring outbounders. The cost to the Club to host a long-term (school-year) inbound student was about \$1,200, with host parents providing room, board, and cost of meals eaten out or at school. The cost to sponsor an outbounder ran about \$180 for the sponsoring club, and \$550 for parents of the student, not including insurance. The WGRC RYE Committee was working with Urbana and C-U Sunrise Rotary Clubs to sponsor three outbounders.

At the District level, Governor Nominee Frank Keck was stirring up a stew of new activity. He launched the RI-prescribed Assistant District Governor program, and named Jan Bahr for Area 5 (Champaign, Champaign West, C-U Sunrise, Monticello, and Villa Grove Rotary Clubs). He and Denton Brown were revving the Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA) engine.

Starting in November, Mark Stolkin ran the Rotary Foundation raffle and raised more than \$3,000, funding Paul Harris Fellowships for three winners. Also in November, the Club sponsored its 78th UI Football Banquet, and WGRC was named the Outstanding Philanthropic Organization by the East Central Illinois Chapter of the National Society of Fund Raising Executives (NSFRE).

A mid-year audit showed that 17 (15.3%) of the Club's 111 active and additional active members were women. The 107 senior active, past service, and senior active excused members were, of course, all men. A later membership study showed induction dates to WGRC by decade: 1920s – 1; 1930s – 2; 1940s – 8; 1950s – 14; 1960s – 32; 1970s – 37; 1980s – 66; 1990s through June 30, 1997: 75. One might deduce that WGRC had consistently grown, but since its peak membership of 267 in June, 1989, the Club had been gradually shrinking. There

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<sup>33</sup> Mission of Mercy" was the title of a February WICD-TV presentation on Operation Rainbow. See p. 106 for the full story of WGRC's tie to Operation Rainbow

were conflicting viewpoints as to whether that was good or bad. In any case, the Club held a successful "Rotary Guest" day, where members brought more than 35 potential Rotarian guests and introduced them to Champaign Rotary. By June, that effort had enlisted eight new members.

Project Planning Committee Chair Nina Eisner reported to the Club Board that, over the past five years, WGRC had contributed \$208,000 to local charitable causes. Her committee gained Board approval of a \$5,000 donation to A Woman's Fund to help retire the loan on its new building. At the same meeting, the Board again commended Glen Wensch and his Sunshine Committee. In the spring, Dave Kuhl's Community Awards Committee awarded a Community Service Award to Abby Hobbs. This award goes to non-Rotarians who, by activities within or service to community-related organizations, exemplify "Service Above Self" and the Four Way Test.

Jill Niles of the C-U Community Schools Foundation spoke to the membership at a Club meeting, describing the impact of the \$37,500 grant the Foundation received from Action Auction VII. President-Elect Scott Anderson, looking a year ahead, announced the 1998 Action Auction (AA VIII) goal would be a net \$125,000: \$75,000 to fund the Project Planning Committee for three years, and \$50,000 to one or more projects to benefit families, with particular focus on youth at risk.

At an April meeting, a large contingent of Interactors from Centennial High School described the various activities to which they had devoted 3,865 service hours – 1,000 more than any previous Interact Club. And on April 28, the Club achieved perfect attendance, again with orchestration by Attendance Chair John Ady. Also during April, District 6490 hosted 44 high school sophomores at its first RYLA encampment at Allerton Park's 4-H camp near Monticello. The culmination of nearly two years of planning by the District RYLA Committee, the actual leadership training program was developed by WGRC's Denton Brown.

On to the District 6490 Conference, held in Urbana. WGRC received four District awards: International Service, for Operation Rainbow; Public Relations, for WICD's coverage of Operation Rainbow; Club Service, for "The Year In Review," Bob Atkins' musical-slide presentation to President Jim Keene; and again, Club Bulletin for *The Fizz*. Ken Gunji was selected as the District's delegate to the RI Council on Legislation in 1998, and Bobby Eisner became the fifth Champaign Rotarian to enter the District Hall of Honor.



K. Kay Machula  
Eisner Award 1996-97

Chris Moyer was Gary's well-received choice for Rotarian of the Year, recognizing his tenth consecutive year of inspirational leadership of the Interact Committee. Two new Rotarians, Maarten Van de Guchte and K. Kay Machula, shared the Robert Eisner Jr. Award. One would think that the "Dream High," Bob Atkins' second "Paean to the Rotary Club of Champaign" honoring President Gary's year with narration, music and 146 slides, would have been the "*grand finale*" for June. And it would have been, except for the June 30 Metropolitan Installation Banquet at which all five Metro Area Rotary Clubs installed their new presidents, and District 6490 installed its new governor: Frank D. Keck II. For more on that sound and light show (with a bit of fury mixed in), see p. 147.

And one might think that Gary's year as president would be the high point of his service to the Club, but one might be wrong about that, too. With apologies to Douglas MacArthur, old WGRC presidents ultimately die, but seldom do they fade away. That was to prove especially true in the case of Gary Wackerlin.

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## **Scott Anderson Jr. 1997-98**



Scott stepped in as half of the fifth father-son set to serve as presidents of WGRC. The previous “tag teams” included: Albert Eisner Sr. (1917-18, 1918-19) and Robert Eisner Sr. (1944-45); Robert Eisner Sr. and Robert Eisner Jr. (1966-67); J. G. Thomas (1961-62) and Lott H. Thomas (1971-72); and Harold S. Dawson (1970-71) and Thomas O. Dawson, (1984-85). “I was in high school,” Scott said, “when my father served as president. So, from an early age, I have come to know the ideals of service in Rotary and the responsibilities the leadership of the Club implies. I am deeply honored, and look forward to the challenges that lie ahead with confidence in the work ethic of our Board and the dedication of our membership.”

Scott offered a verbal “Toast to Gary” for Wackerlin’s leadership in 1996-97, then turned his eyes to the future. With Frank Keck serving as District 6490 Governor, Scott Anderson saw his responsibilities clearly and set ambitious goals – “Host the Governor’s Installation Banquet, and, later:

- Hold the best District Conference in District history.
- Hold the best Rotary Action Auction in WGRC history.
- Have more fun at meetings.
- Promote more fellowship among members.
- Generate more fervor by, service from, and fulfillment for our members.

Each of these goals had measuring sticks, as did the seven pages of Measurable Committee Goals that Scott distributed. He also produced a three-part form and challenged members to fill out individual measurable goals for their personal participation in Rotary. The members kept one copy, and received a reminder copy back half-way through the year.



Women Rotarians Display Necklace Badges

It was also a year of new ideas, starting with *The Fizz*, which changed to a vertical, tri-fold format. The idea was to provide additional space for “Rotarian Profiles” and articles entitled “Moments in Time” addressing Rotary history and Club activities. An early, well-received change involved the badges of women members. Spring-clips may work for attaching badges to men’s pockets and lapels, but are less than ideal for women’s attire. Scott equipped the badges of WGRC women with flashy new chains, converting them into necklaces.

Scott continued the practice established by Terry Davis of recognizing members with Rotarian of the Month citations, and implemented a new program of giving RI theme pins to members who exemplified the year’s RI Theme: “Our Service Shows We Care: for our Club, for our Vocations, for our Youth, for our Community, for our World.” Two early recipients of Scott’s “Show Rotary Cares” pins were Glen Wensch, for leading the Transportation and Visitation (Sunshine) Committee, and William Kuhne, for his idea in 1977 of holding an auction to raise money for the Rotary Hill Project at Lake of Woods. That event raised \$32,000 and launched the astonishing Action Auction story.

In the vein of “more fun at meetings,” Scott continued his “Bottom-Line” lists,” takeoffs of David Letterman’s “Top Ten” lists. A variation was this FAQ (frequently asked questions) Love and Sex Quiz, illustrated by two of the five questions:

Question: Any recommendation as to how long people should make love?”

Response by Greg Lykins: “Sure. They should make love the same way short people do.”

Question: “Should you kiss with your eyes open or closed?”

Response by JoAnn Tieman: “Neither. You should kiss with your lips.”

Throughout the year, Club members were exposed to many such exercises in “sharing the wisdom.”

In September, Scott turned District Governor Frank Keck’s official visit into a theatrical spectacle, presiding in tuxedo, top hat and Mickey Mouse ears. The Caribbean rhythms of the UI steel drum band (courtesy of Jim Keene) almost drowned out Kathe Keck’s induction as a Paul Harris Fellow and the presentation to Governor Keck of a special banner

by Interactors. Lending weight to the District Governor's theme, "Make It Happen," prestidigitation by "the phantasmagoric" Keith Page made improbable things happen.

Starting the year with just 214 members, Scott asked his Board to review admission policy to emphasize the need for enthusiastic young members, not just busy top-level executives. Director Doug Nelson urged getting members involved in hands-on projects as a step to better retention. The Habitat for Humanity project in the spring accomplished this to some extent. Doug also planned a social event for Ambassadorial Scholars.

With Action Auction VIII later in the year, WGRC, Inc. and Scott's board addressed optimal application of existing funds. They immediately authorized \$5,000 for Operation Rainbow, plus additional support via District 6490, which had adopted funding medical equipment for Operation Rainbow as a primary goal. The District Rainbow Committee (Gary Wackerlin, chair) set a \$30,000 goal: \$7,500 from within the District, \$7,500 from a host Rotary club in the Philippines, and then a \$15,000 matching grant from the Rotary Foundation. The District designated RYLA as its other lead project, setting a target of \$10,000.

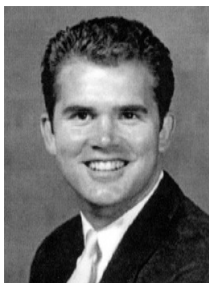
Typical of other WGRC, Inc. awards was \$5,660 for a wheelchair ramp at Roundhouse, a shelter for homeless youths operated by the Children's Home and Aid Society. This was also the year of a funding crisis at the United Way, and area Rotary Clubs stepped up to support UW and restore community confidence, with WGRC picking up more than \$20,000 of funding shortfalls for eight community agencies.



Front Row, R-L: Lott Thomas, Bill Kuhne, Don Moyer Jr., Dave Lawrence, Frank Keck, Ken Gunji, Art Skelton  
 2nd Row, R-L: Leonard Flynn, Scott Anderson Sr., Kim Keene, Dan Crispin, Terry Davis, Peter Tomaras, Jim Acheson, Tom Morgan, Jan Bahr  
 3rd Row, R-L: Dick Knieriem, Tom Good, Dick Foley, Ron Kiddoo, Bobby Eisner  
 Top Row, R-L: Scott Anderson Jr., Ron Bates, Dave Thies, Bud Roderick, Gary Wackerlin

On October 6, Scott scheduled the regular meeting at UI Memorial Stadium, where members dined on a catered lunch, enjoyed entertainment by the Illini Pep Band, and mounted the end-zone

bleachers for the first Club photograph since 1976. The Club also forsook its regular Chancellor Hotel meeting site to convene at the Krannert Art Museum and Parkland College, each meeting featuring entertainment and an educational program.



John Wright II

New Rotarian John Wright II ran the Rotary Foundation Raffle to help the Club meet the District goal of \$40 per member. Mount Union College, Bill Krahling's alma mater, won its second straight NCAA Division III championship, extending its win streak to 28. And for the first time, the annual Football Banquet (Phil Reed, chair) was shifted to the Illini Union and opened to additional fans, including members of Illini Pride, the Quarterback Club, and players' families. Despite the team's 0-11 record, attendance soared to an estimated 600. President Scott gave a brief statement describing the ideals and activities of Rotary, and Rotarians hosted each table.

Scott asked Ed Krol to take the lead in launching a Club website.<sup>34</sup> By January, 1998, Ed was working with Denton Brown and Bruce Rogers of Savoy Rotary to set up and maintain the page, as well as a District site under Paul Luedtke's oversight. At Scott's suggestion, the Board approved purchase of a digital camera so that same-week photos could be published in *The Fizz*.<sup>35</sup>



Brooke Anderson (2nd from left) and Friends at Rotary Youth Day

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<sup>34</sup> [www.rotarydistrict6490.org/champaign](http://www.rotarydistrict6490.org/champaign)

<sup>35</sup> The camera was not purchased. Same-week photos have been provided by Scott.

The Salvation Army drive raised a record \$12,500. In January, Doug Nelson began working on a membership database that would include *Roster* information as well as family details. The January 26 Club meeting was designated “Rotary Youth Day,” and was the first regular meeting in more than 30 years conducted entirely by children of Rotarians and members of the Interact Club. The “cast” included four granddaughters of Bobby Eisner Jr., plus numerous sons and daughters of other Club members. Brooke Anderson (granddaughter of Scott, daughter of Scott Jr.) chaired the meeting – as had Scott during his father’s 1963-64 presidency. Kids greeted, introduced, led the pledge, and provided the entertainment. The Interactors presented their own “Bottom-Line” list: “Reasons Why Your Kids Know More Than You Do.” Examples:

No. 6 – Everything worth knowing has occurred in the last ten years – and you missed it all when it was on MTV.

No. 4 – We’re learning in high school what you learned in college.

No. 1 – Being newer, our chips are faster and our hard drives are bigger.

RYE students from Brazil and Argentina spoke; one Interactor discussed her participation in 1997 RYLA; Interactors introduced the January High School Student Merit Awardees, and they announced a joint Rotary-Interact project to install drywall at a Habitat for Humanity house. A few months later, 17 Club members, four Rotary sons, a Rotary spouse, and more than a dozen Interactors worked a combined 84 hours on three Saturdays on the drywalling project. The Club determined that one goal of the upcoming Action Auction would be a construction trailer for Habitat for Humanity.

The February 2 meeting was a sad one, as Len Flynn gave a eulogy and presented a resolution in memory of Guy M. Duker, who had passed away in January. President Scott presented the resolution to Ernestyne Duker, along with Guy’s Rotary badge. Then Jan Bahr led the gathering in “Thanks for the Memory” – the song Guy had requested – with revised lyrics by (of course) Guy, himself.

At its February meeting, the Board named Nina Eisner president-elect designee. As WGRC’s second woman president, Nina would preside during 1999-2000, the last full Rotary year of the 20th century. And new Literacy Committee chair Bob Wedgeworth declared his intention to investigate the possibility of eradicating functional illiteracy in the community. *The News-Gazette* expressed interest in working with WGRC on this challenge.



Lori Tate Simon and The "Supremes" -  
Scott Anderson Jr. Cropped Out as Too Ugly

Although there will never be another Guy Duker, no Rotary song leader is more dynamic than District Governor Frank Keck when he leads "Smile," Rotary's "own" song. But Frank was to demonstrate a more extreme pitch of extroversion than his rousing rendition of "Smile." As the District Conference approached, David Thies (who had responsibility for building Conference attendance) promised Club members a taste of the planned entertainment. He introduced WGRCer Lori Tate Simon, who launched into a medley of Supremes tunes with Dave on the keyboard and Doug Nelson on guitar. Suddenly in waltzed three "women" in sequined black dresses, wigs and heels, who began to gyrate as back up singers. It took close scrutiny to recognize these "ladies" as President Scott, Governor Frank, and President-Elect Tom Costello. In Scott's words: "I am confident that this 'performance' evoked more hearty laughter from members than any other moment I have witnessed at Champaign Rotary." Few would disagree.

In a return to serious proceedings, Karyl Wackerlin, assisted by Page Parkhill, presented a program on Operation Rainbow's latest Philippines mission, supported for a third year by WGRC. Operation Rainbow is a legacy of Page's parents, Bill and Charlotte Johnson.<sup>36</sup> Page went along on this trip, and shared with members the emotional and spiritual aspects of her journey. WICD-TV Channel 15 produced a five-part video series on Operation Rainbow.

In April, the short-term Rotary Youth Exchange with Corbeil-Essones returned after being cancelled in 1997 because of strikes in France. John Elder presented the Salvation Army's Outstanding Community Service Award to the WGRC, the only organization to receive the award at the Army's annual meeting. Thirty-nine high school sophomores and 25 returning juniors attended the second District RYLA encampment at Allerton Park, with Rotarians from many clubs "making it happen" for District Governor Frank Keck.

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<sup>36</sup> Please see p. 106 for the Operation Rainbow story.



Maria Larsen de Lier

The May 1-3 District 6490 Conference, organized by Denton Brown and promoted by Dave Thies, was a smashing success. The Friday evening international dinner was highlighted by the appearance of Maria Larsen de Lier, the Club's 1977 full-year exchange student from Argentina. Maria, along with the president, vice president and secretary of the Azul Rotary Club, thanked WGRC and the District for supplying much-needed neo-natal equipment to their children's hospital. The Argentinians then presented the program at the May 4 WGRC meeting, where Governor Frank presented each of them with a District 6490 pin.



Jim Turpin on the Job

At the District Conference, WGRC again won the Presidential Citation for Balanced Club Achievement, and was honored for both the highest total and highest per capita contributions to the Rotary Foundation. *The Fizz* won the best large-club newsletter award, and the Club received a District award for each avenue of service, with Rotary Youth Day receiving special attention. Jill Wagner arranged a trade show booth and put together large photographs (mostly by President Scott) of Club activities with text explanations. A final highlight was Governor Keck's presentation of the District Vocational Service Award for 1997-98 to Jim Turpin, long-time WDWS/WHMS radio station manager and "Voice

of the Illini.” Jim was chosen for his exemplary record of service to his profession and to his staff. As he stepped aside, Governor Frank accepted a new job: leading the first all-teacher Group Study Exchange Team to Malaysia in the fall of 1998. This special additional District GSE team had been endowed by the late Past District Governor and RI Service Above Self Laureate, Lowell Samuel of Effingham.



Tom Good, Greg Cozad Run Auction Raffle  
with Tom Cornell (in spotter hat)

Tom Good chaired Action Auction VIII to \$128,000 in revenue: \$78,000 coming from the auction and dinner, and \$42,000 from the raffle of a Chevy LT Blazer. Four local programs shared \$52,000 in immediate grants: \$33,000 to the Don Moyer Boys and Girls Club to establish a new Teen Center; \$10,000 to Champaign Unit 4 Schools for a handicapped-accessible playground at Marquette School; \$6,000 to Women in Transition for playground fencing; and \$3,000 to Habitat for Humanity for a construction trailer.

As he wound up his presidential year, Scott presented WGRC Four Avenues of Service Awards to John Ady (Club), Kip Pope (Vocational), Roger Martin (International), and John Elder and Thom Brown (Community). Stan Rankin received a special award for being the year's leading donor to the Rotary Foundation. Stan, a member only since 1996, may have been the quickest Paul Harris Fellow after induction ever, and within months, he would become the Club's 11th RF Benefactor.



Conference Chair  
Denton Brown with  
Governor Frank Keck

Tom Good<sup>37</sup> and Denton Brown shared the Rotarian of Year Award – Tom for chairing the Action Auction, and Denton for coordinating Youth and Student Affairs Committees and running the District Conference. The Eisner Award for outstanding new member also went to two people: Bob Aldridge for the Habitat for Humanity project, and Jill Wagner for co-chairing the Club Fellowship and Social Committees, as well as for her District Conference display. And to Doug Nelson, Scott presented the Rotary International Four Avenues of Service Award, newly created by RI for demonstrated support of the Object of Rotary through participation in all Four Avenues. Doug became the first District 6490 Rotarian to receive this Award.



Bob Aldridge and Jill Wagner,  
Eisner Awardees

Scott commended the Club members for carrying off both the District Conference and Action Auction within a few weeks, and for expanding service in many other ways while having fun doing it. He ended his

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<sup>37</sup> Tom Good, that "excellent man," thereby became the only two-time winner of the ROY award.

“swan song” by reading his last list himself, this one the “Top Ten Things I Will Miss Not Being President of Champaign Rotary.” The only one we’ll mention is: “Dancing in Drag with Keck and Costello.” At the outset of his presidency, Scott honored his father for his Rotary values, “which inspired his son.” Beyond any doubt, son Scott had honored his father’s values in true Anderson fashion.



Doug Nelson Accepts  
RI Four Avenues of Service Award

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## Thomas J. Costello, 1998-99



Preceded by his reputation as a toastmaster/jokemaster, Tom launched his presidency with his own “Top Ten” List: “Reasons It’s Great Scott Anderson Is No Longer President.” These reasons included:

- We now have a president who is used to spending other people’s money.
- Bobby Eisner will not be permitted at podium.
- Club members can now look at ties bought at T J Maxx instead of Brooks Brothers.
- New president has hair color that closely resembles that of most club members.
- There will be no more “Top Ten” lists.

Tom adopted RI’s theme for the year, “Follow Your Rotary Dream,” for the Club and appointed three new committees: Rotary in Action, focused on community service; Web Site; and Council of Past Presidents, the latter to be periodically tapped for their input and counsel.



WGRC's 1st Place Freedom Celebration Float

On July 4, the WGRC Freedom Celebration float, “Follow Your Rotary Dream,” won the first-place trophy in the Non-Professionally Built Float Division, thanks to co-chairs Jill Wagner and Kay Machula, who coordinated the efforts of seven WGRCers, one Rotary spouse, Gaston Fulquet (the Club’s long-term exchange student from Argentina), and three Interactors.

Another goodwill ambassador sponsored by the Yanai Rotary Club<sup>38</sup> arrived. Akiko Takemura, a college student at Oshima National College of Maritime Technology, “couldn’t believe” the flat land and endless fields, or Lake Michigan – she thought it was an ocean. One of her “cultural awareness” experiences was picking sweet corn for the Corn Roast. *The Fizz* published excerpts from her application essay:

What we read in newspapers and see on television are often bad things about countries and cultures. I would like to learn what is good about them. Problems arise from differences in values and lifestyles...to solve such problems, it is important to recognize the other person's viewpoint and try to understand each other. Therefore, I wish to travel abroad and live with people for an extended time, to really get to know them. I feel that being an exchange student will be enjoyable and helpful, and improve my understanding of the world outside of Japan. It will help me develop better communication skills and grow as an international person.



Tony Peressini

With those words, Akiko neatly summarized the concept of Rotary Youth Exchange (RYE). The summer of 1998 saw 20 outbound short-term RYE students from District 6490. On August 3, Tony Peressini presented a program describing the experiences of the Group Study Exchange team that he had led to southern Italy the previous spring. Tony, whose parents were born in Italy, had previously visited Italy and had hosted a long-term exchange student from Parma.

On September 12, under the leadership of Bob Aldridge, 16 Rotarians and spouses built 18 Dream Houses (large play houses for children). This was a District-endorsed hands-on project, and involved people from the Champaign West and Urbana Rotary clubs as well. The houses were placed with pre-schools and day care centers that had been contacted by Jill Wagner and Kay Machula, Public Relations Committee co-chairs.

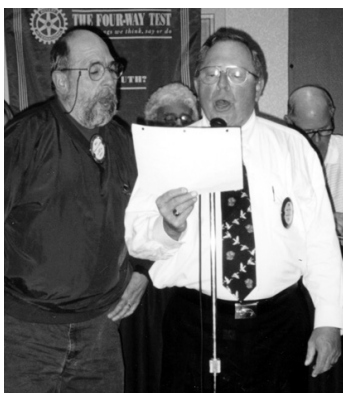
Director for International Service Doug Nelson proposed Club involvement in Shelters for Underprivileged Families, a three-year pilot program of the Humanitarian Grants Programs of the Rotary Foundation. Similar to Habitat for Humanity projects, houses would be built in developing countries at a cost under \$2,000. Recipients would share in construction and maintain the houses at no cost to Rotary. Participating clubs would pick a specific geographic area and project, pair up with another district, and then apply for a Matching Grant. District Governor Jack Wilz favored the project, and Doug suggested an investment of \$1,000. The Board agreed, and Champaign Rotary became the first District 6490 club to adopt Shelters for Underprivileged Families.

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<sup>38</sup> Again, see pp. 64-6 in *Steps Going Up* for the origins of the Yanai-WGRC sister-club relationship.

Inspired by the work of Kathe Keck, WGRC chose to help Ugandan families. In 1997, Kathe had traveled to Uganda to investigate potential international service projects, and had identified a combined literacy and income-generating project for Kabale, Uganda [the complete project is described on p. 110]. On November 9, Kathe informed Club members that District 6490 had adopted her Uganda project and she asked for help in raising money that would lead to a Matching Grant from the Rotary Foundation. That help would be forthcoming. On the same day, President Tom welcomed Kathe as an Honorary member of WGRC. Showing that she did not equate “honorary” to “ceremonial,” Kathe immediately volunteered to be one of the Club’s five escorts for the Children’s Holiday Shop, sponsored by Crisis Nursery of Champaign County.

Ken Gunji, World Community Service/International Exchange chair, gave a Rotary Foundation report: In 1997-98, RF awarded 1,206 Ambassadorial Scholarships to students from 71 countries to study in 70 countries. The PolioPlus commitment had reached \$313 million as of June 1998; more than one billion children had received oral polio vaccine; and 160 countries reported zero cases in 1997. In 1996-97, WGRC members had contributed an average of \$48 to the RF, but the world average was \$50 per member. Gunji challenged members to raise, not lower, the world standard.



Bill Krahling and Tom Cornell  
Lead the Mount Union Alma Mater

As a reward for an active half-year of Rotary service, President Tom announced that the first-ever “WGRC Holiday Social” would take place at Jillian’s – with meeting make-up credit. It was undoubtedly the latter benefit that prompted so many hard-working Rotarians to march into Jillian’s to take responsible steps in prevention of dehydration.

Bill Krahling’s Mount Union College Purple Raiders won their third straight NCAA Division III championship, pushing their undefeated,

untied streak to 42 games, including yet another victory over President Tom's John Carroll University Blue Streaks.

Kathe Keck had asked Champaign Rotarians to bring books and school supplies to their December meetings, including the Family Holiday Party – and they did. The first “Rotary in Action” book-packing session took place on January 23 from 8 a.m. to noon, followed by a second session on February 13. Books were boxed for proper packing in trans-oceanic shipping containers.

An historic event had taken place in California on October 23, but the report did not reach Champaign Rotarians until January 18, when The Fizz reprinted this article from the *Rotary Times*, the Rotary District 5220 newsletter:

### Rotary's Greatest Chefs Ignite Under One Roof

On October 23, four Rotarians arrived at the home of the North Stockton Rotary Club's immediate past president, Phyllis Jan Nusz, to fulfill their obligation on an item purchased at their “Action Auction” in Champaign, IL on 12 June, 1998. Nusz, en route to the RI Convention in Indianapolis, bid on a five-course dinner for twelve prepared by the “First Families” (District 6490 Governor and First Lady Frank and Kathe Keck, and President and First Lady of the Champaign Rotary Club, Scott and Donna Anderson), at their house – or yours!

Even though Phyllis lived in Stockton, the four chefs agreed to fly to California to put on their dinner. At twilight on Saturday, October 24, twelve Rotarians and their spouses arrived at Phyllis' home in black tie and evening attire. The special guest was Megan Boelter, the District 5220 Ambassadorial Scholar who will be studying in Uganda, Africa beginning in July, 1999.



Rotary Chefs Frank and Kathe Keck, Scott and Donna Anderson

Guests were greeted with the sound of music being played by the pianist for the evening, and adjourned to the rumpus room for cocktails. While half the Illinois team served refreshments in their newly-acquired WGRC chef's jackets, the other half were busy at work in the kitchen. The festivities began with the guests snacking on chicken liver pâté and listening to the story of the North Stockton Rotary Club's international project, “Seeds of Hope,” presented by project founder Mel Hansen. Since 1993, over 28,000 pounds of seed have been sent around the world for use by 29 Rotary clubs and 10 humanitarian organizations.

Following a champagne [or perhaps Champaign?] toast by PDG Keck, the guests moved into two dining areas and began their gourmet experience. The “First Families” dinner menu included *coquilles St. Jacques*; *salade avec* pears, walnuts, *et* Stilton; sorbet; grilled Chateaubriand, broiled tomatoes, *courgette gratinee*, mashed potatoes *avec* fresh chopped arugula; Grand Marnier® soufflé *avec creme Anglaise*; coffee *et* liqueurs; and cigars.

At the end of the 2-hour experience, the guests adjourned into the formal salon to congratulate the chefs and to listen to a presentation by First Lady Kathe Keck about her new Rotary humanitarian

and literacy program in Kabale, Uganda. Guests then “paid the bill,” with hostess Phyllis presenting a check for the amount of her Illinois bid (to go ultimately to the Uganda project)<sup>39</sup> and guests paying \$100 each, with that money going to Mel Hansen for “Seeds of Hope.”

It was a truly inspirational evening, spent sharing and implementing the Rotary International theme: “Show Rotary Cares.”

Even if words could be found, no further comment is required.

A flow of activities, sparked by ongoing Costello-Keene and Costello-Eisner repartee routines, kept Rotarians on their toes throughout the spring. On March 1 Gary Wackerlin reported that the Rotary Foundation had approved a \$15,000 Matching Grant for Operation Rainbow medical equipment. The Board approved \$2,500 to upgrade the Champaign-Urbana Symphony’s computer system. April began with a second “Rotary After Hours” social, this one at Galileo’s atop the University Inn. And from France, three sponsors arrived with 20 students in tow for what would be the final chapter in the Corbeil-Essones exchange.

Champaign West Rotary undertook the “Relay for Life” as a fundraiser for the American Cancer Society, and Jim Acheson organized significant support for the project by WGRCCers. Denton Brown orchestrated the highly successful third annual RYLA encampment at Allerton Park, with 42 sophomores and 19 returning juniors. There was also a senior RYLA reunion weekend in March.



Dannel McCollum Receives Community Service Award from President Tom and Rolland Kelley

The Community Awards Committee, chaired by Gary Wackerlin, presented Community Service Awards to five deserving individuals: Sister Beverly Ann Wilson, who devoted 47 years of caring service to Mercy Hospital/Covenant Medical Center; Sondra Libman, board member of the Don Moyer Boys and Girls Club (where she “is in the trenches,” according to nominator Elisabeth Barnett), and also founder of the C-U Community Schools Foundation, the primary recipient of the 1995 Action Auction; Dannel McCollum, who served three consecutive terms as Champaign’s mayor – “frugal with the city’s money, but not

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<sup>39</sup> The California trip resulted from a *second* bid for the chefs; the actual auction-night bid went to WGRC, Inc.

with his time and energy"; Col. Robert C. V. Hughes who, through the Red Cross and RSVP, devoted 13 years to providing transportation for the elderly and disabled to physician appointments and shopping; and to Donald C. Carter, 29 1/2 years on the Champaign Police Department, the last seven as chief, who inaugurated community policing and raised the level of professionalism and the concept of service to people of community.

The Turner Vocational Scholarships, now called the Parkland Vocational Scholarship Awards, had not been awarded since February, 1997. President Tom restarted that engine and, at the June 14 meeting, Carl Meyer and Zelema Harris presented \$500 awards to five Parkland students. At the District 6490 Conference, WGRC won another Presidential Citation for Balanced Club Achievement, and was the Top Club in Annual Program Giving to the Rotary Foundation.

George Scheetz' *Fizz* reported on the June 14 youth-led Club meeting as follows:

Jack Costello, son of President Tom, was in the chair and ran a tight meeting! Daniel Thies led the singing of "America the Beautiful," accompanied on the piano by his sister, Stephanie. Brent Baxter served as invocator, and Theresa Lawrence, granddaughter of Dave Lawrence, handled introductions. Kaitlyn Poor, granddaughter and niece of more Rotarians than you can even imagine, served as greeter. President Pro-tem Jack invited PDG Bob Eisner to come forward, proposed a sporting wager to benefit the Rotary Foundation, and proceeded to fleece the fully flummoxed Bobby with a clever bit of prestidigitation, to the delight of the crowd. Then Daniel and Stephanie Thies — plus the Future Rotary-Aires, comprised of Jackie and Daniel Piland, Maxwell Golema, and Christina Turino (daughter of Elisabeth Barnett) — led the gathering in a wild version of "Old Bob Toalson Had a Farm," in which cows went quack, pigs went moo, ducks went oink, and turtles went \_\_\_\_!



Donna Anderson,  
Eisner Awardee  
1998-99

At his final meeting as Club president, Tom presented: Club Service awards to Denton Brown, John Elder, Nancy Martin, and George Scheetz; Unsung Heroes Awards to James Acheson and William Stallman; and Particularly-Helpful-to-the-President Awards to Scott Anderson Jr., Duane Cole, David Janson, and Douglas Nelson. He named John Ady Rotarian of the Year, and presented the Eisner Award for outstanding new Rotarian to Donna Anderson. On August 2, Scott Anderson Jr. presented another marvelous slide and sound program on the highlights

of Tom's year, and Bob Atkins presented Tom with a commemorative photo scrapbook.



1998-99 ROY John Ady with Past  
President Scott Anderson Jr.

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## Nina W. Eisner, 1999-2000



WGRC's second woman president returned from the RI Convention in Singapore with much more than four banners and the recipe for a "dynamite Singapore Sling." In her opening remarks, she espoused an expansive and precisely defined vision of WGRC's role in the work of Rotary. She wanted to emphasize literacy and children's issues, while gaining greater community visibility to help promote the Club's service projects and increase pride in membership. Rather than initiating new programs, Nina called for a change in attitude – "a more forward-looking, flexible Rotary." Her priorities:

- Membership development: "We need to recruit and retain committed members; not enough Rotarians are committed to fellowship and service."
- Changes in orientation: "Include mentoring and other aids for new members."
- Commitment: "Get involved right away, and value your experience."
- Fellowship: "Continue our strong traditions and develop new traditions. All programs of service begin with fellowship."

In terms of service, Nina planned a close look at our funding history, and would ask early engagement in long-range planning and setting of priorities. "A focus in recent years," she said, "is securing a bright future for children, both locally and internationally. We can do that; we're eradicating polio. We ordinary Rotarians accomplish extraordinary things." She ended with this:

That's it. No rocket science, just back to the basics and carrying on the legacy for our future. Imagine our potential impact: we can change the future of our Club, our community, and ultimately our world by pursuing RI President Carlos Ravizza's theme: "Act with Consistency, Credibility, and Continuity." The opportunity of membership is service.

Considered unusually articulate and persuasive (despite being the first president to address the members as "Y'all" and "All Y'all"),<sup>40</sup> Nina quickly set new standards for efficient organization. She moved Board meetings to The Chancellor at 11:00 a.m. on each third Monday with the unheard-of time limit of 45 minutes. Meeting agendas and Service Area Updates/Actions Required sheets would be circulated in advance

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<sup>40</sup> For Northerners: y'all is singular, all y'all is plural, all y'all's is plural possessive.

to facilitate the “flow of communication and direction of Champaign Rotary.”



President Nina Helps Dick Burwash  
at 1999 Corn Roast

As of August, the Club leaders in perfect Rotary attendance were Bill Bash, Tom Morgan and Kyle Robeson with 30 years; Art Skelton with 23 years; and Roger Sinott and Tod Dawson with 22 years. That means they were among the 229 who attended the Annual Corn Roast at Rotary Hill in July. Hiromi Morihira arrived as the Club's ninth Yanai exchange student. Nina announced that RF Matching Grant Project No. 9643, which funded medical equipment for cleft lip and palate surgeries for indigent children in Cavite, Philippines, was completed – kudos to Gary Wackerlin and the Operation Rainbow team. The next destination for Rainbow would be Nicaragua.

In October, Nina called attention to “The story behind the Four Way Test,” an article by Darrell Thompson in *The Rotarian*. He wrote:

“Eloquently simple, stunning in its power, undeniable in its results, the Four Way Test offers a... positive vision in the midst of a world full of tension, confusion, and uncertainty.”

Duane Cole and Pat Dorsey, Attendance Committee co-chairs, organized a successful 100% attendance day on November 15. A week later came the 81st Annual Football Banquet, co-chaired by Dana Brenner and Joe DeLuce. This third banquet at the Illini Union attracted 717 persons – yet another record. A sad, but inevitable development on the football front: Rowan College finally ended Bill Krahling's Mount Union College Purple Raiders NCAA record 54-game winning streak in a Division III semifinal game. At 120-7-1 for the decade of the 1990s, however, the Purple Raiders still owned the best record in all of college football. Also in November, PDG Frank Keck took his all-teacher GSE team to Malaysia.



The Reverend Alan Herbst

The final program in November featured Alan A. Herbst, principal pastor, Emmanuel Memorial Episcopal Church of Champaign, and a former Rotarian. Father Herbst entitled his remarks “I Gave My Best,” describing the impact of Rotarians’ generosity in this way: “Rotarians, individually and collectively, give their very best to ease the debt of grief in the world.” He played a CD featuring Nathan Gunn, a C-U native and UI graduate, singing “American Anthem” (subtitled “I Gave My Best to You”). The meeting was unique not only because a non-Rotarian preached Rotary to Rotarians, but also because Father Alan graced the occasion by contributing yet another \$1,000 to the Foundation, giving him six sapphires on his Paul Harris Fellowship pin. Introducer Alan Ryle matched Father Alan’s gift, completing his own Paul Harris Fellow recognition.

In December, International Service Director Doug Nelson and the Club’s International Hospitality Committee hosted a Christmas party for all UI Ambassadorial Scholars and their Rotarian hosts. Nelson also reported that the WGRC membership database he began to build in 1998 was completed.



Kathe Keck

Kathe Keck reported on the World Community Service program she had initiated in 1997 in Uganda. In an extension of Kathe’s literacy/ income-generating project for the people of Kabale, Past District Governor Wes Rush (Danville) raised money for a second Matching Grant to send 100 solar ovens for Kabale. Commending Kathe’s leadership,

President Nina announced that 139 solar ovens would soon go to Uganda, along with more equipment for Kathe's project. Soon to leave for Kabale, Kathe asked members to provide a gift in recognition of David Tindywabe's 30th anniversary of teaching the blind at Kabale, offering to match donations up to \$300. She got a single gift of \$300 to match her own, and additional contributions of \$750.

The Club's Salvation Army collections, led by 119 bell-ringers, reached \$12,917 – yes, another record. The Project Planning Committee approved awards to worthy community projects including The Reading Group, Family Service, Youth Opportunities Unlimited (YOU), UISES,<sup>41</sup> and UI Wheelchair Athletics. The PolioPlus campaign sought additional donations, with \$4 per member qualifying the Club for PolioPlus Partners. WGRC raised \$1,105, or \$5.24 per member. The District 6490 goal for Rotary Foundation giving was \$45 per member, or \$9,500 for Champaign Rotary; members raised \$11,500 by the end of February.

When Frank and Kathe Keck returned from their Uganda trip, they presented a gift from the Rotary Club of Kabale: a woven basket with the inscription, "Thanks to Champaign Rotarians." Champaign Mayor Dan McCollum declared March 30 as "Glen W. Wensch Day" and presented his proclamation to Glen and his wife, Lois Anne, at Carle Arbours, where Glen now resides. Nina's Board agreed to participate with the other four area Rotary Clubs on a Habitat for Humanity House in the year 2000 to the extent of \$16,000 for materials, plus hands-on labor. WGRC sponsored two teams to support Champaign West Rotary's "Relay for Life" for the American Cancer Society. WGRC hosted the reciprocating GSE team from Malaysia. The Club sponsored two sophomores and one junior to the 2000 RYLA camp, which attracted a new record of 45 sophomores.

April also featured Marc Changnon's presentation on the Education to Careers and Professions (ECP) Program at Centennial High School. Grasping the connection of ECP to Rotary's Vocational Service avenue, Club members adopted a rare regular-meeting resolution on Monday, June 5, commending the Board of Champaign Unit 4 School District for developing the ECP program at Centennial.

Another Vocational Service-related program was "Ethical Issues in Business in a Global Community," presented by Parkland College Professor of Philosophy Donald Nolen. In honor of the occasion, two years after the passing of Guy Duker, one of Guy's compositions was sung:

"The Four Way Test" (to the tune of "Is it True What They Say About Dixie?"):

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<sup>41</sup> University of Illinois Securities Exchange Simulation: an educational program directed by UI Assistant Professor Elisabeth Oltheten enabling Centennial H.S. students to "purchase" and track securities.

Can we test all our thoughts, words and actions  
With the test that is four-square and true?  
Can we carry out this ideal...at work, at home at play?  
Can we keep this goal before us, and can we always say:  
Is it true? Is it fair? Is it building –  
Friendship's bond, and good will every day?  
When we benefit all through...our proven Four Way Test  
We will know we have done our best!



Doug Nelson, Jan Bahr, and Tom Cornell  
Serenade Nina with "Bye, Bye Love"

On May 8, in honor of President Nina (whose brother, Mike, tours with John Mellencamp), and perhaps in realization that but two months remained in Nina's presidential year, Jan Bahr, Tom Cornell, Doug Nelson (on guitar) and Dave Thies (on keyboard) led the members in a rousing rendition of "Bye, Bye Love," the 1957 hit song made popular by the Everly Brothers.

At the District 6490 Conference in late May, Champaign Rotary won the following awards:

- Governor's Trophy for Club of the Year. WGRC became the first winner of this new award, recognizing overall achievement in all areas of service.
- International Service Achievement Award for the Uganda Project.
- Vocational Service Award for the Parkland College scholarship program
- Top Club in Total Annual Program Fund Giving to the Rotary Foundation, surpassing the District goal of \$45 per member by contributing more than \$60, boosted by ten new Paul Harris Fellows, 16 new sustaining members, and one benefactor.
- RI Presidential Citation for Balanced Club Achievement.



Past President Carlos Ravizza  
with Art Skelton at a  
District 6490 Conference

Jan Bahr was recognized for her work as Assistant District Governor; both Scott Anderson Jr. and Doug Nelson received the Rotary Foundation District Service Award. The frosting on WGRC's District cake was Past District Governor Frank Keck's induction into the District 6490 Hall of Honor. Worthy of note is that 1999-2000 RI President Carlos Ravizza established a District Conference Award for that conference meeting the criteria for the best conference in any zone. For Zone 29, the 2000 District 6490 Conference, under District Governor Gary Shore, was cited. That made WGRC the Club of the Year at the "Best District Conference" in a multi-state zone of 14 districts, adding luster to the leadership of Governor Shore and President Nina.

At the June 19 Club meeting, Nina convened a special forum: "The Future of the Rotary Club of Champaign." She reported that Rotary International membership declined during 1998-99, the first time this had happened since the Great Depression, and that WGRC membership had declined from 219 to 205 during the 1999-2000 year. She then broke the Club into small groups based on years of Rotary Service, for a dialogue structured around 12 questions addressing issues of membership recruitment, development, and retention. She described such issues as the main challenge facing Champaign Rotary, RI, and service clubs in general. The facilitators met the following day to evaluate the member input, and Nina promised continuing study of the problem and a future report to the members.

As Nina was about to deliver her year-end remarks, Tom Costello took the podium to emcee a surprise roast, ably aided by Ron Kiddoo and Bobby Eisner (Nina's father-in-law), to the poignant strains of "My Old Kentucky Home" in the background. The epithets, however, were more toast than roast. Costello congratulated Nina on "the incredible quality of your presidency," and Bobby Eisner praised her as "the second-best president we've had"—second to himself, presumably.



Nancy Casey Accepts 1999-2000  
Eisner Award From—Who Else?—  
Bobby Eisner

Nina then reprised the theme-based goals she had set coming in, commenting that the thrust of her year had been about “carrying out the legacy and traditions while taking responsibility for our future.” She gave preliminary feedback on the “Future of Champaign Rotary” meeting, and then read off a page and a half of Club achievements for 1999-2000, most of which are set forth above. She recognized Nancy Martin for serving as Club secretary since 1994, Ron Kiddoo for serving as Club treasurer since 1998, and Art Skelton for his continuing service as executive secretary. She honored Nancy J. Casey with the Robert Eisner Jr. Award for outstanding new member, and named Duane D. Cole Rotarian of the Year with these words:



Duane Cole,  
ROY 1999-2000

Duane has ably served as chair of Attendance and Membership Retention Committee for the past two years.†He also served on the District Membership and Retention Committee. On November 15, 1999, he coordinated a highly successful Perfect Attendance Day, only the 2nd time in our history we achieved 100%.<sup>42</sup> He revised our exit interview given to departing members and assisted the Board in developing the survey used in the assessment of membership satisfaction. An incoming

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<sup>42</sup> Our records indicate it may have been the 3rd or 4th time.

member of the Board of Directors in the 2000-2001 Rotary year, Duane exemplifies the ideals of Rotary.

Like other WGRC past presidents, Nina would remain visible and influential. At the October 15, 2001 Club program, "Renewing Our Rotary Vows," Nina was among several past presidents who offered their thoughts. Excerpts from her comments on member involvement merit inclusion here:

Rotary nurtures our hearts and our souls (if not our wallets)...We are extraordinarily powerful in support of our initiatives...Seek service on committees that interest you...your service choices must be personally meaningful, or you will just sit here and have lunch.

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## **Mark D. Stolkin, 2000-2001**



Mark began his year with 214 members, challenging them to be pro-active as they work toward the goals of the mission statement of RI President Frank J. Devlyn: “Create Awareness and Take Action – In Our Club, In Our Community, In Our World.” He specifically called for pro-activity in RI and RF programs such as PolioPlus, Literacy, Clean Water, Low-Cost Shelter, Hunger Alleviation, Preservation of Planet Earth, and At-Risk Children. He urged involvement in elimination of poverty, working partnerships with other organization, increasing the Club’s per-capita Foundation goal to \$55, and support of Rotary Youth Exchange and Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA). Finally, he asked for support of RI President Frank J. Devlyn’s focus on ending avoidable blindness.

As though to lend weight to Mark’s endorsement of his program, Frank Devlyn’s schedule included a July 22 official visit at a special 5:00 p.m. meeting hosted by the six Rotary Clubs of Champaign County at the Champaign Country Club. President Devlyn’s father was born in the District 6490 town of Gilman, and his roots in Central Illinois “go deep.” President Mark suggested 100% attendance by WGRC members, and asked voluntary contributions to RF in support of President Devlyn’s Avoidable Blindness Task Force.



Past President Nina Eisner, President Jennifer Shelby of C-U Sunrise, RI President Frank Devlyn, and President Mark Stolkin

On that special evening, President Mark called the meeting to order. With David Thies at the piano, PDG Frank Keck led the gathering in his dynamic rendition of "Smile," after which Mark introduced the presidents of the other host clubs. The program included many presentations, including a RF Certificate of Appreciation to Kathe Keck for the Uganda Project and 11 Paul Harris Awards, including one to Immediate Past President Nina Eisner. The hosts presented a check for \$1,500 to President Devlyn for his Avoidable Blindness Task Force. Devlyn was the sixth Rotary International President to visit Champaign-Urbana while in office, and the first since W. Jack Davis in December, 1978.<sup>43</sup>

RI President Devlyn's remarks included these edited thoughts:

As we enter a new century, our clubs, our communities, and our world have an array of problems that are not being adequately addressed. As Rotarians, we can choose to overlook these problems, or we can do something about them. I hope that as we approach Rotary's 100th Anniversary, we make it our priority to *do something*.

We have the potential to strengthen our clubs, and the credibility to generate public support and implement solutions to problems in more than 29,500 communities of the world. We also have the extensive international network to expand our humanitarian actions to all parts of the globe.

Although the International President's visit grabbed top billing, we cannot overlook an unprecedented decision by new Club President Mark who, in a bold, although characteristically brash, act, named Bobby Eisner as his "Aide de Camp," inviting him to sit at the head table throughout the year. Overcoming his self-effacing shyness, Bobby accepted the assignment.

Yoshiko Shibanaka was the Club's latest Yanai Exchange Good Will Ambassador, and described her visit as "a precious connection for me." The local clubs' RYE Consortium dispatched a long-term student to Germany. WGRC paid the largest portion of the Consortium expenses, \$1,899, followed by Urbana, then Champaign West. The five area clubs also renewed their determination to combine efforts on a Habitat for Humanity house, now scheduled to break ground in August, 2001. Champaign Rotary's pro-rata share was set at \$20,980 in cash or goods and services. President Mark's Board also voted to participate in the District 6490 Zimbabwe Literacy Project, headed by PDG Paul Luedtke of Urbana. Scott Dahman, Club Literacy Committee chair, was named to represent WGRC.

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<sup>43</sup> See p. 69, *Steps Going Up*.



Tom Good with Ford Escape for  
Action Auction Raffle

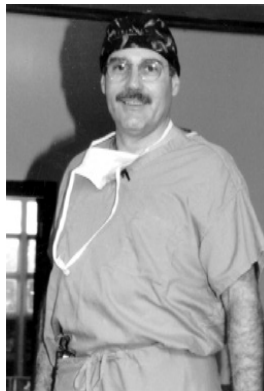
With the RI President's visit behind him, President Mark focused early on Action Auction IX, to which he had assigned a host of committees under Gary Wackerlin. With expectations (a goal of \$135,000) higher than ever, Wackerlin needed something special. That excellent man, Tom Good, drove "something special" smack into the middle of a Monday meeting in The Chancellor's Iowa Room: a new 2001 Ford Escape. With President Mark donating 50% of the vehicle cost, Tom announced a grand raffle of the Escape to help push the Auction to new heights. Tom asked each Rotarian to buy not less than seven \$10 raffle tickets. That would cover the balance of the SUV's cost, and members would have seven chances to win either the Escape or \$20,000.

The primary Auction recipients were selected: Crisis Nursery of Champaign County, \$25,000 for playground equipment at its new facility; Men's SAFE House, \$15,000 for capital improvements; Prairielands Council, BSA, \$8,500 for mowing equipment at Camp Robert Drake; Champaign County CASA, \$6,750 for a video training program and computer workstation. If the Auction was to net enough for these goals, as well as at least \$50,000 to fund WGRC, Inc. for the next three years, net revenues would have to reach more than \$105,000. President Mark then uttered the catch-phrase (originated by Jim Acheson) that he would repeat often during the year: "All we expect is that you donate everything you own, then come to the Auction and buy it back."



President Mark at 82nd Rotary Football Banquet with UI Tight End Josh Whitman and Assoc. Director of Athletics Terry Cole

Another of Mark's priorities was a great Rotary Football Banquet, and for leadership he turned again to Dana Brenner and Joe DeLuce. This 82nd banquet hosted by Champaign Rotary. was held for the fourth year at the Illini Union, and again attracted more than 700 persons, welcomed by President Mark. WDWS radio station manager and on-air personality Stevie Jay kept things running smoothly as master of ceremonies.



Dr. Michael Goldwasser

Honorary WGRCer Michael S. Goldwasser presented a program on Operation Rainbow, which he has served for nine years, averaging more than 50 cleft lip/palate procedures per year. In conjunction with the surgical procedures, the volunteer teams deliver post-graduate education to host country physicians. Said Goldwasser: "I went to school all those years to be able to do things like this." Dr. Goldwasser, and others like him, are living icons of vocational service.

The Rotary Foundation announced that it would need another \$400 million to accomplish its goal of eradicating polio globally by 2005. Through PolioPlus Partners, a special committee of District 6490, District Rotarians continued to support the RF effort. In 1999-2000, the District raised another \$68,753. President Mark said that the target through June 30, 2001 was \$5 per Rotarian in the District, but \$26.50<sup>44</sup> as an original gift for any member joining since June, 1988, the initial campaign year for PolioPlus.



Santa Claus (John Frothingham)  
Visits Annual Family Holiday Party.  
Dan Crispin and Tom Costello  
Have Also Played Santa

At the Annual Family Holiday Party on December 18, PDGs Frank Keck and Bobby Eisner presented Paul Harris Fellow Recognition to 16 members and friends of Champaign Rotary – possibly the largest group of PHFs to be awarded at one time in the history of the Club.<sup>45</sup> The new honorees included five daughters and three wives of WGRCCers. Rotary spouse Suzanne Aldridge was the featured entertainer. John Elder announced that bell-ringing and other donations established yet another Salvation Army Drive record of nearly \$16,000.

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<sup>44</sup> \$26.50 was the amount of the first contribution to the Rotary Foundation in 1917, from the Rotary Club of Kansas City, MO.

<sup>45</sup> As *The Story Continues* goes to press, WGRCC boasts more than 368 Paul Harris Fellows, including at least two major donors who may wear the diamond pin (Rotary Foundation contributions of \$10,000 or more).



Joseph H. Cannon

In early spring, President Mark announced to the Club that Joseph H. Cannon, a member from 1947 until his October 23, 2000 death, left more than \$1 million, or 1/3 of his estate, in trust for WGRC, Inc. – the largest gift of any kind to the Champaign Rotary Club in its 84-year history. The principal would be held in trust, with only the interest available. Mark appointed a special committee to study just how that interest might best be used. Meanwhile, the Board voted to name the Club's Community Service Award in honor of Joseph H. Cannon.



Scott and Annabelle Anderson,  
with Scott Jr. in June, 1998

Mark's Board approved: \$1,000 to support Project Goodstart, a program launched by Scott and Annabelle Anderson to provide breakfasts for grade school children who come to school without this important meal; and \$4,341 to Developmental Services Center for the software and devices necessary to individualize computer training for clients with hearing and motor impairments, including traumatic brain injuries.



Jill Wagner Reads, Children Listen Raptly

Board members also authorized \$500 for a new hands-on project, Illini Read Across America, coordinated by Literacy Committee Chair Scott Dahman. On March 3, Rotarians from WGRC, Urbana, Champaign West, and C-U Sunrise took turns reading to children at the Lincoln Square mall in Urbana. Each club had a station supplied with children's books and a rocking chair for the reader. WGRC's chair was later donated to the Champaign Public Library. The dollar balance after expenses went to The Reading Group. The Champaign Rotary booth also displayed photos and accounts of past RYLA camps, supplied by Denton Brown. The display attracted the interest of parents, all of whom had, or soon would have, children in high school. About 200 children visited the Champaign Rotary Club booth to listen to stories read by Denton Brown, Jill Wagner, Terry Harter, Peter Tomaras, and Scott Dahman, plus Scott's wife, Jennifer, and Pat Shepard, Rotary spouse of Jack Shepard. Several members of Centennial's Interact Club also read and assisted at the WGRC station, and the event earned good media coverage.

On March 7, the Rotary Club of Mahomet became 53rd active Rotary club in District 6490. The Mahomet Club was sponsored by Champaign West Rotary, and WGRC presented a special gift at the charter banquet: an engraved bronze bell.

Interactors provided the program for the April 2 Club meeting. Interact President Jeff Grider ("A club that's all about service") introduced his officers and key activity leaders who reviewed highlights of the year's service projects. Interactors served as senior mentors to freshman and sponsored both a picnic and a freshman dance. They raised \$3,000 at their annual October Chili Supper and sponsored a Winter Fiesta. They rang bells for the Salvation Army and shopped for needy families – groups of three Interactors spending \$200, wrapping gifts, and delivering them to families identified by the Salvation Army. This led to their newest project, Cupid's Kitchen, which found them shopping for food, preparing meals, and delivering them to less fortunate families. The project was so successful that the Centennial Student Council adopted it. Interactor Anna Rudolphi then presented

the prestigious Eugene H. Mellon Award for Excellence in Teaching to Centennial educator Scott Filkins.

At the April 16 Meeting, Doug Nelson led the members in Guy Duker's immortal version of "When IRS Eyes Are Smiling":

When IRS eyes are smiling, Sure now, watch your pocket book.  
Oh, their lilt of fiendish laughter, Lets you know that you've been took!  
When IRS men are happy, You just know you've made their day,  
And if you run out of mo-ney, You can bet there'll be hell to pay!



RYLA Kids Negotiate Team Challenge Course

Continuing its successful encampments, RYLA 2001 took place on back-to-back weekends, April 27-29 (for returning juniors and seniors) and May 4-6 for the 44 sophomores. Then on May 19, WGRC and Interact members came together for a joint dinner meeting at the Centennial High School track, site of the 2001 "Relay for Life." Participants, including cancer survivors, walked laps through the night, pushing "Relay for Life" to record revenues.



George Scheetz Completes  
Relay For Life Leg

Speaking of records, June 1 will go down in history (this one, at least!) as the date of yet another Action Auction phenomenon. All the numbers set records, beginning with the 530 members and guests who attended the marvelous evening, with dinner arrangements by Auction Chair Gary Wackerlin's wife, Karyl. Bob Scherer donated the largest auction item

yet: his motor home. From the astonishing \$190,707 in total revenues, Champaign Rotary realized net proceeds of \$146,911, of which \$55,250 was earmarked for the four lead recipients. The balance of \$91,661 went to WGRC, Inc., for distribution over the next three years. More details may be found on p. 20.



Past RI President and  
Mrs. Cliff Dochterman

The District 6490 Conference was held June 8-10 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Springfield. Springfield lies outside District 6490, but Governor Dan Thornburgh felt that the historic Lincoln sites, and a candlelight dinner at the Old State Capitol, offered a fascinating backdrop for the Conference. A special highlight: Past RI President Cliff Dochterman was the featured speaker at the Governor's Banquet. WGRC highlights were many, including a Club Service Award for "The Future of the Rotary Club of Champaign." Begun by Nina Eisner's focus group discussions in June, 2000, and continued with the Board's planning events during 2000-2001, the project culminated with a presentation to the Club on membership recruitment and retention by Steve Carter and George Scheetz on April 30, 2001. The Club raised \$94 per member in contributions to the Rotary Foundation, easily surpassing the District goal of \$55 and earning the award for the top club in total donations to the RF Annual Fund. Denton Brown became the sixth Champaign Rotarian to be inducted into the District Hall of Honor.

Ending his successful year as Club President, Mark cited as highlights his experiences at the RI Convention in Argentina, the "wonderful opportunity" of hosting RI President Frank Devlyn, and Action Auction IX. He praised the wealth of help and advice offered by members: "You can't stray too far from the right path, or caring input is forthcoming." As for the Auction, Mark said: "I did absolutely nothing, except talk about it. I knew I could watch – with absolute confidence – a well-oiled machine do its thing." In fact, he referred to WGRC as:

a lean, mean fighting force – a very special unit of Rotary International. If I were to choose one word that would describe this year, it would be humbling. In this self-starting, self-motivated group are unbelievably brilliant and hard-working people. The name of Rotary in this community is beautiful, and always will be. I will never forget what a privilege it has been to serve as your president, and I will never forget any of you.



Scott Dahmann, 2000-01 Eisner Award Winner

Mark distributed numerous presidential citations; then he awarded the Eisner Award for outstanding new member to Scott Dahman, and named Gary Wackerlin Rotarian of the Year for his leadership of the incredible Action Auction IX. Scott Anderson Jr.'s "Year in Review" musical slide presentation highlighted many memorable incidents from 2000-2001. Then Tom Cornell (with the debit for the lyrics going to Tom and Jef Farlow-Cornell) led the gathering in a farewell song to the tune of "Bicycle Built for Two":

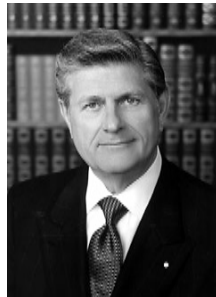
Stol-kin, Stol-kin, Give me your answer, do  
Did you have fun, Being our pres-i-dent  
A host to RI Prexy Devlyn, An Action Auction Smash Hit  
And so we too, admire you,  
Not "good-by-e" Instead – "Shalom."

\* \* \* \* \*

## George H. Scheetz, 2001-2002



From the day George joined WGRC in 1992 (he had been a Rotarian in Sioux City, Iowa), he got involved. He quickly became co-editor of *The Fizz*, taking over as sole editor in June, 1994. Five years later he was elected to the Club Board of Directors, and his energetic enthusiasm propelled him to the presidency. Bob Aldridge put it best: "There are no brakes on that engine." As a harbinger of George's attention to organization, the meeting schedule for his Rotary year was distributed in early May, followed by his ten-page, single-spaced 2001-02 Committee Plan, circulated via e-mail on June 15.



Richard D. King,  
RI President 2001-02

The winds of change blew through the meeting hall as Champaign Rotary's 87th president stepped up. George accepted the gavel on July 2 wearing a star-spangled tie and red, white and blue top hat. That bit of levity belied George's earnest approach to the job, which he amply demonstrated through his July 9 inaugural address, built upon the 2001-2001 theme, "Mankind Is Our Business," and the four challenges to Rotary's business set forth by incoming RI President Richard D. King. Many veteran WGRCers welcomed George's speech as splendid and timely, and, at the request of members, *The Fizz* published all 3,500 words as a special addendum to the July 16 issue. We include brief excerpts:

I share Rick King's conviction that Rotary is necessary for the future...our best days lie ahead. In nearly 200 countries and areas of the world, Rotary is poised for the greatest opportunities to do good in the world of any organization in the history of the human race. *Mankind is Our Business*; our product is service...and never before has there been such a demand for our product.

What is the business that brings us here every Monday? For Dr. Michael Goldwasser, operating on a child with cleft palate, that child is Rotary's business. In a village in India, when a Rotarian places polio vaccine on the tongue of a child, that child is Rotary's business. In our community, Rotarians encourage children to read; they are our business. In Uganda, Rotarians work to help women be self-sufficient; they are Rotary's business. In Champaign, members of five Rotary clubs volunteer to build a Habitat for Humanity house; the family that will live there is Rotary's business.

Every second of the day, Rotarians in some part of the world are helping the lame to walk, the blind to see, the deaf to hear. We clothe the naked, feed the hungry, and heal the sick. We bring hope. Who among us could not bear witness to the positive changes, the happiness, the friendships, the purpose, the nobility that has come to each of us because we are participants in the miracle that is Rotary?

George then covered the four challenges King saw to Rotary's business, beginning with declining membership, and set forth how Champaign Rotary proposed to address each of those challenges. Into the fabric of his speech he aptly wove quotes from Oliver Wendell Holmes, Past RI Presidents Richard Evans and Raja Saboo, Winston Churchill, Herbert Hoover, John Adams, and Charles Dickens, before concluding:

You can expect of your Board of Directors all that we can possibly do to support you...and enhance the World's Greatest Rotary Club and Rotary International...We will listen to your concerns and help you meet difficulties you may encounter...we will not ask anything of you that we are not prepared to do ourselves...I solicit your ideas on how to make our Club grow and prosper...no one has a monopoly on what is best for Rotary...I pledge to you the very best of which I am capable, because, like Rick King, I believe that Rotary is God's work on Earth...Let us then have no regret, no misused opportunities. As Rotarians, we are the most dedicated, competent business and professional people on earth. We can make the second century of Rotary service something never dreamed of, and because of our work, the 21st century mankind's best ever...May we proudly proclaim that, for Rotary International and the World's Greatest Rotary Club, this day and always, *Mankind Is Our Business!*



Jim Acheson

Commenting on George's speech and some of his meeting-format changes, resident Club president counsel/critic Jim Acheson opined, "Every so often you kind of feel that we *are* the World's Greatest Rotary Club. Indeed, the potential exists; the outcome depends on the extent to which members endorse and act upon George's vision. Judgment is necessarily reserved for the next volume of *The Story Continues*. But for now, the editors of this volume embrace Rick King's and George Scheetz's theme, "Mankind Is Our Business," as the finest-ever thematic

expression of the Object of Rotary, and have adopted its emblem for our back cover.

The first challenge cited by Presidents King and Scheetz – declining membership – carries increasing urgency for WGRC, which began the year with just 210 members, far below the peak of 267 in 1989. At the July 9 meeting, PDG Ken Gunji, the District’s delegate to the Rotary International Institute in June, explained changes in Rotary’s classification rules designed to help promote membership gains. Early on, Club leaders attended District and national convocations focusing on Rotary’s Global Quest.<sup>46</sup>

President George instituted various changes in meeting format, starting with the singing of a different patriotic song at the outset of each meeting, rather than using only “America the Beautiful.” Another change was the instituting of birthday tables, whereby on the third Monday of each month, members with birthdays in that month are asked to sit together – this to promote extension of fellowship.

Club Director Donna Anderson reminded members that WGRC’s commitment to Rotary Youth Exchange continues apace with commitments to host long-term inbounder Bruno Zaffora, the fifth student from Azul, Argentina. She asked for volunteers to help provide memorable experiences for Bruno, and also for Yugi Kawamoto, the tenth Yanai student who arrived on July 14 for a month in Champaign. The August 20 meeting was attended by a school-year inbounder from France (hosted by Champaign West Rotary) and WGRC’s outbounder for Belgium, Gabriel Mathy.



Don Judy in Action at the  
2001 Habitat House

Meanwhile, on July 14, District Governor Sandra Broadrick-Allen (Savoy) and officials of the five local Rotary Clubs helped break ground at 1109 North Market Street in Champaign for the Rotary Habitat for Humanity project, with Bob Aldridge and Don Judy spearheading

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<sup>46</sup> See p. 162, *The Story Continues*.

WGRC's involvement. By September 10 the walls were up, with trusses and the roof to be completed by October 10. We are happy to report that the WGRCers who pitched in to help on this home, led by coordinator of volunteers Don Judy and the skillful John T. Schumacher, are too many to list. As Bob Aldridge commented, Champaign Rotarians "stepped up." In fact, so many hands worked together that, within four short months, the home was completed.<sup>47</sup> The dedication took place on November 11, and the Joe Peeples Family moved in a week before Thanksgiving, the target completion date.

This hands-on project responds to RI President King's fourth challenge – building stronger clubs; the media coverage of the event answers the second challenge – enhancing the public image of Rotary. Jeff Ford, Savoy Rotarian and executive director of Habitat for Humanity, told the Club that the summer of 2001 marked a new beginning. With WGRC providing outstanding leadership and the other local Rotary clubs joining in, Habitat now has the seed money to carry its projects for five years. Joe and Karen Peeples devoted 500 hours of "sweat equity" to their home, and will also make purchase payments. In this manner, and with churches and private companies participating as well, the program will be self-perpetuating. Nine homes have been built in the past three years, four are under construction, and six are planned for the summer of 2002.

A Board review of early committee activity noted that the Literacy Committee, again chaired by Scott Dahman, planned to bolster the undersized book resources of public and school libraries in nearby smaller towns. John Wright II's Project Planning Committee began investigating worthy causes to support; a Board member suggested the Rotary Hill Pavilion at Lake of the Woods Park, site of the WGRC Corn Roast and many public and private events, could use refurbishing, perhaps as a hands-on project for Rotarian volunteers. Steve Main, Youth Committee chair, was preparing to present a plan for a radio show for youth leaders.



Jeffrey Farlow-Cornell,  
*Fizz* Editor 2001-02

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<sup>47</sup> As many as 200 Rotarians from the local clubs lent on-site assistance.

One special event that George's administration would focus upon would be a celebration of the 85th anniversary of the Champaign Rotary Club,<sup>48</sup> and to coordinate those arrangements, George named Tom Costello to head a blue-ribbon committee. As we go to press, we do not know whether RI President Rick King will accept George's invitation to be the speaker for the celebration. For 83 of Champaign Rotary's 85 years, the Corn Roast has been a traditional event, and this year's Roast at Rotary Hill in Lake of the Woods Park had added excitement. A ferocious thunderstorm, complete with high winds and nature's best fireworks display, drove corn lovers into the Pavilion for shelter. "It made for much more intimate fellowship," agreed Art Skelton and Jef Farlow-Cornell. The storm blew through, scarcely interrupting the festivities, with corn provided by Dick Burwash for the 38th consecutive year, and frothy refreshment provided by Stu Clark, also for the 38th year. To cover all contingencies, insurance was courtesy of Tod Dawson, who has handled that detail for many years as well.

On July 16, in introducing Sarah Tufte, the Club's newest member, President George debuted a new ceremony intended to attach more significance to a new member's induction as one way to improve member retention. Calling forward Sarah and her sponsor, Bob Aldridge, he recited:

The day a man or woman becomes a Rotarian can be the beginning of many years devoted to service and fellowship. Sarah, it is my great pleasure on behalf of the Board of Directors and members of the Rotary Club of Champaign to welcome you as a member. We welcome you not only for the fine fellowship that we will share, but also for your strong arm that will help us to carry out many projects to make our community, our country and the world a better place in which to live.

Rotary is not a political organization, but all Rotarians are vitally concerned with everything pertaining to good citizenship and the election of good men and women to public office.

Rotary is not a charitable organization, yet its activities exemplify the charity and the sacrifices that one should expect from people who believe that they have a responsibility to help others.

Rotary is not a religious organization, but it is built on those eternal principles that have served as the moral compass for people throughout the ages.

Rotary is an organization of business and professional people pledged to upholding the highest professional standards.

You, Sarah, have been chosen for membership in the Rotary Club of Champaign because your fellow members believe you to be a leader in your special line of activity and because you manifest those qualities of head and heart that fit you to interpret and impart the message of Rotary.

You are the representative of your vocation in this Club and any information of an educational value pertaining to your craft must naturally come to us through you. At the same time you become an ambassador from us to your classification, and we rely on you to carry the principles and ideals of service, which we here inspire, to those who share your profession.

We also expect you to give us the inspiration that will help us to become better Rotarians, and it is with this hope that I ask your sponsoring member, Bob Aldridge, to invest you with the distinguishing badge of a Rotarian — and I gladly offer you the right hand of Rotary fellowship.

Fellow Rotarians, it gives me great pleasure to present to you Rotarian Sarah J. Tufte, assistant director of human resources, Parkland College.

On August 30, Sarah, along with some 50 of her WGRC colleagues, joined members of C-U Sunrise Rotary at 2 Main, a newly opened refreshment emporium in downtown Champaign, for a renewal of the "Rotary After Hours" social hour started by Tom Costello in 1998. This

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<sup>48</sup> The Club's first meeting took place on December 11, 1916; the Club was chartered on February 1, 1917.

proved an effective fellowship mixer, and members suggested that President George schedule more such opportunities.

Throughout the fall, RI President Rick King's third challenge – improving the level of training and education in Rotary clubs as a way to increase member commitment – was being met to an appreciable extent by brief background reports (the Rotary Moment on the ABCs of Rotary) each Monday on such basics as the history of the Rotary wheel emblem, the Four Way Test, and so on. And on October 15, with Jim Keene absent because of illness, Scott Anderson Jr. moderated a special program, “Renewing Our Rotary Vows,” presented by several past presidents.



WGRC's Past District Governors: Bobby Eisner, Art Skelton, Frank Keck, and Ken Gunji

During her October 8 official visit, District Governor Sandra Broadrick-Allen thanked those Past District Governors in the room – Frank Keck, Ken Gunji, Bobby Eisner and Art Skelton – for the district that they had presented her. She also praised President George for his comprehensive approach, based on the Planning Guide for Effective Rotary Clubs, to meeting RI President King's challenges, saying “I would be very proud to present the Presidential Citation to WGRC in June.”

At the end of October, the East Central Illinois Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals chose the Champaign Rotary Club as the Outstanding Philanthropic Organization. President George accepted the honor at the 10th Annual Philanthropy Day<sup>49</sup> Awards Luncheon on November 16 at the Champaign Country Club. The record proceeds of Action Auction IX, and the Club's thoughtful distribution of those and other funds, positioned WGRC to earn this noteworthy award for a second time. The occasion was richly flavored by Rotary:

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<sup>49</sup> The purpose of National Philanthropy Day is to recognize the tremendous impact philanthropy has on American society and to honor those who contribute their time, talents and treasures to their communities. WGRC previously won the award in 1996.

the award was presented by Jeffrey Farlow-Cornell, AFP past president; Gary Wackerlin, current AFP president, had directed the Action Auction; and AFP National Assembly Representative Mark Neville had composed an Action Auction song. Champaign West Rotarian Jane Bernthal won the Outstanding Individual Fund Raiser Award for Relief for America, a project she initiated and led, with monetary and manpower support from WGRC. Other WGRCers, including Art Skelton, attended.



Steve Main Describes "Straight Talk,"

At the September 24 meeting, Steve Main described the Club's newest youth project, an idea he brought from a similar project he had spearheaded as a Cumberland, MD, Rotarian a few years earlier. Champaign Rotary, along with *The News-Gazette*, would offer community youth a radio voice by sponsoring "Straight Talk" on WDWS-AM. Two students from each of 12 Champaign County high schools (including six Interactors in leadership roles), and also representatives from the Don Moyer Boys and Girls Club, would alternate as producers on a committee that decides what subjects to discuss and how to present the subject matter. An adult committee (including five WGRCers) with backgrounds in health, education, law enforcement, and social services would provide facts and figures specific to the subject matter the students choose.

Diane Ducey, disk jockey with WHMS-FM, would host the program, mainly handling technical aspects, Main reported, "so that the teens will be free to think, listen and talk." The adults would not edit what the students talk about, other than reasonable oversight of good taste. Steve will insist that the students include someone who has lived whatever experience they will discuss. Although the on-air teens will have background information, "Straight Talk" hopes to focus more on what call-in listeners bring to it. The September 27 *News-Gazette* ran a feature article on "Straight Talk," with a color photograph of the five student producers of the September 29 program.

Working with the City of Champaign, John Orrill's Environmental Protection Committee agreed to adopt a mile of an arterial street for quarterly cleaning. Champaign Rotarians planned to perform their

first cleanup on December 8, along Mattis Avenue from Kirby Avenue to Windsor Road. Other events scheduled as this active half-year wound down: a social gathering at Jillian's on December 13, and the (now) traditional Family Holiday Party on December 17, the final official Club meeting of 2001.

Before those December events, Champaign Rotary sponsored its 83rd UI Football Banquet on November 26, a vibrant celebration of the Illini's undisputed Big Ten Championship and coveted slot in the Bowl Championship Series. Kurt Kittner, who led his team to more career victories than any quarterback in UI history and earned MVP honors, carried the championship trophy as the players marched into the ballroom. Coaches lavished praise and awards on the 18 seniors who had brought the team from 0-11 in 1997 to this year's 10-1 – with the opportunity to become the first UI team in history to win 11 games. As Master of Ceremonies Jim Turpin put it, "It's been a hell of a ride." A record crowd of 824 Rotarians, fans, players, coaches, and players' families cheered not only highlight videos and Chancellor Nancy Cantor's stirring remarks, but also a Rotary Moment presented by WGRC President George Scheetz. All in all, this first banquet of the 21st Century was an historic event, worth holding the presses to include it in *The Story Continues*.

We conclude with a follow-up on "Straight Talk." For that first program on September 29, student moderators had chosen "Relationships" as the broad topic. But on September 11, the horrific terrorist attacks struck our nation and indeed, the entire community of mankind. Exigencies of thought and action in the aftermath of these tragic events superseded planned schedules and pushed aside other concerns.<sup>50</sup> The teens switched their subject to terrorism and its fallout, as Americans young and old looked upon their futures from a new perspective, all seeking ways to recover, to respond supportively, to act in some constructive manner.

The dismay that saddens the soul of our wounded nation renders less celebratory the holiday-season publication of *The Story Continues*. Nevertheless, we have every confidence that Rotarians of many nations will be in the forefront of international efforts to assuage the grief of those who suffer, to rebuild what has been destroyed, and to address the religious and political conflicts that lead to such unimaginable human tragedies. *The Story Continues* looks back; we cannot alter the history it reflects. With both hope and resolve, we look to a future founded upon the globally relevant principles of Rotary. Surely many Champaign Rotarians will follow avenues of service into that future, creating the history that will continue their story.

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<sup>50</sup> The topic of the October 27 show was "Music," and "Relationships" aired on November 24. State Representative Tom Berns and Congressman Tim Johnson both have sent letters of support for "Straight Talk."

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## **PART III: PRINCIPAL PROJECTS**

### **Women in Rotary**

We include this promised section here although the assimilation of women into a formerly all-male organization is not “a project.” In fact, the opposite is true: the transition, viewed early on with apprehension by some, caused scarcely a blip on the administrative radar screens of most clubs, and “the new order” spread rapidly even to more chauvinistic nations. In the Rotary Club of Champaign, women quickly assumed positions of leadership and responsibility, adding their distinctive abilities and sensibilities to every committee and project.

Briefly, here is how and when Rotary International (RI) officially removed its gender barriers. Proposals to admit women were first made to the Council on Legislation in 1972 without success. Some years later, in defiance of RI Bylaws, the Rotary Club of Duarte, CA, admitted three women to membership. RI revoked the Club’s charter, and the Duarte Rotary filed a blocking action against RI. In 1983, the California trial court ruled that Rotary’s membership policies did not violate state law. But in 1986, the California Court of Appeals reversed the lower court’s decision. The California Supreme Court refused to hear the case, and RI presented its appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court. On May 4, 1987, the Supreme Court ruled against Rotary International, validating the Duarte Rotary Club’s admission of women to membership and setting a precedent that would cause other all-male organizations in America to accept qualified women members.

In late 1988, Canada legally ended the “adult male only” rule for Rotary membership, and the January 1989 Council on Legislation in Singapore drafted an amendment to the RI Constitution and Bylaws removing the “male only” membership provision. The amendment was adopted by the RI Board of Directors as of July 1, 1989, thereby permitting any Rotary Club in the world to admit qualified women members. Also, Group Study Exchange (GSE) teams could include both men and women – initially, all men or all women. Secondly, women could be GSE team leaders. Thirdly, team leaders could be accompanied by a spouse; however, that would reduce the number of non-Rotarian professionals from five to four. Today, women make up half of the participants in the Rotary’s GSE program.

By January 1990 there were 17,000 women in Rotary worldwide. During the 2000-2001 year that number had topped 103,000, including 2,000 club presidents. The first woman nominated as District Governor was Virginia Nordby by the Rotary Club of Ann Arbor North, MI, who took office in 1995. Today, women governors oversee 20 Rotary districts. Champaign West Rotary was the first club in District 6490 to induct a woman: Dorene A. Kuffer, a public defender. She was followed by

Bonnie Kelley and Nancy Martin of Champaign Rotary. WGRC's third woman member, Jan Bahr, became its first woman president in 1992-93.

Involved in all programs of Rotary, women are also recipients of services provided by Rotary clubs. The RI Board encourages Rotarians to identify the needs of women in their communities and to develop responsive projects and programs focusing on education, health, economics and self-development. *Rotary's Service to Women* pamphlet outlines recommendations made by the 1996 RI Women in Future Society Committee, suggesting ways Rotarians can address issues related to women in their communities.



Governor Frank Presents Jean Harris Award to Ruth Dobbins of Champaign

To encourage clubs to focus on women's issues, the RI Board established two awards: the district-level Jean Harris Award, which recognizes outstanding contributions by individual non-Rotarian women, and the Rotary Award for the Advancement of Women, which annually recognizes one outstanding club project worldwide that advances the development and progress of women.

Rotarians interested in learning more about women and Rotary should access the website:

<http://www.rotary.org/newsandinfo/downloadcenter/pdfs/682en.pdf>

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## **PolioPlus**

Launched in 1985, the PolioPlus program remains the highest priority of Rotary International (RI) and the Rotary Foundation (RF). The Global Polio Eradication Initiative, spearheaded by the World Health Organization (WHO), RI, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, and UNICEF, has become the largest health initiative in world history. According to WHO's Director General, "Rotary's example has become the model for international public-private sector partnerships."

In June 2000, WHO announced a tracking initiative to certify the world polio-free in 2005, which coincides with Rotary International's goal to rid the world of polio by its 100th anniversary. The Americas were certified polio-free in 1994; the Western Pacific Region, including China, by the end of 2000; and Europe is on track to be certified in 2002. But four northern states in India, countries in sub-Saharan Africa affected by conflict, and Bangladesh, Nigeria, and Afghanistan, and Pakistan need particular attention.

As of July 1, 2001, the number of polio cases worldwide had decreased 99% since 1988 when there were an estimated 350,000 cases annually. Fewer than 3,500 cases were reported in the year 2000, down by 50% over the previous 12 months. This reduction is credited to the World Health Assembly's call in 1999 to accelerate eradication efforts, including increased rounds of National Immunization Days (NIDs). More than two billion children have been immunized against polio during NIDs from 1995 to 2000. Last year, a record 550 million children under five were immunized during intensified NIDs in 82 countries. This included India, where 147 million children were vaccinated in a single day, and a synchronized effort across western and central Africa which immunized 76 million children in 17 countries.

The greatest challenge still lies ahead: reaching all children, especially those in war-torn areas; closing \$400 million funding gap; and maintaining political commitment in the face of a disappearing disease. Four central and southern African countries along the Atlantic coast will hold NIDs in a race to protect all children within their borders from polio by 2005. The Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola, Congo (Brazzaville) and Gabon signed a protocol committing their countries to synchronization of NIDs in July, August and September, 2001. In Angola and D.R. Congo, slow progress has been made in vaccinating the children of families fleeing the fluid front lines of the wars in those nations. Cease-fires in such nations, and now perhaps also in Afghanistan, must be negotiated to hold NIDs, and health workers face the daunting task of delivering vaccine amid collapsed health and communications infrastructure. The four countries will also organize immunization efforts with neighboring countries, targeting migrant and displaced populations, primarily the more than 250,000 Angolan refugees who have fled into Zambia. So far, funding by the RF and

through the PolioPlus Partners program to these countries totals more than \$12.2 million.

By 2005, Rotary's contribution to the global polio eradication effort will be about one-half billion dollars. Just as important, millions of dollars of in-kind and personal contributions have been made by Rotarians, local Rotary clubs and districts. Rotary's unprecedented role in mobilizing ordinary citizens to help with this effort has resulted in 10 million volunteers coming on board each year. The partnerships and supportive infrastructures formed to eradicate polio have been recognized by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan as a model for addressing other health issues in the 21st Century.

Even if the media does not always recognize Rotary's contributions, we can rejoice in knowing that Rotarians have made the difference. Rotary is – and will remain – committed to seeing this humanitarian effort through to the end. Champaign Rotarians may take justifiable pride in the inspirational performance of WGRC as a Model Club in 1987-88.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> See pp. 59-60, *Steps Going Up*. And in a footnote to a footnote, Walter Maddocks, the initial executive director of PolioPlus who spoke to WGRC in March, 1987, was the featured speaker at the Charter Installation Banquet for C-U Sunrise Rotary on December 1, 1987.

## Hands Across the Americas: The Azul, Argentina, Connection

“We are grateful to have received the second ultrasound scanner, and I formally accept your donation of the three infant warming tables, all of which will be very important to our needs.” This message from Dr. G. Noemi Signoretti, director of the Hospital Zonal Especializado Materno Infantil “Argentina Diego,” Azul, Argentina, to the Rotary Club of Champaign, understates the remarkable exchange of people, sophisticated medical equipment, and international good will spanning nearly 30 years.

It all began “once upon a time” when Art Skelton befriended Enrique Mario Alfieri, an Argentinian student at the UI from Olavarria, a town near Azul. Advance in time to January 1977 when Dick and Anne Tryon agreed to host IYE student Maria Luisa Larsen of Azul. The Tryons – with hearts as big as their home – had already promised to host Gabrielle Sladden, another school-year inbounder from Australia. In addition to the Tryons, Maria lived with the WGRC families of Ron and Anita Bates, Frank and Kathe Keck, and Dick and Sue Knieriem. Maria returned to Argentina, married, and gave birth to three children in Azul, one of whom required special attention at the pediatric hospital.

Jump ahead again, to February 1989. The Tryons visited Maria in Argentina, and as she showed her *norteamericano* parents the wonders of the Pampas, she introduced them to their next IYE “daughter,” Malena Omoldi. Malena’s uncle, Dr. Oscar Omoldi, introduced them to Dr. Signoretti, then director of the Hospital Zonal Especializado Materno Infantil (specializing in pediatrics). When Dick saw nine premature infants struggling to survive in hand-fashioned masks connected to an oxygen cylinder, he knew that Rotary could find a better way. Dick reports: “I found a well-trained and determined medical staff, but an appalling lack of equipment in the neo-natal care unit. The staff knew what equipment they needed and how to use it; they just lacked the funds to acquire it.”

Dick lost no time, seeking counsel from WGRC obstetricians Jack Brodsky and Carl Greenstein. They directed him to Dr. Nestor Ramirez, Mercy Hospital’s neo-natal staff leader who came up with two incubators, surplus equipment from the Mercy-Burnham merger.<sup>52</sup> The value of these machines exceeded \$120,000, but Dr. Signoretti’s hospital lacked funds to pay even shipment and installation. Dick organized arrangements; President Cal Owens’ Board authorized \$1,000 for expenses; and crates were constructed. Colwell Systems people prepared shipping documentation and loading. Dick persuaded the Argentine Embassy in Washington, DC, to ship the crates as diplomatic baggage

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<sup>52</sup> Mercy-Burnham became Covenant Medical Center which became Provena Covenant Medical Center in October, 1997.

– cheap, but safe shipping by boat to Buenos Aires. Rotarians from the Azul Club (District 4950) received the equipment and got it to Azul where it was installed at the hospital. In the spring of 1990, the Omoldi family came to Illinois to attend Malena's graduation from Centennial High School and to personally thank Champaign Rotarians for providing the life-saving incubators to their neo-natal clinic.

This story was far from over. In 1993, Tryon learned that Dr. Signoretti had no ultra-sound scanners, vital for pre-natal sonographic detection of cardiac and abdominal abnormalities. Tryon located a \$100,000 Picker-Artis ultrasound multi-modality scanner, but even reduced to \$34,000, the price was too high. Enter Champaign Rotarians Jack Pollard and Joe Beard, CEOs respectively of Carle Clinic Association and Covenant Medical Center. Each came up with a phased-out scanner – one Picker, one Doppler – at no charge. Rotarian Bud Leister coordinated transport in the U.S., and Azul Rotarians facilitated on the receiving end. In February, 1995, Maria Larsen de Lier welcomed Dick and Anne Tryon back to Azul in time to witness both the arrival of the first scanner and Maria's induction as the second woman member of Azul Rotary.

Another highlight of this latest Azul sojourn was the introduction of Lucila Acuña as the third IYE student outbound for Champaign. Hosted by the Tryons, Scott and Donna Anderson, and Doug and Janet Nelson, Lucila became so proficient in English that she matriculated at a Buenos Aires university that teaches exclusively in English to prepare graduates for leadership roles in government, industry and education.



Dick Tryon with Lucila Acuña

Early in 1996 Dr. Ramirez, a Champaign West Rotarian, rescued from surplus inventory three infant warming tables that support newborns removed from incubators. These were shipped to the pediatric hospital in care of Dr. Signoretti. International shipping involves time, the liaison of numerous governmental agencies, and a fair amount of diplomacy. This time around proved difficult but, as Scott Anderson Jr. said, "This is

typical of Champaign Rotary: when we perceive a need, someone figures out how to make it work.”

As related elsewhere in this volume, five friends from Azul attended the 1998 District 6490 Conference and the May 4 WGRC Club meeting, at which Maria Luisa Larsen de Lier presented the program. She was accompanied by Jorge Pablo Escalante, president, Rotary Club of Azul, and his wife, Azucena Maria Esnal de Escalante; Rodolfo Piazza, Club president-elect; and Elsa Santamaria de Fernandez Lutz, Club secretary. [We note that women appear to be as important to Rotary in South America as they are here at home.] Maria said that the Champaign-Azul connection had grown into a continuing, District-to-District project. “We all thank you,” she said, “for your spirit of service, for your wonderful hospitality, and for receiving our youth into your homes. You have made us feel like family and have demonstrated, once again, that the distance between us shortens when love flourishes among us.”

Dick Tryon downplays his pivotal role, saying,

No big deal. It’s rewarding to see what can grow from an IYE seed. Malena Omoldi has hosted us three times in Mar del Plata, and is now running her own travel agency. Maria Larsen’s daughter, Belén, is now sharing her college room in Buenos Aires with our granddaughter, Charmaine, who is interning with the major Buenos Aires newspaper. From the day Art Skelton asked me to help find a host for Maria Larsen, that seed has bloomed to include three generations of our family – evidence of the beauty of the Rotary design for the exchange program. This project should be named the Arthur Skelton International Understanding Testimonial in honor of his outstanding Rotary career.



Dr. Nestor Ramirez

The complexities of current Argentine politics preclude shipments of more medical equipment. Nevertheless, at the 2001 District 6490 Conference, Nestor Ramirez entered the District Hall of Honor, partly in recognition of his efforts in securing neo-natal equipment for the only children’s hospital serving a geographical area some 400 miles in diameter.

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## Rotary Ambassadorial Scholars

Since 1947, RI has funded 33,000 full-year study-abroad scholarships at a total cost of \$335 million. This award is intended to cover round-trip transportation, tuition, fees, room and board expenses, and some educational supplies up to \$25,000. In 1999-2000, 1,162 students from 67 sponsoring countries spent a year in 75 host nations. Many Rotarians do not know that the Rotary Foundation also sponsors Cultural Ambassadorial Scholarships for either three or six months of intensive language study and cultural immersion in another country. Funds are provided to cover round-trip transportation, language training expenses, and home-stay living arrangements, up to \$12,000 for three months and \$19,000 for six months. Applications are considered for candidates interested in studying Arabic, English, French, German, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin Chinese, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Swahili, and Swedish.



Brownie Davis

If the Azul Connection hints at some of the benefits of Rotary-sponsored exchanges of youths of high school age, we cannot omit one powerful illustration of the impact of the Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar program. Brownie Davis was a WGRC-sponsored Rotary Scholar to England in 1990-91. Her story indicates what scholars can offer to their hosts, as much as what they can learn by living abroad. Already an award-winning teacher of the handicapped at Champaign's Carrie Busey School, Brownie wrote from England:

Thoroughly enjoying my studies in special education at Westhill College, where I am considered a "teacher fellow" with access to all the tutors, yet with the freedom to visit special schools for children with severe learning difficulties all over the country. That allows me to pursue specific interests, including autism. I have spoken on "Special Education in the U.S." at a teacher training workshop in Liverpool, and will be doing more of this. Rotary wives...have been instrumental in providing contacts in special education and I have attended an Inner Wheel luncheon at Kings Norton where the speaker's topic was "Conductive Education" a relatively new approach to special ed in England. I have addressed seven Rotary Clubs and attended the District Conference in Torquay, and am slated to address at least six more clubs. Sharing a bit of myself with Rotarians, students and educational professionals has been grand. Everyone has been "dead" wonderful, and this is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Thanks to all, and I hope I can live up to the ideals of world understanding and good will that Rotary embodies.

Sincerely, Brownie Davis.

This caring, sharing ambassador discovered as much about herself as about her host nation. She learned that the backbone which emboldened her to deepen her knowledge base housed a resolute marrow of pride and patriotism. Here are excerpts from her April 1991 letter that nearly filled a *Fizz* issue:

Diary Entry, January 17, 1991

The [Gulf] war started yesterday and last night Israel was attacked by Iraqi scud missiles. It sounds pretty grim, and being American here inspires many negative jokes and comments...the students here, in particular, seem dismissive of their own country's role...but I am proud of my country, and I will not back down from this if confronted. It is difficult being in another country for an extended period...even more difficult to be away from home during a crisis, much less a war. The emotional tie to the daily mail delivery and being separated from loved ones is an experience difficult to describe... the intense loneliness you feel when communication from home has been cut off, however briefly, is one of the most profound emotions I have ever experienced.

As a Rotary Scholar and "ambassador of good will," I must keep my opinions about the war to myself...it is a very emotional subject here.. America is often misunderstood, and I do not have enough answers to win a debate. There is no flag waving here, no patriotic song on the radio to urge on the British forces, no feeling of zeal...only a job to be done, a sad one, and one that "someone else got us into." I do not believe we have sent men and women to fight and die for a worthless cause... this is not America. I believe in my countrymen, in the right of people to govern themselves, and I believe in helping someone out.

I believe in freedom, in the United Nations and the commitment to world peace. I do not believe in submitting to tyranny without a fight. Being in a foreign country has heightened my sense of patriotism. While they sing "God Save the Queen," I am singing "My Country 'tis of Thee." I miss "The National Anthem" and The Pledge of Allegiance. I miss the safety of home. In my mind, I see flashes of the Vietnam Wall, the statue of the men raising the American flag at Iwo Jima, and the rows of white markers in Arlington Cemetery. Strength, pride and courage are in those symbols, and yet so is incredible sadness.

A couple of weeks ago at a small Methodist church, we sang a hymn with a verse I had to write down. As a small ray of sunshine spread its warmth through the church window, it seemed as if the world stood still for just a moment in my heart as I sang, and longed for the woods and hills of my Georgia home:

"He reminds us every sunrise that the world is ours on lease; For the sake of life tomorrow may our love for it increase; May all races live together, share its riches, be at peace; May the living God be praised!" (F. Pratt Green, 1903 -)

It is difficult to imagine that we could send out any student with a better grasp of what both America and Rotary stand for. Today her name is Brownie Kocher, and she still works in special education as an inclusion facilitator with the Hickman Mills School District in Kansas City, MO. Our thanks to Bill Krahling for recording Brownie's letters in *The Fizz*; following the events of September 11, 2001, we empathize all the more with her feelings from 10 years before.

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## Rotary Youth Exchange

The foregoing text includes many references to Rotary Youth Exchange (formerly International Youth Exchange), but a few words here seem in order. From the Robson-Perkins exchange highlighted in *Steps Going Up*,<sup>53</sup> through the many short-term exchanges (especially the Corbeil-Essones exchanges of the 1990s) and the Azul and Yanai connections, WGRC has deeply involved itself in this internationally honored service to youth. Incidentally, in the ensuing years, Peter Robson and Phyllis Perkins both revisited their host countries more than once; both are Paul Harris Fellows. Most recently, Phyl Perkins became a permanent resident of Australia, having married (on March 10, 2001, aboard *Commissioner II* in Sydney Harbour) Paul Stuart Hulonce, whom she first met during her IYE year.



Phyl Perkins Receives Paul Harris  
Recognition from Tom Costello  
and Peter Tomaras

Although most Rotarians understand the benefits of RYE to the inbound/outbound students, and those Rotarians who have been hosts know first-hand the rewards of that experience, the one thing that prevents more involvement in RYE by WGRC is the daunting task of finding host families. Just ask Club RYE activists Tom Good, Bob Rydell, Tony Peressini, Maria Dowd, and Donna Anderson. Our District, with the leadership of Monticello Rotarian Keith Hutson, established a tremendously active IYE program through the 1970s and 1980s. Then came a period of diminished activity, and one of Ken Gunji's goals as District Governor in 1992-93 was improving RYE participation.

While Champaign-Urbana is a marvelous community for both short- and long-term inbounders, opportunities to host young people exceed WGRC's ability to come up with host families, which means reaching out to non-Rotarian homes. Fortunately, Rotarians in many smaller clubs in the District (Hoopeston, Villa Grove and Monticello are prime examples) have opened their homes to the stream of students arriving in C-U. The

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<sup>53</sup> See p. 64, *Steps Going Up*

newer C-U area clubs have opened still more doors; at the 1996 District Assembly, Scott Anderson Jr. reviewed how our local clubs consortium provides financial support for long-term exchanges, making possible participation by smaller clubs like Sunrise.

But finding host families remained difficult. In a frank evaluation of Champaign Rotary as the World's Greatest Rotary Club, despite extraordinary involvement by some Club members, we find that WGRC's commitment to and participation in RYE exceeds that of many Rotary clubs, but falls short of being "great."

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## Operation Rainbow: Missions of Mercy



Dr. Bill and Charlotte Johnson

There is no better example of how caring people can turn personal tragedy into hope and happiness for others than Operation Rainbow. Actually, Operation Rainbow is an international organization which sends medical teams to underdeveloped countries, primarily to administer surgery to children with cleft lip/palate deformities. In Urbana, the Carle Development Foundation maintains The William S. Johnson Memorial Fund to generate money to pay for nurses to travel with Carle's Rainbow team, headed by Michael Goldwasser, D.D.S., M.D., director of oral and maxillofacial surgery, Carle Clinic Association. For 26 years, Dr. Bill Johnson was a member of Carle's department of reconstructive and plastic surgery. Dr. Johnson, a former Champaign Rotarian, died in a 1993 automobile accident along with his wife, Charlotte, the sister of WGRC's Frank Keck. He is remembered as a skilled, compassionate surgeon who cared deeply about his patients and was supportive of the nursing staff.



Dr. Michael Goldwasser

In January 1996, WGRC, Inc. contributed \$3,500 to the Johnson Fund in support of the nursing component of Operation Rainbow. Regina Ross, R.N., staff nurse for the operating room at Carle

Foundation Hospital, was the first beneficiary of William S. Johnson funds. Later that spring, Ross assisted Dr. Goldwasser in a presentation to Champaign Rotary, reporting on their 1995 trip to the Philippines, where the incidence of these genetic disorders is perhaps the highest in the world (one in 300 births, or twice the U.S. rate). The condition is physically and emotionally devastating. On this trip, two all-volunteer teams performed 160 surgical procedures on some 100 children. Dr. Goldwasser introduced a seven-minute film documentary, "Rainbow of Hope," which illustrated how Operation Rainbow changes the lives of the affected children and their families, as well as those of team members. Ross dedicated her trip to the memory of her sister, who died 57 years ago from complications following cleft-palate surgery.



Karyl Wackerlin Blows Bubbles for Child Pre-Surgery

Over the next four years, WGRC gave an additional \$13,500 to the Johnson Fund. In 1997, Gary Wackerlin worked with District 6490, the Manila District in the Philippines, and Rotary International to secure a Matching Grant of \$30,000 to provide medical equipment for Operation Rainbow teams. Gary's wife, Karyl, has traveled on four of these medical missions, twice with the Carle team and once each with teams from Chicago and Canada. In 1997 she helped coordinate the District partnership that led to the Matching Grant by meeting with Rotarians in the Manila area. Page Parkhill, wife of former WGRCer John, and daughter of Bill and Charlotte Johnson, has also been on two of the mission trips with the Carle team.

Volunteers like Karyl and Page pay their own expenses. Karyl has also done professional photography work for Operation Rainbow and for Dr. Goldwasser during surgeries. Karyl produced a video presentation on Operation Rainbow, which she shared with Champaign Rotarians when she and Page spoke to them in the spring of 1998. Karyl later appeared in the WICD-TV presentation, "Mission of Mercy – Operation Rainbow." On July 30, 2001, Karyl was inducted as an Honorary Member of Champaign Rotary.

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## **Rotary Youth Leadership Awards**

In 1960, Australian Districts 258 and 260 shared in establishing a committee that developed the official framework of RYLA: to train youth (ages 14-30) in character, leadership, personal development and good citizenship. These guidelines helped RYLA expand to all Rotary districts in Australia and led to RYLA's approval as an international program by the R.I. board at the 1971 RI Convention in Sydney, Australia. By 1998, RYLA had become an established program in more than half of the 521 Rotary districts worldwide. Also in 1998, then-RI President James Lacy appointed an international RYLA committee, dedicated to improving and expanding this special Rotary program to the entire world.

The District 6490 RYLA Committee needed nearly two years of planning to launch this intriguing youth program. Early organizers included WGRCCers Dean Cavey, Harold Moe, Frank Keck, Gary Wackerlin, and (from April 1996) Denton Brown. Bill Schweizer from Pontiac, the Committee chair, felt that top student leaders already receive plenty of training, so his thrust was to provide a development opportunity to "the roses that haven't yet blossomed." Schweizer needed someone to create the actual leadership training program, and that job fell to Denton.

On November 4, 1996, Denton presented to his fellow WGRCCers "Rotary Youth Leadership Awards." According to *The Fizz*, he used a 5-minute District 6420 video and "a series of well-organized [what else?] remarks." Denton described RYLA as a program involving more than 9,000 young people in 25 countries each year, with these objectives: (1) to further demonstrate Rotary's respect and concern for youth; (2) to encourage and assist selected youth leaders and potential leaders in methods of responsible and effective voluntary youth leadership by providing them with a training experience; (3) to encourage continued and stronger leadership of youth by youth; and (4) to publicly recognize the high qualities of many young people who are rendering service to their communities as leaders. The camps would be educational and social programs that included leadership training, with expenses paid by sponsoring Rotary clubs.



Denton Brown Receives District Hall of Honor Award from PDG Frank Keck

Each District club was asked to send one student who is “a potential leader,” that is, who has the qualities of a leader but who has not yet stepped forward in a leadership role. Students must be high school sophomores of either gender, and should be active participants in school activities, church or community groups, or volunteer organizations. They should be of high moral character, willing to participate as group members, well-informed about current events, and respected by peers. Sons or daughters of Rotarians should be neither excluded nor treated preferentially. John Hecker chaired WGRC’s selection committee.

The first District 6490 RYLA camp took place April 25-27, 1997, at the 4-H Memorial Camp in Allerton Park near Monticello, with 44 high school sophomores. By the following fall, Denton developed RYLA as a progressive program that would invite each class of sophomores back as juniors and seniors. He defined this objective for sophomores: to instill knowledge that students can become leaders of other young people in doing positive things. A lively mix of high-energy leadership games, guest speakers, and Team Challenge courses focused on fundamental leadership skills and teamwork. For juniors, the objective would be to build on the previous camp by taking a deeper look at the fundamentals of leadership and making personal commitments. Problems presented would be more challenging. The objective for seniors would be to instill courage and overcome reluctance to accept challenges that involve personal risk. Sophomores and juniors would spend a full weekend at the 4-H Memorial Camp near Monticello; seniors would spend one day at the Experiential Training Course near Homer.

In Governor Frank Keck’s District newsletter, Peter Tomaras described the 1998 encampment in this way:

Gloomy weather could not dampen the spirits of 64 high school sophomores and juniors who attended the RYLA encampment April 24-26...By the time the sun broke through late Sunday morning, 39 first-year and 25 second-year potential student leaders had learned about public speaking, meeting leadership, conflict resolution and decision making; had engaged in leadership

games and Team Challenge courses; and had discussed career planning, responses to harassment, service project planning, and ethics and personal values.

Along the way they shared meals and songs, enjoyed Friday-night bull sessions with pizza, and Dan Crews' DJ music with dessert on Saturday evening. While Rotarians and other facilitators made RYLA '98 happen for DG Frank Keck, the participating students were the stars who made it "a happening," encountering challenges, seeking leadership attributes within themselves. They did not always come up with optimum responses, but individual and team strengths emerged.

Denton had enlisted a large group of adult leaders, many joined by their spouses, to conduct seminars and run such challenges as a desert survival scenario and two LeaderShape® Team Challenge courses. Students evaluated the encampment at 8.99 on a 10-point scale, with both classes ranking the Team Challenge courses the most valuable segments.

RYLA 1999 hosted 41 sophomores, 19 juniors, and 9 seniors. Denton tried a fall session that attracted 24 juniors and 11 seniors, then decided to return to a spring-only format, starting anew with 45 sophomores in the spring of 2000. In 2001, 22 juniors and 9 seniors attended RYLA April 27-29, followed by 44 sophomores May 4-6. While leadership training is the primary program objective, Denton also saw this "imbedded sub-objective": creating an awareness of other Rotary youth programs, such as Interact, Rotaract, and Rotary Youth Exchange.



Joan Brown Pitches In  
with Denton on 1998  
Dream Houses Project

Over several years of encampments, Champaign Rotarian volunteers have included Dan Crispin, Tom Costello, Harold Moe, Frank Keck, John Elder, Craig Golema, Peter Tomaras, Jean Driscoll, John Ady, Jan Bahr, Scott Dahman, Steve Main and Nina Eisner, as well as Joan, Matthew and Connie Brown (Denton's wife, son, and daughter-in-law).

Following five years of leadership, Denton has moved on to other Rotary challenges, leaving the District RYLA program on solid ground. At the 2001 District 6490 Conference, he was inducted into the District Hall of Honor, recognizing his outstanding contributions to many District projects, including making RYLA happen.

On January 1, 2000, the Rotary International float in the Rose Bowl Parade – "Recognizing Tomorrow's Leaders" – won the Volunteers' Trophy for best floral design depicting the parade theme, "Fabric of America." Ten recent RYLArrians rode on the float. RI has been "floating" for more

than 20 years, because, in the words of RI President Frank Devlyn, "This is one excellent way to showcase Rotary's finest contribution to the 'fabric of America' (and of the world): the commitment to developing young leaders." Twenty years ago, Rotary seldom called attention to itself. Today, increasing public awareness of Rotary is highly relevant to RI's membership problem. People aware of Rotary's good works may be attracted to serve through Rotary.

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## The Uganda Project: Matching Grant No. 10050

The Rotary Foundation's Matching Grants for International Humanitarian Projects intend to benefit the economically disadvantaged, providing assistance that is not being met by other sources. The criteria include significant Rotarian involvement and monitoring by Rotarians of clubs/districts in two countries: one country will be the project (benefiting) country, and one will be the international sponsoring country. Since 1965, some 12,000 Matching Grants projects totaling more than \$100 million have been funded in 165 countries – 2,300 grants valued at nearly \$17 million in 2000-2001 alone.

In 1997, Kathe Keck, wife of Champaign Rotarian and then District 6490 Governor Frank, traveled to Uganda with seed money from a Carl P. Miller Discovery Grant to investigate a potential international service project. Kathe is a knitting-machine expert, and she wanted to do a third-world project. One day a woman had come to her door asking for knitting machines to take home to Uganda. The woman happened to be a Rotarian, and the rest, as Kathe says, is history – hundreds of people coming together in a humanitarian project that represents what Rotary is all about.

Kathe's exploratory trip ultimately resulted in Matching Grant No. 10050, an exemplary illustration of how this linked-district program should work. Her recipient community was Kabale, Uganda, in District 9200, where the local Rotary club was fostering an incipient income-generating/literacy activity. Kathe knew she could teach disadvantaged women how to earn income; she also felt Champaign Rotary and District 6490 could do much to boost literacy. What she envisioned would require knitting and sewing machines, supplies (including yarn, mosquito netting and chemicals), and literacy kits, computers, and books. The school supplies were sorely needed: she had seen 250 children in just one nursery school.



Kathe Keck Sorts Books for Uganda

Kathe first needed to sell the project to District 6490, then to the Rotary Foundation for matching funds. On November 9, 1998, she gave the Club an update: the District had adopted her Uganda project; she had \$8,000 in hand; and she needed Champaign Rotarians' help in boosting that to \$12,000 before she applied for a RF Matching Grant. Her immediate need, however, was for books and literacy packs (paper, crayons, markers, scissors, glue, etc.), and she asked WGRCCers to bring such items to Club meetings in December. These would go to Kabale for use in nursery and primary schools, as well as village schools for adults, while some books would establish the Kabale Rotary Library.



Loading Boxes of Books:  
Frank Keck and Volunteers

The generous response included donations of left-over used books by Friends of the Champaign Public Library (facilitated by George Scheetz), and the first "Rotary in Action" book-packing session took place on January 23, 1999. Centennial Interactors held a book drive for Uganda schools on January 27, and, after a second packing session on February 13, Kathe sent off the first trans-oceanic shipping container of books, kits, Braille supplies, and a dozen computers. Arriving in June at the Uganda/Rwanda border, the cargo was released by customs and escorted the 90 kilometers to Kabale. Wrote James Ndomeirwe, chair of International Service for Kabale Rotary: "We admire you all for the time taken to collect and sort that big consignment. Thanks a lot for making Kabale a good place to live."

But Kathe and others were just getting started. The second container, shipped in September, 1999, held not only kits, computers and books, but also two basketball goals donated by Porter Athletic Equipment Company, eight knitting machines, and a peanut-butter grinding machine donated anonymously in honor of late Craig Webber, a Past District Governor (PDG) from Urbana. Kathe learned that funds she had allotted for eight knitting machines were not needed. She had asked PassapAmerica, the U.S. importer of the Swiss machines, to post an appeal on its web page under "Good Deeds," for unused mechanical machines, and twelve knitters donated machines.

A local volunteer reformatted the hard drives of donated used computers, installing Windows 3.11 and a common word-processing package. Churches, schools, club groups, and individuals collected the supplies needed for the literacy kits; Rotary clubs and other groups across the country came together to collect *more than 60,000 books*. In Missouri, an appeal by PDG Luther Thompson had residents of an entire town turning out on a cold Saturday to bring books to the town square; another PDG, Jim Gisslasen of Indiana, collected books and computers. A Rotarian trucker donated the shipping of many boxes of books collected in Stockton, CA; a book rescue league in Chicago donated wonderful primary and secondary school books, with the volunteers there packing them.

Everything had to be boxed for placement in the containers, and there were more packing sessions than Kathe can remember. Centennial Interactors, members of the UI Farm House fraternity (thanks to Tom Costello), and Rotarians from several District clubs pitched in. Rather than omit anyone, Kathe asked that we not list names. The first container was loaded at the old Keck Furniture site, the second at a store front donated by Peter Fox, a friend of Rotary. Members of the Lincoln Challenge program helped load that one. On the receiving end, once containers arrived, local Rotarians, Interactors and Rotaractors unpacked them. Books were distributed to 22 schools, and a Rotary Library was established in Kabale. Books donated by the UI School of Veterinary Medicine went to the Veterinary Medical School at Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda. Professor Paul Anderson, a Rotarian from Normal who had accompanied Kathe on the 1997 fact-finding trip, also donated books from his Illinois State University geography department.

Along with all the hands-on assistance, Kathe had raised enough dollars to boost the total Matching Grant 10050 to \$33,040. In December, 1999, she gave Champaign Rotarians an update, using this list of numbers:

- 50,000 books shipped.
- 650 students in Trinity High School, Kabale.
- 500 women in ten villages who are members of Kabale Ana Women's Cooperative Association.
- 30 years that David Tindywabe has taught the blind in rooms provided by Hornby High School.
- 24 computers shipped to Uganda.
- 23 members in the Rotary Club of Kabale.
- 14 knitting machines shipped to benefit the KAWCA.
- 3 volunteers (Kathe and two others) traveling to Uganda at project expense in January, 2000.
- 1 volunteer (Frank D. Keck) traveling "on his own nickel."

WGRC President Nina Eisner praised the project, and Kathe asked members to provide a gift in recognition of David Tindywabe's 30th anniversary of teaching the blind, offering to match donations up to \$300. She got a single gift of \$300 to match her own, and additional contributions of \$750.



Kathe Keck Instructs Knitting Class

Kathe made her second journey to Kabale in early 2000, accompanied by Frank, and friends Jeanne and Phil Oneacre. Jeanne and Kathe would be trainers for the knitting project, while Phil was the computer trainer. Unfortunately, although the second container (with eight needed knitting machines) had been scheduled to arrive in November, it was missing – held up by the Tanzanian government in Dar es Salaam for “overweight.” Kathe had brought 4 machines and yarn on the plane, expecting 20 knitters, two from each of ten villages, for training. When 36 women showed up, Kathe and Jeanne tried to train them with the available machines. Because training proved unworkable with that many, half the women had to be sent home. Kathe and Jeanne were also teaching wives of Rotarians after the regular lessons ended at 4 p.m., and writing lesson plans at night, according to how far the ladies had progressed each day. Before leaving the U.S., Kathe had air-shipped more donated yarn and machines, and that shipment arrived just as the original yarn was at an end. When time came to leave, she had two competent trainers in place and about seven women reasonably well trained as knitters.

At the 2000 District 6490 Conference, Kathe’s Uganda Project earned WGRC an International Service Achievement Award. In her final Matching Grant report to RF, Kathe outlined the future of the project, paraphrased here:

The knitting project: the women in this income-generating project remain eager to succeed; the revolving yarn fund will enable them to borrow money for yarn for their school sweater contracts, or for other items which they will sell. We left them making long sari-like garments, which are very warm and beautiful. No other machines available there can produce this kind of knitting. We determined that the only way to keep the machines from being ruined was private ownership. Women will be allowed to purchase the machines in self-formed groups, with the proceeds going into the Kabale Ana Women’s Group Association to use for other income-generating projects. The Kabale Rotary Club will oversee the project. Passap in Switzerland has ceased making the machines, but PassapAmerica donated \$34,000 worth of parts; those will be shipped with the solar ovens.



The Kabale Rotary Library

The literacy project: the library is good as it is, but needs to become self-sustaining. The librarian is a graduate of Makerere University in Library Science. Local schools will pay for student access to books at the library. It is hard for Americans to understand the great hunger for books; many schools in Uganda have no books at all. The book project is a huge success, as is the computer portion of the literacy project. We placed two computers in the library; one, plus a fax/copier that will arrive with another computer, will generate income from public use. A computer room is set up at a local high school, and students from the community keep the classes full; the teachers we trained will also offer classes to the community at large. Access to computers is one of the most important things we could have done for the people, because with computer knowledge one is assured of a job. Because of power fluctuations in this rural community, we will be supplying UPS units to condition and stabilize the power and prevent ruining the computers.

Update: with additional money supplied by WGRC, the second container finally made it to Kabale. PDG Wes Rush's solar oven initiative led to a second Matching Grant for District 6490 and to the shipping of a third container with 139 solar ovens. The ovens were cushioned with mattresses Urbana Rotary had donated to replace some stolen from the students at the Uganda School for the Blind. Although not part of Kathe's original grant, there was room in the container for 10 computers, more knitting machines and accessories, and the much-needed power stabilizers. Regrettably, the third container is 90 miles from Kabale, held hostage by the complexities of governmental paperwork, and delivery of the coveted ovens, in particular, is in doubt as *The Story Continues* is published.

We have necessarily omitted many of the difficulties and frustrations of this project – some overcome and others still to be resolved. To future scribes we leave the pleasure of reporting the successes and satellite projects that may spring from Kathe Keck's original vision. For now, Project Uganda ranks with Operation Rainbow as the most significant World Community Service/Matching Grant undertakings in WGRC history.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Writes Kabale Rotarian James Ndomeirwe: "We continue to cherish your compassion for the people of Kabale."

## **PART IV: NEW PROGRAMS OF THE ROTARY FOUNDATION**

The Rotary Foundation's 3-H Program (Health, Hunger, Humanity) has so broadened its scope and reach that we could credibly describe it with two more Hs: Harbinger of Hope. As Rotary reaches into the remotest pockets of need, extending its hand to people deprived of what we enjoy as basic rights, one can imagine that many might see in Rotary the very countenance of humanitarianism. With combined annual contributions and investment earnings reaching \$120 million per year, the Rotary Foundation is refining existing programs and enabling new ones. Briefly listing just some of these programs, although WGRC may not presently be directly involved in them, alerts caring Rotarians to the Foundation's expanding vision.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Sources for PART IV include the November 2000 issue of *The Rotarian*, the 1998-99 and 1999-2000 Rotary Foundation Annual Report, and the Rotary International website: [www.rotary.org](http://www.rotary.org)

## **Children's Opportunities Grants**

In 1999, 1,600 Children's Opportunities Grants were established for one year. Grants of up to \$25,000, distributed through Rotary clubs in more than 100 countries, supported projects such as care for orphans and street youths, literacy, vocational training, health care, and prevention of child abuse and child labor. In addition, a grant of \$500,000 from the Children's Opportunities Fund earnings was used to benefit, through the Red Cross, victims of the crisis in the Balkan countries, particularly children. This pioneering exercise led to the creation of the Community Assistance Program, whereby a district may spend a portion of its District Designated Funds on approved projects within its own district or nation. This is a "sea change" in the development of Foundation funding.

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## **Preserve Planet Earth**

RI launched its Preserve Planet Earth (PPE) focus in 1990 to address concerns for the global environment and sustainable development. Through PPE, Rotarians are encouraged to live environmentally-conscious lifestyles, to increase the number and diversity of environmental service projects carried out by clubs, and to promote greater awareness of the critical environmental issues affecting their communities and the planet. One outstanding example:

The Rotary Club of York, PA discovered a successful way to encourage school children to protect the health of the environment. The program, "The Earth and You," taught children the four R's of environmental health: Rethink, Reduce, Reuse and Recycle. The hands-on nature of the program allowed the children to develop a sense of personal responsibility and the consequences of carelessly ignoring the environment.

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## **Literacy for Bangladesh**

Illiteracy is a major obstacle to economic, political and social development, and combating it has been an emphasis of Rotary International since 1986. UNESCO estimates that a quarter of the world's population is illiterate, and millions more are functionally illiterate – lacking the reading and writing skills necessary for everyday life. A 3H Grant funded a unique program in Bangladesh: facing poverty and disease in addition to illiteracy, Bengali and Australian Rotarians introduced the Concentrated Literacy Encounter (CLE) teaching method. Within a three-year period, literacy rates rose from 26 to 55 percent. Significantly, CLE teaches the teachers, ensuring a widening circle of success.

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## **Along the Road to Health Care for Kenya**

The Lokori Primary Health Care program provides people in Kenya's arid, impoverished northwest area their only access to care. A mobile medical program launched in 1993 relied upon a worn-out truck. Creative fundraising by Rotarians in Ireland, a Matching Grant, and help from Kenyan Rotarians provided a new, fully-outfitted all-terrain vehicular clinic. Twenty to 30 times a month, the specially-retrofitted vehicle and health teams make the grueling trek from the Lokori headquarters, diagnosing and treating many diseases and medical conditions.

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## **Rotary Centers for International Studies (In Peace and Conflict Resolution)**

Rotarians have long dreamed of a Rotary-sponsored university or peace institute to work proactively toward world understanding. The Rotary Centers for International Studies (RCIS) provide an unprecedented opportunity to advance the cause of peace and conflict resolution through education. The Foundation has established seven RCIS with recognized universities in diverse geographic locations, and the RF Trustees have committed \$2 million to support administration of the Rotary Centers during a six-year pilot period. The RCIS will help educate the world's future diplomats, professors, and international agency leaders, infusing Rotary's philosophy into their policies and decisions.

In 2002-2003, the first 70 scholars will begin a master's program at these universities: International Christian University, Mitaka, Tokyo, Japan; University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia; University of Bradford, West Yorkshire, England; Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris,<sup>56</sup> France; Duke University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, NC, USA; University of California-Berkeley, CA, USA; and Universidad del Salvador, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Commented Guillermo Makin, professor of political science at the Universidad del Salvador: "Somebody's guerilla is somebody else's freedom fighter, and a religious fanatic is to others a righteous warrior. The study of conflicts and the attempts to resolve them instructs us all."

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<sup>56</sup> This university is commonly referred to as Sciences Po.

## **Urban Peace**

Rotary International's urban peace emphasis focuses attention on community terrorism, domestic violence, ethnic and religious intolerance, deteriorating infrastructures, lack of recreational facilities, hunger, homelessness and unemployment. Rotarians, Rotaractors, and Interactors can demonstrate their commitment to peace by developing a project in any one of these areas. Here are examples of projects:

- "Friends Forever" began in 1986 as a joint project between the YMCA and Rotary Club of Portsmouth, NH, and the YMCA of Carrickfergus, Northern Ireland. Protestant and Catholic youth with strong leadership skills are chosen to attend a retreat in the United States where they learn to overcome the obstacles to peace which exist in their country. Upon their return to Northern Ireland, reunions are organized to help maintain and further develop the friendships formed in the United States.

- An international Rotary Youth Leadership Awards Seminar held at the University of Texas brought together 30 seniors from high schools in El Paso, TX and neighboring Juarez, Mexico. Discussion of a wide range of controversial topics, including race relations, immigration, gangs, and premarital sex, helped to promote a mutual understanding between the U.S. students and their Mexican counterparts.

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## **Teen Suicide: Searching for Solutions**

Boulder, CO, and Melbourne, Australia share a distinction beyond their relative affluence: the highest teen suicide rates in their respective nations. With flexibility extended by the RF, U.S. and Australian Rotarians established a Group Study Exchange (GSE) with teams of youth workers to explore new approaches and exchange ideas. Their ranks included high school teachers, social workers, YMCA staff, and coaches chosen for their dedication to understanding the issues facing young people.

The five-week learning experiences “were not all happiness, hospitality and fun,” according to Stuart Williams, the Aussie team leader. One of the Australian team’s school visits happened to coincide with the first anniversary of the Columbine High School tragedy. “We discussed dark, troubling issues...that were emotionally draining,” remarked Williams. “But we returned home energized with new perspectives and ideas. The challenge is to use what we learned to make a difference.”

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## **In Apartheid's Aftermath**

Although apartheid ended in South Africa in 1994, the boundaries between races prove hard to erase. Tennessean Jake Bohstedt, an Ambassadorial Scholar in Cape Town, saw the racial rifts and economic disparities left in apartheid's wake. He brainstormed with like-minded Paul Turner, also from Tennessee, on how to bring the children of South Africa's varied cultural backgrounds together. Jake was already volunteering at a foster home with primarily Afrikaans-speaking youths, and at another with Xhosa children, and had met children with leadership potential at both homes. They shared a language (English) but otherwise, they might have been from different countries. Jake and Paul envisioned a camp where culturally diverse children could come together in a non-threatening environment with the aim of breaking down barriers.

The two scholars launched "CaTYRPILLAR," the Cape Town Youth Rotary Programme in Learning Leadership and Responsibility that worked on three levels: through songs and games; through workshops on issues such as the environment, racism and the former apartheid system; and through community projects such as picking up trash or volunteering at a homeless shelter. In CaTYRPILLAR's first year, nearly 100 youngsters aged 12 and 13 came together, their selection based not on academics, but on whether they possessed a "special spark." Jake and Paul saw examples of CaTYRPILLAR's life-changing potential, and felt their camps would touch the lives of many more of Cape Town's future leaders.

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## **Rotary Responds to AIDS**

Rotary International supports the efforts of Rotary clubs, working with government health agencies and non-governmental organizations, to increase awareness among their membership and the broader community about AIDS, and to undertake or support AIDS education and prevention programs. Rotarians in Georgia, which ranks eighth among the 50 U.S. states in AIDS cases, organized a panel of HIV-infected young adults to provide first-hand information about the dangers of HIV/AIDS to teenagers in local high schools.

The Interact Club of Sete Lagoas, Brazil, helped develop AIDS awareness by selling stickers with the theme of "Protect Yourself," and distributing pamphlets explaining precautions against AIDS. To help health professionals diagnose and treat HIV-infected individuals, the Rotary Club of Jakarta-Gambir, Indonesia, underwrote the costs of producing a hospital manual. In April 1997, 5,000 manuals were distributed to local hospitals, and will be adapted for public use to educate people on prevention of AIDS.

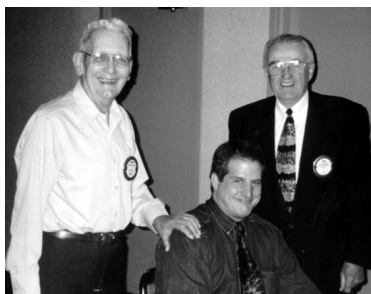
In 1996, Rotary and UNAIDS, the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS, signed a cooperative agreement to work together to save the lives of millions of young people who are at risk. One could speculate that, after a successful conclusion of PolioPlus, the Rotary Foundation might target AIDS as a primary health and humanitarian focus. Indeed, it is as a facilitator and catalyst that Rotary can best help.

Many more Rotary Foundation initiatives may be found in Rotary publications and on its website.

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## PART V: ROTARIAN PROFILES

A Rotarian once portrayed Rotarians as “ordinary people doing extraordinary things.” That fairly describes innumerable Champaign Rotarians. In fact, we could easily compose a book entitled “Profiles in Service” based solely on the contributions to other local, state and national organizations by dozens of Champaign Rotarians. We cannot include all of the many individuals who merit profiles. As just two examples: 1996-99 Club Director John Hecker has headed Champaign-Urbana Crimestoppers since 1987; Ron Kiddoo, who has run WGRC’s football guessing contest for some 15 years, is in his fourth term as Club treasurer, and recently stepped down after 17 years as treasurer of the UI Alumni Association.



Tom Morgan and Marsh Berner with  
Host Neil Stevens of The Chancellor

Some former Club leaders, such as Roger Martin, Thom Brown, and Jim Leffelman,<sup>57</sup> have moved away. Those who are dependably “present” should not be overlooked: Bill Bash, Kyle Robeson, and Tom Morgan lead the way with 32 years of perfect attendance. Bill, along with Morry Hecker and Dwyer Murphy, recently received his 50-year membership pin. Don Moyer Jr. served as secretary of WGRC, Inc. from 1983 to 1996, while Dick O’Neill handled WGRC, Inc. treasurer duties for two decades. And through more than two decades, host Don Judy did everything possible to accommodate the weekly and special-event food and facility requirements of Champaign Rotary at the Chancellor.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Jim Leffelman is now a board member of St. Louis Park Rotary in suburban Minneapolis.

<sup>58</sup> Don Judy retired as General Manager of the Chancellor in 2001.



Ron Kiddoo



Gene Oliver



Morry Hecker



Bill Bash

Others serve so quietly that we lack published information on them. A prime example is Nancy Martin who, for the past eight years, has assumed almost total responsibility for gathering the data, then designing and publishing the *Club Roster*. During those same eight years, Nancy has also served as Club secretary; for 2001-02, she is also WGRC, Inc. secretary. David Hood served six consecutive terms as Club treasurer, then a year as WGRC, Inc. president. Gene Oliver put in five years as Club secretary and 13 as assistant *Fizz* editor. Many members are even less visible as they consistently exemplify "Service Above Self." In sub-titling *Steps Going Up: A Selective History of the Champaign Rotary Club*, Oscar Dodson acknowledged the impossibility of equivalent treatment for all deserving individuals. Readers should understand that the creators of *The Story Continues* have similarly faced that fact, and also that the length of the following exemplary profiles is more a function of available information than a measure of quantity and quality of service.

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## Janice M. Bahr: What Gender Gap?



Jan at Campinas Rotary Club, Brazil

Jan Bahr's leadership is amply described in the recap of her 1992-93 presidency of WGRC,<sup>59</sup> but her professional achievements are so noteworthy that we decided to include at least some of them. Jan's *curriculum vitae* were already impressive when she was proposed for Rotary in 1988: she'd been listed in several Who's Who books and had just received an Outstanding Alumna Award from Viterbo College, La Crosse, WI. She was immediately appointed to the Club's International Hospitality Committee, and within a short time her work in Rotary led to her election to the WGRC Board. All the while, she has steadily added new honors and achievements to her professional résumé.

In early 1989, Jan received the UI College of Agriculture's Paul A. Funk Recognition Award, the most prestigious research award for UI faculty, for her research on improving reproductive efficiency in various species and thereby increasing food production. In 1993, she earned the H. H. Mitchell Award for excellence in graduate teaching and research in the Department of Animal Sciences, as well as election to Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society. The next year ΦΚΦ honored her for Outstanding Leadership and Scholarship. Also in 1993 came the Merck Award for Achievement in Poultry Science. Next, she was inaugurated as 1993-94 president of the Society for the Study of Reproduction, comprised of 2,500 scientists. Jan was named one of 21 University Senior Scholars for 1993-96 by the UI Foundation for her pioneering research.

As though she didn't have enough going on at the UI and in WGRC, Jan became one of three community representatives on the Unit 4 School District's 5-Year Strategic Planning Committee. She has put in eight years on the Board of McKinley/Champaign County YMCA, and 11 years as a director of Provena Covenant Medical Foundation, serving as its 2001 Board chairman. Her long service with the Green Meadows Girl Scouts earned her their Woman of Distinction Award in 1996. She has been cited for her work to help finance relocation of St. Jude Catholic

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<sup>59</sup> See p. 37, *The Story Continues*.

Worker House, and has chaired United Way divisions. A member of the UI Oratorio Society and of her church choir, Jan naturally became one of WGRC's few "singing presidents." She organized the Rotary-Aires and often leads songs at Rotary meetings.

A native of La Crosse, Jan earned her M.S. in zoology and Ph.D. in physiology at UI. She is a full professor in the departments of animal sciences and physiology. Her desk is cluttered with credentials in reproductive biology, and she has edited or written two professional journals, a book, 21 book chapters, and 84 research papers in that field. Jan has performed lead roles with every important national panel in her field (we'll throw in the recognizable acronyms: NSF, USDA, and NIH). She has served as an external examiner of the physiology department at Cornell University. Her work has attracted more than \$3 million in grants to the UI and she has presented seminars to universities and pharmaceutical firms in many countries.

If this woman tires of reproductive research, perhaps she should go into executive search. In 1987-88, her university made her chair of the Search Committee for a new vice chancellor for research and associate dean of the Graduate College. Five years later she chaired the Search Committee for UI provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs. Then during 1994-95, Jan chaired the Consultative Committee to assist in the search for a UI president that resulted in the selection of James Stukel. The following year, no search committee was needed when the UI named Jan Bahr UI's associate vice chancellor for research.

Jan's remarkable balancing act continues apace: she received the 1999 "Book of Golden Deeds" award from the Exchange Club of Champaign – the 13th WGRCer to be so honored. On April 12, 1997, at a tea at the UI President's home, she received one of her most treasured awards: the UI Mothers Association Medallion of Honor, the most prestigious single award given annually by the Association. When she was feted at a banquet five days later, the presenter said: "The Mothers Association is very proud to honor a woman who is able to balance teaching, research and other University duties, and still find time to contribute to the community."

Amen, and wow! Little wonder that WGRC leaders, recognizing her active pursuit of Rotary principles in the Club and the community, nominated her to the Club Board so early in her WGRC tenure. The prospect of becoming the first woman president of Champaign Rotary in no way intimidated Jan Bahr, who is "to the manner born." As we earlier described, she discharged her responsibilities with enthusiastic aplomb and later moved into District 6490 leadership as 1997-2000 Assistant Governor, the first Rotarian chosen by Governor Frank Keck to "Make It Happen."

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## William H. Creswell Jr.: Rotarian and Humanitarian



Bill Creswell

Bill Creswell devoted a quarter-century to Champaign Rotary, and a lifetime to health education. We regret that Bill passed away June 28, 2001, before he could see *The Story Continues*, because he has been an exemplary initiator and “continuer” of Champaign Rotary’s work. Mild of manner and unassuming, Bill was an achiever of the highest order. One of what Tom Brokaw has described as “The Greatest Generation,” Bill served during World War II as a naval aviation radioman. He earned his A.B. at the University of Northern Colorado, his M.S. at UCLA, and his Ph.D. at Stanford. He served on the Northern Colorado faculty for five years, then spent four years in Washington, D.C., as a health association executive and consultant to the National Education Association for the School Health Education Study, which resulted in the development and adoption of a curriculum throughout the country.

Bill then was a professor in the UI Department of Health and Safety Education from 1962 to 1990, serving as department head 1970-1980. He held a joint appointment at UI-Chicago School of Public Health and was a visiting professor at the universities of Wisconsin, Indiana, and Colorado. He was prominent in all state and national public health organizations; had scores of publication credits including *Smoking and Health: A Report of the Surgeon General*; and at the time of his death, was in the process of updating an 11th edition of his textbook, *School Health Practice*, considered “a classic for professional training of health educators.” Among his awards: the Illinois Governor’s Health and Fitness Award in 1981; the American Heart Association’s Service Citation for 1982-83; University of Northern Colorado’s Outstanding Alumnus Hall of Fame Award, 1989; Champaign Rotary Club Rotarian of the Year for 1989-90; the Society for Public Health Education Distinguished Fellow Award, 1991; the ISOPHE Award for Outstanding Contributions to Health Education in 1995; and the Illinois Public Health Association’s honored emeritus member in 1997.

As he joined Champaign Rotary in 1976, Bill said he was attracted by the international student programs, "one of the powerful forces in a world society that reaches beyond governments." Early on, he played a key role with WGRC's Vocational Committee, confirming his commitment to inter-generational, one-on-one contacts with youth. Bill was one of the first people to criticize the popular media for encouraging teen smoking; he campaigned for no-smoking policies for athletes and led a complex study to assess the extent of youth smoking. He waged a professional campaign to document differences education can make to smoking behavior among elementary and high school youth. Little wonder that 1988 WGRC President Cal Owens picked Bill as the ideal person to lead WGRC's Drug Abuse Committee and to later ramrod Project Drug Free in Champaign-Urbana schools.

Bill's greatest service to WGRC and the community was his leadership of the Drug Abuse Committee. Details of this pioneering work are found in Part II, but it bears reporting that WGRC won the 1989 District Community Service Award for Bill's project to train Unit 4 teachers in assisting teenagers to deal with peer pressure and abuse problems. This program, which earned Rotarian of the Year honors for Bill, was expanded and linked to Bill's initiative, Project Drug Free, which won a second District Community Service Award in 1990. The professionally produced Project Drug Free video premiered in July of that year and was distributed to all District clubs, along with the offer of assistance from WGRC in establishing substance abuse projects.

Asked some years later how he saw substance abuse in the future, Bill thought smoking would basically disappear, thanks to research and education showing that it is so uniformly harmful. He expected alcohol will always be with us as a hidden menace, and that most work with illegal drugs was yet to be done. Pessimistic about attacking only from the supplier perspective, Bill advocated concentration on decreasing consumer demand and providing treatment resources and programs for addicts. "There is also need to face societal matters," he said, "that help make drugs the 'substance of despair.'" He urged the Club to continue and accelerate the "Teacher Training in Drug Education" effort as an example for many more clubs. "This is too important," he said, "to leave to just our Club or Committee." At the time of his death, Bill remained active in research and writing as professor emeritus.

Characteristic of a man who cared so very much for his fellow human beings, Bill was a leader of his Community United Church of Christ. Said a colleague, "He was everything at church – moderator, head of building and grounds – he served on every committee." Bill's friends admired his thirst for education – he was as eager to learn and exchange ideas as he was to teach. He was interested in a wide range of issues, including politics, and would sometimes contact people who expressed opinions in speeches or letters to the editor.

In March 2001, Bill wrote a short apologetic letter to inform Art Skelton that he was no longer able to attend meetings. Enclosed were donations to PolioPlus and the June 1 Action Auction. And a month before he died, Bill communicated his concerns about a Rotary Scholar who was experiencing some difficulty in Barcelona. This man stayed concerned and involved until his very last day. The 1989 Fizz tribute to Bill Creswell concluded: "We're proudest that Bill is a prophet with honor in his own land, showing the way in 'Service Above Self' as our 1989-90 Rotarian of the Year." Nearly always smiling, Bill loved family, friends, and life itself; his very work was devoted to helping people enjoy healthier, longer lives. That work lives on, but Bill Creswell is missed.

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## Glen W. Wensch: He Took It Seriously



Glen Wensch

In 1984, Champaign Rotary was doing just fine, as always, when Kyle Robeson sponsored new member Glen Wensch. In short order, the perspicacious and energetic engineer began to point out where, and demonstrate how, even a good service club could do better. Glen was retired from a career of honorable and valuable service to his nation, but had plenty of service yet to give. He was quick to see what should be done and equally quick to volunteer for the job. Between 1988 and 1995, Glen Wensch ramrodded the Attendance Committee – as chair the first four years, then as a Club director with oversight of Club Service Committees. Highlighted by a District Attendance Achievement Award in 1991 (85% for the year), it's unlikely that WGRC ever experienced a period of higher attendance than during those years, because Glen took that assignment seriously.

He also took seriously his three years on the Board of Directors. Club Service, his area of oversight, also included the Club Awards Committee, which he would later chair, and Club Fellowship, which he effectively promoted. But some of his most persistently valuable input came at Board meetings; you had to be there to appreciate it. Club presidents would be clicking along only to hear – like a yank on their training collars – “Mr. President, you can't do that. That requires a motion and a second. No, you can't make the motion yourself.” Or some such reminder. When Glen was present, meetings were going to be run properly, according to policy and rules of procedure. To those who scoffed at *Robert's Rules*, Glen could be as irritating as a burr in the bustle; others saw him as a welcome breath of fresh air. But beyond this, Glen competently handled many assignments of which most members were unaware, but that Club presidents appreciated. For example, more than once, Glen wrote the applications WGRC submitted for various District awards, many of which the Club won. At the end of his 1993-94 presidential year, Terry Davis named Glen Rotarian of the Year, commending him “for always thinking of Rotary.”

In the two years following his Board service, Glen chaired the Transportation and Visitation Committee, charged with providing transportation of members to weekly meetings as needed, and coordinating visits to comfort ill and disabled members and their families. The transportation part had been there; the visitation segment had not. Perhaps Glen was inspired by the work of Bob Wright on the Transportation Committee that earned a Meritorious Service Award from WGRC President Jan Bahr, for which Glen wrote the citation honoring Bob. In any event, Glen saw a need, and appointed himself to get the job accomplished. The committee quickly became known as the Sunshine Committee, and Glen's energetic pursuit of his new mission won WGRC a Club Service Achievement Award at the 1996 District 6490 Conference. Glen also received numerous commendations for his Sunshine work from WGRC Presidents Keene, Wackerlin, and Anderson.

A glance at Glen's pre-Rotary life makes it easy to understand how he could offer so much at an age that tends to excuse most people from such active involvement. He earned three degrees from the UI, including the first Ph.D. awarded in metallurgy. While a student he met UI coed Lois Anne Dallenbach. Then came Pearl Harbor, and Glen joined the (then) Army Air Corps. He married Lois in Charleston, MO, before he went off to England to fly Curtis P-40 and P-51 fighters for the Blue Nose squadron, engaging and destroying a Messerschmitt ME -109 in his first flight over Germany.

After the war, Glen put his expertise to work as a pioneer in atomic energy at Los Alamos, NM. He continued to serve the federal government in Washington, and established reciprocal atomic energy programs with European countries. Lest we think that Glen was too serious to have fun, he admits to being an avid sailor on the Chesapeake Bay during his time in D.C. – although he undoubtedly took that seriously and did it very well, too. In retirement, Glen had his own professional corporation and became a consultant conducting energy assessments for emerging nations. He has evaluated nuclear energy installations in many countries, especially in Russia, where he has been “everywhere,” including near Chernobyl when it melted down.

On the community front, Glen headed a task force studying downtown traffic patterns that recommended traffic lights at University and Chester, along with removal of the reviled Downtown Mall. His pace never slowed; he monitored city government intently and served on two campaign committees for four-term Mayor Dannel McCollum. He became active in the Air Force Association, serving as State President Kyle Robeson's secretary, and then as president himself. In fact, in 1990, Glen became the first Illinoisan to win the Man of the Year Award of the Air Force Association's five-state Great Lakes Region.

Glen served (actively, of course!) on the UI Alumni Association Board. He established the Materials Science Alumni Group and earned

the Constituent Leadership Award from the UIAA. He received the Distinguished Merit Award of the UI Department of Materials Science and Engineering Alumni Association for his career in industry and government – particularly for his “unique contributions to pioneering advancements in the field of nuclear energy.”

Glen’s last award came after viral encephalitis finally diminished his ability (but not his desire) to do good works. At a ceremony at Carle Arbours Nursing Home, where Glen has resided since September 1997, Champaign Mayor McCollum declared March 30, 1999, to be Glen W. Wensch Day and presented the proclamation to Glen and Lois Anne. “Glen has been a major boost to every project to which he has devoted his energies,” said McCollum, “be it his career, his community, or Rotary.”

Asked by George Scheetz (for *The Fizz*’s “First Person Rotary” feature) to describe himself in one word, Glen came up with “persistent.” No argument there; Glen has been a persistent blessing and producer of good works for WGRC and people everywhere he’s been. We could use more like him.

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## Kip R. Pope: Aesthetics and Integrity



Kip Pope

Most Club members might describe Kip Pope as affable but not effusive, friendly but quiet. But that calm public demeanor masks an athletic heart and an adventurous soul. Until *The News-Gazette* devoted most of page 1 and all of page 3 of its Sunday, July 1, 2001, edition to Kip, few recalled that he was a State high school swimming champion, a four-time Big Ten Conference champ and record-holder, and a two-time All-American; and that he was on the 1971 U.S. modern pentathlon team. Even fewer know of his fondness for swift sports cars, or that he once rode a 1966 Triumph Bonneville motorcycle across Europe, or that he enjoys downhill skiing and general aviation flying – a pastime not unanimously applauded by Janet, his wife of 32 years, Kevin (20) and Hillary (12).

For that matter, outsiders were mildly amazed when, in 1983, Kip Pope left practice with a respected Champaign law firm to run CandU Poster Advertising, a billboard company. They didn't realize that what had motivated Kip to become an attorney was a decision he made in 1971 while on a 10-month, government-paid sojourn in Vietnam: to challenge the twin-city plan of Champaign and Urbana to ban billboards. Kip had never anticipated operating CandU Poster, although it had been the family business since 1917. But he did not concur that cities should or could, by drafting ordinances, legislate a private company out of business.

In 1976, after completing UI law school and years of research into billboard industry issues, Kip filed suit contesting the action of both Champaign and Urbana to ban billboards. Had he not prevailed, CandU Poster would have been history. Motions and counter-motions delayed the trial until 1982. Finally, in a 283-page opinion and 50-page order, the 6th Circuit ruled for Pope, invalidating the city rules on First Amendment grounds. Then Kip took over the family business. He set about not just improving the appearance of his billboards with landscaping and creative design, but also by hiding poles and blending the structures into their surroundings. "My focus on aesthetics just kind

of evolved," he says; "I liked the results and got more involved as the years went by."

In fact, Kip's intelligent vision inspired a national campaign to promote billboard aesthetics, and he became not just a director of the Outdoor Advertising Association of America, but its conscience. Through individual leadership, he has set the example for aesthetic improvements in the billboard industry. Starting from his consciousness of the community impact of billboards, Kip has championed the cause of what many might once have considered an oxymoron: attractive billboards.

Recently, Kip worked again with city planners to develop new design and placement restrictions. "They've really raised the bar," Kip commented. "It will take our best work to meet the new requirements. We could argue that they've gone beyond the purview of the 1993 settlement agreement...but the changes they've made – despite my predilection against over-regulation – are probably pretty good. We have nice communities and want to keep them that way."

Says Kip's wife, Janet: "He has the most integrity of anyone I've ever known, and that integrity has always included a meticulous concern for what's right for his community and what's right for us as a family." Given Kip's gift for finding constructive common ground, it's little wonder that city officials lamented his decision this year to sell CandU Poster Advertising to an Atlanta-based sign company. Kip will serve as aesthetic consultant to the new owners and continue presentations on billboard aesthetics around the country.

We include this signboard saga because it is so reflective of Kip Pope's character. Before "win-win" became part of the business lexicon, that was Kip's approach. His court antagonists, the city attorneys, respected Kip because "he never showed personal animosity, and was quite gracious." That rings true to his Rotary friends; there is no animus in this man, certainly no pretense, no visible ego. To all he is a warm friend, a gentleman, and a gentle man. At the same time, he is a multi-faceted man of many interests and talents.

So: business sold, now what? "I'm going to try to relax, and dust off my piano," Kip said. Ah, the piano: the instrument of Kip's primary visibility within Champaign Rotary. For many years he has shared keyboard duties with David Thies, counterbalancing David's *élan* with an understated sophistication, an almost scholarly touch. To wit, this comment from a 1994 *Fizz*: "Jan Bahr led her Rotary-Aires chorale; Kip Pope gave music lessons and led new songs, as well as old ones with flair." He is both thoughtful innovator and steady hand, a dependable resource, a solid block in the foundation of Champaign Rotary.

Selfishly, Rotary leaders hope Kip included a covenant in his contract whereby the new sign moguls will, when and where possible, follow

his example and provide Rotary billboards for just the paper cost. Kip donated the first – “Smile – Rotary Pledges a Polio-Free World” – in 1990. In 1993-94, he provided several sites for a February to June program, with WGRC President Jan Bahr enlisting the participation of other local clubs. Enabling Rotary billboards earned Kip several Club citations, and his Club Vocational Service Award for chairing the 1997-98 Four Way Test Committee indicates that he helps the Club in many ways. Kip also served as WGRC, Inc. president in 1998-99. Perhaps now that he has retired, Champaign Rotary can lean even more on Kip’s quiet leadership.

Kip has visited every continent but one, and hopes soon to add Antarctica to his travel schedule. Perhaps he could do that (with tire chains?) on “Tommy Triumph,” the motorcycle that also carried him 6,600 miles through the Rockies, “camping all the way.” After all, at 35, the bike is younger than its easy rider. But we suspect Kip will take Janet and leave Tommy home. Says Janet: “We’ve had a great life together. I don’t think I’d change a thing.”

Neither would Kip’s Rotary colleagues, who like him just as he is.

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## Elizabeth A. Beauchamp: Lioness of Literacy



Beth Beauchamp

Before any service clubs admitted women, Beth had considered challenging the exclusion. After all, she had been a successful sales executive with WICD since 1975. She had been elected to consecutive four-year terms on the Champaign City Council. From its inception until 1990, she had served on the C-U Convention and Visitors Bureau Board of Advisors. Meanwhile, she was raising two sons and a daughter, all of whom became successful professionals. One can speculate as to how a community-involved career woman like Beth might have perceived male-only service organizations. At the right moment, problem solved: Rotary opened its doors, Kip Pope sponsored Beth for membership, and she quickly began to contribute.

In 1991-92, in response to a newly announced focus of Rotary International, President David Thies created the Literacy Committee and appointed new Rotarian Beth Beauchamp as a member. Rotary recognizes the huge cost of functional illiteracy in under-employment: people who lack literacy and numeracy skills cannot pull themselves out of poverty. In many ways, illiteracy is akin to a world-wide epidemic of a debilitating illness. In the United States, a surprising 20 per cent of adults read below the 5th grade level and cannot perform jobs that pay a living wage.<sup>60</sup>

Beth became Literacy co-chair in 1993-94 and pumped life into what would be her committee “home” for the next four years. She researched literacy needs and initiatives already underway to which WGRC might link. She met with her counterparts from other C-U clubs and established a Literacy Fund run through the Champaign Rotary account. The informal group’s shared mission was to build suitable reading areas in community rooms of public housing and, in due course, Beth came up with \$1,600. In conjunction with making physical improvements to the spaces, volunteers from each local club took responsibility for one of the housing complexes. WGRC developed a working relationship with the Joanne Dorsey Public Housing Complex, with a half-dozen WGRCCers

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60 In 2001, the “living wage” benchmark was \$17,000 per annum.

spending an hour a week either reading to children or helping them with reading comprehension. At the 1994 District 6490 Conference, Beth's Literacy Project won a District Achievement Award for all cooperating clubs.

Beth was always scavenging for books. During the 1994-95 year, she asked Champaign Rotarians to donate books for Make a Difference Day. Committee Member Clif Carey collected more than 300 books, and to those Beth added discounted books from Pages for All Ages Book Store, plus a donated set of *World Book Encyclopedia*. All were delivered to Dorsey Homes where, at one time, Beth had 21 volunteers reading with children.

At the January 16, 1995, Club meeting, Beth presented a program on the Literacy Committee, describing the previous summer's Literacy Project. She thanked everyone involved in the book drive where "each book touched the life of a child." She commended Gene Rose and John Ady, who volunteered during the 10-week program. Gene worked with five teenagers at Dorsey Homes, and John worked with a learning-disabled first-grader at Dr. Howard School. Beth expressed her hope of expanding the program. At the 1995 District Conference, the Literacy Achievement Award went to WGRC alone.

In her enthusiasm (and possibly because of unreliable follow-through by one or two cooperating clubs) Beth exceeded her small budget for buying books in late 1995, but the Project Planning Committee quickly approved \$500 in early 1996. After a year of co-chairing, Beth turned the Literacy Committee over to Bob Wedgeworth for 1996-98. He raised the possibility of eradicating functional illiteracy in the community. *The News-Gazette* expressed some interest in working with WGRC on this, but the initiative did not fly. The Club continued to support literacy efforts through tutoring programs and contributing towards necessary resources for reading centers.

Beth next turned her attention to International Hospitality, then to International Scholarship Services. She took on the key task of chairing banquet arrangements for the 1998 Action Auction. She rejoined the Literacy Committee in 1998-99 and returned to co-chair it with Dick Ensrud in 1999-2000. That year, Beth and Dick met with Parkland College and signed on to Project READ, Parkland's adult literacy program. After 20 hours of required training they had two volunteers, one being Dick. Beth also worked on providing a book for every newborn baby in the Champaign-Urbana area, but funding for that project did not materialize. The following year Beth served on the District Literacy Committee.

On July 1, 2000, Beth began a three-year term on the Champaign Rotary Board of Directors. She oversaw Vocational Service in her first year, and has responsibility for all Community Service committees in

2001-2002. Literacy is one of those committees, and it is in good hands with Scott Dahman, who took the reins in 2000-01 and continues as chair.

Although there was no longer a direct support link from Rotary to the Reading Group, a private not-for-profit group serving children with congenital or trauma-induced reading disabilities, Beth served on that Group’s 1998-2000 Board. She also served 1999-2001 on the UI Library Board and now serves on the Great Rivers Board of The Nature Conservancy. “The longer I am in Champaign Rotary,” Beth commented, “the better I understand Rotary’s commitment to service, and the more I value the relationships and opportunities to serve. This Club opens doors and windows to the world.”

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## Vernon L. Barkstall: Builder of Bridges



Vern Barkstall

Because differences – of background, culture, education, age, economics, and perception – still separate people, Vern Barkstall spent his life building bridges and assisting those in need. Born in Cincinnati, Vern went through the Columbus, Ohio, public school system. After military service, he earned Bachelor's and Master's degrees in education at the Ohio State University. At OSU, Vern earned five varsity letters, playing basketball with Bobby Knight and captaining the baseball team in 1958. He was a scholar-athlete and one of the first black athletes in the Big Ten to compete in two major revenue sports.

Vern married Carol Benton in Columbus in 1957 and was disappointed that his hometown high school would not hire him for the open position of teacher and coach: it was not "ready" for black faculty. He took a similar job at a Columbus junior high, but in Vern's words: "I learned early in life that racism seemed to have a life of its own which shamelessly damages the quality of life for the oppressor as well as the oppressed. I became convinced that dealing with racism was a larger calling than my first love of teaching." In 1966, Vern accepted a position as executive director of the Urban League of Champaign County. Vern continued in that position until a year before his death in 1995, building the Urban League from a token agency to the multi-million dollar organization of today.

A long-time member of American Legion Post 559 and of the NAACP, Vern was one of Champaign-Urbana's most community-involved citizens. He served on the founding committees of the Don Moyer Boys and Girls Club, the Champaign County Opportunities Industrialization Center, and the Frances Nelson Health Center.<sup>61</sup> Vern was a charter Board member of the Champaign County Chamber of Commerce, Board member of Concerned Citizens for a Better Neighborhood, and past vice president of the Champaign-Urbana Convention and Visitors Bureau.

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<sup>61</sup> FNHC was a major recipient of Action Auction VI in 1992.

Vern joined Champaign Rotary in 1976 and became a Paul Harris Fellow in 1989. During the 1990s, he served on the important Development and Classification, Substance Abuse, Project Planning, and Nominating Committees. Other committee assignments for WGRC included Salvation Army, Fellowship, and World Community Service. Fellowship was a good assignment for Vern because, although he had faced many humiliating forms of racism, he had a sunny disposition and saw good in everyone. In response to Illini ribbing about his Buckeye connection, he gave as good as he got.

In 1992, he was honored by County organizations celebrating National Volunteer Week – one of many similar honors, because Vern spent his life volunteering above and beyond the call of his job. In December 1993, 500 people turned out to see Vern honored as Citizen of the Year by the Champaign County Chamber of Commerce. Four months later, the Illinois Community Action Association presented Vern its Martin Luther King Jr. Award.

Vern Barkstall was a beacon of hope and encouragement for disadvantaged citizens. Earnestly and tirelessly, he worked to expand opportunities for economic and housing assistance, job training, health care access, and a better life for thousands of people in need. One admirer said he could advocate for the disadvantaged without antagonizing either the black or white community. In the spring of 1994, beset by terminal illness, Vern gave his final address, a speech titled “Reflections on a Career,” at the Urban League’s 33rd Annual Meeting. He looked back on his entire life, although most in the audience already understood the “why” of this man. He expressed his gratitude to many who had supported his initiatives, and he pointed a finger of culpability at both blacks and whites. Mostly, he urged those present to continue the work to which he had devoted all his energies. This excerpt could be seen as Vern’s personal mission statement:

Let me make my most emphatic point: so long as we allow racism and other obstacles to clutter the path to equal opportunity, society will be burdened with the necessity of doing for others that which they could well do for themselves, given fair opportunities. I am asking you all to continue down the roads to equality. Continue to support the Urban League, the Boys and Girls Club, Girls, Inc., the Frances Nelson Health Center, and other agencies serving economically disadvantaged persons. Thank you for helping me serve this community all these years. Although the road often has been bumpy, it has been a good ride. I am cognizant of the difficult road yet to travel, but am buoyed by the knowledge that a goodly number of people out there of all races want to help make Champaign County a better community.

Not long after his moving, career-capping speech, Vern left this world. His wife, Carol, and their children – Jeffrey, Lisa and Karen – can take pride in Vern’s legacy: Champaign County is making strides in eliminating some kinds of discrimination. We believe he would be pleased to see the bridges now being constructed by Rotary’s cooperative Habitat for Humanity project.

Long a champion of equity in public education, Vern was vocal in his condemnation of forced busing as the “answer” to integration, because

“blacks bear the lion’s share of the burden.” Vern would be gratified to know that Tracy Parsons, his successor as Urban League president, continues the quest for “equality in education, the justice system, and job opportunities.” And we believe Vern would be pleased that his name will be linked to education for decades to come through the new Barkstall Elementary School in southwest Champaign. Let us hope that Barkstall School will stand in permanent tribute to Vern’s dedication and contributions to “a better community.”

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## David C. Thies: Passionate Rotarian



Dave in Outdoor Cabaret  
(at Corn Roast)

Many Champaign Rotarians contribute their time and talents to Club and community; for most, it's an ebb and flow proposition. From his first months of membership, David Thies has contributed non-stop. That's why his name pops up so frequently in this volume, and also why he merits a few more words. David came into Rotary with what WGRC wags would consider the proverbial three strikes: working in Urbana, and being an attorney and a Democrat. With his infectious good humor, David deflated the caustic jibes like so many popped balloons, and his devotion to the Object of Rotary soon transcended all other perceptions. Suffice it to say that no other Champaign Rotarian has been Outstanding New Member, Rotarian of the Year, and WGRC president.

Should David ever leave Champaign-Urbana – and we hope he never does – the average Champaign Rotarian would remember him most for the hundreds of times he has provided musical accompaniment and luncheon background music for regular Monday Club meetings. George Scheetz referred to his “preprandial musical entertainment” [that means: related to, or suitable for the time just before dinner]; one might visualize the freshness of a bubbling brook, its laughing, musical sounds evoked by David's flying fingers. No, even more: at special moments, David's playing expresses a *joie de vivre*, a breaking free akin to that of exuberant dolphins.

We take for granted the incredible level of talent that underlies David's keyboard interludes. The repertoire at his fingertips flows from ABBA to Zappa; he slips easily from *Phantom* to Foreigner. He studied with noted teacher Lester Van Tress most of his childhood; from a classical background, he got “into” jazz, and that (in David's words):

helped develop my ear so that I can hear something on the radio...and get close to sounding like I know it. Most important, though, was growing up in a family with such a wide variety of musical tastes that I heard all styles. Genetics provided me with the ear and the chops — it's all a very interesting thing and I take credit for none of it. I really do communicate through the keyboard, and I

would be lost without music. Without that outlet, it would be like taking my voice away. Somehow that results in the music you hear. The members don't realize it, but it is the Club that has given me the gift of the opportunity to play. It's part of who I am."

Yes. But while we marvel at the technique that would enable him to succeed as a professional musician, there are many other excellent parts to David Thies. He readily acknowledges his wife, Jodie, and his children (Daniel, Stephanie, Michael, Adam) as some of the best parts of him; and in the Thies musical tradition, son Daniel, with his sister Stephanie on keyboard, led the singing at the June 14, 1999, Youth Day meeting of the Club.



The Late PDG Craig Webber  
at 1998 District Conference

David earned his B.S. and J.D. at the UI, with a year of study in France mixed in. That year expanded his language skills and helped open his mind and heart to international students and visitors – a wonderful attribute for a Rotarian. Perhaps even as a student, David knew that Rotary was in his future. After all, his grandfather, Judge Charles Webber, was an Urbana Rotarian, as is his uncle, Carl Webber. Of course, David's other uncle, Craig Webber, was an active Past District Governor (1989-90) prior to his untimely death.

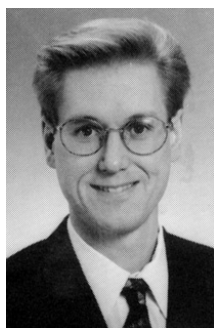
David has served his Club and District in many ways and on many occasions, and does so with obvious enjoyment and passion. We could say more, but no one needs to speak for David. Speaking for himself in his "First Person Rotary" interview, David declared these passions: "My faith, my family, my profession." Those would be the top three; clearly, there are a number of others. Asked to describe himself in one word, he said,

"Well-grounded." We would add, "well-rounded" as he is the complete, and passionate, Rotarian.

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## Douglas W. Nelson: GSE Missionary

Doug Nelson communicates and connects in many ways, including through his talented hands. Music lessons he began at age six led to formal studies at Illinois State University and the Chicago Conservatory of Music. By the late 1970s, he was playing in various rock bands and also practicing massage therapy. The dual careers, says Doug, “were a good combination until they began pulling in opposite directions.” Coming to Champaign to do background vocals for an album a friend was recording at Creative Audio Studio, he decided to stay. He joined the house band at the Ramada Inn and played six nights a week, 48 weeks a year.



Doug Nelson

Doug founded BodyWork Associates, and his reputation in the emerging field of massage therapy grew to where he could no longer pursue his music. In 1997, Doug started NMT MidWest, Inc., the teaching/consulting arm of his business. Today NMT MidWest conducts more than 50 seminars a year and does consulting for prominent sports teams – among them the Chicago Bulls, St. Louis Rams, and New York Jets. Doug considers Kansas City Chiefs coach Dick Vermeil “truly my mentor.”

But he has another mentor, one instrumental in Doug’s Rotary career. In 1992, Doug was chosen to be a member of a District 649 Group Study Exchange team that visited Japan. “To a farm kid with no travel experience,” Doug says, “that was a life-changing opportunity.” Doug was hosted in Japan by a physician who, in that brief time, “became like a father” to him. The story is too long to include, but Doug’s host sent him off with a charge: he was to seek not to pay *back* a debt, but to pay it *forward*.

“That’s how I got so jazzed up about Japan and Rotary exchange,” Doug explains. “It really allowed me to step out of the box, explore new vistas, and redefine my life and career.” This is a story that resonates with the many Rotarians who have found International Service to be the evolutionary avenue of the Four. “Everything changed when I returned,”

Doug recalls; “no, everything was about the same, I had changed... mostly because of the wonderful people I met.” Within months of Doug’s return, Ken Gunji sponsored him into Champaign Rotary, a youthful new member in a classification new to the Club: Physical Therapy.

That many “old guard” WGRCCers did not rush to relate to this GSE “graduate” did not deter Doug from his almost devotional pursuit of Rotary service. New members generally cut their Rotary teeth on Club committees; Doug immediately involved himself at the District level. He became a veritable GSE missionary, speaking to many clubs and doing “a ton of work for GSE.” Aside from his unusual GSE-to-Rotarian leap, Doug gained early visibility in WGRCC with the Photography and Music committees. In April 1994, Doug’s “We Are Interact!” adaptation of “We Are Family” soared to the top of the Club “hit parade.” Although not many knew the extent of his District work, no one was surprised when 1994-95 Club President Tom Good presented him the Robert Eisner Jr. Award as the outstanding new Rotarian.

The following year Doug chaired the Club’s World Community Service/ International Exchange Committee and served on the International Hospitality Committee. He wrote a terrific youth exchange group song that, unfortunately, has been lost. He helped with the Yanai exchange, and helped bring to fruition the Japan House project in 1996-97. Meanwhile, he continued to work on the District GSE Committee, which became an even larger responsibility when PDG Lowell Samuel’s endowment funded a second District 6490 GSE team.

On July 1, 1997, Doug was elected a Director of Champaign Rotary. For the next three years he would oversee all International Service committees; but he contributed in other ways, as well. In his first months on the Board, Doug began championing more hands-on projects. In due course, along came Habitat for Humanity, Dream Houses, and the Uganda project – and Doug was there, offering his hands. Club President Scott Anderson Jr. called upon Doug’s computer expertise, appointing him to the committee to create a Club website. And that January (1998), Doug began work on a membership database that he would complete in December, 1999.

In April 1998 came the deathless musical séance: WGRCC’s incarnation of The Supremes, described on p. 67. No one will claim credit for this “event,” but Doug was on guitar and also on Dave Thies’ committee to promote attendance at the upcoming District Conference, so we have our suspicions. Fortunately, “The Supremes” did not appear at the District Conference, or else the first-ever Four Avenues of Service Award, newly created by Rotary for demonstrated support of the Object of Rotary through participation in all Four Avenues, might not have been presented to – Doug Nelson.

After his Board term ended, Doug became active with the Ambassadorial Scholar and Youth Exchange Committees, and, at the 2000 District Conference, he received the Rotary Foundation District Service Award, an RI award issued at the discretion of the District Governor for service to the Rotary Foundation. For 2001-2002, Doug will work with the 85th Anniversary and World Community Service committees.

Yes, Doug has a life outside of Rotary. In 1994 he married Janet Ellis ("the best thing ever to happen to me"), and Janet soon joined Doug in his "paying-forward" Rotary work. She and Doug have hosted 12 RYE students, three for more than a month, including two from Azul. But Janet, a collaborative consultant at Centennial High School, made her own significant Rotary mark: for five years she devoted at least 15 hours each school-term week as Interact sponsor. Her tireless "Service Above Self" resulted in the 1998 recognition of Janet Ellis-Nelson as an Honorary Champaign Rotarian.

"Janet and I are a team," Doug avers. That makes the Nelsons a team within a team within a still greater team: they are a special blessing as WGRC missionaries for Rotary International.

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## **Denton R. Brown: He Makes It Happen**



Denton with PDG Tim Gover  
of Charleston

Denton Brown embraced the Object of Rotary the day he joined WGRC in 1990. But then, service comes naturally to a man who served 25 years in the U.S. Army, attaining the rank of lieutenant colonel and earning the Legion of Merit, the Meritorious Service Medal (3 awards), the Bronze Star, and the Army Commendation Medal (3 awards). He forged an impressive record in personnel management and training, project management, and financial management in addition to overseas assignments that included 18 months in Vietnam. He came to Champaign as deputy commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Construction Engineering Research Laboratory (CERL), and his final assignment was as professor and department head of military science, Army ROTC, University of Illinois. Following retirement from the Army, Denton chose to stay in Champaign (and with Rotary!), taking a position as associate director, administrative affairs, for UI's School of Chemical Science.

His organizational and management skills were quickly recognized and he moved to the UI National Center for Supercomputing Applications (NCSA) as associate director for finance and administration. In 1999 he became NCSA's associate director for strategic planning. Among several key contributions to NCSA, Denton is credited with recovering more than \$5 million in funds which had been "lost" through sloppy accounting over a period of ten years. He led the creation of the budget package that enabled NCSA to be selected as one of two national sites for \$35 million in annual funding from the National Science Foundation; and played a lead role in the design and management of the expansion of NCSA's new supercomputer building, breaking ground in 2001.

Denton recently took up a new challenge. The UI is replacing all of its business and financial software, including the UFAS accounting system currently used on all three campuses. The new Oracle-based system allows a wide range of utility in the management of the University. The

conversion process will take four years and employ 200 people at its peak. Denton is leading teams (with members from all three campuses) under the finance group: Grants and Contracts, and Fixed Assets.

Club President David Thies immediately tabbed Denton for the 1992 Action Auction Committee that set a new revenue record. That same year, Denton helped boost the 1992 Salvation Army Committee that raised a record \$10,550. But Denton really began to roll in 1993-94, being named chair of the Rotary International Exchange Committee, with responsibility for GSE and all adult exchanges and hosting. He also served on the important Project Planning Committee. For 1994-95, Denton chaired the Club's PolioPlus Committee and served on the Corn Roast and Action Auction committees.

From his first year in Rotary, Denton began attending District 6490 conferences and has yet to miss one. His visibility led DG John Hieser to choose him to help launch a District Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA) program. During two years of planning, the development of the leadership training program (the heart of RYLA) fell to him. It is fair to say he became a key organizer and ramrod not just of one of our District's finest programs, but probably of one of Rotary's best RYLA programs. The RYLA story appears on p. 107.

Meanwhile, Denton's Rotary-focused energy and ability resulted in his being named to the Champaign Rotary Board of Directors for a three-year term beginning 1996-97. He was named coordinator of the Vocational Service committees, which now gave him involvement and experience in all four avenues of Rotary service. During the 1997-98 year, Denton chaired DG Frank Keck's inaugural banquet, which went so well that Frank named Denton to chair his 1998 District Conference. Denton appointed Joan, his wife and RYLA colleague, Conference secretary and coordinator of spousal programs. That Conference proved to be outstanding, with 204 Rotarians from 39 clubs attending and a total registration of 409. Denton has been a conference advisor to two other district governors and has presented at several District Assemblies and at PETS (President-Elect Training Seminars).

More recently, Denton became one of WGRC's most active supporters of the District's Uganda project initiated by Kathe Keck, never missing a session to sort and pack books or knitting machines for shipment. In DG Frank Keck's words: "Denton has never refused to help or accept a job when asked. He is a model Rotarian who acts with interest, knowledge, competence, and enthusiasm in all undertakings." Apparently Club President Scott Anderson Jr. agreed, naming Denton 1997-98 Rotarian of the Year.

In 1998-99, Denton's final year on the Champaign Rotary Board, he continued as coordinator of the five Youth and Student Affairs committees. For the 1999-2000 Rotary Year, Denton chaired the Student

Recognition and RYLA committees, and also served on the Corn Roast, Rotaract, and Salvation Army committees. He directed his final District RYLA camps in April and May 2001 while co-chairing the Program Committee for Action Auction IX. Considering his career work load, that Denton Brown can dedicate so much of himself to Rotary clearly defines the qualifications that earned his induction into the District 6490 Hall of Honor at the 2001 District 6490 Conference.

Although he planned to step away from District responsibilities for 2001-2002, Denton has joined the District Rotaract Committee. That's like throwing kindling on the embers of a dying fire. Meanwhile, he remains one of WGRC's busiest members. He has already helped stage the 83rd Corn Roast and is on the committee for the Club's 85th Anniversary Celebration. Several times over the years, on the occasion of Veterans' Day, Denton has eloquently reminded Champaign Rotarians that all members of society (not just Rotarians) owe a debt to past and present members of our Armed Forces for their contributions to our freedom and to world peace. Denton is past president of the local chapter of the Society of American Military Engineers and president of the local Retired Officers Association. Denton's facility for organizing and directing adult colleagues in two careers is matched by his ability to engage and awaken young people to what leadership can mean to their future. As an anonymous wag noted, not many individuals can span generations by leading both teenagers and "doddering, tired, old officers."

Somehow Denton finds time to take interest in fishing, camping, and woodworking, and serving on the Building and Grounds committee of St. Peter's United Church of Christ. Denton and Joan<sup>62</sup> have raised two sons, Adam and Matthew. Could it be that Denton's ease in relating to youth stems from his sincere interest in – and love for – children, and his appreciation of their role in shaping the future of the world? We welcome this chance to salute Denton Brown, the latest of an honored list of former ROTC, NROTC and AFROTC commandants who have chosen Champaign Rotary and, upon retirement, Champaign-Urbana.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> In October, 2001 Joan Brown, a consistent participant in the work of WGRC, received Paul Harris Recognition.

<sup>63</sup> That list includes current WGRcers Tom Woodley (Colonel, USA) and John Orrill (Captain, USN).

## Ken Gunji: A Rotarian's Rotarian



Ken Gunji

That Ken Gunji's name appeared more than any other in *Steps Going Up* is no accident. Ken immerses himself in Rotary, and his fascinating life merits more attention. Although he was born in Los Angeles, Ken became an "accidental exile" when his family took him on a visit to Japan prior to December 7, 1941. He returned to the U.S. in 1949, attended high school, and in 1953 became the first Japanese-American in Chicago to attain Eagle Scout rank. He earned his B.S. and M.S. at the University of Illinois; he was commissioned and served two years on active duty with the U.S. Army, retiring 25 years later from the Illinois National Guard with the rank of lieutenant colonel. After active duty, he worked in student services for the University of Illinois and Parkland College for 32 years.

In 1966, Ken returned to Japan to fulfill a request of his deceased father and, through relatives, began a two-year pen-pal correspondence with a young Japanese woman named Kimiko. Her letters drew Ken back to Japan, and, within two weeks of meeting Kimiko, he married her. With daughters Tricia and Jennifer, they will celebrate their 33rd anniversary during the 2001-2002 Rotary year. Ken joined Champaign Rotary in 1976, and *Steps Going Up* details his more significant contributions. For WGRC, he has been sergeant-at-arms, secretary, and Board member before serving as WGRC President in 1986-87. Not mentioned is that the final guest speaker in Ken's presidential year was UI Professor Jan Bahr. Five years later, Jan, as the new WGRC president, stood by as District 6490 inducted Ken as its 1992-93 governor. Included in Ken's remarks:

In 5,000 years of world history, only 202 years have been free of war. Rotary is committed to the attainment of lasting world peace. With the Iron Curtain melted away, and once-remote areas now just hours away, we must make our truly small world fit for our children, by working for RI's programs to promote peace, eliminate hunger and illiteracy, and preserve Planet Earth. We are all on the front line.

Ken's involvement in District service began with his leading the Group Study Exchange team to Japan in 1984, and includes heading the GSE and Foundation Committees, as well as many other responsibilities. He

represented the District at the triennial RI Council on Legislation in 1998 at New Delhi, India. Ken has attended eight RI Conventions, and represented RI President Glen Kinross at the District 5840 Conference in Del Rio, Texas. For 1998-99, Ken became just the second Champaign Rotarian to receive the Rotary Foundation's Citation for Meritorious Service. The seven other District 6490 recipients, all Past District Governors, are: Kurt Schmidt, Paul Luedtke, and Craig Webber, all of Urbana; Steve Bellinger, Virgil Judge, and Wes Rush; and Mr. Rotary, Art Skelton. Ken was a District 6490 delegate to the Rotary International Institute in 2001 and is currently serving as the Zone Coordinator for the World Community Service Task Force for RI President Richard King.

Here are excerpts from Ken's comments on serving as DG:

The district governor is an officer of RI. His first obligation is to lead the district, and his opportunity to participate with his home club diminishes greatly. A district governor must visit every club in the district as soon as possible to convey the message of the RI president, as well as his or her personal goals for the district. Each club president has his or her own ideas as to what they hope to accomplish in their presidential year. This is the DG's challenge: to unify efforts so that all clubs work not just towards their own objectives, but also towards mutual goals established by the RI president.

During my year, one of my goals was to have every club work toward earning the Balanced Club Presidential Citation. My job was to suggest modifications of some club projects so that they would meet the requirements of the Presidential Citation program.

Each year, more is demanded of the district governor. In 1992-93 I managed to work full time and still carry out my responsibilities as DG, using accumulated vacation time and working after hours. Ten years later, I do not see how anyone can successfully achieve all that is required of the DG while maintaining equally successful business or professional endeavors. I doff my hat to those who currently serve, and will serve in the future, as district governors.

Ken's life outside of Rotary has also been committed to "Service Above Self." He has long been an active volunteer leader for the Boy Scouts of America, serving as president of the Prairielands Council and as area vice president. Recipient of the Silver Beaver Award from the local BSA council, he was presented the Silver Antelope Award by the National Council of BSA – the second member of WGRC to be so honored for "meritorious service to youth" (the first being the late Les Bryan, 1955-56 WGRC president). Ken has also chaired the Board of the Octave Chanute Aerospace Museum Foundation.

Elsewhere in *The Story Continues* he is credited for initiating the ongoing exchange of college students between WGRC and the Yanai Rotary Club. Ken and Kimiko have been consistent leaders in strengthening that sister club relationship. In January, 1998 Ken presented a program to the Yanai Club in (according to *The Fizz*) "Gunjish – an exotic blend of English and Japanese." And he attended Yanai Rotary's 40th Anniversary Celebration on March 20, 2001. On this Japan trip, Ken also spoke to the Rotary Clubs of Jure, Ono, and Tokyo-Koto.

When asked to describe himself in one word for the "First Person Rotary" feature in *The Fizz*, Ken said, "Dedicated...to what I believe in." As he stepped down at the end of his year as district governor,

Ken enunciated some of his beliefs in congratulating District and Club leaders:

Some people feel that they would rather see their gifts used locally than to give to the Rotary Foundation which they erroneously believe uses most of its funds for the people of other countries. This is far from the truth. Under the Share Program, 60% of undesignated contributions to the Foundation are available to our District to choose how the money is spent. This year, you have planted trees, helped people to read, provided food for the hungry, cleaned our highways, built homes for the homeless, assisted people with AIDS, took time to serve, brought hope, built bridges of friendship, looked beyond yourselves....You are Rotarians and not just members of Rotary.

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## Frank D. Keck II: Rotarian of the 1990s



Frank D. Keck II

Frank Keck joined Champaign Rotary before he was 30 years old and, for the next dozen years, was not especially visible. But within him lurked the leadership qualities of a former quarterback, Air Force captain, and golf champion. At a District Conference in the early 1970s, Frank became intrigued with Rotary International's programs and wanted to get involved. He volunteered to host two Brazilian short-term exchange students in 1974 and began to live his early Rotary motto: "Participate. When you're asked to do something in Rotary, say 'yes' even if it means delegating other things."

On track to become the Club's leader, Frank was perceived as businesslike and sincere, but acknowledges he had some "rough edges" and lacked self-confidence. He credits Dale Carnegie training for empowering him to do "a better job" as WGRC president in 1977-78. That year he presided at the dedication of the Rotary Hill Pavilion, WGRC's largest community service project to date. With funds left over, he initiated the idea that became the Fred H. Turner Vocational Scholarships. By then he had involved his entire family in Rotary, especially through Rotary Youth Exchange. Over several years Frank and Kathe hosted 15 inbound RYE students in their home, and all four of their own children became outbounders: Kimberly to Australia, Lucy to Italy, Frank III to England, and Tom to France and Mexico.

Frank did not rest on his presidential laurels. In 1978 he worked with Dick Foley and Art Skelton to sponsor the Champaign West Rotary Club. He stayed involved with District affairs and in 1987, worked with Art and Urbana Rotarian Ron Hermann to sponsor C-U Sunrise Rotary. At Savoy Rotary's Installation Banquet in January 1990, Past District Governor Kurt Schmidt commended Frank for his help in creating that new Club. The same year, Frank was chairing WGRC's Four Way Test Committee, co-chairing the Vocational Service Committee, chairing the Membership Development Committee, and also working on the *Roster*, Rotary Youth Exchange, and Rural-Urban Affairs – seven committees.

Commented Frank: "I want to grow – to learn and do something new each year in Rotary." In naming Frank Champaign Rotary's Rotarian of the Year, Club President Cal Owens said: "ROY Frank Keck exemplifies the best of what it means to be a Rotarian." *The Fizz* added, "Frank puts into practice RI President Royce Abbey's theme for 1988-89: 'Put Life into Rotary – Your Life!'" Frank was also named District 6490 Rotarian of the Year in May, and recognition only inspired him to do more. Working with District Vocational Service Chair and WGRCer Tom Woodley, Frank established Champaign Rotary's Vocational Awards for deserving community citizens.<sup>64</sup> At the 1990 District Conference, this was named Best Vocational Service Project, with a special citation to Frank, who continued to chair the Club's Vocational Awards Committee for five more years.

Ever since he inherited a large box of assorted club flags in his presidential year, Frank has been organizing them onto felt banners to display at meetings. He buys flannel and gets it hemmed, then adds one-inch wood dowels and gold nylon rope. He drills holes through the ends of the dowel and strings the rope through. Then he lays the banner flat, places the flags – 40 to 50 per banner – and glues them in place. He numbers each banner and records the identification of the flags in a computerized record. "It's not a hard job, fun, and doesn't require much time," Frank says. Right – whatever you say, Frank. Some 1,600 flags later, WGRC's flagmaster recently completed the Club's 37th display banner.

On November 28, 1994, WGRC members approved a resolution presented by President Tom Good nominating Frank to be Governor of District 6490 for 1997-98. The resolution asserted that Frank had "willingness and ability, physically and otherwise, to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of the office of District Governor." And how! In February 1995, the District approved the nomination, and Frank floored his Rotary accelerator. A key assignment came when Club President Jim Keene assigned Frank and Denton Brown to the District 6490 RYLA Committee. Frank would chair both the District RYLA and Vocational committees several times. He continued helping organize new Rotary clubs, including Coles County Sunrise, and in 1996 received a personalized certificate from RI President Herbert G. Brown for sponsoring new Rotarians during the year. In July 1996, he was recognized by District Governor Bill Jones for creating commemorative T-shirts from the handprints of that year's Rotary exchange students.

In 1995, Rotary International had prescribed an Assistant District Governor program. With nothing happening by 1996, Governor Nominee Frank Keck got that idea off the launching pad within 90 days. He announced his ADG plan to all District club presidents in September and

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64 See Part II, The Presidents, for the Award criteria (p. 24) and the 15 recipients through 1999.

soon divided the District into 10 areas, naming Jan Bahr ADG for Area 5 (Champaign, Champaign West, C-U Sunrise, Monticello, and Villa Grove Rotary clubs). On February 22, 1997, Frank convened the first-ever District 6490 Assistant Governor Orientation. His "Mission Possible" invitations alerted the ten ADGs to what lay ahead. We can picture all ADGs except Jan Bahr (who already knew) thinking, "Uh-oh, now what are we in for?"

By the time he convened his President-Elect Training Seminar (PETS) in March 1997, FDK had his District 6490 Mission Statement for 1997-98:

To build enthusiasm for Rotary service at local, district and international levels through communicating and sharing goals and information involving every member.



Frank Leads "Smile," with Feeling

Frank's PETS drew 40 presidents-elect, six vice presidents-elect, six ADGs, and 10 PDGs! Those gathered soon realized that every convocation during FDK's year would be a motivational production. Frank Keck III, FDK's son, kicked off the assembly as though it were a Chicago Bulls home game, calling forth the training team individually as theme music rang out. FDK then led the Pledge of Allegiance and his rousing trademark rendition of "Smile." We can't include all the highlights, but one was a video in which incoming RI President Glen Kinross presented his theme for the year: "Show Rotary Cares."



Frank Keck with Frank III and Kathe

FDK, Frank III, Governor Bill Jones, PDG Paul Luedtke and other presenters kept the enthusiasm flowing through training sessions that focused on leadership, Rotary information, and problem-solving skills. At one point Frank III divided the assembly into five groups and gave each a practical Rotary problem to address, such as poor attendance, club aging and low on energy, etc.. The groups brainstormed, then shared their solutions – five for each problem. At the end of the PETS, FDK endorsed the “Show Rotary Cares” theme for District 6490, and added his mottos: “You Can Make a Difference,” and “Make it Happen!”

With now-characteristic optimism and enthusiasm, Frank carried his message to May’s District Assembly in Bloomington, emphasizing that a positive, forward-looking attitude and knowledge are all-important to club leaders, and that personal contact – eye to eye – is the way to “Make It Happen.” As he did throughout his year as Governor Nominee and then District Governor, Frank called on Champaign Rotarians to lead plenary sessions and make presentations – especially Ken Gunji, Jan Bahr, Chris Moyer, and Denton Brown.

Even with all this prelude, few could have anticipated the palpable energy of FDK’s June 30 Installation Banquet, held at Champaign’s Chancellor Hotel and Convention Center. Entitled “A Celebration Honoring People Who Care,” the banquet was a Rotary extravaganza. The Prairie Ensemble provided background music for the social hour, and WGRC’s Tom Costello mastered the ceremonies. Guests included Interactors and members of two outbound GSE teams.

FDK chose Charles E. Laine, PDG of District 6760, as his highly entertaining main speaker. Karyl Wackerlin presented her video on Operation Rainbow and announced that WGRC and other District 6490 clubs had teamed with District 3810 in the Philippines to qualify for a \$15,000 Matching Grant from Rotary International. Denton Brown outlined the objectives and success of the District RYLA program, and PDG Ken Gunji talked about Rotary Youth Exchange. Frank and Kathe

Keck presented a contribution to both Operation Rainbow and RYLA in honor of Charles and Doris Laine.

PDG Paul Luedtke then installed not only FDK as District Governor, but five Rotarians as club presidents: Scott Anderson Jr. (Champaign), Jeanne Larson (C-U Sunrise), Bruce Knight (Champaign West), Bruce Rogers (Savoy), and Samuel Banks (Urbana). Governor Frank outlined some of his 13 quantifiable goals for the year: (1) increase District membership by 8%; (2) feed the hungry, perhaps by following the “Food for the Hungry” drive led by Mattoon Rotary; (3) help lift people out of poverty and illiteracy; and (4) protect children from abuse and neglect. He cited 5 Cs – Caring, Commitment, and Communication could turn Conviction into Conduct – and called on club presidents to identify and address the most serious problems in their community. He challenged all 50 clubs to get publicity on their activities six times during the year: that would equal 300 positive statements about what Rotary is doing. “If Rotary takes leadership,” he said, “others will join in. Ask people, eye to eye, ‘Will you help?’ The answer will be ‘Yes.’ That is the way to Make It Happen.”

Then Frank asked all Rotarians present to rise, open the sealed envelopes they had received upon arrival, and join with him in reading the italicized print (thoughts of RI President Glen Kinross) which included:

*A world half starving will never be a world at peace  
A world half sick will never be a world at peace  
A world half illiterate will never be a world at peace  
A world of prejudice and intolerance, mistrust and ignorance,  
will never be a world at peace*

The moving evening then concluded with the song “Let There Be Peace on Earth” led by Doug Nelson with David Thies on the keyboard.

We would say, “Wow!” but a full year of FDK’s infectious vitality lay ahead. In less than three months, Frank communicated his inspirational message to all 50 District 6490 clubs, coaching Rotarians on how to “Make It Happen.” With all his administrative duties and personal appearances,<sup>65</sup> another important pot was boiling behind the scenes: First Lady Kathe Keck’s literacy and income-producing project for Kabale, Uganda. Frank found time to help with enlisting District support and then the paperwork involved with obtaining a Matching Grant. Kathe and Frank had taken to heart the words of RI President Glen Kinross: “Unless we address the needs of people around the world, we are wasting our time on all those other great things we do because the first responsibility of the world is to care for...families who are starving and have nowhere to go in life.”

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<sup>65</sup> Let us not forget his appearances in drag as back-up singer – see p. 67.

During Frank's year, with volunteers from Champaign and Savoy, the District website was made to happen. So were two new Interact clubs in Nokomis and Robinson, joining Champaign (Centennial), Pontiac, Urbana (University High), Normal and Lincoln. Two 16-year-old graduates of the 1997 RYLA camp were the sparks that led to the chartering of Nokomis Interact. Also, the Paris and Tuscola Rotary clubs celebrated their 75th anniversaries during the year. As his year wound down, FDK confidently handed responsibility for making the "best-ever" District Conference happen to Denton Brown, David Thies, and Scott Anderson Jr. Scott was already WGRC president, of course; David was District Club secretary and on three other WGRC committees; and Denton was merely in charge of RYLA and all WGRC Youth programs.

Although Denton was in between a successful RYLA encampment and the Club's Action Auction, Governor Frank's District Conference was a smash. Friday featured club activities and projects in the morning, and District programs in the afternoon. The evening's International Dinner at the Octave Chanute Aerospace Museum in Rantoul had "Freedom and World Peace" as its theme and was highlighted by the appearance of Maria Larsen de Lier, the Club's 1977 exchange student from Azul, Argentina. Along with the president, vice president and secretary of the Azul Rotary Club, Maria thanked WGRC and the District for supplying much-needed neo-natal equipment to their children's hospital.

Saturday morning's programs focused on the Rotary Foundation and Youth programs, including GSE, Ambassadorial Scholars, Interact and Rotaract, RYLA, and RYE. The Governor's Banquet was highlighted by presentation of major Rotary awards, including the Four Avenues of Service Award to Doug Nelson and a District Vocational Service Award to Jim Turpin. No less than 35 Champaign Rotarians and spouses played active roles as presenters or facilitators. At the outset of his year, WGRC President Scott Anderson had envisioned the best Conference in District history, and he may well have been a prophet. Total registration hit 409: 234 Rotarians from 39 clubs and 103 spouses; 37 outbound/inbound RYE students; and assorted Ambassadorial Scholars, GSE members, RYLA graduates, Interactors and Rotaractors, Rantoul hosts, and guests. FDK had come in like a ravenous, roaring lion, and was going out a proud and gratified king of beasts.



Tom Morgan Models Sgt.-at-Arms Sash

But even out of office, Frank was still on the prowl. An endowment by the late PDG Lowell Samuel of Effingham, had authorized a second GSE Team for District 6490. As specified by Lowell, this team was comprised of teachers, with representatives from an elementary school, a high school, a community college, and the UI Extension Service. The all-female team went that fall to District 3310, Malaysia, where Lowell had led a team in 1967, and Frank D. Keck was chosen to lead it, accompanied by Kathe. They returned with 11 flags and a sergeant-at-arms sash Frank presented to WGRC Sergeants-at-Arms Tom Morgan and Marshall Berner.

On November 18, 1998, District 6490 welcomed the Rotary Club of Arcola as its 51st club, and recognized the organizational efforts of FDK. Same story with the Forsyth Rotary Club, chartered in the year 2000. Near the end of that year, Frank and Kathe undertook a new personal project: building a new house at Bonita Springs, FL. They retain their Champaign home, however, both because they have roots here, and probably because Frank won't disengage himself from Rotary involvement. For 2001-02, he continues as WGRC's Flag Committee chair and serves on the Foundation and Public Relations committees; he chairs the District's RYLA Committee and serves on the World Community Service and GSE committees.

Meanwhile, Frank has maintained his two business ventures, Go Promotions and Fit-Rite Golf, his custom golf-club enterprise. Frank holds the designation of Class A Clubmaker by the Professional Golf Clubmakers' Society. Other priorities have limited opportunities for Frank to keep his own game up to par, however, and that's unfortunate. The former UI golf letterman is a local links legend: he won the Twin City Golf Tourney four times in three different decades, and added the TC Seniors crown in 1990. He was club champ at Champaign Country Club four times, and is the only person to have won the Twin City, the UI Open, and the Lake of the Woods Open in the same year (1955). That year he toured the CCC in a course-record 64.

The next year he played in the Belgian and German opens as an amateur, and in 1957 played the Belgian, German and British opens. In 1963 his medal 69 at the Central Illinois Country Club Tourney earned him the privilege of playing an exhibition at Savoy with the new Western Open champ – Arnold Palmer. All this comes as no surprise to those who know Frank as an all-around athlete. As a hard-nosed senior quarterback taking snaps from the equally hard-nosed Jim Acheson, Frank led the Champaign Central Maroons to an 8-1 record and the Big 12 Conference title. Ski trips have taken him to France, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Canada, Italy, and three western states. With all that, asked to pick his top accomplishment, Frank's answer comes quickly: "The best thing I ever did was to marry Kathe Porter."

At the 2000 District 6490 Conference, PDG Frank Keck II was inducted into the District Hall of Honor. Let the accomplishments cited above speak eloquently in justification of what Frank has meant to Rotary. But the truest expression of what Rotary means to Frank was elicited at a quiet interview in early 2001. Referring to the Uganda project, Frank said: "The library...it's so gratifying...it's a wonderful feeling to share...and have people appreciate it. And they do, so very much."

Perhaps as much, Frank, as Rotarians of your Club and your District appreciate you.

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## Arthur J. Skelton: Rotarian of the 20th Century

The profile of Arthur Jones Skelton on p. 102 of *Steps Going Up*, updated from a 1968 issue of *The Fizz*, illustrates why Rotarians throughout District 6490 refer to Art as “Mr. Rotary.” We profile Art in *The Story Continues* as well because, as we begin the new millennium in service to and through Rotary, Art continues to outshine most of the 1,180,000 stars in the firmament of Rotary International. If WGRC kept a record book, Art would be the leader in more categories than anyone else. For all of his 54 years in Rotary, he has been our constant, our rock. And right there with him has been his faithful redhead, Audrey.



Art and Audrey

Art and Audrey were the first Paul Harris Fellows in Champaign Rotary and in District 6490. Art was the Club's first Rotary Foundation Benefactor. He served as Board secretary 1975-78; then he became Club's first executive secretary and served through 1989. He stepped aside briefly, then back in as executive secretary in 1992 and continues in that capacity, handling administrative housekeeping, recording all income and expenditures, tracking District and Rotary International dues and Foundation donations. At each Board meeting Art recaps actions taken between meetings, outlining what needs to be completed, started, or addressed.

Art does not assume the mantle of Rotary oracle; he is more the Club *consigliere*. He does not manage and rarely volunteers opinions; when the directors turn to him, he offers assessments or suggestions that spring from encyclopedic Rotary knowledge and from experience in Club and District administration that exceeds that of everyone else around the table. One year-end recognition that members can expect from every retiring Club president is his or her salute to Art Skelton. In 1989, Cal Owens honored Art for “13 golden years as WGRC's executive secretary,”

with Audrey on hand to share in the accolades. Cal's tribute included the following achievements:

- WGRC President, 1956-57 (youngest ever at age 34).
- District 649 Governor, 1959-60 (third-youngest in the world at age 37).
  - Attendee at 13 RI Conventions (ten consecutive) from Japan to Switzerland, serving as chief assistant sergeant-at-arms three times and as assistant sergeant-at-arms ten times.
  - Attendee at many International Assemblies and 13 International Institutes, with key responsibilities.
  - Information Counselor for the Zone, conducting seminars in 1960-61.
  - Member of international committees, including the Area F Nominating Committee for RI Director in Zone 3.
  - Nominee for RI Director.
  - Chair of many District 6490 committees and served as advisor to District Governors.
  - RI Presidents' representative to 16 District Conferences in the U.S. and Canada, and also to RI President Bill Carter's home District in the United Kingdom.
  - One of 42 first-year recipients (1973) of the Rotary Foundation Meritorious Service Citation; one of just eight in District 6490 history.
  - First Champaign Rotarian to enter District 6490 Hall of Honor, 1992.
  - Recipient of Rotary International Four Avenues of Service Citation, 2000.

Not surprisingly, Art has said, "Rotary has been my life." His years as executive secretary have given him "the chance to work with 23 wonderful Champaign Rotary presidents and the opportunity to know all the new members who have come into the Club."

We cannot overstate Audrey's lead role in the drama of Art's Rotary life. If Art has been at an RI Convention or a District Conference, so has Audrey. Their home has been the Champaign home to some 50-60 Rotary-related visitors – visiting Rotarians as well as many who arrive via Rotary's international exchange programs. One example is a friendship enjoyed across three decades: in April 1992, the Skelton's house guests were Marjorie and Brian Carss, a couple from the University of Queensland, Australia. Marjorie was a Rotary Fellow at the UI in 1959-60, and Art was her host counselor. Art was district governor at the time, and Marjorie accompanied him to visit every club in the District.

The Skeltons have hosted untold numbers of hospitality rooms at District Conferences. For Action Auctions I through VIII, they donated a hosted cocktail party for 50 persons. Bidders scrambled for this because Art and Audrey are the consummate host and hostess. No one has a larger collection of cook books and recipes – or can prepare them more succulently – than Audrey Skelton. She has been featured

in newspapers and magazines numerous times for her culinary magic, as well as for the magical Christmas display she and Art create in their home. For decades, the most coveted invitation has been to Art and Audrey's during the Christmas season to marvel at their unparalleled array of trees, ornaments, and complete villages – treasures from around the world. Because of the chore of set-up and take-down, Art and Audrey have reluctantly decided to dispose of their Christmas regalia. Characteristically thinking first of Rotary, they donated selected pieces from their Original Snow Village (Dept. 56), the major ceramic pieces in original packaging, for Action Auction IX.

To mention all the things Art does for Rotary is not possible. Hamlet might murmur, "*hic et ubique?*" for Art is certainly "here and everywhere," helping everyone, representing WGRC long after most Rotarians would have cut back on active involvement, especially outside the Club. In April 1989, Art – accompanied by Audrey – attended Charter Presentation Night for the Danville Sunrise Rotary Club, presenting the new Club's official club banner on behalf of WGRC. The following year, he coordinated the new Bloomington-Normal Sunrise Club's installation of officers.<sup>66</sup> He and Audrey hosted the hospitality hour preceding the June 1993 District Governor's Banquet for Ken Gunji. And with Ken Gunji, Art attended the 70th anniversary banquet of the Monticello Rotary Club in June 1994. You get the idea.

If Rotary is Art's life, he must have a split personality, because he leads other lives as well. There is family life: he and Audrey have been married 60 years, raised three children, and nurtured six grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. Not everyone knows Art is a 32nd degree Mason, a member of the Ansar Shrine at Springfield. There is also his work life – a career that threatens to enter the Guinness Book. A graduate of the UI and the Hynds School of Pharmacy (Chicago), Art has been a licensed, practicing pharmacist since 1947, both in his own business and for others. He has outlasted some pharmacies, retired from others.

Art's "retirements" remind of the "Boy Who Cried Wolf." He "retired" from Schnuck's in January 2000; less than a week later, he was back in the harness at Osco. He "retired" from Osco in February 2001, only to resurface at Wal-Mart. He "officially" retired from the practice of pharmacy in May 2001. *The News-Gazette* made quite a story of this; after all, at nearly 79 years old, Art was the senior practicing pharmacist in Champaign County. Shhhh—as we go to press, he's working part-time at Target Pharmacy. Perhaps his "First Person Rotary" responses explain: Future challenges? "Actively avoid retirement." You, in one word? "Workaholic."

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<sup>66</sup> Art's presence at the March, 2001 Charter Night of the Mahomet Rotary Club suggests that he's attended many other such events during the 1990s.

Eight years ago, during his tour as manager of Schnuck's Pharmacy, the Illinois Department of Aging honored Art as the Private Sector Employee of the Year. Art had been nominated by his boss and WGRC colleague Dave Beckerle. "In addition to being Mr. Rotary, Art is known by just about everyone in town, so he might also be known as Mr. Champaign-Urbana," said Beckerle. Dave described Art as "truly an impressive individual, as well as a valued employee, with these attributes: dependability, punctuality, attendance, quality/quantity of work, community involvement, motivation, attitude, and personality."

We knew that. But wait, that's not all. Art's organizational and administrative skills are not limited to Rotary. He has served on many boards; his contributions as executive director of the Community Foundation of Champaign County were such that he is now an honorary trustee. In March, 1999 he received a plaque for 23 years of service to the Champaign Township Board of Supervisors. Within a month, he was elected to the Board of Trustees of the Village of Savoy, where he continues to serve. Whatever. Or, you know, awesome!

Sometimes, Art's tributes come in the form of song and verse. On January 19, 1998, President Scott Anderson called Skelton to the front. Guy Duker, who (once upon a time) had been Art's band teacher, led the members in serenading Art with "Mr. Rotary" to the tune of "John Brown's Body." On April 30, 2001, to commemorate Art and Audrey's 60th wedding anniversary and the birth of their seventh great-grandchild, John Hecker dedicated to "Mr. Rotary" a passage from Philippians. Then Doug Nelson (with David Thies on piano) led his song "I Believe in Service," the chorus of which is:

I believe in service...  
That comes from the heart...  
Real happiness is helping others...  
Placing service above self.

David Thies summed it up in his 1992 nomination of Art for the District 6490 Hall of Honor:

I can think of few individuals more deserving of an award that honors Rotarians with a "long history of Rotary and civic service." I have experienced the richness of Art's experience as he has helped me every step of the way...even more important is the manner in which Art helps...he's unassuming and humble. His attitude is fantastic; he's constantly encouraging, especially the newer members of the Club, and is never critical or judgmental. He is an invaluable member of our Club and of the District.

Incredibly, nearly ten years after David wrote those words and long past the age when most people stagger off into retirement from work and public life, Art rolls on – an almost mythical figure. With infinite patience he observes not just the forging of Rotary history, but history repeating itself *ad infinitum* as new Club leaders address ongoing concerns and celebrate new milestones placed onto the landscape of service by thousands of WGRC hands.

If we picture 85 years of good works by Champaign Rotarians as a resplendent tapestry, how do we describe Art Skelton's contributions? The first thought might be as the golden filaments highlighting many noteworthy achievements. But no; let glitter reflect the touch of other protagonists. The contributions of Art and Audrey are the strong strands that weave myriad fibers into a coherent design, that connect and bind, that guide a thousand threads of thought and effort into the continuum of service in which we all take pride.

Art is both rudder and stabilizer to the Champaign Rotary Club, our proprietary proponent of the Object of Rotary . He is our Rotarian for All Seasons, for All Reasons. Art Skelton is WGRC's Rotarian of the 20th Century.

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## PART VI: WHITHER ROTARY?

Anyone who has read the first five parts of *The Story Continues* will feel confident in the future of both Rotary International and the Champaign Rotary Club. But does the individual Rotarian truly grasp his or her personal role in helping Rotary realize its tremendous potential? And while we rightfully celebrate the individual and collective achievements of those who have embellished our tradition of service, we must not be content. Challenges confront Champaign Rotary, and we cannot conceal them behind our resplendent tapestry of good works. These challenges chiefly concern membership issues: attendance, retention, involvement, and diversity.

In terms of member involvement (time and caring, not dollars), WGRC can legitimately claim improvement. More members now invest time in projects such as literacy, vocational guidance, the Uganda project, and Habitat for Humanity. At the same time, only a few members – usually the same few – bother with international visitors, be they RYE, GSE, or Ambassadorial Scholars. In 1990-91, President Mike Martin asked members to expand their community involvement, to help where there is real need. At the end of the year, he gave the Club a “C” for improvement in involvement and commitment. Ten years later, how would members grade themselves? For a candid appraisal and thoughts on how we might improve our “grade,” read on.

As for attendance, Rotary International has stayed true to its conviction that absent members cannot deliver the investment of self that Rotarians must offer. The traditional 60% attendance requirement is reasonable; some feel the expanded make-up time is actually too liberal.<sup>67</sup> As a matter of record, WGRC’s attendance has been a mark of pride. However, our one-time goal of 85% attendance receives little emphasis today. The April 2001 attendance percentage – 58.6 – may have been more aberration than trend; the percentage for July-August-September rose to 75.

While attendance can be periodically improved by concerted effort, declining membership has become the pressing concern for both Rotary International and WGRC. Consider this from RI President-Elect Richard King’s address to incoming District Governors at the 2001 International Assembly:

I believe with all my heart and soul that it is Rotary’s destiny to become the most important non-profit, non-government and non-religious organization in the world’s history. In the words of one 20th-Century statesman, “Rotary has a rendezvous with destiny.

Of four challenges King has outlined along that road to destiny, declining membership is the first. If RI is to expand its sphere, more minds and hands are needed, not fewer. King characterizes “Rotary’s

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<sup>67</sup> Surely a missed meeting can be made up somewhere within 28 days – 14 prior or 14 after the miss.

Global Quest” as “the most ambitious, far-reaching membership campaign in Rotary’s history.” The “Quest” relies upon the efforts of individual Rotarians to sponsor new members: no one becomes a Rotarian until asked, and it is estimated that 90% of Rotarians have never sponsored a new member. As Rotary approaches its 2005 Centennial, the words of Past RI President Robert Barth ring true: “If we want another century of Rotary, we must make Rotary attractive for young people.”

For some 30 years, Champaign Rotary leaders were content with membership in the 230 to 250 range, maintaining a no-growth policy. But during the latter 1990s, membership began to slump, reflecting Rotary International’s first membership decline since the Great Depression. From June 1997 through June 2000, RI membership slipped from 1,215,000 to 1,180,000. Champaign Rotary contributed to the problem, as its membership tumbled to 194 on July 30, 2001 – the lowest in decades.

On June 19, 2000, President Nina Eisner devoted the Club meeting to “The Future of Champaign Rotary,” initiating a dialogue structured around 12 questions addressing issues of membership recruitment, development, and retention – issues that challenge WGRC, RI, and service clubs in general. Over ensuing months, President Mark Stolkin’s Board analyzed the findings of the study groups organized by Nina. The results mostly restated what has always been known: recruitment is Step 1, and retention must begin from the day of induction. But at the March, 2001 Board meeting, Scott Anderson Jr. suggested that, when recruiting, we must ask not only “are they right for us?” but “are we right for them?”

We believe Scott has asked the crucial question. Champaign Rotary is an extraordinary organization with a traditional culture. In days past, merely murmuring “Champaign Rotary” was all it took to attract new members, and then it was their responsibility to “fit in.” Today, we inhabit an impatient world. Recruitment/retention challenges also plague the business and professional sphere. Successful managers today market their organizations as inclusive workplaces, then live up to the claim by identifying and addressing the needs of individual employees. Are we Champaign Rotarians doing that?

We have seen no definitive study, but at least in WGRC, women members added far exceed the number of men who resigned over objections to women in Rotary. However, any expectation that the advent of women would solve membership concerns appears to be unsupported. Faced by a loss of 10% each year through attrition, growing Champaign Rotary is no easy task.<sup>68</sup> Assuming an annual loss of 20 members, a net

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68 District 6490 Governor Tim Gover reported that U.S. Rotary clubs have a 19% attrition rate.

gain of just four members would require, on average, two new members each month. Today another factor complicates recruitment: in 1985, Champaign-Urbana had just three Rotary clubs; now, with the new Mahomet Club, six local Rotary clubs compete for the same potential members.

Changing life patterns have made a dramatic impact on interest in service clubs. Today's business and professional leaders – precisely the prospective members targeted by Rotary – are far more transient than in 1980. Companies move people up, sideways, and out: Champaign today, Omaha tomorrow. When the “movers-and-shakers” and even the “up-and-comers” aren't working, they're flying hither and yon. Two-income households find discretionary hours to be elusive. Twenty years ago, girls didn't play sports. Today we have organized activities ad infinitum for both girls and boys. When parents aren't playing taxi driver, they're scrambling for a precious hour of “quality time” with kids. Even the “time-saving” personal computer claims countless hours, competing with outside interests. Simply put, many people stay in a community three years or less and, because of job and family demands, have little time to become assimilated residents – let alone service-minded citizens.

Societal changes carry deeper implications. In his provocative book, *Bowling Alone*,<sup>69</sup> Robert D. Putnam explores the concept of “social capital,” or “community,” in terms of the declining connection of Americans to family, friends, neighbors, and social structures, and the negative impact of that phenomenon on the productivity of individuals and groups. Most Americans, Putnam argues, no longer spend much time in community organizations, despite rapid increases in education that have armed more people with the skills, resources, and interests that once fostered civic engagement. Rotarians should not shrug off this trend as generational or cyclical; rather, we must take responsibility for reversing it. Putnam says,

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<sup>69</sup> Simon and Schuster, New York, 2000. Robert Putnam is Harvard University Professor of Public Policy. *Bowling Alone* references suggested by Lott Thomas.



Zelema Harris

Leaders and activists in every sphere of American life must seek innovative ways to respond to the eroding effectiveness of the civic institutions and practices that we inherited....we need to fortify our resolve as individuals to reconnect...actions by individuals are not sufficient to restore community, but they are necessary.

We agree that America's social capital is eroding, and 2001-02 Club President George Scheetz and his Board are working to develop effective responses. George has appointed a Membership Development Committee and asked Chair Zelema Harris to develop a membership strategy. Once a new member is attracted, retention becomes key. The most alarming membership losses for WGRC are members who have been on board but a short time. In part, this may reflect Robert Putnam's hypothesis:

We've stopped doing committee work, stopped serving as officers, and stopped going to meetings...in short, Americans have been dropping out in droves, not merely from political life, but from organized community life more generally.

The pressure of competing priorities has forced a half-dozen WGRCers to take leaves of absence. Also, the shift in term of membership just since the publication of *Steps Going Up* is stunning. More and more members are in and out within months, some too quickly to appear in an annual Club *Roster*. Of 36 new members inducted in 1995-96, 20 have left; half of 36 inducted in 1997-98 are already gone.

The Club has tried to address this. Jan Bahr developed her *Wonderful World of Rotary* to enhance new-member indoctrination, even though WGRC has long taken indoctrination seriously. In 1999 and 2000, the Club appointed a mentor (in addition to the sponsor) for each new member. The present judgment is that the mentor idea did not help. RI President King asked all districts to convene Membership Development and Retention Seminars; District 6490 conducted its Seminar on August 4 in Urbana. The Seminar placed much emphasis on member retention as well as improving Rotary's public perception through increased media exposure of its work. A month later, President George Scheetz attended, along with 700 Rotarians from 16 countries, the North American Presidential Conference in Salt Lake City, where membership was a primary focus.

Meanwhile, at the triennial Council on Legislation held April 21-27, 2001, in Chicago, the delegates passed what Council Chair and past RI President Cliff Dochterman called a “watershed vote.” In a dramatic change to Rotary’s unique classification system, “senior active” and “additional active” disappear as classifications, and clubs may induct several members in each active classification, so long as no single classification constitutes more than 10% of the total club membership. From July 1, 2001, members will retain their classifications permanently; should they retire, they will no longer be counted against the 10% limit. At the 2001 International Institute, where PDG Ken Gunji represented District 6490, the RI Directors took other steps designed to promote Rotary’s Global Quest, including eased attendance requirements.

Many long-time Rotarians see these changes as controversial. That members are the primary representatives of their professions has been one of the attractions of Rotary over, say, Kiwanis. Still, we are encouraged that Rotary is taking aggressive action on membership recruitment and retention. The specter of societal change, however, warns us that moderation of attendance and classification rules cannot bring about in individuals the necessary attitudinal change. The next volume of *The Story Continues* will record the success – or failure – of Rotary’s Global Quest for membership growth.

Another, seldom-mentioned aspect of WGRC membership that raises concern is its lack of diversity. The 1988-89 Club *Roster* included, among active Rotarians (honorary and members emeriti excluded) three women, three African Americans, one Asian American, and no Latinos. We began the 2001-2002 year with 20 women, two Asian Americans, one Latino, and five African Americans.<sup>70</sup> While the number of women in Rotary gradually increases, racial and ethnic minority membership does not. If diversity is indeed the face of America’s future, Champaign Rotary remains stuck in its past.

On the surface, the issue of gender diversity appears to be taking care of itself: the number of women Rotarians is growing, and whether Club presidents and committee leaders are men or women has no discernible effect on WGRC’s service achievements. Still, many of the “in-and-out” members mentioned above are women. We overhear that the Club’s essential culture remains “traditional male;” that one is expected to talk sports and “play 18” on weekends; that a woman can be invisible at a luncheon table. For that matter, some “in” women are “snobs.”

“Hey, if you want to fit in, it’s up to you to meet people,” goes the standard advice to new members, regardless of gender. In fairness, while some newcomers readily make friends and get involved, others are

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<sup>70</sup> By October 29, the number of African Americans had risen to seven.

dismayed by perceived slights and decide that they have better places to spend their time and money. Even non-local white males can feel alienated. Should the responsibility for “fitting in” fall solely upon the new member?

In this regard, Scott Anderson Jr.’s question, “are we right for them?” becomes key. We should not expect members 70 and 80 years of age to seek out young new members and probe for non-existent commonalities. However, in the context of social consciousness and of what Rotary International purports to stand for, some honest self-examination may be in order. There is a self-satisfied, self-perpetuating homogeneity in WGRC. Suggesting that here may offend some of Champaign Rotary’s members. But the truth is that, as society has changed, the culture of WGRC has not. Overtly, we are welcoming, yet many of us are oblivious to the undertow that carries some of our catch back into the sea. When members leave, we ask them to tell us why. Most who respond praise our Club; a few allude to an unfriendly or non-inclusive climate. Perhaps we see these few as exceptions, and dismiss them as whiners who lack initiative. Do we execute the messenger? Is the mote never in our own eye?

No Champaign Rotarian would oppose the admission to membership of any qualified minority candidate. But to say that there is no racial threshold at Rotary’s door reveals a lack of awareness. Mere acceptance of a member of a minority group does not guarantee a sense of welcome, let alone assimilation into the Club culture. At the same time, the assimilation threshold – and it is one of class as much as of race – is bilateral. Given the reality of social and cultural differences, many minority leaders may not perceive Rotary as an aspiration group. With few exceptions – Ken Gunji’s leadership comes first to mind – WGRC has been a “white-run” club. If one has grown up feeling polarized from such organizations, one understandably looks to alternatives.

Speculation aside, this Club can claim only modest progress in attracting and retaining members of diverse racial and ethnic heritage. In a sophisticated community blessed with a renowned university and a premier college, home to large numbers of international faculty and students, this is an unacceptable situation for a Rotary Club that enjoys referring to itself as WGRC. No, it is not easy to bridge a chasm from one side only; neither is it enough to say, “Hey, the door’s open if you’re interested.” New UI Chancellor Nancy Cantor says:

Diversity ... comes from all of us, challenges all of us, benefits all of us. Diversity is what this institution should be doing not only because it is socially responsible, but also because it is the best way to achieve our long-standing goals: excellence in education, research and public engagement.

Clarence Shelley, retiring UI associate vice chancellor, added: “She has articulated...the expectation that the faculty and administration need to make this a more welcoming and diverse place.” Let us ask ourselves: should our leadership and members do more to make Champaign Rotary

a more welcoming and diverse place, to better achieve our goals of service? If the answer is “probably” or even “maybe,” then the challenge becomes how to create positive change.

Let these paragraphs hold up a mirror, and let us look closely. Many of us coast along in our comfort zone, content with Rotary as our principal service vehicle. World understanding is a worthy goal: we applaud fostering peace and bridging cultural gaps around the world; Rotary International has Forums and Centers dedicated to peace and conflict resolution. But there is a troubling disconnect between issues we address abroad, yet avoid at home. Rotary encourages urban peace initiatives; are we doing enough in our cities? We put aside our biases and minister to those beset by illiteracy and poverty; but do we openly discuss confrontational societal issues within our community, or even within our Club? Rotary Scholars and RYLA participants discuss racial barriers; are WGRCCers willing to convene a forum to address local sources of conflict?

If we are genuine Rotarians, worthy of our international involvements, we can be a catalyst for dialogue to examine persistent, divisive undercurrents within our community. We serve young people well, but do we listen to them? The young sometimes see social concerns more clearly than many of us; when did we sit down with youth leaders to hear their perspectives on community concerns, or ask what worries them about their future? “Straight Talk,” the new radio program godfathered by Steve Main that gives our young people a public forum, is an encouraging, commendable step in the right direction. We need to listen in.

Heterogeneity, long a cherished element in America’s societal construct, is now the mainstream design. If we truly accept this, we must think and act outside our attitudinal box. Tradition is grand, but not if it generates complacency and inertia. Change, if we wish it, will be fostered not by our leaders, but by the opinions of the members at large. Organizational leaders tend to be gatekeepers of the status quo; ours must be door openers for interaction with the membership, initiating discourse and soliciting frank input. Change will not happen overnight. Perhaps we do not wish change; perhaps we are content with who and how we are. Perhaps we cannot change, even if we desire it.

Then again, perhaps we can. In the July, 2000 issue of *The Rotarian*, RI President Frank Devlyn said: “The overriding challenge that we face today is to make Rotary meaningful in the new century at all levels.” This is elemental: *Rotary must be relevant in today’s American society*. Promoting awareness of Rotary’s good works may attract more people to Rotary. Can Champaign Rotary, with minimal diversity in its membership, make Rotary meaningful in the new century? Can our praiseworthy achievers temper satisfaction with introspection? Is

mankind truly our business? As Scott Anderson Sr. so aptly put it: “Will we be WGRC – ha-ha? Or WGRC – you betcha!”

Paul Harris once said, “Rotary still stands. Why and how? Because it is grounded not on fear, rivalry, and suspicion, but on the eternal and indestructible rocks of friendliness, tolerance and usefulness.” He did not exaggerate. Rotarians across the world, across all lines of color and culture, embrace common values and goals. Yet within the country where Rotary was born, the perception of Rotary as “the best and brightest way” is not universal.

We are confident that the global influence of Rotary has exceeded what even the intuitive imagination of Paul Harris envisioned. We Champaign Rotarians have a remarkable record of good works and, in recent years, we have blazed new trails of service. Let us keep exploring new ways to raise the relevance of Rotary to this and successive generations of our own community’s citizens. If we seek new members not only to bolster our ranks, but also to show us new directions, WGRC will continue to define benchmarks of service.

When we began this addendum to *Steps Going Up*, we might have asked: where have the steps led? As we conclude it, we are reassured that they continue upward, always along four paths, parallel and yet convergent, toward the achievement of the Object of Rotary. Let us evoke once more the words of 1988-89 Club President Cal Owens, in his March report to the Club:

We have come far. But we have, as Robert Frost wrote so eloquently, “...miles to go before we sleep.” There are still children at home and abroad who are sick, hungry and without hope...still men and women without shelter or jobs. Many elders languish without proper health care, housing and, most regrettably, without anyone caring...or affording them the respect, dignity and human compassion all of us want and need.

We Rotarians will walk these miles by holding fast to fundamentals that are true while embracing things new that are good. Some will see this as building on a firm foundation; some will see it as changing with the times. We see it as both, blending the best of the old with the promise of the new, energizing WGRC’s exciting and effective role in this new century.

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The viewpoints expressed in Part VI reflect my thoughts, drawn from observations, research, and discussions with Rotarians past and present. These perspectives, intended to elicit reflection, do not necessarily represent the sentiments of other members of the History Committee.

– Peter T. Tomaras

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# APPENDIX I

## Members Who Have Passed Away

**July 1, 1988 to November 30, 2001**

Reading the names below brings home the inadequacy of such a listing. Some were Rotarians for more than half a century; all contributed to their Club, to their community, to their families. To all who knew them, their names evoke indelible memories of their achievements, of their characters. They were Champaign Rotarians, and each — to a greater or lesser extent — played his role in the continuum of the Club's history. We list their years of membership and the month and year of their deaths.

Vernon L. Barkstall (1976-95)	October, 1995
Marshall K. Berner (1967-01)	October, 2001
Jonathan P. Booz (1981-01)	January, 1999
H. R. "Tiz" Bresee (1939-89)	August, 1989
Paul K. Bresee (1934-92)	April, 1992
Donald F. Bresnan (1972-99)	March, 1999
Jack D. Brodsky (1973-96)	March, 1996
Joseph H. Cannon (1947-00)	October, 2000
James J. Costello (1976-88)	August, 1988
V. Dale Cozad (1981-93)	November, 1993
William H. Creswell Jr. (1976-01)	June, 2001
Charles E. Curran, Jr. (1968-00)	July, 2000
Joe W. Daily (1952-95)	January, 1995
Harold S. "Hal" Dawson (1941-92)	December, 1992
Oscar H. Dodson (1950-96)	January, 1996
Guy M. Duker (1954-98)	January, 1998
Russell H. Duncan (1955-89)	December, 1989
Bruce W. Dunn (1992-93)	July, 1993
John A. Edwards (1962-99)	February, 1999
William R. Edwards (1969-99)	September, 1999
Philip M. Faucett, Jr. (1978-96)	March, 1996
Carl Greenstein (1946-2001)	March, 2001
Willard S. Hansen (1953-99)	September, 1999
Horace L. Henderson (1962-97)	February, 1997
David Dodds Henry (1955-95)	September, 1995
Mark H. Hindsley (1934-99)	October, 1999
Steven Hotsinpillar (1989-89)	November, 1989
Edward C. Jordan (1954-91)	October, 1991
William L. Julian (1949-00)	January, 2000
Donald L. Kemmerer (1941-93)	December, 1993
Louis R. Kent (1962-94)	March, 1994
Alan K. Laing (1955-93)	May, 1993
George A. Legg (1944-89)	July, 1989
Robert L. Lienhart (1977-00)	November, 2000
Don H. Livingston (1972-99)	January, 1999

Guy F. Main (1959-99) June, 2000  
 George W. Mayes (1945-91) February, 1991  
 King J. McCristal (1967-93) October, 1993  
 Eugene H. Mellon (1943-95) March, 1995  
 Richard J. Parkhill (1964-96) January, 1996  
 William T. Parkhill (1928-93) December, 1993  
 Thomas P. Parkinson (1967-93) November, 1993  
 Arthur H. Perkins (1973-93) June, 1993  
 Charles A. Petry (1947-89) June, 1989  
 Robert P. Pope (1950-97) February, 1997  
 William H. Rice (1947-94) October, 1994  
 Stanley C. Robinson (1964-00) April, 2000  
 Edward E. Roderick (1981-01) August, 2001  
 John R. Scaggs (1967-90) June, 1990  
 William D. Shoemaker (1989-97) September, 1997  
 William L. Springer (1980-92) September, 1992  
 James G. "Glad" Thomas (1933-90) January, 1990  
 Albert G. Tuxhorn (1936-89) February, 1989  
 Harold C. Vance (1944-96) August, 1996  
 Robert C. Wright (1968-96) November, 1996  
 C. Wayne Young (1969-93) February, 1993

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## APPENDIX II

### CLUB OFFICERS 1988-2002

Year	President	Secretary	Treasurer
1988-89	Calvin L. Owens	E. Eugene Oliver	Thomas M. Good
1989-90	Dan M. Crispin	E. Eugene Oliver	Thomas M. Good
1990-91	J. Michael Martin	E. Eugene Oliver	Thomas M. Good
1991-92	David C. Thies	E. Eugene Oliver	David W. Hood
1992-93	Janice M. Bahr	E. Eugene Oliver	David W. Hood
1993-94	Ivan W. Davis Jr.	Roger E. Martin	David W. Hood
1994-95	Thomas M. Good	Nancy Eisner Martin	David W. Hood
1995-96	James F. Keene	Nancy Eisner Martin	David W. Hood
1996-97	Gary G. Wackerlin	Nancy Eisner Martin	David W. Hood
1997-98	Scott Anderson Jr.	Nancy Eisner Martin	Richard J. Dutton
1998-99	Thomas J. Costello	Nancy Eisner Martin	Ronald L. Kiddoo
1999-00	Nina W. Eisner	Nancy Eisner Martin	Ronald L. Kiddoo
2000-01	Mark D. Stolkin	Nancy Eisner Martin	Ronald L. Kiddoo
2001-02	George H. Scheetz	Nancy Eisner Martin	Ronald L. Kiddoo

### Executive Secretary

1988-89 Arthur J. Skelton    1989-92 John T. Stier

1992-2002 Arthur J. Skelton

### WGRC, INC. OFFICERS

Year	President	Secretary	Treasurer
1988-89	Thomas O. Dawson	Donald E. Moyer, Jr.	Richard J. O'Neill
1989-90	Leonard T. Flynn	Donald E. Moyer, Jr.	Richard J. O'Neill
1990-91	Ronald H. Bates	Donald E. Moyer, Jr.	Richard J. O'Neill
1991-92	David B. Lawrence	Donald E. Moyer, Jr.	Richard J. O'Neill
1992-93	Robert L. Lienhart	Donald E. Moyer, Jr.	Richard J. O'Neill
1993-94	William E. Gleason	Donald E. Moyer, Jr.	Richard J. O'Neill
1994-95	Robert J. Cochran	Donald E. Moyer, Jr.	Richard J. O'Neill
1995-96	Bonnie B. Kelley	Donald E. Moyer, Jr.	Richard J. O'Neill
1996-97	Stephen D. Hamburg	Denton R. Brown	Dean V. Cavey
1997-98	Nina W. Eisner	Patrick B. Dorsey	Mark D. Stolkin
1998-99	Kip R. Pope	Elizabeth A. Beauchamp	James S. Acheson
1999-00	Patrick B. Dorsey	Christopher S. Moyer	James S. Acheson
2000-01	David W. Hood	Gregory D. Cozad	Guy C. Hall
2001-02	Dale A. Morrissey	Nancy E. Martin	Gregory D. Cozad

### DISTRICT 6490 GOVERNORS

1992-93 Ken Gunji    1997-98 Frank D. Keck II

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## **APPENDIX III**

### **Recipients of Significant Awards 1988-2001**

#### **CHAMPAIGN ROTARY CLUB**

##### **Rotarian of the Year**

1988-89	Frank D. Keck II
1989-90	William H. Creswell Jr.
1990-91	William Stallman
1991-92	P. David Kuhl
1992-93	Stephen D. Hamburg
1993-94	Scott Anderson Jr., Glen W. Wensch
1994-95	Thomas O. Dawson
1995-96	Nancy E. Martin
1996-97	Christopher S. Moyer
1997-98	Denton R. Brown, Thomas M. Good
1998-99	John R. Ady
1999-00	Duane D. Cole
2000-01	Gary G. Wackerlin

##### **Robert Eisner Jr. Award for Outstanding New Member**

1988-89	Nancy E. Martin
1989-90	Bradley C. Booton, R. James Leffelman
1990-93	(not awarded)
1993-94	George H. Scheetz
1994-95	Ivor M. Emmanuel, Douglas W. Nelson
1995-96	(not awarded)
1996-97	K. Kay Machula, Maarten van de Guchte
1997-98	Robert C. Aldridge, D. Jillian Wagner
1998-99	Donna J. Anderson
1999-00	Nancy J. Casey
2000-01	Scott R. Dahman

#### **DISTRICT 6490 AWARDS**

##### **Rotarian of the Year**

1989	Frank D. Keck II
1994	Stephen D. Hamburg

##### **Vocational Service Award**

1998	James G. Turpin
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#### **ROTARY INTERNATIONAL AWARDS**

##### **Four Avenues of Service Award**

1998	Douglas W. Nelson
2000	Arthur J. Skelton

##### **Rotary Foundation Meritorious Service Award**

1973	Arthur J. Skelton
1999	Ken Gunji

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## **APPENDIX IV**

### **Editors of The Fizz 1919-2002**

1919-20	Ed Filson, Harry J. Millard
1920-34	Harry J. Millard
1934-35	Edwin N. Jacquin
1935-37	Stewart D. Daniels
1937-38	Paul K. Bresee
1938-42	R. Forrest Colwell
1942-44	Ivan W. Davis Sr.
1944-46	Paul Corcoran
1946-47	Philip M. Faucett Jr.
1947-48	Ben F. Harris III
1948-49	Royal B. McClelland
1949-50	H. Cullen Kariher
1950-57	Dean R. McCumber
1957-58	Willard S. Hansen
1958-59	Irving D. Schwartz
1959-60	Charles E. Flynn
1960-62	Ivan W. Davis Jr.
1962-64	Herbert F. Heaton
1964-65	Lott H. Thomas
1965-66	Howard F. Babbs
1966-67	Donald M. Lindsay
1967-68	Norman E. Ritchie
1968-69	Harry L. Bird
1969-70	Richard R. Tryon Jr.
1970-72	Donald E. Radcliffe
1972-74	Norman E. Ritchie, William D. Krahling
1974-76	William D. Krahling, Norman E. Ritchie
1976-93	William D. Krahling
1993-94	Sandra K. Norlin, George H. Scheetz
1994-00	George H. Scheetz
2000-01	George H. Scheetz, Jeffrey E. Farlow-Cornell
2001-02	Jeffrey E. Farlow-Cornell

Some of the editors listed served several weeks less, or more, than indicated by the Rotary year breakdown. Sixteen editors held this demanding job for one year or less, and six for just two years. The champion, of course, is Bill Krahling, who met weekly deadlines as editor or co-editor for 20 consecutive years.

Most editors served at least one year as assistant editor. Of many members who have served as assistants to the editor, the most dedicated have been Peter T. Tomaras (18 years), Mal Nygren (16 years), Gene Oliver (13 years), and Russ Duncan (7 years).

Other members who have assisted include Pat Harmon, Alan Gardner, Chuck Petry, Morry Hecker, Tom Morgan, Don Livingston, David Dressel, Tom Rochford, and Bob Aldridge.



## **APPENDIX V**

### **District 6490 Rotary Clubs (with year of chartering)**

**December, 2001**

Arcola Sunrise (1998)  
Arthur (1952)  
Atlanta (1937)  
Bloomington (1915)  
Bloomington-Normal Sunrise (1990)  
Bloomington-Normal Sunset (2001)  
Blue Mound (1948)  
Casey (1925)  
Champaign (1917)  
Champaign-Urbana Sunrise (1987)  
Champaign West (1978)  
Charleston (1928)  
Clinton (1920)  
Coles County Sunrise (1995)  
Danville (1915)  
Danville Downtown (1965)  
Danville Sunrise (1989)  
Decatur (1914)  
Decatur Metropolitan (1986)  
Effingham (1920)  
Effingham Sunrise (1994)  
Eureka (1955)  
Fairbury (1928)  
Forsyth Sunrise (2000)  
Gibson City (1964)  
Gilman (1927)  
Hillsboro (1923)  
Hoopeston (1942)  
Lincoln (1923)  
Litchfield (1925)  
Mahomet (2001)  
Marshall (1926)  
Mattoon (1921)  
Metamora-Germantown Hills (1968)  
Monticello (1924)  
Mount Pulaski (1926)  
Moweaqua (1925)  
Newton (1925)  
Nokomis (1926)  
Normal (1949)  
Pana (1921)  
Paris (1922)  
Paxton (1952)  
Piper City (1939)

Pontiac (1922)  
Rantoul (1937)  
Roanoke (1969)  
Robinson (1924)  
Savoy (1990)  
Shelbyville (1922)  
Tuscola (1922)  
Urbana (1924)  
Vandalia (1925)  
Villa Grove (1925)

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## **The Story Continues 2002-2013**

“Bombastic”

“Warm, welcoming, traditional, rooted.”

“A grouping of longtime friends!”

“An organization where most members always say ‘YES’ when asked to help.”

These are just a few of the ways WGRCCers<sup>71</sup> have described the Rotary Club of Champaign. For more than 90 years, the Club has been a place of fellowship, a place where business and professional leaders can network. It has also been a resource for the community’s youth and, most importantly, a service organization that donates impressive amounts of members’ time, expertise, and money to support local and international projects every year. Since 1916, Champaign Rotary has been a fixture of the Champaign-Urbana community. A glance over the roster of past and present members mirrors the feeling of driving around town seeing the same names on parks, buildings, and streets.

Many potential members come to Rotary for the networking opportunities, because Rotary’s tradition of representing the diversity of professions in a community has built its reputation as a prime location for making valuable contacts. In a 2012 member survey, WGRCCers highlighted this aspect of the Club, describing it as “a great place to know the ‘movers and shakers’ in our community,” and as providing an opportunity to “learn and follow in the footsteps of some of the greatest leaders in our area.” These networking opportunities have been some important attractors for new members.

Their primary motivation, however, is the desire to find worthwhile service opportunities, and the variety of service projects WGRCC supports is one of the driving forces for member retention. In that same survey, when asked “What has kept you in the Rotary Club of Champaign,” two factors were cited above all others: service projects and friendships within the Club. When asked to describe the Club’s atmosphere, members responded: “Very welcoming and an opportunity to meet very kind and generous people;” “A great combination of meeting positive, service-minded people and learning new things—all with a sense of fun and humor;” and “A great group of men and women trying to make our world a better place to live.” It’s abundantly clear that fellowship and service lie at the core of Champaign Rotary’s success.

“You get to enjoy the benefits of being a Rotary member by committing your service and your heart to projects.

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<sup>71</sup> The term coined by longtime Fizz editor Bill Krahling for members of the “World’s Greatest Rotary Club”

Attending Club meetings is gratifying, as many diverse personalities from different professions are involved. It's rewarding to be associated with men and women who want to help others in the community, and also around the world." (2012 member survey)

As WGRC moves into the 21st century, the Club has considerably increased its support of local organizations, not only financially, but also through hands-on volunteer hours. Champaign Rotary's long-standing annual Christmastime support of the Salvation Army has grown exponentially. Every winter WGRCers and Interactors<sup>72</sup> brave the cold to ring bells, bringing in more and more contributions each year. 2012 donations reached \$30,000, more than doubling the amounts raised at the turn of the millennium. A few energetic members get up early to spruce up Mattis Avenue between Windsor and Springfield, maintaining the Club's Adopt-a-Highway tradition.

"I like the presence our Club has in Champaign-Urbana as a resource to improve our community" (2012 member survey)

Throughout the decade, the Club also took on a number of new volunteer projects that relied on Rotarians' willingness to roll up their sleeves and improve the community with their own two hands. Champaign Rotarians have helped build and maintain parks and playgrounds, and have collaborated with other local organizations on environmental projects. Since 2007, Centennial Interact's Austin Cloyd Day of Service has pushed this trend even further, by bringing together volunteers for a growing number of local service projects each spring. At the District level, Rotarians have noted a sort of "re-branding" of WGRC thanks to its increased commitment to volunteer service. Details of these hands-on projects will unfold in the following chapters.

Champaign Rotary's reputation as a fundraising powerhouse remains strong. Virtually every year, District 6490 has recognized the Club for its outstanding commitments to the Rotary Foundation, as well as to projects and organizations. Fellow Rotarians from around the state—even from around the world—increasingly view WGRC as much more than a "check-writing club"—as a club that works hands-on to make the world a better place, both at the local and global levels.

A key enabler of the Club's major service achievements in this first decade of the 21st century has been the Cannon Grants. In October 2000, Champaign Rotary was saddened by the death of 53-year member Joseph H. Cannon. His spirit lives on with Champaign Rotary, however, because his generous endowment laid the foundation for the Club's annual Cannon Grants, which fund a variety of local projects each year.

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<sup>72</sup> The term coined by longtime Fizz editor Bill Krahling for members of the "World's Greatest Rotary Club"

Cannon left one third of his estate, more than \$1 million, in trust to WGRC, Inc. Each year, WGRC distributes the interest—approximately \$75,000—to community organizations as Cannon Grants, which aid large-scale projects for these local agencies and institutions. Each fall, WGRC accepts proposals for grants in the amount of \$5,000 or more to support projects that benefit Champaign County. The basis for the selection of Cannon Grant recipients has been the notion of “impact dollars,” funding projects that can substantially benefit Champaign County in the following ways:

- Suggest practical approaches to addressing community problems
- Promote collaboration and cooperation among agencies
- Generate community support, both professional and volunteer
- Strengthen an agency’s effectiveness or stability
- Address prevention as well as remediation

These qualifiers beautifully illustrate not just Rotary’s community service mission, but also the strength of its foundation as an organization of business and professional leaders.

The influence of women in Rotary continues to increase worldwide, not least with Champaign Rotary. Since Jan Bahr became WGRC’s first woman president in 1992, four more women have led the Club, three of them within the past five years. The dominance of women among winners of the Robert Eisner, Jr. Outstanding New Member Award is another indicator of their impact on WGRC: eight of the past 11 winners have been women. These numbers suggest that women in the Club are not merely a presence, but a driving force. The 2012 member survey revealed that members are concerned that WGRC does not fully reflect the diversity of the community, that women, minorities, and a younger age bracket are still underrepresented. However, changes are evident across this first decade of the 21st Century. With the persistent initiatives for improvement embraced by succeeding presidents, the Club will attract a wider variety of members who represent the diversity of Champaign-Urbana.

The following chapters outline the most significant achievements of Champaign Rotary from 2002 through the summer of 2013. The chapters, organized chronologically by the terms of presidents who have led the Club, can only provide a snapshot of the manifold events, projects, and trends that have shaped the Club over the past eleven years. We have attempted to highlight the major contributions WGRC has made to the community, but this volume cannot present an exhaustive list.

We also seek to situate the Club’s activities within the broader context of Rotary International, and to recognize the local and international figures who have influenced the service mission of Champaign Rotary. These pages cannot possibly feature all the WGRCers who merit being mentioned; the Club could not accomplish all it does without the

dedication of the hundreds of members who have passed through its ranks. The writer is incredibly impressed by the extent of Champaign Rotarians' devotion to service at all levels, even if I cannot acknowledge all of them by name. Indeed, distilling Champaign Rotary's achievements down to a manageable read has been a truly daunting task. I am grateful for the privilege.

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## 2002-03: President Bill Williams

Board of directors: Robert C. Aldridge (President-Elect), Donna J. Anderson, Elizabeth A. Beauchamp, David G. Bernthal, Scott R. Dahman, Jeffrey E. Farlow-Cornell (ex officio as Editor of *The Fizz*), K. Kay Machula, Christopher S. Moyer, D. J. (Jill) Wagner

We begin the next chapter of Champaign Rotary's history with a fitting tribute to the author of previous volume. The close of President George Scheetz's term saw the Club's prolific historian, Peter Tomaras, named Rotarian of the Year. President George described Peter as a "Renaissance Rotarian" and praised him for his professional work in chronicling the Club's history.

At President Bill's induction District Governor George Wolf introduced the Rotary International theme for the new year: *Sow the Seeds of Love*. He also counseled the new president on the nearly impossible, yet crucial, task ahead: "You'll find that running a Rotary Club is like driving a flock of chickens off the road—it cannot be done. However your job is to manage the club and lead its members."

This particular presidential turnover also saw the Club move into the digital age with the viewing of the first end-of-year photo retrospective on DVD, carefully prepared by Scott Anderson. The compilation was a rousing success, and has been an annual tradition ever since. Pictures were combined with music and narration by the outgoing president for a moving tribute to the past year's accomplishments and entertainment. And fun was certainly the name of the game during this transition. *The Fizz* notes that President George ended his term in the colorful Cat-in-the-Hat-inspired top hat he wore to open his term just one year before. President Bill took up the mantle to carry on that playful legacy, laying out one of his primary goals as being for the Club to have fun.

President Bill Williams started off his presidency with a trip to Barcelona for the Rotary International convention that boasted an impressive lineup of speakers, most notably Mikhail Gorbachev. Hearing Gorbachev speak was very moving, but less so was Jerry Lewis. Hoping to hear more about Lewis's philanthropic work, the attendees were met with a barrage of terrible jokes, some going back to his earliest work, and the audience dwindled halfway through the session. The trip was a success, however, and President Bill met impressive Rotarians from around the world who inspired him to tackle the challenge of leading the World's Greatest Rotary Club.

The spirit of fun closely wedded to community service was on display in November of 2002, when the CEO of the Champaign County YMCA was the invited speaker and began his presentation by calling up Rotarians and guests for a rousing version of the famous song, complete with Village People dance moves and costuming. It was also noted, however, that Champaign Rotary's connections to the YMCA run deep.

When honorary Rotarian Senator William B. McKinley left \$200,000 for the construction and endowment of a YMCA in Champaign during the Great Depression, Champaign Rotary was one of the Y's strongest champions as it took the community more than a decade to get the Y built. Champaign Rotary saw the YMCA as a vital force in bringing Champaign-Urbana out of the depression, and the Club has been a strong supporter in the decades that followed.

The year was not all fun and games, however. A combination of factors led to a difficult year in 2002, where the Club found itself between major fundraisers and strapped for cash as previous years of declining membership led to less income from dues and donations. The Club was forced to cut back on some social activities and "extras" in order to maintain its charitable work, and President Bill worked hard to keep the Club afloat and stronger going into the next year. Getting the Club back on track financially became President Bill's primary goal. One of the most noticeable cash-saving measures taken was also a step toward the future of *The Fizz*, as well as the Club's general move into the digital world of the 21st century. The largest Club expenditure was the printing and distribution of the award-winning newsletter, which amounted to more than \$11,000 in 2002. To reduce those costs, the Club moved to a bi-monthly newsletter, before eventually launching digital distribution.

The Club was still able to maintain its signature events, such as the Corn roast and Football Banquet. President Bill fondly remembers the Club's first progressive dinner. Club members sampled their fellow Rotarians' food and hospitality around town, and then wound up at President Bill's for coffee and dessert. The progressive dinner became an annual tradition through 2007, but was ultimately phased out in 2008 due to dwindling participation. The Corn Roast took place on July 29th, and at the end of August, the Club participated in the Rotary Gold and Great Skills Event. The new format for the this District 6490 golf outing was held at five different courses around the district—at Stone Creek Country Club for Champaign-Urbana Rotarians. Participants competed for honors including Longest Drive, Longest Putt, and Closest Second Shot to the Pin on a Par 4 hole.

August was Membership and Extension Month. The previous year, Champaign had exceeded Rotary International's Global Quest for Membership's call for each Club to induct one new member per month (with an ultimate net-gain goal of five members per year). In 2001-02 Champaign had recruited 20 new members, resulting in a net growth of 10 by year's end—on par with the national average. Overall, Rotary International saw a 4.6% increase in new membership around the world, including charters for more than one thousand new clubs. The fastest growing region was Asia.

Champaign Rotary's membership grew, but not without challenges. The addition of clubs in the Champaign-Urbana area—such as in

Mahomet and Savoy—meant that all local Rotary Clubs faced a member shortfall not only because today's young professionals have less time, but also because of competition for members with each other. .

2003 also saw the Club's meeting venue change from The Chancellor Hotel. The move to the Hawthorn Suites not only enabled members to come above ground for meetings after years in the basement, but also provided an improvement in the food, by many accounts.

The Club's Adopt-a-Highway project was in full swing on Mattis Avenue, as Club members rolled up their sleeves to better the community. The first clean-up took place on Saturday, September 21. The Club has continued to spend one Saturday per quarter diligently sprucing up Mattis Avenue from Springfield to Windsor, then enjoying some fellowship time afterwards at Panera.

The end of President Bill's term saw the announcement of the first-ever Joseph H. Cannon Memorial Grants, awarded to recipients at the June 9 meeting. The first round of Cannon Grants went to CASA to fund training programs, Family Services of Champaign County for important renovations, the Prairieland Council of the Boy Scouts of America for the completion of a new building, and the Center for Women in Transition to facilitate a major expansion. The grants ranged from \$25,000 to \$60,000 for a total of \$171,900. *The News-Gazette* reported in July 2003 that Champaign Rotary's \$50,000 award to the Center for Women in Transition enabled the organization to carry out a much-needed expansion project which was nearly sidelined after fund-raising efforts had stalled the previous year. The expansion included a new building to house an additional five families and provide space for educational programs and career training.

The 2003 District 6490 Conference provided an opportunity to celebrate Champaign Rotary's greatest asset, Art Skelton, as he received Rotary International's highest honor: the Service Above Self Award. Many a page has been written about Art, the backbone of this Club for more than half a century. Past District Governor Sandra Broadrick-Allen described the reasons why Art exemplified Rotary's ideals and philosophy, noting that "...his responsibilities at the District level have spanned decades of service; his leadership at the Club level has involved thousands of hours of dedicated voluntary effort. Art is truly 'Mr. Rotary'."

WGRC also recognized Art as one of its Rotarians of the Year, along with William J. Kitson III. The Club also awarded Sarah Tufte with the Robert Eisner, Jr. Outstanding New Member award. President Bill prided himself on ending meetings on time and getting the Club members on their way. He remarked that Rotary not only has allowed him to serve his community in meaningful ways, but it also has given him the

opportunity to forge relationships with members, many of them pillars of the community, whom he otherwise would not have encountered.

Possible link to video

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## **2003-04: President Bob Aldridge**

Board of directors: John R. Ady, Donna J. Anderson, David G. Bernthal (President-Elect), Larry J. Carney, Scott R. Dahman, Joan M. Dixon (ex officio as Editor of *The Fizz*), D.J. (Jill) Kemper, Karen K. Machula, J. Steven Main

In July 2003, Bob Aldridge stepped up to lead Champaign Rotary as the Club worked to fulfill Rotary International's theme of *Lend a Hand*. As the Club settled into its new digs at the Hawthorne Suites, Bob spoke about his motivating trip to Brisbane, Australia for the RI Convention. He described the presentations and leadership sessions as informative; however, it was the chance to network with Rotarians from all over the world that really made the trip worthwhile. He also learned a valuable lesson in Australian fashion: sporting what many consider to be a traditional "bush hat" is a sure fire way to mark oneself as a tourist.

President Bob discussed RI President Majiyagbe's theme and urged members to consider the different ways in which they could lend a hand at the global, as well as the local level. President Bob likened Rotary to a freight train: "At the front we have several tremendous engines. Each engine is comprised of leadership at the International, District and local club levels. These engines need a fuel car, and the fuel for Rotary is the gifts we make to the Rotary Foundation, including our support of the eradication of polio...but the bulk of the train is really the hundreds of freight cars, each car originating in a different location, with a different cargo...all now on the same track, moving in the same direction...with any train, it takes a tremendous effort on the part of the engines to start the train in motion...but once started, it is almost impossible to stop." He noted that Rotarians have different leadership styles that can all be incorporated to keep the Rotary train running smoothly, and he encouraged members to think about the different ways they can contribute and "lead from the front, lead from the back or work in the middle." President Bob's goal was to find ways for every Club member to accept the challenge of the year and "to take a personal chance to say 'Yes.'"

Despite a rainy morning, the sweet corn harvest was, in the words of Peter Tomaras, "not too bad." The skies cleared up in time for the main event, and the 2003 Corn Roast took place on a beautiful, breezy July evening.

In October the WGRC Community Service Awards Committee honored Professor Bruce Henrikson, Department Chair for Business and Agri-Industries and Program Director of the Agriculture and Equine Programs at Parkland College, for his dedication to his students, both in and beyond the classroom. Upon notification of his nomination, Professor Henrikson's response exemplified Rotary's ideals: "I don't need awards. I just want to do my teaching." His humble reaction was truly an example of *Service above Self*.

In November, District 6490 recognized Champaign as the #2 Club when it came to Rotary Foundation support. *The Fizz* broke down how significant those contributions could be in 2003: \$50 could pay for two cataract surgeries in India, \$100 could purchase 1,000 trees for reforestation efforts in Guatemala, and \$500 could provide beekeeping materials and equipment for 20 people in Mali. In December, the Club's annual Salvation Army bell-ringing day raised more than \$13,000, pushing Champaign Rotary's contributions to the Salvation Army past \$100,000 over the previous decade. The Salvation Army estimated that Rotary's day of service translated into an \$800 savings for the organization, who would have otherwise had to pay recruits for 109 hours of bell ringing. Centennial's Interact Club also lent a hand, joining the annual bell ringing day for the first time in 2003 and entertained shoppers with songs and their infectious energy. The ties between the Army and WGRC run long and deep. The earliest record of collaboration was in 1919, just three short years after Champaign Rotary's founding. In addition, as of 2003, the last eight commanding officers of the Champaign Salvation Army were all Champaign Rotarians.

December also saw \$70,000 in Cannon Grants to five local organizations announced. The awards ranged from \$25,000 toward the YMCA's construction of a new facility in southwest Champaign, to \$8,000 for Centennial Interact to provide leadership and team-building training similar to RYLA, Rotary's Youth Leadership Awards program.

The 2003-04 year was busy for Interactors. In addition to joining Rotarians on bell-ringing day, they devoted hours of service to both their school and the wider community. They started the school year by hosting their annual Freshmen Picnic, an event to help new students from five different middle schools get to know their new peers. They also hosted their annual Chili Supper before the Homecoming game, this being their #1 fundraising activity to support their charitable community service projects, most notably their Christmastime Adopt-a-Family program. Interactors select a family in need and have a wonderful time buying and wrapping presents for them. Valentine's Day features a similar tradition, Cupid's Kitchen, for which students prepare a special romantic dinner for another family. They also spend a day alongside Champaign Rotarians by entering a team in Relay for Life, and volunteer at other Rotary events.

WGRC's packed December schedule included the annual U of I Football Banquet, a tradition dating back to 1901. From 1908 to 1918, the banquet was hosted by J.M. Kaufman and C. B. Hatch, Jr., who would eventually become charter members of the Rotary Club of Champaign. In a special history section of *The Fizz*, George Scheetz described the banquet as follows: "Kaufman and Hatch believed that the football players, win, lose, or tie, had given their best. They should be honored with an evening of banquet, including a program filled with

toasts, roasts, and repartee to show that the local folks were backing the team.” In 1919, when Hatch retired, Rotary took over hosting duties, with the aim of turning the football banquet into an occasion for the City of Champaign to show its support of the Fighting Illini. Rotary remained an integral part of the tradition for nearly 90 years.

In 1997 the banquet moved to the Illini union and was opened up to fans and family members of the players and coaches. In 2003 Champaign Rotary hosted the 102nd football banquet and also made a contribution to Scoring Against MS, a campaign spearheaded by Fighting Illini Head Coach (and Honorary Champaign Rotarian) Ron Turner. Launched in 1997, Scoring Against M.S. raised money to fund multiple sclerosis research and treatment through a system wherein fans could make pledges based on the number of points the Illini would score.

Bob Aldridge’s year also saw the creation of the Rotary Challenge, an investment mentoring program that WGRC undertook to support in cooperation with the University of Illinois College of Business to teach local high school students fiscal responsibility. The core of the program is the management of a hypothetical \$1 million investment portfolio via an online brokerage account on the University of Illinois Securities Exchange Simulation. Students learn to research the market, then buy and sell equities based on what they learn. Not only does the program teach them about managing investments, it also develops their critical thinking and research skills. Champaign Rotary was approached by Professors Elisabeth Oltheten and Ken Waspi from the U of I Department of Finance, and John Hecker took the lead in getting the program approved and serving as the Rotary coordinator. The department had been running a Financial Literacy Program since 1995, and was looking to partner with a local organization and broaden the program to local high schools.

At the end of each semester, the Challenge students with the highest rate of return, and the instructors of the most successful groups, are recognized at a Rotary luncheon meeting. The Club has created a “prize vault,” from which the first place winner gets first choice, and so on down the line. In addition to the investment competition, Club members also partner with the Finance Department as business mentors, speaking in area high school classes about their particular fields of expertise. Those who have volunteered have enjoyed speaking directly to Champaign youth, and have found them engaged and interested in learning about different industries. The Rotary Challenge is still going strong and was profiled in the April 2010 issue of *The Rotarian*.

Both Rotary International and WGRC continued to embrace the digital age. *The Fizz* was still distributed on paper, but kept inching closer to its eventual electronic format while reporting on a new make-up option with one of RI’s newest Clubs: eClub One, the first-ever online Rotary Club. The aim of eClub One was “keeping Rotarians involved, informed,

inspired, and connected.” It offered discussion forums, as well as a variety of articles and videos about Rotary International. By spending time on the site learning about Rotary activities, discussing topics with Rotarians from around the world, and possibly making a contribution to eClub One’s water, literacy, and women’s health initiatives, Rotarians from anywhere could make up for a missed meeting. eClub One and subsequent online Clubs have helped professionals whose careers are not conducive to weekly meetings in a fixed location become Rotarians and help keep the RI community as a whole connected in new and exciting ways.

President Bob’s term continued WGRC’s march into the 21st century with the creation of new programs and groundwork laid by the club and Rotary International to embrace the digital age. As his presidency drew to a close, President Bob presented Kay Machula with the WGRC Rotarian of the Year award and recognized Joan Dixon as the Robert Eisner, Jr. Outstanding New Member. He appreciated the opportunity to serve the club and encourage his fellow WGRCers to say Yes!

Possible link to video

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## 2004-05: President Dave Bernthal

Board of directors: John R. Ady (President-Elect), Larry J. Carney, Scott R. Dahman, Joan M. Dixon (ex officio as Editor of *The Fizz*), Stephen D. Hamburg, Patrick J. Kovar, Karen K. Machula, J. Steven Main, Carl R. Meyer (2007)

In July of 2004, Federal Judge Dave Bernthal stepped into the role of Club president with a plea for tolerance during his “first 11 or 12 months” in office. As many presidents before and after him have expressed, President Dave felt that, after a solid year by his predecessor, he would have a good handle on the job. He led the Club through a busy year centering on the theme, *Celebrate Rotary*, as Rotary International prepared to enter its second century. The Club took the celebration theme to heart, twice surprising President Dave with festivities to mark first his birthday, and a few weeks later, his 10-year anniversary on the federal bench.

Another occasion for celebration arrived with 55-year member Art Lewis’s 90th birthday. The party featured emotional tributes to “the man with the biggest heart in town,” and RYLA scholarships were renamed in his honor. President Dave’s term was also a family affair. He did his part to boost membership numbers by bringing his wife, Jane, into the fold as a new member. Together they had the honor of bestowing a Paul Harris Fellowship on their daughter, Randal.

Champaign Rotary continued its charge into the digital age with the full implementation of the electronic *Fizz*. *The Fizz* has always been an invaluable resource for Champaign Rotarians; one Club member pointed out that this thorough, award-winning, newsletter was a great help to members with hearing aids: “*The Fizz* helps me catch the things I didn’t hear.” While a few members preferred to receive the newsletter in its traditional paper format, a majority of Club members enjoyed reading *The Fizz* online and appreciated that they could now get the news on the World’s Greatest Rotary Club sooner, and with color pictures. The transition to electronic distribution was also an enormous cost-saving measure. By eliminating printing and mailing expenditures, the Club would save more than \$10,000 per year. The savings helped absorb the impact of an increase in Rotary International dues, which would have reduced the Club’s share of the dues collected from members. Not only was the electronic *Fizz* more economical, it also made it more convenient for snowbirds—those members who spend the winter months in more pleasant climates—to keep up with Club news.

Champaign Rotary celebrated Rotary International’s centennial with a number of events throughout the year. A joint luncheon meeting with other local clubs took place on February 23rd, 2005—Rotary’s official birthday. That same evening, Urbana Rotary hosted a cocktail party at the Urbana Country Club, with proceeds benefiting the Urbana Rotary Centennial Project. April of 2005 was also designated Centennial Service

Above Self month, during which members were encouraged to volunteer 10 hours of personal time. The call to volunteer was not restricted to specific Rotary projects, illustrating the Club's commitment to serving not only in the name of Rotary, but simply to benefit the community at large. Champaign Rotary's Centennial Project involved renovating the Rotary Hill pavilion at Lake of the Woods. Club members donated not only money, but also time and energy sprucing up the landscaping and painting at the home of the Corn Roast.

The Centennial also provided a platform for informing the community about Rotary's illustrious history and extensive service projects. A special supplement was published in *The News-Gazette* outlining Rotary International's global impact, as well as the activities of the local clubs. National and international media also recognized Rotary's widespread and lasting influence. An April editorial in *The Wall Street Journal* praised Rotary's role in eradicating polio, pointing out that the organization's efforts are not always widely known, and proclaiming that "Rotary's unsung polio effort deserves the Nobel Peace Prize."

As previous volumes of this history have noted, Champaign Rotary has been at the forefront of RI's PolioPlus campaign and, as of 2005, the Club had contributed more than \$175,000 since the 1985 launch—nearly 20% of the total contributions from District 6490. By the end of the year, Champaign Rotary managed to exceed the 2005 PolioPlus goal, donating over \$20,000, district 6490's top contributor. A 2005 *New York Times* editorial entitled "Rotary's Big Boots" described the organization as "a staple of small-town life." The article cites the Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF, who believed it was Rotary's local credibility and influence that played a crucial role in getting polio vaccinations to children, an often politicized issue that sometimes hinders polio eradication efforts.

The experience of 2003 RI president Jonathan Majiyagbe provides an excellent example. In his home state in the North of Nigeria, religious leaders put a stop to polio vaccinations, claiming the vaccinations had been tainted with drugs that would cause infertility among girls who received it. The result was a significant increase in cases of polio, and this strain eventually spread to countries where the virus was thought to have been eradicated. Majiyagbe publicly had his own daughter vaccinated as a reassurance that the procedure was trustworthy, and eventually vaccination efforts resumed. Perhaps more than any other international program, PolioPlus has expanded Rotary's reputation as a non-governmental organization with global reach.

Appropriately, Chicago, the city where Rotary began, hosted Rotary International's Centennial Convention. Tens of thousands of Rotarians from clubs all over the world came together to celebrate a century of shared achievements and new goals. At the Home Hospitality evening, local members could sign up to host international guests for an evening

cruise and dinner on the Spirit of Chicago, bringing Rotarians together in fellowship. The Convention also featured a parade around the corner from the historic meeting place of the Rotary Club of Chicago, known as Rotary/One, the founding club. Rotarians placed messages inside a time capsule to be opened in 2105, on display throughout the convention for pictures. The capsule would remain at RI headquarters in Evanston until Rotary enters its third century.

Convention organizers also created five special Rotary bells, representing the traditional method of starting club meetings. These bells would travel around the world, with one visiting each of the first 100 clubs established, passing through the United States, Canada, England, Scotland, and Ireland. The remaining four bells traveled to Asia and the Pacific, Europe and the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Africa, visiting the first club founded in each country of each region, before being reunited in Chicago.

The Convention was not all fun and games, however. The RI Council on Legislation passed numerous resolutions, notably a decision to remove a gender-specific pronoun from Rotary International's secondary motto, which became "They profit most who serve the best." The resolution represented a further acceptance of the role, and staying power, of women within the organization, still a relatively new development—women had only been official Rotarians for 15 years. The Council endorsed the new marketing plan, Every Rotarian Every Year, and the initiative continues today, seeking to engage each Rotarian to make an annual donation to the Rotary Foundation. Rotarians can donate to the Annual Fund generally through the SHARE system, or contribute to specific programs in a variety of areas. The annual report showed that Foundation giving from the United States represented the largest contribution by a single country and, at \$70 per member, the U.S. ranked fifth globally in per capita contributions.

Sadly 2005 was not just a year for celebration. Champaign Rotary lost a dedicated member and dear friend with the passing of Bill Krahling, who had edited *The Fizz* for more than 20 years. The Krahling years were *The Fizz's* golden era: each weekly issue contained a recap of everything that transpired at Monday meetings, including a reporter's summary of the speaker's presentation. Krahling's journalistic professionalism earned annual recognition for the Club's newsletter at District Conferences. Beyond his dedicated "parenting" of *The Fizz*, across his three-plus decades with Champaign Rotary, Bill was known for his kind, welcoming nature, as well as his wonderful sense of humor.

As the holiday season approached, concerns over the mid-December forecast for Salvation Army bell-ringing day were alleviated when *The Fizz* promised "77° and sunny (in San Diego)"—surely comforting knowledge that would help keep intrepid Rotarians warm around Champaign-Urbana. Matt Deering also assured potential bell ringers

that if the weather wasn't to their liking, they could expect "a full refund on your entry fee." Joking about the weather aside, there was genuine concern that the Club needed to make up ground after losing a prime post outside of Target. However, the 2004 bell-ringing campaign turned out to be Champaign Rotary's most successful to date, netting more than \$16,000. The Salvation Army exceeded its total fundraising goal for Champaign of \$270,000 by nearly \$30,000. Champaign Centennial's Interact Club also contributed, raising funds for a number of causes, including nearly \$600 for PolioPlus, raised in seven hours in recognition of teacher Mark Chagnon, who had overcome polio as a baby.

The Literacy Committee was busy, establishing a reading program at Robeson elementary school and continuing the new Rotary Challenge program to help high school students develop sound financial literacy. Rotarians continued to keep their stretch of Mattis clean with quarterly Adopt-a-Highway teams, and the Club also rededicated Skelton Park, kicking off a new round of renovations. The Cannon Grants Committee distributed \$70,000 to five local organizations, ranging from \$25,000 toward the YMCA's construction of a new facility in southwest Champaign, to \$8,000 for Centennial Interact to provide leadership and team-building training similar to that of RYLA.

The World's Greatest Rotary Club was not only active in Champaign-Urbana; the Club sponsored a number of important projects abroad as well. Champaign actively helped bring another country into the Rotary cosmos with the founding of a club in Tajikistan. Marilynne Davis had been working tirelessly on an orphanage renovation project there, eventually leading to Champaign co-sponsoring, with a club in Bellview, WA, the chartering of a new club in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, bringing the number of countries with active Rotary clubs up to 167. The orphanage project replaced bedding for the first time in 15 years, and helped provide better access to potable water. Thanks to the support of WGRC, the boys residing at the orphanage no longer had to walk one kilometer to find clean water.

Champaign Rotary also sponsored other international water projects, including two major well installations in India. The first provided resources to drill a well deep enough to reach pollutant-free water for a community of 5,000, as well as a holding tank and treatment equipment. The second well served a school in an underdeveloped region where 80% of the population faced poverty. This well was intended to improve health conditions (and eventually increase educational opportunities for nearly 1,000 young people) in a village where previously women had to walk half a mile in very warm temperatures to get water. Water projects would continue to be a focal point of Champaign Rotary's international aid, and would also become a priority for Rotary International, with the eventual founding of the Water & Sanitation Rotarian Action group in 2007.

At the 2005 District 6490 Conference, Champaign Rotary received the District Centennial Achievement Award, as well as the Centennial Twin Clubs award. *The Fizz* was also honored for both its electronic and paper formats. David Lawrence was recognized with the first-ever District 6490 Commitment to Service Award, and Tod Dawson was recognized by Rotary International with the prestigious Four Avenues of Service Award, Champaign Rotary's first recipient since Art Skelton had received this honor five years earlier. WGRC recognized future presidents Joan Dixon and Dan Wheatman as Rotarians of the Year, and outstanding new member Susan Grey received the Robert Eisner, Jr. Award.

President Dave ended his noteworthy Centennial year on a nostalgic note, however as he passed the torch to John Ady, President Dave was comforted by some lovely parting gifts of a hillbilly calendar and a Champaign Rotary flashlight.

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## **2005-06: President John Ady**

Board of directors: Carl Meyer (President-Elect), Larry J. Carney, Joseph C. DeLuce, Jr., Joan M. Dixon (ex officio as Editor of *The Fizz*), Stephen D. Hamburg, Terry P. Harter, Patrick J. Kovar, Karen K. Machula, J. Steven Main, Daniel L. Wheatman

Under 2005-06 Club President John Ady, Champaign Rotary enjoyed a banner year for recruitment. In fact, WGRC inducted the most new members of any District 6490 club, welcoming 23 new Rotarians and receiving a RI Membership Development and Extension Award. New member Habeeb Habeeb brought the Club's membership up to 200. Champaign Rotary faced Champaign West in the Great Rotary Softball Challenge, but were defeated by one run. Rumor has it poor umpiring was to blame, but in later years Champaign would come back and prove its mettle on the field. The crushing defeat did shine a new light on the issue of membership, which *The Fizz* felt "highlight[ed] the importance of recruiting new members...preferably young, experienced softball players." All kidding aside, President John did strongly advocate membership and attendance. In addition to strengthening its numbers, the Club also achieved two Perfect Attendance Days, no small feat for such a big group.

Social activities highlighted the year, from the U of I tailgate party to the progressive dinner. As Dick Burwash entered his 50th year of service to the Club, he was honored with a plaque on Rotary Hill, commemorating his role in assuring a successful Corn Roast year after year. The annual football banquet was a success, with 575 attendees. The Club introduced a Champaign Rotary Club Service Above Self award, presented to one of the players who had shown particular commitment not just to his sport and school, but also to his community.

Youth projects were a particular focus under President John. The Learning for Life program at Booker T. Washington School was established, co-sponsored by Champaign West and Illini After 5. The clubs secured a \$2,000 District Grant, and Hobbico donated tshirts for participants. The program worked with 15 classes over two semesters, using course materials developed by the Boy Scouts of America. Steve Main oversaw the program, and his work with Learning for Life helped him earn recognition as one of WGRC's Rotarians of the Year. The LfL program was also honored at the District 6490 conference as Outstanding Youth Service Program.

The Club funded a kindergarten reading program at Robeson Elementary School and also participated in the Read Across American program in 2006. The Rotary Challenge program continued strong, honoring the top student investors and their teachers each semester. Champaign Rotary also continued its tradition of recognizing outstanding Champaign-Urbana high school students throughout the year. For as long as any current members can recall, each month the Club has recognized outstanding students for academics, athletics, and

activities by introducing them at meetings with a brief summary of their achievements. At year's end, students in each category are selected as students of the year.

Champaign Rotary continued to sponsor students for the spring RYLA program at Allerton Park, and also to fund Interact's leadership training programs. Rotary's commitment to both youth and international programs came together when a \$500 donation was awarded to Champaign Central High School's drama department to help them travel to Edinburgh, Scotland for a prestigious theater festival. The Club also sponsored two outbound Youth Exchange students, both headed to Germany. Champaign Rotary also successfully founded a new Rotaract Club at Parkland College and added two new Parkland College Vocational Scholarships, bringing the total awards to seven. The new scholarships honored Club members in the process, with The Arthur G. Skelton Healthcare Scholarship and the Dr. Zelema Harris Fine and Applied Arts Scholarship.

Champaign Rotary's addressed community service as strongly as ever, distributing \$70,000 in Cannon Grants to the Frances Nelson Community Health Center, the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, the Champaign Park District for the Virginia Theatre, Don Moyer's Boys & Girls Club, and the Orpheum Children's Museum. The last project exemplified the Cannon Grant ideal of "impact dollars." Rotary's \$15,000 grant for structural repair to the building was matched by a matching grant from a federal historic preservation program, helping the Orpheum raise more than just the Rotary grant alone. And in December, the annual Salvation Army bell-ringing day raised more than \$13,000.

Champaign Rotarians donated their time and energy for a number of environmental programs. In addition to the 4 annual Mattis Avenue clean-up days, Club members also coordinated and participated in the Boneyard Creek project on Earth Day, where they cleaned up the creek area and stenciled drain covers. Because the environmental activities had become such an integral part of Champaign Rotary's community service, the Club purchased special vests for such projects featuring a distinctive Rotary logo.

The Club also emphasized raising funds for the Rotary Foundation, accepting the challenge to have every member donate \$100. Although not every member made a RF donation, total contributions did equate to each member having donated \$105. In total, the Club raised more than \$19,000 and created eight new Paul Harris fellows in the process.

As the 20th century gave way to the 21st, the World Health Organization reported a massive drop in the number of polio cases reported, from approximately 350,000 in 1988 down to less than 2,000 a mere 20 years later. The WHO praised Rotary International for its commitment, noting that "Rotary always steps up" with initiatives like

PolioPlus and the Polio Eradication Fundraising Campaign, launched in 2002. The PEFC's goal was to raise \$80 million in one year, and by June 2003 they had in fact raised over \$111 million. Two years later the campaign proudly reported contributions topped \$135 million. During this year PolioPlus carried out a mass immunization project in the Sudan, aimed at the poorest communities as well as areas isolated by conflict. The program managed to vaccinate 6 million children, in addition to another 11 million children in Ethiopia and Somalia. In February 2006 the WHO announced that polio had been eradicated from two more African countries, Egypt and Niger, declaring that while the fight was still not over, "The finish line is in sight."

President John's term saw the Club recognized by Rotary at both District and international levels. At the District Conference in May, Champaign Rotary received an Outstanding Achievement Award, and the following month RI President Carl Wilhelm-Stenhammar bestowed a Presidential Citation on WGRC as an Outstanding Club. Presidential Citations recognize clubs whose "accomplishments...help them become stronger, deliver effective service, and enhance their public image." This international recognition was a boost as the Club entered its 90th anniversary year.

One particular family of multi-generational Rotarians was also recognized for outstanding contributions. In February Scott Anderson, Jr. was honored with the Rotary International Four Avenues of Service Award—now known simply as the Avenues of Service Citation—only the fourth Champaign Rotary member to receive this prestigious recognition. Four months later his father, Scott Anderson, Sr., received a Meritorious Service Citation from the Rotary International Foundation, joining an elite trio of the WGRicers: Ken Gunji, who received the citation in 1998, and Art Skelton, honored 25 years earlier in 1973. As discussed above, the Club recognized Steve Main as Rotarian of the Year, an honor he shared with Elizabeth Krchak. WGRC also awarded future President Elizabeth with the Robert Eisner, Jr. Outstanding New Member Award, along with Justin McCarthy. With all of these individual and Club achievements under his belt, President John brought an end to his self-described "reign of terror" and looked forward to continuing to serve Champaign Rotary from "back in the ranks."

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## 2006-07: President Carl Meyer

Board of directors: Dean Cavey, Joseph C. DeLuce, Jr., Joan M. Dixon (ex officio as Editor of *The Fizz*), Stephen D. Hamburg, Terry P. Harter, Patrick J. Kovar, Dan Wheatman (President-Elect)

In July, 2006, Carl Meyer, an exemplary member with almost 15 years of perfect attendance, took up the presidential reins, vowing to keep Champaign Rotary's smoothly running machinery Club humming. Outgoing President Ady commented that he felt like a Pony Express rider as he handed the Club over to his successor: "You jump on the horse, lead the charge, carry out the mission, and jump off in exactly 12 months to the replacement rider, and walk off into the sunset." President Ady left with a few recommendations, including more diversity in membership and establishing the Club's own endowment fund. President Carl saw his role as that of a chemist, mixing the right combinations of elements to allow the Club to function. The Rotary International theme of President Carl's year was *Lead the Way*, which he intended to do as he aimed to streamline new membership procedures, increase membership to 205, improve Skelton Park, and, most importantly, "have fun, have fun, have fun."

President Carl sought to increase the chances for members to get together informally. He also wanted to bridge the gap between older and younger members. Rotary International President Bill Boyd stressed the importance of recruiting younger members, and President Carl felt that it was the mixture of younger and more experienced Rotarians that really makes Rotary tick. While the younger members may have more energy, the older members have more experience and knowledge to pass on, and also tend to have more time for service. President Carl also sought to continue attracting high-caliber members, and to ensure that meetings featured high-quality speakers. He sought to increase the diversity of the Club by recruiting more women, with events such as a Ladies Only Happy Hour, to which male members were welcome, contrary to the name, as long as they brought along a female potential member. Above all, 2006-97 would be a year for celebration, with the Champaign Rotary Club's 90th anniversary on the horizon, as well as preparations for both the 2007 Action Auction and the upcoming District Conference in Champaign.

The year kicked off with the Club's biggest Corn Roast to date. With more than 180 attendees, the Club was actually forced to issue refunds once the food started to run out. The event allowed the Club to enjoy improvements to the Rotary Pavilion, and generally was a rousing success. President Carl later thanked Dick Burwash, Dave Lawrence, Lin Warfel and Rolland Kelley with Champaign Rotary flashlights, to make sure they could always find their way out of the fields in the dark. Other social events included an outing to an Amish Thanksgiving dinner in Arthur, which became an annual outing over the next few years. The annual Football Banquet in December was followed in early 2007 by

Champaign Rotary's 90th Anniversary Celebration, which featured a party attended by District Governor John Behrendt from Litchfield, as well as a special supplement in the News-Gazette chronicling Champaign Rotary's history and impact on the community.

Club meetings featured a variety of speakers, but 2006-07 did see a focus on topics related to natural disaster responses and emergency preparedness. The Club learned about new Shelterbox responses in Papua, New Guinea and the Solomon Islands following devastating earthquakes and tsunamis at the beginning of April. Local Rotary Clubs called on Shelterbox to aid some of the more than 9,000 victims left homeless. They received shelters, water filtration systems, and mosquito nets to protect against a possible malaria outbreak. On a more local level, a presentation by Jim Hines of the Eastern Illinois Foodbank introduced the Backpack Buddies program, which provides weekend groceries distributed to students in backpacks, so as not to stigmatize them in front of classmates for receiving assistance. Champaign Rotary would go on to make a three-year, \$6,000 commitment to the program. Club meetings were also enhanced by new AV equipment, following a \$30,000 investment by Hawthorn Suites.

As Champaign Rotary celebrated its 90th anniversary, Rotary International saw a number of important developments. The first all-Russia district was chartered; previously any Russian clubs were divided among districts that spanned a territory comparable to half the continental U.S., and crossed national borders with Finland and Sweden. The first clubs in China were also chartered in 2006, and Champaign Rotary hosted a Group Study Exchange team from China in May. Pat Kovar coordinated the visit, and the Club stepped up to host the team and show them the sights. In true Rotary fashion, the visiting team represented a diverse cross-section of professions, including a prosecuting investigator, a police officer, and an architecture student working toward a PhD.

PolioPlus also received international recognition by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, who held Rotary International up as an example of a non-state actor that has helped achieve major social goals on a global scale. PolioPlus entered what doctors projected to be the final stretch, tackling the final regions where polio was still endemic (specifically Nigeria, India, and Pakistan). This stage has been very much dependent on "political will"—a serious commitment on the part of relevant governments to take the necessary steps to administer vaccines wherever needed. Rotary International had determined that "polio eradication hinges on vaccine supply, community acceptance, funding, and political will." Rotary support and local clout had ensured the first three, and has worked hard to translate its credibility on both the local and world stage into enough influence to ensure the fourth.

2006-07 was a busy, but also tragic year for the Centennial Interact Club. The club started the year with a team building workshop in conjunction with Champaign Rotary where students learned how to manage different work styles and how to accomplish goals as a unit. The workshop featured speakers from local organizations and culminated in a dinner featuring a presentation by Champaign Rotary's own Tom Costello. Interact fundraising efforts flourished, enabling the students' donation of nearly \$2,000 to PolioPlus from their Pennies for Polio campaign.

But in April tragedy struck the nation when a gunman killed 32 people and wounded 17 at Virginia Tech University. The massacre was a devastating loss for Centennial Interact: one victim was freshman Austin Cloyd, a recent Centennial graduate and former Interactor, who was studying French and International Studies when her life was tragically cut short. A few weeks after the attack, the Interact Club led Champaign Rotary's weekly meeting, and began with a moment of silence for all Virginia Tech victims. It was a very emotional moment. Interactors would go on to establish Austin's Day, an annual day of service that brings together Interact, Rotary, and eventually Rotaract members to honor Austin's memory by working to help the community. Austin's Day would expand to include University of Illinois students, and continues to exemplify the Rotary commitment to Service above Self.

In November, Champaign Rotary had received an award for Outstanding Philanthropic Organization from the East Central Illinois Association of Fundraising Professionals. This award was not only earned, but prophetic, given the success of the Club's 11th Action Auction. The final tallies fell short of the triennial event's goal to raise \$150,000, but WGRC did raise an impressive \$108,000. Although the Action Auction remained Champaign Rotary's primary fundraiser—and a very successful one at that—it did begin to face competition from similar auctions by other local organizations, spreading the community's donation dollars thin. Ultimately the Champaign Rotary was eminently successful in its 2006-07 fundraising goals, also raising \$20,000 for the Rotary Foundation. At the end of his term, President Carl recognized Claudette Gonsiorowski and Dave Johnson as WGRC's Rotarians of the Year and presented Marjorie Williams with the Robert Eisner, Jr. Award for Outstanding New Member. The Club also managed to grow its membership by 10 by year-end, marking the achievement of yet another of President Carl's goals for his presidential term.

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## **2007-08: President Dan Wheatman**

Board of directors: Dean Cavey, Joseph C. DeLuce, Jr., Joan Dixon (President-Elect), Bill Gleason, Sue Grey, Terry P. Harter, Elizabeth Krchak, Jerry Laughlin

Dan Wheatman stepped up as Club President in the summer of 2007, on the heels of a successful Action Auction that raised \$108,000. President Dan started his term energized and motivated following the Rotary International Convention in Salt Lake City. He appreciated the chance to visit Olympic sites and enjoy the natural beauty of the Rockies, but he was even more inspired by the opportunity to meet Rotarians from around the world and learn about their experiences. He was struck by the challenges Rotarians tackle in some of the world's most poverty-stricken regions, where clubs devote their resources and efforts to provide basic life essentials, such as water and shelter. The keynote speaker at the Salt Lake City convention was Bill Gates, Sr., who discussed the importance of Rotary as a force for change around the world.

President Dan laid out a number of goals for the coming year, including the implementation of a disaster relief and preparedness program, inspired by Champaign Rotary's relief efforts in 1917 when a devastating tornado struck Mattoon. Another objective addressed WGRC's embrace of the digital age, by increasing use of the new and improved Club Website as a more effective communication tool. The new Clubrunner Website allowed members to update their information directly, saving time and energy from the annual compilation of a Club roster that was usually out of date even as it went to press. Members could keep themselves current on upcoming activities and register directly for events, without everything passing through one sole administrator. The Website also allowed Club leaders to make policies and other important information more accessible to members.

Another of Dan's goals was to increase membership to 205, an ambition that was in danger early in the year, due to attrition. President Dan encouraged each current member to bring at least one prospective member to see the World's Greatest Rotary Club in action. Furthermore, he aimed to improve retention through improved mentorship of new members, including finding the right fit between committees and members. His final and perhaps most important objective was simply "Don't destroy the Club!" He absolutely succeeded in the latter goal, and like so many presidents before him, President Dan credits the reliable support of Art Skelton for keeping everything running smoothly. In early 2008 Art would step down after over 27 years serving the Club tirelessly as Executive Secretary. His duties as Executive Secretary would be shared by different club members, notably Claudette Gonsiorowski and Sandra Calderon, until Todd Salen took over duties as Executive Secretary.

Before the annual Corn Roast at the end of July, Dick Burwash gave a refresher course on how to pick the corn and encouraged members to bring along their children and grandchildren for some hands-on farm training. The Corn Roast was a rousing success once again, with 185 attendees. Champaign also began recruiting early for the annual softball game against Champaign West, seeking to maintain bragging rights as the "World's Greatest Rotary Softball Team in Champaign." At the rematch in September, Champaign successfully defended their title, thanks in no small part to a home run by "Slammin" Jerry Pagac. That summer thoughts also turned to service, as the Club sponsored the 8th annual blood drive, trying to fill the gap that arises when students leave Champaign-Urbana for the summer.

In late fall WGRC distributed more than \$75,000 in Cannon Grants, once again providing funds to Interact for leadership training and helping CASA and the YMCA purchase much-needed equipment. Crisis Nursery received \$5,250 for a playground upgrade that incorporated rubber-based mulch as a softer playing surface. The Center for Women in Transition received \$30,000 toward essential housing renovations, and the Eastern Illinois Food Bank was able to replace a truck with their \$20,000 award to help them more effectively serve those in need.

The Literacy Committee, headed by Tom O'Laughlin, recruited eight Club members to volunteer at the Read Across America event at Lincoln Square, helping to encourage in children an early, enduring interest in reading. In the realm of financial literacy, the Rotary Challenge continued strong, as Club members recognized the excellent work of area high school students and instructors—and perhaps picked up a few investment tips along the way. And justifiable so: the 2008 winning classes ended with a return rate of more than 2.5%, as compared to -3.82% for the S&P 500 and -4.5% for the Dow Jones. The program appeared to not just teach students basic financial literacy skills; it was turning them into savvy investors, yet another example of WGRC's impact on Champaign-Urbana youth. 2008 saw the addition of an annual Video Essay contest, which accompanied spring semester sessions of the Rotary Challenge. Students chose topics related to their everyday experience with financial institutions, and the top three videos would be viewed and judged by Rotarians. The goal of the contest was to expand the interdisciplinary appeal of the program and show students the many ways finance is tied to virtually every aspect of their lives. Club members looked forward to both the video essay contest and the chance to recognize students for their work, and the program continues to flourish today, poised for potential expansion around the district.

In September member Sherban Lupu played a benefit concert at the First United Methodist Church in Champaign to raise funds for the World Community Service Committee. Together with renowned pianist Ian Hobson, he played Mozart, Schubert, Bach, Ravel, and Enescu,

a composer from Lupu's native Romania. The concert underscored Champaign Rotary's commitment to International Service, but also to Community Service in that the Club kept ticket prices for students to \$10, enabling Champaign-Urbana's penniless scholars to enjoy world-class musicians in an intimate setting.

One month before Champaign Centennial Interact held a Leadership Academy, featuring presentations by President Dan on the Rotary 4-Way Test, and by Sue Grey about the importance of nonprofit organizations. The keynote address was given by University of Illinois president Joe White, who outlined key points from his own book on leadership. The training was evident as Interact organized the first annual Austin's Day service event, in honor of their former classmate who was killed in the Virginia Tech shooting the year before. Interact sponsored the event, which recruited volunteers from Champaign Rotary and other community organizations to work on a variety of projects. The day began at Scott Park in Champaign with a greeting from Renee Cloyd, Austin's mother. To honor Austin's memory and her own commitment to service from a very young age, participants volunteered at Habitat for Humanity, clean-up projects for both the Champaign-Urbana Theater Company and Boneyard Creek, as well as Samaritans for Seniors. The event has grown into an annual day of service and continues to attract volunteers from numerous organizations and help instill a sense of service and generosity among the youth of Champaign-Urbana.

Rotary International's polio eradication efforts continued with the first disbursement of a \$100 million challenge grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Progress continued: in March the World Health Organization reported a "landmark victory" in eradicating polio from Somalia, following a program of vaccinations for nearly 2 million children. Rotary continued to work with UNICEF and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on the Global Polio Eradication Initiative. Much work remained in the four remaining polio endemic regions—Afghanistan, India, Nigeria, and Pakistan—as well as in five other countries where strains of the polio virus had returned. Nevertheless, a Harvard University study projected that the eradication efforts, even if incomplete, were still far less expensive than simply combating outbreaks as they emerge. India's National Polio Project declared "Unless the whole world is done, we are not done," a statement that could just as easily pass for Rotary International's philosophy.

In April a Group Study Exchange team from South Korea visited Champaign-Urbana, hosted by WGR. The visitors went by Americanized names, such as Amber and A.J., and spent an enjoyable week in the community, organized by Karla Peterson, visiting the University of Illinois, a fifth grade class at Robeson elementary school, the offices of *The News-Gazette*, and Lake of the Woods in Mahomet.

Their visit ended with the traditional exchange of Rotary flags, and the Club also took the opportunity to honor its Korean War veterans.

In 2008 Rotary International was named one of the top NGO's for Corporate Partnership by the *Financial Times*. A supplement titled "Corporate Citizenship and Philanthropy" outlined the findings of an extensive United Nations report, which evaluated NGO's based on four key criteria: accountability, adaptability, communication, and execution. Rotary International ranked 5th worldwide.

By the end of the year, President Dan had accomplished a number of important objectives. Both Champaign Rotary and Rotary International continued to achieve remarkable goals, here and abroad, in all avenues of Rotary Service. The Club awarded over \$116,000 to various local organizations implemented a mentor-sponsored guide for new members, and developed a Club endowment fund. WGRC recognized Jonathan Boyd as the Robert Eisner, Jr. Outstanding New Member and named Bryant Evans and Todd Salen as Rotarians of the Year. On a more relieved note, in his farewell address President Dan happily pointed out "It's official. I have made it through the year without destroying the Club," but on a more serious note he thanked the Club for the chance to serve Rotary and have a great time along the way.

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## 2008-09: President Joan Dixon

Board of directors: Dean Cavey, Bill Gleason, Sue Grey, Elizabeth Krchak (President-Elect), Jerrome Laughlin, Robert Driver, Todd Salen, Anh To

In July, 2008 Joan Dixon took the stage as Champaign Rotary's new president, only the third woman to do so. President Joan's presidential term would prove her to be a formidable force. Not only did she lead the Club through a year that saw increased diversity in membership, PolioPlus fundraising that tripled the initial call by District 6490, and an extensive streamlining of the committee system, but she did so with torn quadriceps muscles and surviving a near-fatal blood clot. They don't make 'em much tougher than President Joan.

President Joan was also part of possibly the most athletic flag exchange in Champaign Rotary history. In April 2009 Donald Arthur, a Rotarian from New York, came to Champaign to run the first-ever Illinois Marathon. Unable to meet Mr. Arthur earlier in the week, Joan realized that the marathon route would take him right past the foot of her driveway, so a quick flag exchange en route was arranged. This exchange put an unusual twist on the Service Above Self ideal, as Mr. Arthur shaved precious minutes off his running time in order to make a Rotary connection.

The 2008-09 Rotary International president was D.K. Lee of Seoul, Korea. His theme was *Make Dreams Real*—with a special emphasis on fulfilling the dreams of children around the world. RI continued to focus on areas that significantly affected children: water safety, health, hunger, and literacy. Tens of thousands of children were dying every day from preventable causes related to disease and water safety, and Rotary International pledged itself anew to providing resources to reduce these unnecessary deaths. At the local level, President Joan set as a primary goal an increase in the Club's membership to 200 from 188.

She also sought to increase the diversity of membership, so that it more closely reflected the community, answering President Lee's call: "A club that is not diversified is less able to conduct ambitious projects and has a narrower range of resources." She noted that Champaign Rotary's membership was only 22% female in a community that was 47% female, and only 5% non-Caucasian, as opposed to 21% in the greater Champaign-Urbana community. She also noted the average age of the Club was 61, while the community average was 33 (though admittedly the average age in the community counted many too young for Rotary at the time). President Joan's goal was to recruit a more diverse membership base that could grow with the club.

She also sought to increase mentoring efforts, to encourage retention of new recruits. When President Joan joined the Club, she was determined to dive right in and get involved wherever she could, most notably with her years of dedicated service editing *The Fizz* (and

winning several district awards for it in the process). She noted that in her own experience, it was the opportunity to participate in service projects and the pride she felt in contributing to local and international efforts which really made her feel acclimated in the Club. Another of her goals as president, therefore, was to increase the variety of community service projects, so that more people could get involved. She also aimed to reinstate Community Profile presentations, to keep the Club abreast of non-profit efforts around the community and increase collaboration among the different Champaign-Urbana clubs. One such collaborative project was the 9th annual Rotary Blood Drive in July, in which all local clubs participated.

Champaign Rotary continued to support the community in a variety of ways. WGRC, Inc. distributed \$75,000 in Cannon Grants, including \$25,000 to The Rotary Club of Champaign itself for the ongoing Skelton Park project. The park had long existed on the site where Art Skelton's father had owned a house on the corner of Washington and First Streets in Champaign. The property was eventually donated to the Champaign Park District and dedicated to the Skelton family. The \$25,000 grant would enable the Park District to construct a plaza and memorial plaque, as well as plant trees and flowers. Another Cannon Grant of \$15,600 went to the Champaign Public Library, to promote early literacy via their "A Gift for Your Baby" project, which provided packets for new mothers. With the Cannon Grant, they were able to distribute more than 3,000 packets in one year.

Champaign Rotarians again participated in Read Across America, settling into comfy rocking chairs and reading to local children at Lincoln Square. The Literacy Committee again supported the Booker T. Washington School's summer reading program, following impressive results the previous year—participants had clearly improved their reading levels and test scores. The Club also continued its three year commitment to the Eastern Illinois Foodbank's Backpack Buddies program, which provided children with healthy food for the weekend, packed into discreet backpacks so as not to stigmatize the students receiving assistance. In three years this program had grown from serving 50 students in one school to more than 180 students from three different schools. Support for this project represented another aspect of Champaign Rotary's commitment to literacy, by making life more manageable for children so they could concentrate on learning critical skills.

Champaign Rotary's financial literacy program, The Rotary Challenge, also continued strong, with 396 students from five schools participating in the spring semester. The overall winner was Urbana High School, whose top class had a rate of return of 15.81%. The top individual earner, however, came from Champaign Central High School, at 37.02%. The fall semester challenge had also been a success, with the top

individual performers, indeed the top classes as well, all outpacing the S&P 500.

On December 13, with a goal of raising \$14,000, 90 WGRCers volunteered for the Club's annual Salvation Army bell-ringing day, with promises of temperatures in the 50s—somewhere, that is, “not necessarily in Champaign-Urbana.” Bad weather would pay off, however, with President Joan promising that participation would count as a “makeup x 2.” The Champaign-area Fire Fighters challenged local Rotary Clubs to match their goal of \$20,000, and Champaign Rotary's final collection of \$14,312 put the clubs well on their way to surpassing that goal.

It was a typically busy year for Champaign Centennial Interact. The annual Chili Supper, Interact's primary fundraiser, earned \$1,900 for their charitable projects, such as the Christmas Gifts Project, by which Interact selected a family and purchased \$100 worth of gifts for each child. Interactors wrapped the presents themselves and presented them to the family in time for Christmas. As Interact member Jim Szuiewski noted, “Seeing the children smile as they received their gifts was the highlight of my year.” Interactors also carried out a recycling project within their school, not only keeping more recyclable products out of landfills, but also helping remind their peers about the importance and ease of recycling. They also held their second annual Austin Cloyd Day of Service, aiming to double the number of volunteers from the 500 who had participated in the first Austin's Day. The Interact Club also raised \$900 from their own Pennies for Polio drive, putting Champaign Rotary on pace to fulfilling their pledge to raise \$3,000 over three years—a goal WGRC actually hoped to complete within one year.

The \$3,000 pledge over three years was part of the Gates Challenge to eliminate polio. As part of the \$100 million pledge from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, each local Rotary Club needed to raise \$1,000 per year for three years. Champaign Rotary took a number of steps to surpass this goal, eventually raising nearly \$10,000 by year's end. In addition to Interact's generous donation, in March the Cup donations at every meeting went to PolioPlus, and Past President Scott Anderson, Jr. launched the Champaign Rotary Presidents' Challenge. Anderson, Jan Bahr, Tom Constello, Bill Williams, Bob Aldridge, Dave Bernthal, John Ady, Carl Meyer, Dan Wheatman, President Joan, and incoming president Elizabeth Krchak all pledged to each give \$10 for every \$100 donor. As one of Rotary International's initial “model clubs,” Champaign Rotary had soared well beyond the \$120,000 set in 1987 when Scott Anderson, Sr. challenged the Club: “Will we be WGRC, ha-ha? Or will we be WGRC—you betcha!?”

By 2009, Champaign Rotary had raised more than half a million dollars for PolioPlus, saving an estimated two million children. As for the campaign at hand, by the end of April 2009, the club had raised

\$7,767 but was assured by Incoming President Elizabeth, "We'll keep taking donations if you keep giving." Although Rotary International had not yet reached its initial goal of eradicating polio by its centennial in 2005, progress continued. MSNBC reported an important breakthrough in Nigeria, where popular support for vaccinations had been slowly increasing following past RI President Jonathan Majiyagbe's public vaccination of his own daughter in 2005. Clerics in his home state of Kano who had been actively fighting against vaccination efforts, claiming they were being used to sterilize Muslim girls, finally began to support vaccination efforts and information campaigns. This change in public opinion resulted from Rotary's combination of global and local influence, thanks to the trust they inspire at the local level.

In addition to local PolioPlus, Champaign Rotary committed itself to a number of international service projects. The World Community Service Committee worked on three primary projects. The first involved sending two Medpacs with crucial supplies to Haiti following a series of devastating hurricanes. The second supported the Hospices of Hope project in Romania, with the Club's own Sherban Lupu on location in his native country. This program sought to provide care for terminally ill patients in rural areas who had no access to hospice care. Finally, the Club assisted Marilynne Davis's efforts in Turkmenistan, a country closed off from the world until 2008. With Champaign Rotary's assistance, she was able to sponsor a national business literacy contest for 500 students. Marilynne also continued her efforts in the Tajikistan school purchased three washing machines and a generator to power the kitchen facilities.

2008-09 was also a year for visitors and celebrations. The Club received an inbound exchange student from Japan as part of the traditional Yanai exchange. Make Okabayashi, a student of Hiroshima College of Foreign Language, visited for a month at the end of August. In June, the Club sponsored an outbound student, Kevin Garton, who headed to Belgium excited to spend his exchange year in a small village and looking forward to learning a new language. Champaign Rotary received three flags from Brazil, after U of I Visiting Professor Edgard Cornachione, Jr.'s travels took him to Jundiai, Rio de Janeiro, and Sao Paulo, where he exchanged banners with local clubs. The Club was also visited by Ambassadorial Scholar Mariella De Firo from Bari, Italy, who was working on her Ph.D in Civil Engineering at the University of Illinois. In June 2009 Ibulaimu Kakoma, a member of the C-U Sunrise Club introduced the Club to Chantal Murenzi from the Rotary Club of Kigali-Virunga in Rwanda, located in one of the fastest-growing regions for women in Rotary. Half of her club was comprised of women, unusual in most parts of the Rotary world.

WGRC's traditional events also brought Champaign Rotarians together, starting with the annual Corn Roast in the summer, and then

the Holiday Party in December. The latter again took place at the Virginia Theater, with luncheon, a visit from Santa Claus, and a private screening of How the Grinch Stole Christmas. President Joan also showed off her theater training with a reading of "Yes Virginia, there is a Santa Claus." To fittingly cap another year packed with Club achievements, District 6490 held its annual conference in Champaign.

President Joan's term had its ups and downs as she ended the year on crutches, but was ultimately a year of accomplishment. President Joan moved closer toward her goal of helping the Club's membership reflect the diversity of the community, and membership held steady. She also streamlined the committee system, going from 43 down to 27. The Club recognized Bill Stallman as Rotarian of the Year and awarded Bethany Hearn with the Robert Eisner, Jr. Award for Outstanding New Member. Sadly, the year also brought with it four heavy losses, with the passing of longtime members Howard S. Elder, John Mittendorf, Donald E. Radcliffe, and Thomas R. Woodley, whose combined service added up to 350 years. The Club carried on in their spirit of service, however, and supported a number of local and international projects, helping around the world where Rotary still worked tirelessly to alleviate poverty, improve literacy, and eradicate polio.

Possible link to video

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## **2009-10: President Elizabeth Krchak**

Board of directors: Coming soon

Immediately following Champaign Rotary's third woman president, Elizabeth Krchak took office as its fourth. Before starting her tenure, President Elizabeth attended the RI Convention in Birmingham, U.K. She appreciated the chance to network with Rotarians from around the world and truly get a sense of the diversity within the organization, but she also described the experience as "a humbling reminder that for thousands of women and children across the globe, every sunrise begins another struggle to just survive one more day." The RI presidential theme was *The Future of Rotary is in Your Hands*, and President John Kenny, Rotary International's first ever Scottish president, laid out his primary objectives to "encourage Rotary clubs around the world to partner with local governments and non-governmental organizations to initiate projects that improve literacy rates, eliminate hunger and malnutrition, and provide clean water and sanitation to communities in developing countries." The Convention reinforced within her how great the need is for Rotary around the world, and the launching pad for her year as president was this challenge: "How can Champaign Rotary make an impact?"

At the local level, President Elizabeth embarked on a three-year strategic plan for the Club to help guide its growth and development. She laid out a number of key objectives: increasing membership to 190; maintaining at least an 80% retention rate; increasing recruitment of younger members and candidates from "emerging occupations" to increase diversity in the Club; raising \$100,000 at WGRC's 12th Action Auction; focusing on the Club's commitment to vocational service; and promoting Champaign Rotary's public image within the community.

President Elizabeth's strategic plan began with a member survey to gauge what Club members saw as Champaign Rotary's strengths and weaknesses. Suggestions addressed ways to keep new members engaged, how to keep meetings running smoothly and efficiently, and how to maintain attendance. The strategic plan focused on four key areas: service, membership, fellowship, and meetings. Recommendations for improving service included identifying—even partnering with another organization on—a major local project that would generate more Club participation, as well as one major international project. The plan also called for enhanced partnerships with local Rotaract and Interact Clubs, as well an increased financial support at the local and international level.

When it came to membership, the new thrust became bolstering retention through improved orientation and leadership programs. President Elizabeth sought to specifically identify and recruit young (potential) community leaders. As for fellowship, her plan sought to promote more opportunities for engagement at regular meetings and to improve participation at gatherings outside of regular Club

meetings. Another plan to improve both fellowship and service was to promote service projects as opportunities for fellowship: Elizabeth noted that camaraderie and the opportunities to learn about and help the community had been one of the primary factors that kept her in the Club. Finally, Elizabeth looked for ways to “spice up” meetings by incorporating challenging programs, utilizing University of Illinois resources, and inviting speakers with a vocational focus to keep the Club abreast of various local and global industries. This strategic plan was intended to be reviewed and adapted by successive Club presidents, and President Elizabeth anticipated continuing effects over the coming years.

Champaign Rotary’s annual traditions took place as they had for many years, with one notable exception (see next paragraph). The annual Corn Roast convened rather late in the season, on August 10, but the date is always determined by the weather gods of farming. On December 12, Rotary’s bell-ringing day for the Salvation Army again raised more than \$14,000. WGRC began the year by welcoming an exchange student from Yanai, Japan, and at year’s end, Action Auction XII met its goal, raising more than \$100,000 at a major Krannert Center party that entertained more than 400 boisterous attendees.

A major change to the club’s roster of annual events was the Club’s decision to no longer sponsor the U of I football banquet. The Club had sponsored the banquet since 1919 with the purpose of recognizing university athletes’ community service. Each year, the club presented the Service Above Self Award to a player who had provided outstanding community service during his playing career. However, over the years, the community service component became a smaller focus of the football banquet. At the same time, Rotary members’ attendance at the banquet declined significantly as members focused on other projects. After much consideration, the Club Board decided to re-direct its support for U of I athletics by donating the \$3,000 budgeted for the banquet sponsorship to the Marching Illini.

As part of the President Elizabeth’s goal to boost Champaign Rotary’s name recognition in the community, the improvement of Skelton Park progressed with the planting of more trees and flowers. Although the Champaign Park District had received a Cannon Grant for the park upkeep, Champaign Rotarians continued their involvement in park upgrades, pulling out their checkbooks and giving their time and energy. President Elizabeth remembers one tree-planting outing scheduled for what turned out to be a rainy, misty Saturday. Undeterred by the weather, she arrived at the site at the announced start time only to find that more than half of the work had already been accomplished by intrepid Rotarians who had come early to get a jump on planting.

Champaign Rotary continued to support the community with a variety of projects. Cup donations benefited a different service organization each month. Rotarians turned out to help the Extreme Home Makeover

renovations at the home of Nathan Montgomery, director of the Salt & Light Ministry. The nationally-televised event generated a great deal of excitement around the community, and Champaign Rotarians took joy in volunteering to help their fellow Club member and his family, who themselves devoted so much time and energy to helping the community.

Champaign Rotary's vocational scholarships honored seven students at Parkland College. The Club earmarked money to send a ShelterBox to Haiti following January's devastating earthquake, and continued its support to the Rotary Foundation, creating 11 new Paul Harris Fellows in the process. Centennial Interactors supported the Club's ongoing PolioPlus campaign with \$840 from their Pennies for Polio collection. Rotary International continued to work with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to raise an additional \$550 million toward polio eradication.

The terrible, and potentially deadly, strain of flu virus, known also as Swine Flu, had hit Central Illinois—and the University of Illinois campus—particularly hard in the fall of 2009. Champaign Rotary offered help to its members by arranging free H1N1 vaccinations, and The Fizz urged members to get themselves vaccinated not just to keep their households safe from the flu, but also “to show how brave you are to your fellow Rotarians.”

As President Elizabeth's term drew to a close, the Club named Jerry Laughlin Rotarian of the Year and presented Mary Tiefenbrunn with the Robert Eisner, Jr. Outstanding New Member Award. The new WGRC strategic plan was adopted and to be reviewed and adapted by successive Club presidents, and President Elizabeth has noticed real effects in the years that followed.

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## **2010-11: President Robert Driver**

Board of directors: Coming soon

In July, 2010 Robert Driver took the WGRC reins with the aim of leading the Club in new directions, pushing Champaign Rotary to think and act in new ways and to commit to new types of projects. He also sought to renew the Club through the recruitment of new, young, energetic members. The 2010 RI Convention took place in Montreal, Canada under the theme, *Building Communities, Bridging Continents*. The lineup of speakers did just that, featuring presentations by Jo Luck, president of Heifer International and Arkansas Rotarian; Dolly Parton, who emphasized the importance of literacy programs; and Queen Noor of Jordan, who praised Rotary International's Peace Centers, as well as its polio eradication efforts.

Fresh from recognition as District 6490 Club of the Year, Champaign Rotary embarked on another ambitious year. One of President Robert's goals was to raise \$15,000 for the Rotary Foundation, which the Club managed to surpass by some \$3,800. The Club also increased membership by six, and enjoyed another successful Corn Roast in July. Champaign Rotary sponsored a mile on the route of the third Illinois Marathon, and the second sponsored by Christie Clinic. Rotarians gathered in fellowship at an assigned station to cheer on the intrepid runners and walkers.

The Club hosted a school-year RYE student from Mexico, Augustin Aguayo, who began his year in Champaign hosted by John Calderon and family. The Club added Judah Christian High School to its Student of the Month recognition and worked on broadening the program to additional local schools. Champaign Rotary continued its work to improve literacy at the local level by settling into the rocking chairs at Lincoln Square once again for the Read Across America event. Volunteers from the Club read stories to kids to promote to the children the importance of reading as a way of nurturing their literacy skills.

Champaign Rotary participated in a number of collaborative efforts with other local clubs. At the beginning of August, Champaign, Savoy and the C-U Illini After 5 clubs partnered with the Eastern Illinois Foodbank on Kids Against Hunger: a mission to package 50,000 meals in 2.5 hours. Members from all seven local Rotary Clubs took part, as well as people from the Junior League of Champaign, Urbana Middle School staff, and a number of local churches. The youth were also out in full force, with volunteers from Parkland Rotaract, Champaign Central Interact, the Urbana Middle School Student Council, and the Prairielands Council of the Boy Scouts of America. The total number of volunteers came to 160 for this ambitious project, ranging in age from three to 83. The event was a model not only of organization and efficiency, but also of camaraderie. Volunteers were divided into sixteen work stations, with runners moving among tables to restock products.

Participants noted the dedication of volunteers who worked hard, often without breaks, and clearly enjoyed themselves in the process, with cheers erupting from each station when completed boxes were ready for loading. Writing about the event in the District 6490 newsletter, Larry Johnson from Champaign-Urbana Sunrise Rotary described it as “a true community service event.”

Champaign Rotary also collaborated with local clubs on a dictionary project for local schools. In November, the clubs purchased dictionaries for the 1,600 third-grade student in Champaign County public schools and personally delivered them to the students. This project expanded on C-U Illini After 5's original, three-year-old project that provided dictionaries to third graders in Champaign and Urbana public schools. Now, with the support of their other Rotary Clubs, the Dictionary Project included all third-graders in the entire county. The small dictionaries proved to be a valuable resource both in the classroom and at home, where many of the recipients rarely had books of their own. Students were excited about the gift, one thank you letter exclaiming “This will be the first time I will have a dictionary all to myself! I will use it every day!” George Johnston, president of the C-U Illini After Five Rotary Club, noted that “the students’ excitement when they receive the books [was] palpable.” The dictionary project provided an opportunity not only to help children in our community, but also to promote Rotary’s commitment to improving literacy around the world.

The collaboration between Champaign Rotary and its Centennial Interact Club continued strong as well. Interact’s annual Austin Cloyd Day of Service brought together more than 200 volunteers to work on 12 different projects around Champaign-Urbana, with Champaign Rotarians participating in record numbers.

Another Champaign Rotary project for the kids involved a partnership with KaBoom, a national non-profit organization dedicated to making sure children across the country have access to playgrounds in their neighborhoods. The two organizations joined forces with the Champaign Park District and volunteers from Champaign’s Kraft Foods to construct a new playground at Hazel Park in Champaign. WGRC supported the project in numerous ways—funding the registration fee, recruiting volunteers, preparing the site, serving as team captains, and dedicating their time, sweat, and energy to the construction when the day finally arrived.

Ultimately, more than 250 volunteers, including Champaign Rotarians and members of Parkland Rotaract, dedicated their time to upgrade the playground by replacing the older equipment with safer, more extensive play areas, swings, and picnic tables. Past President Joan Dixon described the event as one of her favorite service activities in recent memory, and a testament to Champaign Rotarians’ willingness not simply to write a check for a project, but also to roll up their sleeves.

. President Robert was proud of the turnout and of his fellow Rotarians' "showing the power of getting our hands dirty." He also pointed out the effort put forward by volunteers who, among other tasks, laid down two semi-truckloads of mulch: "This is really hard work—mixing concrete, lifting mulch and so forth—some of us desk jockeys aren't used to this kind of effort. We may need to install a hot tub in the park to help us recover." The project was a rousing success and marked KaBoom's 1,881st playground construction.

In September, WGRC, Inc. announced the annual Cannon Grant awards, distributing \$60,000 to six organizations. The Frances Nelson Health Center received a grant to purchase Fetal Dopplers, hand-held instruments that allow doctors to hear and monitor fetal heartbeats. The Girl Scouts of America received an award to fund safety equipment training, and the Crisis Nursery award was earmarked for a security system. The University YMCA received funds to upgrade their restrooms and elevators to meet ADA standards. Cunningham Children's Home received funds to purchase a van, and the Don Moyer Boys and Girls Club grant went for upgrades to improve energy efficiency.

The 2011 District 6490 Conference took place in Normal, and featured an oratory contest for high school students who represented 13 district clubs. The contest began with a round of short presentations on prepared topics, and finalists were then chosen for a final round where they discussed the central elements of the Rotary Four-Way Test: Truth, Fairness, Goodwill and Friendship. Champaign had two representatives in the competition, Kieran Miller and Joshua Ferrer, with the former doing the Club proud by taking second prize. Rotarian Don Moyer, Jr. was recognized with one of the District's first-ever Ageless Rotarian awards, and Champaign Rotary itself won Achievement Awards for both Community Service and Vocational Service. At the club level, WGRC named Connie Walsh Rotarian of the Year, and presented Stan Herrin with the Robert Eisner, Jr. Award for Outstanding New Member.

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## **2011-12: President Bill Malone**

Board of directors: Coming soon

In July, 2011, Bill Malone took over as president, energized by the Rotary International Convention—this one in New Orleans. Although past presidents had described what he might expect at the Convention, Bill maintains that no one can truly grasp the awe of finding oneself in the midst of 18,000 Rotarians from 240 different countries until he's there. President Bill was able to comprehend the scale of Rotary's strength and the breadth of its reach. He was inspired by the presentations, most importantly that of Rotary International President Kalyan Banerjee of India. President Banerjee's theme, *Reach Within to Embrace Humanity*, reflected his belief that "if we truly want more kindness, more caring, more joy and more love in the world, we have to put them there."

The new RI president proposed to accomplish his worldwide goals in various ways, but he saw three keys as central to Rotary's efforts: "family, continuity and change." President Bill extended the metaphor into a second theme specific to Champaign Rotary, challenging members to "Be the Tree for WGRC!" Bill noted that many of Champaign Rotary's efforts focused on projects that affect families: housing, clean water, and health care. He pointed out that WGRC has always included family members in annual traditions such as the Corn Roast and Holiday Party, and as one of his goals as president, he called for family-friendly social events in the coming year. He also pursued creative ways to make meetings and gatherings more fun, admittedly difficult at times—he did not feel he was a "natural entertainer." He was, nonetheless, creative, with ideas like his "5th Monday" meetings. Four months of his year would contain five Mondays, so he pledged to make each 5th Monday a more entertaining meeting, with diversions such as costume contests and Rotary-themed song rewrites.

President Bill's second point of focus was continuity: identifying Rotary's strengths at both the local and international levels and continuing Rotary's commitments to its core goals and programs. He stressed the importance of persisting with ongoing programs such as PolioPlus, not just because the Club has "always done it that way," but rather looking hard at what the Club needs to do in the future to truly serve the community and the world. Such introspection sometimes led to Bill's third area of emphasis: change. President Bill noted two kinds of change that Rotary needed to stress: the change Rotarians want to see in the world, and the manner in which Rotary carries out its programs. He noted that Rotary needed to balance tradition and persistence with adapting to the needs of the 21st century: "We must make the changes that are needed, but preserve the principals upon which we were founded and operate."

President Bill introduced one of the changes Rotary International had recently announced—New Generations, Rotary's Fifth Avenue of Service,

established “to help Rotarians, clubs and districts throughout the world to focus on our youth programs in a more comprehensive manner.” New Generations groups familiar programs, including Interact, Rotaract, Rotary Youth Exchange, and RYLA, under a single umbrella as a way of placing greater emphasis on the ways Rotary can serve youth, and vice versa. President Bill noted Champaign Rotary’s strong record with youth programs, and announced a joint project with other local Rotary Clubs to sponsor a middle school essay contest about Rotary, not only promoting Rotary’s overall accomplishments, but providing another avenue for Champaign Rotary’s literacy efforts. He also announced the Club’s commitment to host an inbound RYE student the following year.

The PolioPlus campaign was a key theme at the RI Convention, with Bill Gates as the keynote speaker. Mr. Gates noted the extraordinary reduction in polio cases since Rotary International initiated Polio Plus in 1985: from 350,000 down to only 1,300 cases. He described the challenge of providing enough immunizations in countries such as India, where 24 million babies are born each year. Efforts had succeeded nonetheless, with only one case reported for 2011. Gates also noted the political problems encountered in regions where immunization efforts were regarded with suspicion, but emphasized how close we were to a world without polio. As an added incentive, Rotary International offered double Paul Harris Fellow points for donations made in the week of October 24, World Polio Day. In April 2012, the Club also used the Illinois Marathon as a PolioPlus fundraising event, where runners and walkers could collect pledges for participation in the 5k race.

Another highlight of the RI Convention was youth engagement, with presentations on the different ways Rotary can tap into Generation Y’s strong volunteer ethic. Speakers noted that many high school and college students not only had extensive experience with volunteer work, but were also often in need of networking and mentoring opportunities—a perfect fit for Rotary. Centennial Interact has consistently proven itself a shining example of Rotary youth engagement. Their annual Austin Cloyd Day of service continues as a moving tribute to the dedication of a former Interact member, and in 2012 they included tree planting at Skelton Park as part of their community service activities. Champaign Rotary’s outstanding commitment to youth programs was recognized in 2012 with the first District New Generations Award at the District 6490 Conference in Effingham.

Maintaining membership continued to be problematic for Champaign Rotary, and for clubs around the world. Although overall RI membership remained stable, the number of clubs was growing: competition among clubs for the same pool of potential members was shrinking club size. WGRC also went through a “weeding” process, identifying members who were not active, working to get them engaged, but ultimately dropping members who could not truly commit to the Club. Despite the loss of

inactive members, overall membership remained stable over President Bill's term, balanced by new recruitment.

Together with President Elect Fay Rouseff-Baker, President Bill devised a plan to address member engagement and retention. The plan involved giving each "class" of new members, usually around 15 new recruits, a budget of \$1,000-\$1,500 for planning and carrying out a new local service project during their first year in the Club—this because being involved in service projects has been one of the strongest factors in helping members feel truly connected to the Club. The sense of pride that comes from helping the community appears to be one of the driving forces behind retention.

In addition, President Bill sought to increase the number of volunteer opportunities for all members, new and experienced, in particular shorter projects that would require only an hour or two, as a way of filling in gaps between the major projects. One such opportunity came in October 2011, when Rotarians helped pack food for the Meals of Hope project in conjunction with the Eastern Illinois Foodbank. Together with 21 other community organizations, the goal was to help the EIF prepare more than 54,000 packages of fortified macaroni and cheese for distribution. More importantly, Champaign Rotary received a District Simplified Grant for the WGRC Christmas Backpack Project, in which the Club partnered with the Daily Bread Soup Kitchen to provide backpacks for Daily Bread clients filled with foods and necessities.

Champaign Rotary continued its commitment to the Rotary Foundation, once again earning a Star Patch, indicating annual contributions averaging at least \$100 per member. President Bill was proud that Champaign Rotary was an "honest club," achieving Star Club status through actual donations, rather than making the \$100 donation part of Club dues. He found the Club to be incredibly generous, always willing to give without expecting anything in return, and to increase the number of sustaining members—those who donate at least \$100 per year to the Rotary Foundation—by at least 10%.

As for local fundraising, Salvation Army Bell-Ringing day saw its best collection to date: \$16,000 in the red kettles combined with \$7,000 collected on a December 1 meeting day, adding up to \$23,000 for the Army. The Club also participated in a business clothing collection, donating second-hand suits, ties, shirts, dresses, and shoes for job seekers. Additionally, WGRC distributed \$70,000 in Cannon Grants to community organizations, including Centennial Interact, Champaign County Parks Foundation, Crisis Nursery, and the Canaan Development Foundation.

In February, the Champaign-Urbana Clubs held a Combined Rotary Club meeting at the Round Barn Center, featuring a visit from past RI President Ray Klinginsmith (2010-11), who had been a busy

traveler during his term as RI President Elect and President—spending only two nights at home in two years. He talked about PolioPlus efforts, praising Rotarians for meeting Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation challenge by raising \$200 million.

In May, WGRCer Marilynne Davis led a 10-day study group from “Stan” countries. The purpose of the visit was for visitors from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan to see how agencies and institutions in Champaign-Urbana deliver services to citizens, and to observe how citizens can be involved in the decision making process. John Calderon headed the planning committee for the community tour, and Club members enjoyed the chance to share information with the visitors, as well as to learn something about these very different cultures.

Near the end of President Bill’s term, not only was the Club recognized by District 6490 for its youth projects with the New Generations Award, the Club was also honored with the Community Service Award and the Two Star Club Award. A special honor was the induction of John Calderon, Club President-elect for 2013-14, into the District 6490 Hall of Honor. John became the tenth Champaign Rotarian to be so honored, following (in chronological order) Art Skelton, Scott Anderson, Sr., Ken Gunji, Clarence Thompson, Robert Eisner, Jr., Frank Keck, Denton Brown, Peter T. Tomaras, and Scott Anderson, Jr. The Club itself recognized Jeffery Lehmann as Rotarian of the Year and presented Linda Myette with the Robert Eisner, Jr. Award for Outstanding New Member.

[http://ngcowp.tklapp.com/wp-content/uploads/Rotary/VTS\\_2011-2012.mp4](http://ngcowp.tklapp.com/wp-content/uploads/Rotary/VTS_2011-2012.mp4)

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## **2012-13: President Fay Rouseff-Baker**

Board of directors: John Calderon (President-elect), Steve Carter, Amy George, Guy Hall, Jeff Lehmann, Dale Morrissey, Darcy Sementi, Connie Walsh , Bill Malone (Past-President)

Fay Rouseff-Baker began her tenure as Champaign Rotary's 5th female president on July 2, 2012 following an exciting journey to Bangkok, Thailand for the Rotary International convention. While at the conference, President Fay was struck by the spirit of hope that Rotary International promotes and sustains around the world, remarking in her presidential address that "We, Rotary International, circumvent the negative in humanity to allow the positive to happen." RI President Sakuji Tanaka's theme was Peace through Service, embodied by the impressive flag ceremony that honored the 220 countries and territories who had sent Rotarians to gather in Thailand and celebrate Rotary's continuing commitment to service. President Fay noted the presence of countries that had once been, or still see each other as enemies, on the Rotary stage, united peacefully in the spirit of peace through service. Throughout the year, the Rotary Club of Champaign certainly did its part to promote peace by supporting an incredible variety of projects and organizations that increased stability both abroad and at home in Champaign County.

Membership was once again a top presidential priority, and President Fay wanted to place a particular importance on meeting enjoyment, retention, and recruitment. In her address, she described her own acclimation to the Club. As many a member before her, she joined in part for professional reasons, but soon the collegial atmosphere of the social outings and the variety of service projects that made an impact on the community won her over and brought her into a real commitment to the Club. A recent survey of Champaign Rotary members revealed this story to be a common one. The relationships and the opportunities to help the local and global community were the strongest factors in retention, and President Fay's new member orientation strategies addressed both of those factors. In addition to orientation materials that provided key information and a personal welcome from the president, social events welcomed new members with free drinks and a chance to get to know fellow members in a more informal setting.

Monday meetings included some new components: Rotarians in the news which shared member's activities published in *The News-Gazette*, the Good News moment, which allowed members to share joys and other announcements while putting money in *The Story: 1916-2001* which funded this update of the Club's history. Talented Club musicians planned, led and performed music designed for specific speakers, topics and events.

Despite the 2012 drought, the annual Corn Roast took place on July 9 and would sadly turn out to be the last Corn Roast for Dick Burwash,

who passed away later that year. Although the corn crop was limited by the drought that engulfed Central Illinois, the event was a success, thanks to Dick's generosity and famous lessons about corn and how to pick it correctly. Dick had been a member of Champaign Rotary for 57 years. Earlier that year, Champaign had already lost a long term member: Tom Harrington Sr., who had served Champaign Rotary for 45 years. The annual Christmas party included a short memorial to Tom and resolution in his honor, attended by his children and grandchildren. The moving tribute included the Club singing Auld Lang Syne, bringing one of the granddaughters quietly to tears. 2012 would end with another crushing loss, Mr. Rotary himself, Art Skelton. Art joined Champaign Rotary at the tender age of 25 and was a member for 67 years.

In the face of these losses, the Club still moved forward with its support of the community. The 2012 Cannon Grants awarded over \$65,000 to organizations such as the Developmental Services Center for a kitchen upgrade and the Crisis Nursery to upgrade computer equipment and systems. The Backpack Project, in conjunction with the Daily Bread Soup Kitchen, was able to provide 70 backpacks containing clothing and supplies to homeless individuals in Champaign-Urbana, thanks to support from a District 6490 grant, the WGRC and the Urbana Walmart. The annual Salvation Army Bell Ringing saw over 100 Rotarians ringing bells for 10 hours around town, raising \$30,000. Additional community programs included the Mattis Avenue clean-up and support of Centennial Interact's award-winning Austin's Day, now in its 5th year. Rotary Interact, Rotaract members and additional volunteers, participated in efforts to put together nearly 150,000 meals for the Eastern Illinois Foodbank. The Club was also planned the 2013 Action Auction, which occurs every three years at the Krannert Center for Performing Arts. The Action Auction team worked for over a year planning the June 1 Broadway themed event with a goal to raise at least \$100,000 for the community. The event was a great success raising over \$130,000. The 520 guests in attendance were engaged in a magical evening that highlighted the strength of this service club and its impact on the community.

Additionally, Champaign Rotary welcomed visitors from around the world. A French student stayed for the year and, for the 24th consecutive year, they hosted a student from Yanai, Japan. Under the direction of Marilynne Davis, the Club worked with a team of political leaders from Tajikistan, organizing programs that allowed the visitors to learn more about the Club, local city operations, and agricultural practices. The exchange proved fruitful with both the visitors and Rotarians learning a great deal about each other's cultures. A water well project in Kenya was successfully completed with enormous efforts between multiple Clubs in the United States and in Kenya largely driven by the work of member Carl Burkybile. This was a two year effort started under past president Bill Malone and a continued commitment

of President Fay. This well provides more accessible, safe water for over 12,000 people. The club took the lead, working with additional grants from District 6490 and other American clubs. Champaign Club also sponsored A Group Study Exchange (GSE) member to travel to Italy visiting Italian Rotary Club and hosted the Italians on their visit to Illinois.

Social activities included the Corn Roast, buying an Illinois Marathon Mile to encourage the runners and have fun, a spring social, and a number of other events with members and their families. *The Fizz* continued to keep the Club abreast of Club developments, with expanded segments, via Clubrunner. This year also launched a new Facebook site and an enhanced website. The Club's efforts and hard work culminated in a number of district awards for community service, international service, and youth involvement, Star Club designation and The Presidential Citation. WGRC presented Dean Cavey with its Rotarian of the Year award, in recognition of his extraordinary work preparing the 2013 Action Auction. Carl Burkybile received the Bobby Eisner Jr. Award Outstanding New Member award for his dedication on the Kenyan Water Well project.

The completed addition *The Story Continues: 2002-2013* to *The Story 1916-2001* was made possible by member financial donations and authored by Parkland College instructor—and former Rotary Youth Exchange Student from District 6490—Sarah Simeziane. It is unique to this club to record its history while honoring the men and women who have spent a lifetime making a difference and having fun.

President Fay remarked that being President of the Rotary Club of Champaign has been an honor and a privilege to lead a group of such wonderful people who truly live *Service above Self*.

Possible link to video

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## Conclusion

Once again, the conclusion of a new chapter in WGRC history leads to a reflection on the challenges that Rotary faces in the future. In the 2012 survey of WGRC members, the primary challenge respondents discussed is how to maintain Club membership and continue to recruit dynamic young community leaders. The WGRC has already seen how strong its impact on the youth of the community can be through the impressive service record of Interact, Rotaract, and the local high school students the Club honors every year. Members suggest that the Club needs these young people to revitalize service clubs and to attract these up-and-coming leaders, the Club needs to continue to incorporate networking technologies, such as social media, in order to effectively promote the club. The Club has worked hard at embracing innovation, however at the same time, members are concerned about completely overhauling how the Club operates, noting the importance of “recruiting new, enthusiastic young members while balancing the expectations of veteran members.”

Another challenge that goes hand in hand with recruiting younger members is being able to attract new members to a service organization in a business climate that is not always conducive to service organizations. Increased career mobility has weakened the potential for long-term membership. Particularly early in their careers, potential members move around the country, and while they may remain Rotarians throughout their lives, they may belong to a number of different clubs. Furthermore, WGRCers have observed a shift in corporate culture, with some company leaders who once encouraged their employees to join organizations like Rotary—and afford them the time to participate actively in service projects—approval of extracurricular activities appears to be waning. In the 2012 member survey, one WGRCer outlined the following obstacles:

“Continued difficulty in housing/sponsoring international students due to dual-working households; the financial commitments involved in club membership and project support will be challenging for younger members in the tight economy.”

Indeed, the weakened economy has become a growing concern in recruiting, with the younger generations being among the hardest hit. WGRCers are sensitive to the financial commitments that membership entails—supporting the wide variety of Champaign Rotary’s service projects does present an obstacle to young members of the community kicking off their careers. One way WGRC can meet the needs of a more financially-strapped pool of potential new members is through the rise in hands-on service projects. By embracing more volunteer service projects, such as the Boneyard clean-up, Skelton Park, Read Across America, and Interact’s Austin Cloyd Day of Service, WGRCers are able

to promote literacy, help maintain public spaces around the community, and support other local organizations in a variety of ways without writing personal checks. This increase in volunteer projects may prove to be the bridge that allows the younger generation of Rotarians to grow their Rotary credentials as they build up their careers and eventually attain a position where they are more comfortable providing more financial support. This approach can create the needed balance between new, younger members and the “old-timers,” capitalizing on how each membership segment can best serve Rotary.

Despite these recognized challenges, not least the competition for members from six other Champaign County Rotary Clubs, Champaign Rotary continues to serve, innovate, and live up to its honored nickname. As 2013 unfolded, Club membership stood at 160, attendance was up 3% from the previous year, and WGRC had contributed \$18,000+ to the Rotary Foundation— more than 8% of District 6490’s total contributions to date.

So, as Champaign Rotary recognizes and addresses its challenges, this Club’s achievements continue to impact the world, giving ample cause for pride and celebration. Nearly a century of good works forms the unshakeable foundation upon which Champaign Rotary will stride confidently into the future, adapting to its changing world, embracing each new RI and Club president’s theme, and expanding its impressive record of community and international service. We count on each individual member to play his or her role in our storied history.