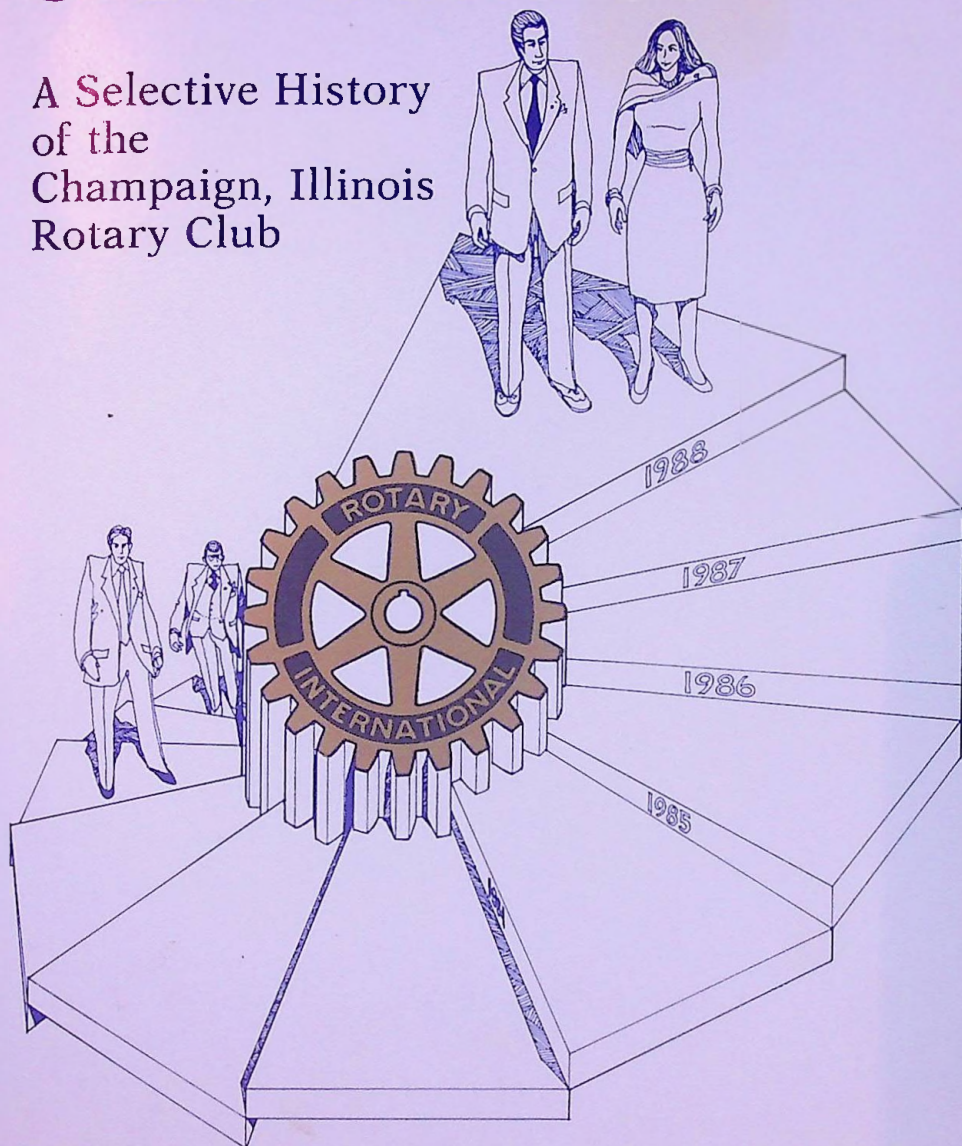


PLEASE RETURN TO:  
ART SKELTON

# STEPS GOING UP

A Selective History  
of the  
Champaign, Illinois  
Rotary Club



Arthur Skelton  
401 Burwash Ave., Apt. 204  
Savoy, IL 61874

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A Selective History of the Champaign, Illinois  
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Champaign, IL 61821

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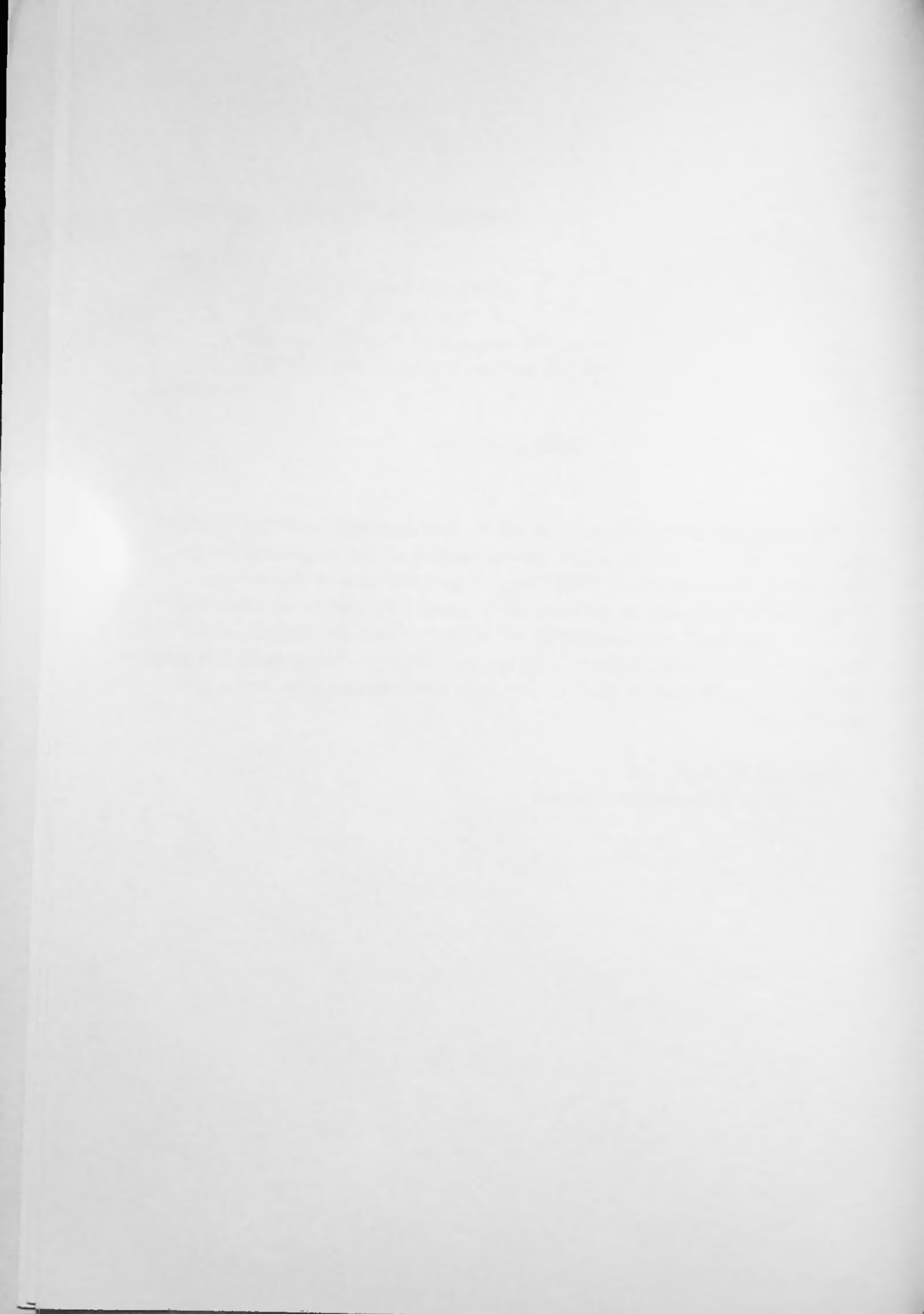


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## *DEDICATION*

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. Still, as new generations of Rotarians broaden the horizons of service, they should be aware of what the previous generations accomplished in their time. On behalf of all those who have gone before, it is my privilege to dedicate this legacy of Champaign Rotary's past to the men and women who represent our future.

— Edward E. Roderick  
President, Champaign Rotary  
1987-88



## INTRODUCTION & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This history of the Champaign Rotary Club is a chronicle of the work of Rotary International as exemplified by one of its most outstanding clubs. Compiled by Matthew Kaufman, a gifted young writer, it records the unselfish efforts of a thousand men of good will who, since 1917, have labored to improve the quality of life in their community, in the nation, and around the world.

— Oscar Dodson, Historian  
Champaign, Illinois Rotary Club

Most of the information for this history comes from the extensive files of the Champaign Rotary Club, largely consisting of issues of *The Fizz*, the weekly Club newsletter, dating back to the early 1930s. Original material from times prior is scarce. A fire at the Bailey & Himes store in 1926 destroyed most of the Club's records of its first decade, and only sketchy records appear to have been kept for several years following the fire.

That situation was remedied during the Depression when former Club President Fred Turner began his four decades as Club Historian. In addition to keeping records, Turner secured a federal grant with which he hired a graduate student to piece together newspaper accounts of the missing years' activities. This probably makes Champaign Rotary the only Rotary club to have its archives compiled with the help of the U.S. Government.

First among those I wish to thank for assisting in this project is Dean Turner's successor as Club Historian, Rear Admiral Oscar Dodson. His recall, perspective and flair for the appropriate anecdote have done much to bring this history to life. After my departure from the community, Peter Tomaras and Bill Krahling spearheaded a select editing committee which expanded and fine-tuned my draft into its final form.

I extend my gratitude to that committee, and also to: present Club President Bud Roderick and the Board of Directors for funding the project; Club President-Elect Cal Owens for furnishing production facilities; the many Rotarians and others too numerous to name who have contributed their thoughts and feelings concerning Rotary; and last, but not least, Claude V. Cook, my grandfather, for support well above and beyond any call of duty.

— Matthew Kaufman  
April, 1988



## THE FOUNDING OF ROTARY INTERNATIONAL

It was February 23, 1905.<sup>1</sup>

The automobile was still evoking cries of "Get a horse!" The Wright brothers had shown that heavier-than-air flight was possible, though the airplane had so far stayed aloft for only minutes. The first motion picture theater was soon to open in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, with a film entitled "The Great Train Robbery." The first concrete cantilever bridge was under construction in Marion, Iowa. Later that year Albert Einstein would introduce his theory of relativity, and James J. Jeffries would retire as the world's heavyweight boxing champion.

On this February day, the skies over Chicago, Illinois, were fair; winds were southerly at 17 miles per hour, and the temperature averaged 36 degrees Fahrenheit. The sun set at 5:33, and the moon had not yet risen as Paul Percival Harris, a young lawyer, walked to the Unity Building on Dearborn Street to what would be the first Rotary club meeting.

If he carried a newspaper under his arm that mid-winter evening, the two-cent journal would have informed him of a Russo-English dispute over North Sea fishing; that 75 arrests had been made in Chicago for violation of an anti-expectoration ordinance; that the Agra diamond was auctioned at Christie's in London for \$25,000; and that Count von Baudissin had eloped with a Berlin shopgirl. It would have cost Paul Harris another two cents to mail a first-class letter to a friend in one of the 45 United States; for five cents he could have sent a letter to Europe — by surface mail, of course.

In room 711 of the Unity Building, Harris met with three other men. They were Silvester Schiele, a coal dealer; Gustavus E. Loehr, a mining engineer; and Hiram E. Shorey, a merchant tailor. The office of Gus Loehr was typical of its time — a small room, dimly lit, with a desk and four uncomfortable chairs, a coat rack in the

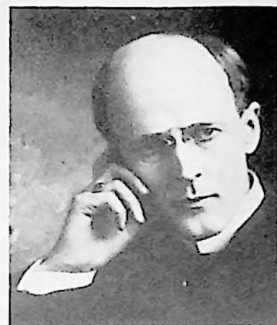
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<sup>1</sup> This chapter is substantially compiled from Rotary International's pamphlet, "The Day Rotary Began," and from an article in the February, 1975 issue of *The Rotarian* magazine entitled "1905: The Way it Was," by Charles W. Pratt. It concludes with a current overview of Rotary.



corner, one or two pictures and an engineering chart on the wall. The men talked about an idea that Paul Harris had been pondering for five years: that business dealings need not be a barrier to friendship. That, in fact, they could — and should — foster friendly relations.

*Paul Harris,  
Founder of Rotary*



What kind of men had Harris brought together? The founder of Rotary answered this question in his book, *This Rotarian Age*:

In the city by the lake, a drama was to be enacted, the importance of which could not be foreseen. The *dramatis personae* were men from ordinary walks of life; business and professional men.

While lacking qualities which would have distinguished them from others of their kind, it may nevertheless be said that they were representative of what in common parlance would have been termed "the better element." They were all natural products of the times and subject to typical frailties. All were friendly and congenial, and each represented a recognized and honorable vocation different from that of the others [thereby establishing, intentionally or not, Rotary's unique classification system for membership]. They had been selected without regard to religious, racial or political differences.

As these men talked that night, they saw ever more clearly that men in business could be personal friends — and should be. In their discussions of ways to foster such business-social relations, they decided that the formation of a club might best suit their aims. Though they didn't decide then and there what to call their fledgling club, that meeting on the night of February 23, 1905, was in fact the first meeting of the world's first Rotary club.

The next day a fifth member joined the group, having been invited by Paul Harris. He was Harry Ruggles, a printer. Ruggles, in turn, interested a real estate dealer named Will Jenson.

It was Ruggles who, at an early meeting, jumped on a chair and shouted, "Let's sing!" His infectious enthusiasm for singing made the Rotary Club of Chicago the forerunner of the many Rotary clubs which today include singing as part of their weekly programs.

Soon after Ruggles and Jenson came in, the organization of the new Club was completed at a meeting in Schiele's office. Schiele emerged as president, Jenson as corresponding secretary, Shorey as recording secretary, and Ruggles as treasurer. Paul Harris modestly declined office in the new Club at that time. In fact, not until 1907 was Harris elected president of the Rotary Club of Chicago.

The name "Rotary" was chosen at one of the early meetings, its proposer being Paul Harris, who pointed out that the word aptly conveyed the original intent of the members to meet in rotation at their various places of business.

With the name decided upon, Montague M. Bear, an engraver who had joined the Club, thought it was time to have an emblem. He came up with a sketch of a plain wagon wheel, a rotating wheel that won full approval. Today, Monty Bear's wheel, though much changed in design, has more than a million descendants in the form of the familiar cogwheel pins on the lapels of Rotarians throughout the world.

The first printed roster of the Rotary Club of Chicago had 19 members; at the end of 1905 there were 30. Paul Harris later wrote of these first members:

There were no drones in the 1905 group. Everyone was interested and busy. Practically every member contributed one or more serviceable ideas. Several of these ideas are in operation today; for example, the mid-day meeting, the practice of using photographs in rosters, the presentation of papers on vocational service subjects, and many others.

So began Rotary in the pioneer city of Chicago. Certainly no Rotarian of 1905 ever dreamed that the idea set in motion in that Chicago office would someday be accepted by men around the world.

Five years after Rotary's birth there were 16 clubs and approximately 1,500 Rotarians. The organization became international with the formation of a club in Winnipeg, Canada, in 1910. The first Rotary Convention took place in Chicago's Congress Hotel in August of 1910. The National Association of Rotary Clubs was organized at that time with all 16 clubs in membership. The following year clubs were organized in Ireland and England, and Rotary was on its way to becoming global. In 1912, the name was changed to International Association of Rotary Clubs.

In 1916 the first Rotary club in Ibero-America was functioning in Havana, Cuba, and in 1919 the first in Asia in Manila, The Philippines. In 1921 the first Rotary clubs were established on three other continents: Madrid, Spain, in Europe; Johannesburg, Union of South Africa, in Africa; and Melbourne in Australia. The less cumbersome name Rotary International (RI) was adopted in 1922.

The foundation upon which the whole Rotary edifice rests is known as the Object (or program) of Rotary. There were six "Objects" until 1935, when the Mexico City Convention of Rotary International adopted four. In 1951, the RI Convention at Atlantic City, New Jersey, streamlined the stated purpose of the organization into a single Object with four parts.

The Object of Rotary reflects Rotary's "golden rule," which is to encourage and foster the ideal of service as a basis of worthy enterprise. In particular, Rotarians are asked to encourage and foster:

- The development of acquaintance as an opportunity for service;
- High ethical standards in business and professions, the recognition of the worthiness of all useful occupations, and the dignifying by each Rotarian of his or her occupation as an opportunity to serve society;
- The application of the ideal of service by every Rotarian to his or her personal, business and community life;
- The advancement of international understanding, goodwill, and peace through a world fellowship of business and professional men united in the ideal of service.<sup>2</sup>

These tenets were further enhanced by the adoption of the 4-Way Test, developed in 1954-55 by RI President Herbert J. Taylor. It can be applied to the work of Rotary through the Four Avenues of Service: Club Service, Community Service, Vocational Service, and International Service. Beyond that, Rotarians are asked to apply this 4-Way Test to everything they think, say or do:

1. Is it the Truth?
2. Is it Fair to All Concerned?
3. Will it Build Goodwill and Better Friendships?
4. Will it be Beneficial to All Concerned?

It was after World War II, and the death of Paul Harris in 1947, that the Rotary Foundation became the vehicle through which Rotarians funded major programs in international service. The four principal Foundation activities are Study-Abroad Scholarships,

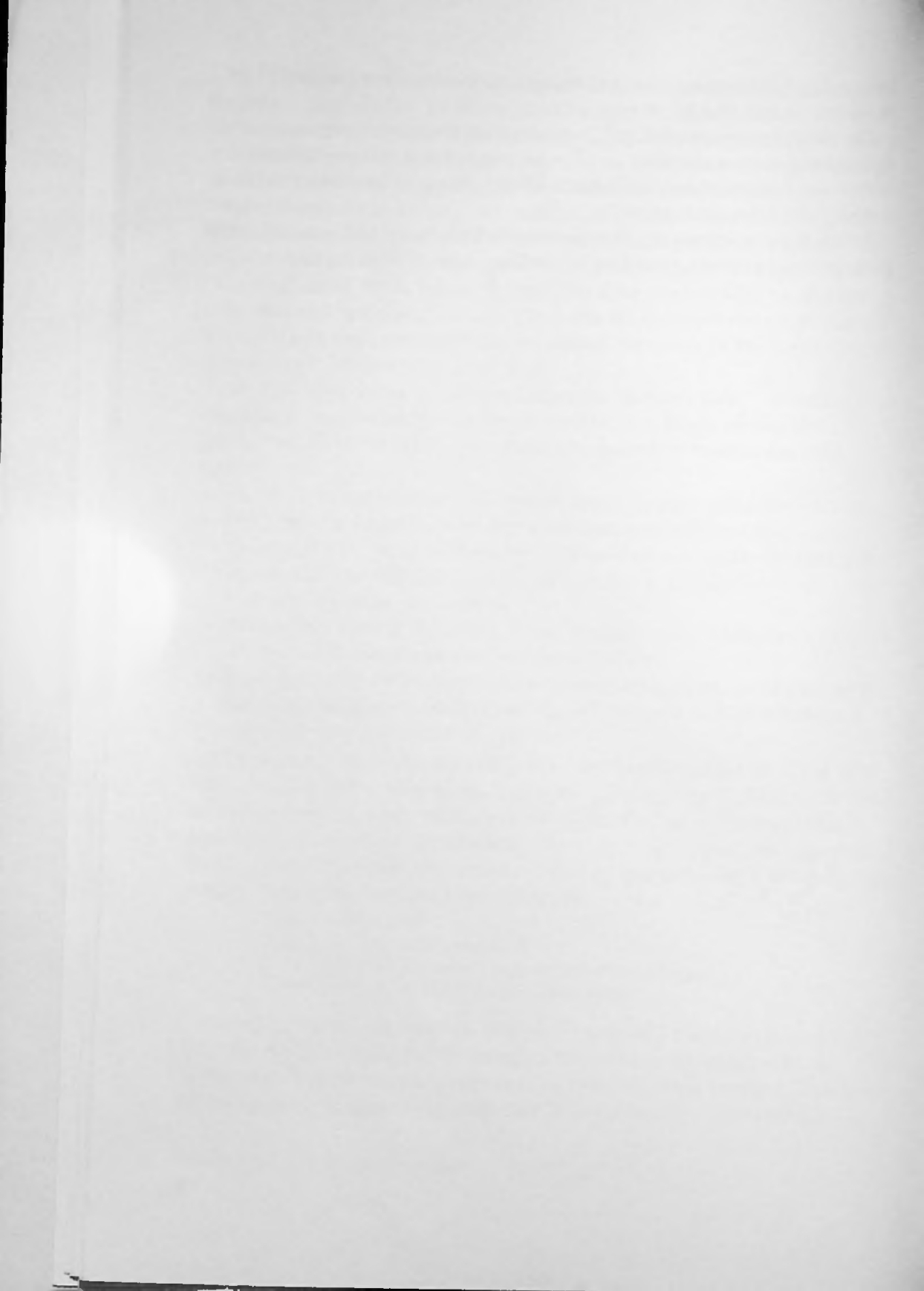
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<sup>2</sup>Modified in 1987 to include women.

Group Study Exchange, the 3-H Program (Health, Hunger and Humanity), and Special Grants.

The Foundation carefully selects and administers programs throughout the world and, as this history goes to press, its most ambitious program yet has raised \$220 million to immunize all the world's children against polio.

Today Rotary spans six continents with clubs in 162 countries and geographical regions, and has more than one million members.



## THE FOUNDING OF CHAMPAIGN ROTARY

By the fall of 1916 a series of crises was commanding the attention of most people. In the United States, citizens were slowly recovering from their outrage over the raid on Columbus, New Mexico, by Mexican bandit Pancho Villa, and over the sinking off Ireland of the *Lusitania* with the loss of 1,198 lives, including 139 Americans. Huge banner headlines in the Urbana *Daily Courier* told of the battles of the Great War. Newspaper readers were both horrified and fascinated by accounts of heavy casualties in the three-month battle of the Somme, and of the great naval engagement between the British Grand Fleet and the German High Seas Fleet off Jutland.

In the year 1916 the X-ray and stainless steel were invented. With radio and television still in the future, Americans read such authors as Thomas Hardy, Joseph Conrad, Rudyard Kipling, and the "pornographic" D.H. Lawrence. Many were mystified by the artist Pablo Picasso and his new school of Cubism. In November President Woodrow Wilson won a second term; in December David Lloyd George formed a new British war cabinet, and Rasputin was assassinated in Tsarist Russia.

Champaign-Urbana citizens flocked to the department stores for pre-Christmas purchases. F.K. Robeson Company offered three pairs of ladies' silk hose "in a pretty box" for \$1.00 and gloves for men and boys at from \$.50 to \$6.00 a pair. J.M. Kaufman sold men's silk shirts for \$4.50, while Lowenstern-Meis announced ladies' coats for \$9.75 to \$19.50. W.L. Lewis & Company advertised "Dear Santa, Please Bring Me A Rocking Horse" — \$4.75 to \$9.50. According to the *Courier*, the Salvation Army bell-ringing campaign got off to a good start with the collection of \$32.20 on December 10.

Four silent movies played at the Orpheum Theatre: "Solomon's Return," "The Wop and the Cop," "A Carnival of Comedy," and "The Hat Maniac." On Saturday the theater offered a special feature — "Fraternity Boys and Girls, 25 singing, dancing, captivating collegians." The price of admission was 20 to 30 cents.



In the fourth week of a revival at the First Methodist Church, the pastor warned that parishioners could not be sure of salvation. Busey State Bank offered membership in its Christmas Club and Taxpayers' Club. News from Washington indicated that penny postage was assured and that the Prohibition bill was under debate in the House. Meanwhile, the *Courier's* competitor, the *Champaign Daily News*, announced a reception to view its modern plant. Visitors would receive "unique souvenirs" and enjoy an "especially engaged orchestra."

With all that going on as 1916 wound down, understandably little notice was paid to a local event that occurred on Saturday, December 11. On that day some 30 members of the Danville Rotary Club traveled to Champaign by interurban electric railway and met at the Beardsley Hotel with 24 local business and civic leaders who there formed the new Champaign Rotary Club.

This was not the first attempt to form a Rotary club in Champaign. In 1914, one of those leaders, Frank Amsbary, Sr., contacted the International Association of Rotary Clubs in Chicago concerning the possibility of establishing a club in Champaign. He was told by one Chesley Perry that it was impractical to organize clubs in towns as small as Champaign (23,000 citizens at the time), due to petty personal jealousies which were likely to arise among members.

Two years later, however, Frank Clark, who would become the Club's first president, went to Indiana to talk with District Governor Frank Manley, after which Clark was able to convince Mr. Perry of the feasibility of a Rotary club in this community.

District Governor Manley and Deputy Governor Dr. E.B. Cooley of the sponsoring Danville Club attended that inaugural meeting. To the latter, especially, goes credit for much of the organizational work. Notwithstanding the presence of those officials, formal recognition of the Champaign Rotary Club did not come until February 1, 1917, when the International Association of Rotary Clubs granted its charter. But in fact, if not on paper, Champaign Rotary was born on December 11, 1916.

These were the charter members of Champaign Rotary, listed with nicknames and classifications or occupations:

F.C. Amsbary (Frank)  
Vice-Pres.,  
Champaign-Urbana Water Co.

B.L. Kirk (Bon)  
Attorney

A.M. Burke (Art)  
Pres., Citizens State Bank

H.F. Chester (Frank)  
Chester Transfer Co.

O.F. Clark (Frank)  
Dist. Mgr., Central Union  
Telephone Co.

Albert Eisner Sr.  
Pres., Eisner Wholesale  
Grocery Co.

George A. Farrar  
Partner, Farrar & Quinlan  
Commission Merchants

B.F. Harris (Ben)  
Pres., First National Bank

D.E. Harris (Del)  
Confectioner

C.B. Hatch Jr. (Charlie)  
Pres., Beardsley Hotel Co.

Harry Herrick  
Partner, Herrick Auto Supply Co.

A.E. Huckins (Al)  
Mgr., Sheldon Brick Co.

J.M. Kaufman (Jake)  
J.M. Kaufman Retail Clothing

C.A. Kiler (Charlie)  
Retail Furniture

J.W. Lawder (Jack)  
Bus. Mgr., Champaign  
*Daily Gazette*

Louis Mittendorf (Lou)  
Undertaker

B.C. Nelson (Bert)  
Partner, A.S. Nelson & Sons  
Retail Grocers

W.W. Paul (Billy)  
Retail Shoes

Charles M. Pearson (Charlie)  
Sec.-Tres., Flanigan-Pearson  
Printing Company

George E. Ramey (Bud)  
Architect

E.S. Scott (Ed)  
Mgr., Harris-Dillavou Coal Co.

J.P. Sledge (Jimmie)  
Grain Dealer

T.E. Smith (Tom)  
Pres., Smith & Co. — Ice

F.L. Stamey (Frank)  
Broker

A.E. Wuesteman (Albert)  
Jeweler

The initial officers and directors were:

President — O.F. Clark  
Vice-President — C.M. Pearson  
Secretary — B.L. Kirk  
Treasurer — A.E. Wuesteman  
Sergeant-at-Arms — A.Eisner Sr.

Directors — B.F. Harris  
F.C. Amsbary  
J.P. Sledge  
A.E. Huckins  
G.A. Farrar



## THE EARLY YEARS

Fifty years after the Club was founded, Frank Clark sat in his Fort Myers, Florida, home and recalled the obstacles he faced as Champaign Rotary's first president. "At this time we were in the middle of World War I. The prospects who would make the best Rotarians were very busy and felt they could not spare the time to help get a new Rotary club under way."

*O. F. (Frank) Clark,  
Club's first president,  
1916-17*



Champaign Rotary did not have the luxury of waiting until the end of the war to bolster its membership. Within months, it was put to its first test. On the afternoon of Saturday, May 25, 1917, a tornado devastated the city of Mattoon, killing 80 people and destroying 500 homes over an area 33 blocks long and 2 to 3 blocks wide.

Frank Clark summoned Rotarians to an emergency meeting in his telephone company office. They quickly made plans to send an Illinois Central relief train to Mattoon. Within three hours the train was underway, bearing doctors (including J.C. Dallenbach, who would later become a Champaign Rotarian), nurses, policemen, food, blankets, tents, clothing and medical supplies. The train stopped briefly in Tolono, Tuscola and Arcola to pick up additional relief personnel and reached the disaster scene at 8:30 p.m. — just five hours after the tornado struck. This was the first help to reach Mattoon. The train stayed through late Sunday afternoon and subsequently additional relief was sent.

That rapid reaction to a crisis typified the Club's early years. L.B. King, who became the third president, once recalled: "We tried to

run everything in Champaign. We were the only service club then, and we thought it was our duty to take the lead in every new project." Such an attitude would prevail throughout and, for a time, after World War I. King noted that later, as other service clubs were formed and welfare activities were put on a permanent, organized basis, "we decided our place was to help, but not necessarily to run everything."

*Louis B. King,  
Club president—1919-1920*



At the time, however, there was work to be done and Rotary, as the only existing service club, had to do it. Much of the work was related to the war, especially under the only two-term president in Club history, Albert Eisner Sr., whose tenure ran from June 1, 1917, to May 31, 1919. A major project was raising money for the Liberty Bond drives. After one particularly inspiring address in which Eisner warned that Champaign was in danger of failing to meet its allotment, the 65 members present pledged \$37,850 within five minutes and then went right on with the scheduled program. Despite Frank Clark's apprehensions about the absence of the "best prospects," those members present more than made up the difference.

Among other war-related activities, Rotary directed Champaign boys and girls in starting victory gardens, pushed Red Cross drives, voted \$500 to the United War Works campaign, named a committee to start a roll of Champaign County veterans, and contributed generously to mess funds of batteries overseas. A typical paragraph of a Rotary summary of activities read:

We gave \$300 to Battery F. Cooperated with the Chamber of Commerce in raising a \$1,000 Mess Fund for Company M and Battery B, giving \$200 to the Fund. We gave \$100 to the first Red Cross War Fund and \$50 to the second Red Cross War Fund. We furnished and installed the school safety signs at a cost of \$125, making a total of \$775.

Some other achievements were: 1st, we induced the City Commissioners to keep the water running in the West Side Park fountain; 2nd, we sent a committee to Rantoul in the interest of the first Liberty Bond Drive; 3rd, we conducted the only patriotic meeting in the city on the 4th of July, and paid all the expenses of same; 4th, we assured the success of the Hessel Boulevard project on the south edge of the city by selling during one afternoon 28 lots; 5th, assisted in putting over the second and third Liberty Bond campaigns.

Even after World War I ended, its effects were still reflected in Rotary activities. During the war, the Club had frequently invited U.S. and allied soldiers as guests; afterwards it cheered returned soldiers at meetings, endorsed public works to furnish veterans with jobs, and started a loan fund for returning soldiers unable to find work. It adopted two French war orphans, paying the bill by assessments levied against Club members on their birthdays, and collected more than \$4,000 in drives for European and Jewish relief funds.

The postwar period saw students returning en masse to the University of Illinois, and with that influx a serious housing shortage developed. This, too, became a Club priority. Members canvassed the whole city west of Neil Street, finding rooms for 325 students and temporary quarters for between 125 and 150 others.

Many of Champaign Rotary's early activities were different in nature from those it would soon take up. War emergencies requiring immediate response tended to predominate in the first years. The need to deal with crises would not altogether vanish with the signing of the Armistice, but the emphasis would shift to more long-term projects. Remarkably, the Club was able to begin some such projects even while WWI absorbed most of its energies, and many more were to follow.

To write about every community service activity in which Champaign Rotary has engaged throughout its history would be virtually impossible. This is not only because records are incomplete, but also because of the sheer number of projects. However, we include a good representation of those activities, since the measure of any service club is the sum and substance of its work.

Of course, groups of individuals do not accomplish good works without strong and energetic leadership. The following poetic tribute to one of Champaign Rotary's early leaders points up both



the quality of his leadership and the spirit of Champaign Rotary in its early years:

TO ALBERT EISNER

On the occasion of his reelection as president of the  
Champaign Rotary Club  
May 27, 1918

President Albert, won't you be good enough to let me have  
the floor;  
Doc Wuesteman can ring that clock of his if I turn out to be  
a bore;  
But I have a little message from the boys who sit 'round  
here,  
Which they think is kind of timely, so let me have your ear.  
It's just a simple message — and here's the gist thereof:  
To bring to your attention the affection—nay—the love  
In which they hold you, Albert—it can hardly be  
expressed—  
For of all the boys of Rotary, Albert Eisner is the best!

We think we have a classy bunch, there's Harris, Del, and  
Frank and Newt;  
Jake Kaufman is a live one, Charley Pearson is a beaut;  
There's Thomas Smith and Edward Scott, each one a  
crackerjack;  
There's A.M. Burke and Arthur Walls, there are no flies on  
Bilder's back;  
Ed Swigart is a man to tie to, you'll all agree, I guess;  
Doc Bennett's a handy man to have when comes a time of  
stress;  
There's Marcus Mead and Louis King who stays home now  
at night;  
There's Chet Brownell and Leslie Glenn, there's Adams and  
Jim White.  
And these are just a sample, there's no need to give the  
rest—  
For of all the boys of Rotary, Albert Eisner is the best!  
You have been our inspiration, Albert, your example has  
impressed  
Upon our minds the law of service, "He profits most who  
serves the best";  
You have taught us how to labor, not for one but each for  
all;  
You have marshalled us to answer when has come the  
nation's call;  
You have taught us love of country, we have seen your  
eyelids well  
When you've spoken of the boys who cross to stop that  
Prussian hell!

And I want to tell you, Albert, another year this night—  
 When, we hope, that war is ended—ended as it must  
 be—RIGHT—  
 We pray that rich in honor, safe and sound and glorified,  
 A certain young lieutenant will sit proudly by your side!  
 And as your son we'll gladly do him honor as our guest—  
 For of all the boys of Rotary, Albert Eisner is the best!  
 So here's looking at you, Albert, here's health to you and  
 yours;  
 Here's promise of a fruitful year, here's friendship that  
 endures;  
 Here's a pledge of faithful service from every mother's  
 son—  
 When Albert Eisner asks us, 'tis as good as it were done!  
 Now when you go to Kansas City, Albert, that's a big and  
 rapid town,  
 You might forget your name and address as you wander up  
 and down;  
 We want to say to Rotary, "This fine upstanding gent  
 Is Albert Eisner of Champaign, a damn good president!"  
 So when you go to Kansas City, wear THIS upon your  
 breast—  
 It indicates—of all the boys of Rotary, Albert Eisner is the  
 best!

—L.M. Tobin

Albert Eisner obviously led Champaign Rotary onto a fast track,  
 setting a high standard of achievement and service for future  
 generations of Champaign Rotarians—including four more  
 outstanding members named Eisner.



*Albert Eisner, the Club's only  
 2-term president—1917-1919*

*O. B. Dobbins,  
Club president—1927-28*



*C. D. "Chet" Brownell,  
Club president—1928-29*

*W. E. C. "Cass" Clifford,  
Club president—1930-31*



*C. M. Pearson,  
Club president—1938-39*

## PROGRAM

---

Invocation

Group Singing—Led by IRVING L. PETERSON

ROBERT EISNER, *Pianist*

"Such Business As There Is"

CHAS. BAILEY, *President*

Vocal Solo—Selected

BURTON C. HURD

Address—"David Kinley and Wider Horizons"

P. J. KOLB, *Past District Governor*

Vocal Solo—Selected

MRS. LLOYD MOREY

Address—"David Kinley As We Know Him"

O. B. DOBBINS

Response

DAVID KINLEY, *President of University of Illinois*

Benediction

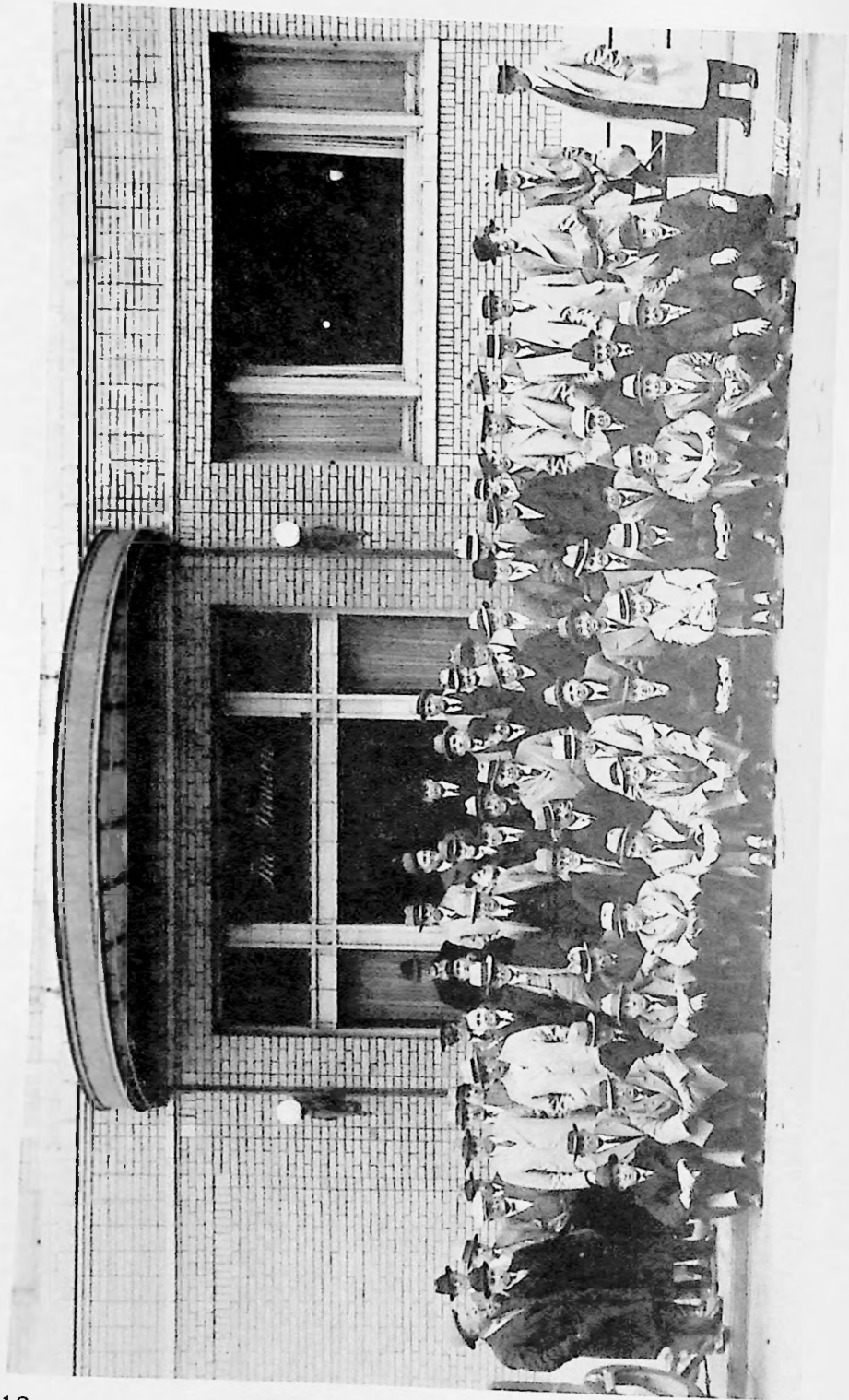
## DAVID KINLEY

*President of the University of Illinois*



*An honored citizen, a seasoned scholar, an efficient administrator, a beloved friend and loyal Rotarian.*

*Champaign Rotary Club Banquet, June 9, 1930*



*Champaign "Cosa Nostra" of 1930, outside Inman Hotel.*

## PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES: COMMUNITY SERVICE

Sometime in the 1950s, before he became Club president but during his service as editor of *The Fizz*, the Club bulletin, Dean McCumber coined the term "W.G.R.C." and applied it to Champaign Rotary. Noting that the Chicago *Tribune* called its radio station WGN (for "World's Greatest Newspaper"), McCumber suggested — partly in humorous hyperbole and partly in pride — that Champaign Rotary become "World's Greatest Rotary Club."

The epithet, tightened later to WGRC, lives on in the Club's consciousness, held out, if anything, as an incentive. The record indicates that, through providing financial support and the personal involvement of its members, Champaign Rotary has lived up to its WGRC billing — if not, perhaps, as the "world's greatest," at least as the first, and still the foremost, service club in the community.

The Club's general policy on community service has not been to adopt specific projects for long-term support. Rather, the Club has preferred to step in with seed money (sometimes substantial) to help worthy causes or organizations get off the ground. Support may continue at some level for a time thereafter, but it is not the Club's intent to provide all nor most of the funding for even the worthiest causes.

This policy has enabled Champaign Rotary to give life to many community dreams, to give them the impetus and the status to carry their efforts forward. In this way, Champaign Rotary spreads its resources over a wider spectrum of community service projects, while still reserving the option to jump in with major or repeated support to selected efforts or organizations.

It's appropriate to point out that financial support, while extremely important, is only one way that Rotarians serve their community. Equally important is the leadership that individual Rotarians have consistently provided as campaign leaders, founders, officers, and members of boards of directors. Examples of extraordinary leadership in this regard by Champaign Rotarians are simply too numerous to document, other than to include a



sprinkling of names as we examine projects and activities in which the Club has been significantly involved.

### COMMUNITY CHEST, UNITED FUND, AND UNITED WAY

As early as the 1920s, Champaign Rotarians saw that there were so many worthy local organizations in need of funding that citizens were hard-pressed to keep them straight. In 1923, Champaign Rotary helped launch an effort to gather the fundraising drives of many groups under one umbrella. Known as the Community Chest, this combined fundraising effort included such organizations as Family Welfare, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4-H Clubs, Well Baby Clinic, etc. Rotarian P.W. Wright was its first campaign chairman, and he was followed by 16 more Rotarians as chairmen through the Chest's first 30 years.

In 1953, in a drive separate from the Community Chest, Champaign Rotarians Ben Harris and Dwyer Murphy originated the United Health & Welfare drive to consolidate the solicitations being conducted by national health organizations such as the Heart Fund, the Cancer Fund, the Red Cross, and the March of Dimes.

In 1957, these two major fundraising activities were combined as the United Fund of Champaign County, which in turn became the United Way of Champaign County in 1971. In 1943-44, with Rotarians Rooney Stipes as chairman and Lyle Gallivan as executive director, the Community Chest raised a record \$148,330. This sum was not topped until the Community Chest and the United Health and Welfare combined to raise \$213,056 as the United Fund in 1957-58. Since then the annual goals have steadily and dramatically increased to a high of \$1,600,000 in 1987.

Through 1988 two dozen Champaign Rotarians have served the United Fund/Way as presidents or campaign chairmen. Champaign Rotarian Jack Coyle served as executive director from 1960 until 1977, then passed the reins to Rotarian Dave Lawrence. During Lawrence's 11-year tenure, annual goals grew by more than \$1 million.

The consolidation of many campaigns into one, due in large part to the persistence and leadership of individual Rotarians, was a push both for efficiency and for the right of public-spirited citizens to select the organizations most worthy of support and to shoulder that responsibility. Today United Way funding embraces the needs of 32 worthy organizations. Champaign Rotary's role in this major community effort is merely an extension of the Object of Rotary.

## HOSPITAL DRIVES

Apart from the Mattoon tornado response and World War I-related activities, the first recorded public service project of Champaign Rotary involved Burnham City Hospital. On October 14, 1918, the Club pledged \$400 to Burnham to assist in furnishing a new nurses home across the street from the Hospital. That contribution was a small forerunner of what was to come. In 1920, responding to a plea for a diagnostic laboratory and X-ray equipment, the Club contributed financial and leadership support to Burnham's public campaign to raise \$75,000. Over the years, Rotary has continued to help Burnham Hospital. For example, in 1950 the Club donated \$5,000 to a Burnham drive which was used to completely equip a room in the hospital's then-newest addition.

Nor has Champaign Rotary slighted Mercy Hospital. In 1960, Bob Eisner Jr. and Oscar Koehnemann co-chaired the fund drive for the first major addition to Mercy Hospital. Many of the division chairmen of this drive, which raised \$500,000, were Rotarians.

The major drives are noteworthy, but no more so than the less-publicized boosts that Rotary continues to give all community hospitals. One example is a \$5,000 donation in 1987 to Mercy to purchase 10 Lifeline units which are provided to needy persons in precarious health who live alone. The Lifeline units enable them to signal the Hospital for emergency assistance by pressing a button.

## BOY SCOUTS & GIRL SCOUTS

Of all the beneficiaries of Champaign Rotary's backing, the Scouting movement — particularly the Boy Scouts — is one of the most prominent. As early as 1919, when Scouting was just starting in this community, Rotarians were involved in getting it off the ground. The level of that involvement is reflected by this summary of newspaper stories from those early years:

June 3, 1919: B.F. Harris announced that the Club had subscribed \$950 for the local Scout movement, a 100% subscription.

July 8, 1920: W.E. Ernst asked for volunteers with cars to bring the Boy Scouts back from camp in two weeks.

July 2, 1921: Whit Wright asked for cars to take Scouts to camp.

March 6, 1922: Boy Scout movement given new impetus today when 200 Rotarians and Kiwanians met in a joint luncheon. Generous pledges wiped out the deficit of \$1,500.

October 22, 1923: A Girl Scout asked the Club for help in organization's fund drive.

February 9, 1925: Scout Ward Dillavou administered the Scout oath to members of the Club at the meeting devoted to boys and Scout work.

April 20, 1925: Scout Lester Leutwiler spoke about his trip to the International Scouting Jamboree in Copenhagen.<sup>1</sup>

June 2, 1926: Next Club meeting to be held at the Boy Scout Camp near Clinton. A special train will take the club.

"You may help turn a potential Dillinger into a Lincoln," declared *The Fizz* in urging contributions. In the 1920s the Club gave seed money to both Boy Scout and Girl Scout camps, and in 1933, the depression notwithstanding, Rotarians donated \$1,000 to help purchase the land for the Boy Scouts' Camp Drake. This camp was to become one of Champaign Rotary's major projects over the next several decades. The Club frequently funded maintenance and improvements, including the purchase of canoes and cabins, and helped fund the construction of considerably larger items such as a swimming pool, several rustic bridges, a winter cabin, and a clubhouse.

Rotary has regularly sponsored Scout troops and for a time made an annual pilgrimage to Camp Drake. Numerous Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts unable to afford camp have been sponsored by the Club, and Boy and Girl Scouts have often shown their gratitude by presenting programs at Club meetings. A sample of the affection with which Rotarians view Scouting is found in a 1945 *Fizz* which notes of a Club-sponsored troop: "Out of a membership of 29 fellows, only six have dads at home. By far the greatest percent of the dads are in the service. Does this give anyone any ideas?"

Apparently it did, and through the years many Rotarians have given their time and effort to serve as Scout leaders and as officers of the local Arrowhead Council. Boy Scout Executive Directors have also been Rotarians, including Fritz Freund in the 1970s and Ray Blackwell and Bob Rydell in the 1980s.

## OTHER YOUTH PROJECTS

Champaign Rotary has always emphasized activities benefiting youth, dating back at least to the Club's Father and Son Night on February 11, 1918. Several youth projects dealt with handicapped children. In 1923, for instance, money was raised to buy braces for crippled children. This project attracted the attention of *The*

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<sup>1</sup>Leutwiler later became the first Chief Illiniwek at the University of Illinois, and went on to become vice president of the Pet Milk Company.

*Rotarian*, the magazine of Rotary International, which cited it as a fine example of Rotary community service.

In the 1930s Champaign Rotarians provided some \$1,200 to purchase glasses for needy children. On the recommendations of a school nurse, doctors in the Club did the professional ophthalmology at no charge and serviced between 200 and 250 children. Champaign County later took over this project.



*Charles W. Bailey,  
Club president—1929–30*

When C.W. Bailey, Champaign Rotary president for 1929-30, reported on activities during his year in office at the 1930 District Convention, he focused entirely on youth work:

During the past year the Champaign Rotary Club has assisted, with the Urbana Rotary Club, in purchases for the Cunningham [Children's] Home. It has assisted in furnishing milk and crackers for some of our public school children, and it has been furnishing transportation for a crippled boy who attends one of our schools. At Christmastime the Champaign Club, with I.M. Bilderback as committee chairman, gave a Christmas party to the children of Champaign and also collected and distributed about 2,000 toys to the children. [Many of these toys had been broken, and were repaired by one interested Club member.] A.C. Gonsier, chairman of our boys' work committee, has had the parole of one boy from our city court for one year.

Late in 1938 *The Fizz* announced: "About 200 elementary school children in Champaign suffer from some form of speech defect — stammering, stuttering, etc." Part-time speech correction classes were necessary, but funding was not available. Champaign Rotarians furnished the funding for the start-up of such classes, and in 1939 an instructor from the UI speech department began teaching them. Rotary had to nurse the program through a rocky start; the

Champaign Board of Education took over funding a year after it began, but within another year had to drop it again for lack of money. The Club stepped back in, furnishing funding until the Board was able to sustain the program on a permanent basis.

Among the other youth projects undertaken prior to World War II were: sponsorship of an ice rink; sending boys to the Boys State Commission camp in Springfield, where they were tutored in government at the township, county, state and national levels; establishment of youth hostels; and support of a day care nursery for black children whose fathers and mothers were both employed.

Another project, according to *The Fizz* in 1938, called

for some Rotarians as individuals to offer their services to boys of high school age or thereabouts to advise them with regard to schooling, work, and the solution of some of their social problems as they are encountered. These boys are not delinquent young men but underprivileged in that they lack the availability of older men to advise them on the road to good citizenship.

This foreshadowed other programs, such as Vocational Service, Big Brothers, and Volunteers for Youth, that would in later years receive attention from Rotarians.

As this account was being prepared, it is interesting to note how history repeats itself. In 1980 Champaign Rotary made a donation for School Medical Screening. A few years later, the Club began sending hearing-impaired children to a special educational summer camp in Aspen, Colorado. And following a March 9, 1988, presentation by the assistant director of Cunningham Home, which still provides "an environment to physically, mentally and emotionally protect young people who have necessarily been removed from their natural homes," the Club by voice vote pledged funds for a needed diagnostic center at Cunningham. Money from two months' accumulation in the "early-leavers" and charity funds was earmarked for this cause.

The investment of time and money is not the only way Champaign Rotary serves youth. In an era which constantly focuses attention on the pejorative side of the news, outstanding young citizens deserve recognition for doing things right. Starting in the 1970s, the Club has made a practice of honoring "Students of the Month" from Central and Centennial high schools. Each month during the school year, three seniors from each school are introduced to the Club at a regular luncheon meeting. The students are selected by faculty as

outstanding in academics, athletics, or activities, and their achievements and aspirations are read aloud.

In short, what early emerged as a particular Rotary concern — our youth — remains so today and undoubtedly always will.

## THE YMCA

Upon his death in 1926, Senator William B. McKinley (who was an honorary Rotarian) left \$100,000 to build a YMCA in Champaign and another \$100,000 to endow it. The community was slow about building it, but the Club spent a good part of the next decade urging its construction. "This community," a 1934 *Fizz* pointed out during the throes of the depression, "will not be back to a healthy and prosperous state until men are at work — this means improvements in the building game and NEW BUILDING — men, women, boys and girls will have their part in the Modern Y Program."

The YMCA Board of Directors included many Rotarians, as did its membership committee. When the additional funds needed to buy a lot, construct a building, and equip it were raised in 1937, it is no surprise that Champaign Rotary played a big part in that drive. In recognition of its contributions, Rotary was invited to become the first service club to meet at the new YMCA building on September 19, 1938. And, when the Y undertook its first membership drive, Club members were also in the forefront of this campaign, which exceeded its goal.

It is interesting to recall the atmosphere that prevailed in those years. The Rev. A. Ray Cartlidge, Rotarian and chairman of the YMCA enrollment campaign, said in 1940 that many people, caught between the depression and an oncoming World War, "are in serious doubt about the future of civilization," and that its preservation could come "only through the development of individual character, spiritual strength, and bodily health."

*A. Ray Cartlidge,  
Club president—1945-46*



A positive force at any time, the Y was then especially encouraging to people who were apprehensive about what tomorrow might bring. When Rev. Cartlidge later reported that in its first two years the Y had served some 2,700 people (approximately three-fourths of them under 21 years old), but that its attendance in 1939 had totalled nearly 90,000 and was fast on the rise, many in the area took heart at the aid they could receive in molding their children into what Cartlidge called "splendid citizens for the future." Aside from helping with fund drives, Rotary purchased numerous memberships in the Y for needy children.

Rotarians continue to play lead roles in the progress and activities of the McKinley YMCA. Kyle Robeson headed a drive in the 1970s that raised substantial funds for facility upgrading, including a new pool. And as this history goes to press, Clarence Thompson, 1964-65 Club president, and Phyllis Robeson, Kyle's wife, are co-chairing the Y's largest-ever capital funds drive. The goal is \$750,000. And the last three Executive Directors of the Y have been Rotarians: Frank Burns beginning in 1957, Dick Knieriem from 1975, and Tom Feller since 1982.

### THE SALVATION ARMY AND CHRISTMAS COLLECTIONS

If any organization has received the continuous support of Champaign Rotary, it is the Salvation Army. The earliest record of a Rotary contribution goes back to a newspaper report on May 28, 1919, when E.S. Swigart announced that the Rotary team assisting the Salvation Army canvass had collected some \$2,000. Since then, the club has consistently helped out when prompted by items such as this good-natured reminder from a 1940 *Fizz*:

Look over your wardrobe, the basement, the attic, March 9th or 10th. Ask mamma whether it will be all right if you wrap up that old suit, coat, bathrobe, the sox you got for Christmas that are too small or too loud; take them to the office with you Monday, March 11th. The Salvation Army will be there. Or if the first enthusiasm of married life has worn off and you have never disposed of the double bed replaced by twin beds, the Army will send a truck; they will pick up anything — newspapers, magazines, coat-hangers, the old baby buggy — and put it to good use. Don't forget it.

Contributions have boosted a number of Salvation Army projects. Many have been youth-oriented: uniforms, tennis shoes, and equipment for boys' teams using the Salvation Army gym; instruments for the Salvation Army Youth Band. Others have been

more general in nature, such as clothing collections and the purchase of an organ.

Champaign Rotary's support of the Salvation Army is an outgrowth of earlier Christmas-oriented community projects, one of which involved contributions to the Family Welfare Society, known today as the Family Service Agency. From the early 1930s and into the 1950s, Margaret Tobin (wife of Rotarian Mike Tobin) was a fixture at the Rotary Christmas banquet, where she addressed the members on the value of their Family Welfare contributions. Rotarians furnished needy children with sweaters, dresses, coats, jackets, mittens, caps, pants, soap, toothbrushes, toothpaste, toys and books — items most people take for granted.

For the children, however, they made a great difference. Mrs. Tobin liked to describe the careful thought that went into distribution of the clothing, in particular. "It means for these boys and girls," she once said, "the difference between looking like the other children around them in school, and the hated feeling of wearing someone's cast-off clothing." As the functions of Mrs. Tobin's group were increasingly handled through the United Fund, Rotary's Christmastime focus shifted more to the Salvation Army.

Out of all its activities, Rotary may be most visible to the general public through its participation in the annual Salvation Army Christmas bell-ringing collections. On one Monday each December, Champaign Rotarians fan out across the city, standing on street corners outside stores and banks to accept donations for the needy. Ironically, there was a time when Rotary almost cancelled this activity.

In the late 1960s, Rotary's participation in the bell-ringing campaign began to falter. Its collections were falling off, and many members were avoiding it altogether. The 1968 Rotary Board debated the advisability of continuing "as it would appear this has become a drag on attendance and the Club is losing interest after a considerable period of participation." The decision was postponed until after the Club election. The new Board voted to continue and, while collections were low in 1969, they have since skyrocketed to a high of more than \$9,000 in 1986.

A major portion of the collections comes from checks and cash turned in at the regular meeting on bell-ringing day. Such spontaneous collections expanded through the 1960s and early 1970s thanks to Santa Claus, portrayed in full costume by 1951-52 Club President Bill Everitt. No member could refuse to give something when collared by Santa Claus. Apart from this, the Club continues



to field multiple teams whose members spend no less than an hour outside ringing bells in whatever wintry conditions the day presents.

The bell-ringing campaign has become something of a friendly contest between service clubs, as Champaign Rotary competes with other area Rotary clubs, Kiwanis, and Lions. WGRC invariably wins this contest, but the Salvation Army emerges the real winner. Recent coordinators of the effort have been Terry Davis, Bob Cochran, and John Elder.

At least the last five Salvation Army commanders have been Champaign Rotarians, dating to Brigadier Bill Kyle in the 1960s. He was followed by Major Ray Wert, Captain Ray Briggs, Captain Steve Hedgren and, beginning in 1987, Captain Ralph Bukiewicz. Meanwhile the Salvation Army Board has consistently enjoyed the leadership of Champaign Rotarians.

Some years ago Art Lewis headed a successful fund drive for the Community Center addition to the Salvation Army Church on Prospect Avenue. 1987 marked the launching of an \$800,000 capital drive to fund the acquisition and remodeling of a new Men's Center on University Avenue. Tod Dawson, 1984-85 Club president, was then serving as chairman of the Salvation Army Advisory Board, and John Elder served as campaign chairman. Rolland Kelley succeeded Tod as Advisory Board chairman in 1988.

## THE WORLD WAR II YEARS

"By a decree of the National Socialist Party in Germany," announced an October, 1937, *Fizz*, "all Rotary clubs in Germany are resigning from Rotary International and disbanding."

Though not a political advocacy organization, Rotary has never been popular with totalitarian governments. In 1938 Italy also abolished Rotary as "incompatible with fascism," and Imperial Japan followed in 1940 — a "clean sweep" of Rotary and its altruistic objectives by the Axis.

Rotary does not exist in the Soviet Union or anywhere else behind the Iron Curtain. For that matter, Spain's Generalissimo Franco also ordered a halt to service clubs in 1940, and it was only in 1977, following Franco's death, that Rotary returned to Madrid, where it had first taken root on the European continent.

At the onset of World War II, Rotary clubs, like most nations, tried to adopt a neutral stance. In September, 1939, the RI President stated:

We feel that Rotary clubs should not become involved in international politics, should not become propagandists for or against any cause of national or international concern . . . [nor] instruct their members as to what position they ought to take on controversial national and international subjects. Members should express their convictions not as Rotarians but as patriotic citizens. Rotary has an important role to play in a troubled world, just as the Red Cross has its role, and neither organization can step out of its role without endangering both its effectiveness and its existence.

Around the same time *The Fizz* reflected the isolationist mood of most of the country, commenting on one speaker's presentation by saying:

Prospects for our ultimate neutrality — the question biggest in most minds — were rather gloomily presented. May we add the thought that before we can hope to stay out, we must believe we can. If "eventually" becomes an accepted concept, "now" is simple.

Nevertheless, the Club became actively involved in war-related humanitarian activities. From 1939 through 1941 Champaign Rotarians donated to relief funds for war victims in such places as China, Finland, and Greece, and worked for such groups as the U.S. Committee for the Care of European Children.

Then came Pearl Harbor, and isolationism gave way to a new tone:

President Bill Lee has appointed D.C. Dobbins [Congressman and honorary Rotarian], chairman, Bert Eisner, and Nels Noble as a Defense Committee from our Club. They have been authorized by the directors to represent and act for the Club in any matter that may pertain to the cooperation and participation of the Club in the National Defense Program. Representatives of all civic organizations have been asked to meet December 16th, at the University YMCA, by the Civilian Defense Administration.

For the duration, as during its first two years, Champaign Rotary's activities focused on war work, although the Club continued to promote a number of projects unrelated to the war effort. One of the major home-front projects was the purchase of War Bonds, which members pursued with zeal; another entailed volunteer work every Monday evening, packing shipments of clothing to stricken areas overseas.

In addition, Champaign Rotary contributed a number of men from its ranks to the armed forces. Frequently a list of their names would be printed in *The Fizz*, and, as they fought overseas, their colleagues on the home front sent them morale-boosting letters, gifts, and special in-service editions of *The Fizz*. A typical in-service issue described a Ladies' Night at Rotary:

The Mural Room of the Tilden Hall took on a brighter appearance with the pastel Easter dresses. The speakers' table was in the usual spot, the tables were extended east and west across the room. The service was prompt — ham with sweet potatoes, green peas, lettuce and tomato salad (in a separate dish) and apple pie.

Toastmaster Cliff Northcott made many humorous comments, most directed to the ladies. "These beautiful women must have really been in love to change their names for these Rotarians." He defined the word courtship as "a man running after a woman until she catches him." He also told the story about the woman who went to the banker and said she wanted to buy some War Bonds. She told him she had saved some money for a divorce, but decided she could live with her husband better than with Hitler.

*Rev. H. C. Northcott,  
Club president—1931-32*



Thousands of miles from their homes and families, the men at war relished the chance to correspond with old friends. "With Eddie Jacquin's *News-Gazette*, *The Fizz* and letters, you would be surprised how well it's possible to keep close to all that you are doing on the home front," wrote then-Major Russell Cone, recipient of the Distinguished Flying Cross, on September 2, 1943. He went on:

In case you read the Keith Wheeler articles in the *Gazette*, he was riding with me on the trip in which he described a raid on Kiska. We liked the idea of having him along — not only because he was a swell fellow, but to let the folks at home know firsthand some of the problems we've had to contend with. It's been pretty tough, but we're out to do this job or else, no holds barred. If the plain unadulterated guts and smart headwork my boys have put out are any criterion, and I know they are, there can only be one eventual result and that favorable to us all.

I can tell you some firsthand generalities on the weather we've flown in. The day Wheeler was along was a perfect example. Normally we speak of ceilings on these missions in terms of tens of feet [above the surface] instead of hundreds or thousands. Several times my men have told me (afterwards) that they lost me visually but followed the wash of my propellers on the water.

Again I want to thank all the gang for their wonderful cards and letters. We *need* their moral support. At the end of a weary day, I get them out again and they pick me up.



*Russell A. Cone,  
Club president—1949-50*

Another Club member, Wally Mulliken, summed up the feelings of many a serviceman. From Australia on April 12, 1943, he wrote:

As I sit here in the tropical night writing I feel in a way that things in Champaign shouldn't be awfully far away — but they are. Just now the boys in my 3rd Platoon finished singing "God Bless America." Even the toughest of them have an awfully soft spot for home . . . I sure was glad to hear Russ Cone got home for a leave. I've got around twenty days accumulated leave stored up now, and if we can lick the enemy in short order, which I sincerely hope, I sure would love to indulge it by using it up in Champaign.

Fortunately, all of the Champaign Rotarians who fought in the Second World War returned alive.



*Wallace Mulliken  
Club president—1958-59*

*George E. Ramey,  
Club president—1939-40*



*Ray C. Sparks,  
Club president—1940-41*

*William H. "Bill" Lee,  
Club president—1941-42*



*Charles E. "Chilly" Bowen,  
Club president—1943-44*



## POST-WAR PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

### THE COSMOPOLITAN CLUB

In 1946 Harry Millard, 1923-24 Club president and one of the most energetic men ever to serve in Champaign Rotary, launched a campaign for statewide Rotary support of an international house for foreign students at the University of Illinois. The Cosmopolitan Club had existed for 32 years, serving as a center for the activities of international students from a wide variety of countries. But by 1946 the house in which it was based was old and dilapidated. Selling the old house would raise only some of the funding needed to purchase and furnish a new one.

Millard saw the project as a prime opportunity to put the words of Rotary's fourth Object—"the advancement of international understanding, goodwill and peace"—into practice. He began by soliciting backing from the Champaign and Urbana clubs; then he and Champaign's president, Ray Cartlidge, attended every Rotary district convention in Illinois to speak on behalf of the Cosmopolitan Club. This extraordinary effort raised the necessary money, and the new house was acquired.

That was not the end of Champaign Rotary's involvement with the Cosmopolitan Club. Again in 1969, to make way for construction of the Psychology Building, the international house was forced to move. It did so with the help of Rotary and individual Rotarians, among many others. And as recently as 1985, when higher attendance at international suppers combined with the wear and tear of time necessitated refurnishing, Rotarians contributed a variety of furniture.

The Cosmopolitan Club remains very active today. For most of its post-war history, its board of directors has included Rotarians, including Champaign's Tod Dawson, who at press time continued to serve as Cosmo's resource link to the community at large.

### SCHOLARSHIPS AND VOCATIONAL SERVICE

Beginning in 1956, Champaign Rotary has provided scholarships to local high school students for higher education in the Champaign vicinity. The first was granted to a Champaign High School senior



specifically for one year at the University of Illinois. Subsequently the emphasis shifted to scholarships for students enrolled in vocational programs.

The change came about in 1977, when the Rotary Youth Scholarship Committee noted that "there are few scholarships available for crafts and trade programs. Those that are available are sponsored by trade unions, and the typical recipients are children of trade union members."

Parkland Community College, under the leadership of its founding president, Champaign Rotarian William Staerkel, filled the vocational gap in higher education. The Club inaugurated the Fred H. Turner Vocational Scholarships, with a commitment to fund six in any given year.<sup>1</sup> Generally they are split between first-year and second-year students in Parkland's two-year associate degree programs, but during the years that the National Academy of Arts offered its vocational/professional program in Champaign, Rotary awarded scholarships to two of its deserving students.

The Club's Vocational Service Committee has at times offered young people practical experience in the working world. Individual efforts and occasional Club projects in this area have taken place since the early years of Champaign Rotary, but it was not until 1972 that the Club geared up for a more concentrated program.

"To many of us spawned in the Depression years," the Committee told Club members, "bread and butter matters overrode considerations of job satisfaction. But today, job satisfaction is equated with individual fulfillment and is deemed especially vital to young people. The need to know the total span of opportunity becomes crucial when viewed in this light and the frustration . . . derives in large measure from lack of knowledge concerning the societal needs which your profession or business fulfills. This is abundantly corroborated by career guidance counselors from all levels of education."

The Cooperative Vocational Guidance Program set out to provide counseling to Champaign's high school youth, and the Club enthusiastically embraced the project. More than 50 members made time in their schedules to lend a hand. Some gave hours of counseling to students in their business offices. Others spent parts of days letting youngsters shadow them while they worked, so they could see firsthand what particular vocations entail on a daily basis. Still others allowed students to work with them as assistants,

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<sup>1</sup>Readers will note that the scholarships memorialize the Club's dynamic president of 1932-33, whose name appears in several places in this chronicle.

sometimes with pay, other times without, but always with the opportunity to gain valuable experience.

This excellent vocational service program did not continue into the 1980s, but has been succeeded by another. Rotarians play a substantial role in Parkland College's Career Day. For an entire day and evening, business and professional people staff desks in Parkland Center, each desk representing a specific career or job field. Students from high schools throughout the Parkland district arrive by the busload to discuss career opportunities with people actively employed in a wide diversity of fields. Individuals of all ages who are contemplating vocational education also take advantage of this excellent chance to learn about the working world.

### VOLUNTEER ILLINI PROJECTS (VIP)

Of all the impressive programs Champaign Rotary has fostered or supported, VIP ranks near the top. It began in the early 1960s under the name of Illini House as a tutoring program. Some 50 UI students and some staff instructed potential high school dropouts—especially minorities, whose dropout rate was then receiving national attention—in basic reading, writing and arithmetic. For the first few years individual Rotarians supported the activity, and then the Club became VIP's principal backer. In 1965, in addition to a grant of \$1,500, Rotary helped VIP find and furnish a facility and paid the rent, too.

Practically overnight, VIP recruited more than 300 student volunteers and rapidly expanded into other areas. Today, between 800 and 1,000 students devote more than 60,000 hours a year to such activities as: working with the mentally retarded, the emotionally disturbed, and the developmentally handicapped; aiding teachers in daycare centers; serving as companions to children, recommended to VIP by social workers, and also to the elderly in nursing homes; collecting blood donations; corresponding with and visiting inmates of state correctional facilities; and conducting many other projects, including an expanded version of the original tutoring program.

VIP has won national acclaim and numerous awards. In 1983 VIP became one of 20 groups—out of 2,000 nominees nationwide—to receive a President's Volunteer Action Award. VIP was the only university organization so honored, and its leaders were invited to a White House luncheon with President Reagan.

Although no longer VIP's chief sponsor, Champaign Rotary has remained a supporter all the way. When VIP first incorporated as a non-profit organization, its five-member board included four

Rotarians. One of them, Chuck Petry, was described by Dean Gaylord Hatch, VIP faculty adviser, as the ramrod of the group's initial fundraising efforts. Succeeding Petry, Bill Everitt was for many years the program's most ardent promoter, frequently soliciting donations from individual Rotarians or the Club at large.

One of the Club's key contributions came in 1972-73 when Champaign and Urbana Rotary combined to deliver \$3,900 to VIP for the purchase of a 12-passenger bus. In subsequent years individual Rotarians gave money for the vehicle's gas and maintenance. When a replacement van was needed in 1977, WGRC provided \$1,500, and individual Rotarians contributed their time to the fundraising effort.

Through years that were troubled for many young Americans, VIP has always done a great deal to repudiate the notion that the present generation has gone astray. Against the background of student riots in 1970, the Lane Bryant Volunteer Awards Committee said it this way:

The citizens of this community witnessed a mass demonstration of student activism stemming from the campus of the University of Illinois. And they were delighted. This demonstration followed a unique protocol. Students turned out by the hundreds, but not to strike or picket. Their protest was against the ravages of despair and apathy. Their weapons: energy, sensitivity, and involvement. They poured into homes for the mentally retarded and the aged and into the community's poorer sections . . . VIP provides the essential link between the socially conscious student and the man, woman or child who awaits assistance.

Indeed, at a time when there was much talk of a generation gap, programs like VIP proved to be a link with youth for many of Rotary's older members. Two decades after VIP began, its large membership flies in the face of negative characterizations of today's younger generation. Its enthusiastic participants represent the finest examples of the types of citizens Rotary's youth work seeks to produce.

## **BOYS CLUB AND BIG BROTHERS**

While Rotary's focus on youth has always included groups such as Boy Scouts and 4-H, the 1960s and 1970s saw the Club's youth activities take on new dimensions. Rising levels of crime and delinquency spurred concern that youth activities ought to target

those young people whose backgrounds made them more likely candidates for getting into trouble with the law—if they hadn't already.

A 1968 *Fizz* noted that one survey had shown more than 700 local juveniles had been "in contact" with the police, including 331 repeat offenders. That had been a major inspiration for the Champaign-Urbana Don Moyer Boys Club, which opened in 1967 with 100 boys as members, "to provide positive activities instead of ones leading to crime."

Champaign Rotary's early support was substantial in both dollars and leadership. As the Club's directors noted after a \$1,000 gift in 1969: "This decision was made because the Boys Club is still in its fledgling period and our total membership appears to be very anxious for its complete success." The Boys Club programs were directed particularly at younger children, stressing not the rehabilitation of those already committing crimes, but rather the prevention of beginnings down that road. Early facilities included rooms for electronics, radio, weightlifting, arts and crafts, photography, woodworking, pool and other games; others have since been added. Rotary's ongoing contributions helped to purchase a Boys Club bus in 1973, among other items.

Rotarian Paul Kent was an important motivator behind the organization of the Boys Club, as were Rotarians Clarence Thompson and Hal Dawson. Rotarians have continuously served on the Boys Club board of directors, with the work of Carl Greenstein being particularly noteworthy. The first executive director of the Boys Club was Rotarian Dave Lawrence; when Dave moved to the United Way in 1977, he was succeeded by Rotarian Jim Forrest. In 1988 Champaign Rotarians joined Kiwanians in a special solicitation drive for the Boys Club.

Apart from the establishment of the Boys Club, concern over juvenile delinquency brought new attention to Big Brothers of America, a national organization chartered in 1946. "A fatherless boy encounters an adult male and realizes the kind of man he might want to be. This is a primary goal of Big Brothers of America," said the Champaign County Big Brothers Association in a 1972 statement of its mission.

A BBA branch was established in Champaign, with the assistance of groups such as Rotary. Committed to the support of many other programs, Champaign Rotary was unable to take on Big Brothers as a long-term project. Yet at the start, when Big Brothers needed substantial help to get off the ground, the Club was there. It raised

more than \$2,000 in 1972 and another \$1,200 the following year. In combination with donations from other clubs, that aid helped sustain Big Brothers of Champaign County until it was able to secure other support. This is typical of the way Champaign Rotary helps worthy organizations get started.

### THE CARROLL ADDITION COMMUNITY CENTER

The Community Center of the Carroll Addition exists partly because of Rotary contributions of time and resources. The Carroll Addition is an area of low-income families—many of Appalachian origins—located northeast of Urbana. Its social problems were described by the Community Center's Board of Trustees as "all too typical for an area of this type . . . low economic base, inadequate health care, high delinquency rate, numerous school dropouts, and limited recreational activities."

By 1972 a number of programs had already been lined up for the Center then under construction, including Boy and Girl Scouting, tutoring by VIP, after-school recreation programs, the County Health Nurse, Teen Club, Women's Auxiliary, 4-H, and family nights. A great deal of volunteer work had been done by Carroll's residents and by concerned citizens from the outside. Financial problems, however, had dogged the project and funding sources dried up before its completion.

Enter Champaign Rotary. As announced in the March 20, 1972, *Fizz*:

The Board of Directors has authorized a contribution of \$500 to the Carroll Addition Community Center. The Center is nearing completion, but there is a need for additional material in the amount of \$1,065, plus labor and expertise to complete the project.

The Board appointed Bernie Dunn to act as the Club's coordinator on the project and to solicit materials, labor and expertise from Club members. Bernie will list the types of labor expertise and materials needed in *The Fizz* and will then work with various Club members to get the job done. Urbana Rotary will share in this with us.

The materials needed ranged from concrete to food for workers, from plumbing to electrical wiring. By definition, Rotary includes men from a wide variety of occupations, and was ideally suited to respond. Barely two months after issuing a call to arms, Dunn announced the completion of the building. On May 29, a number of Champaign Rotarians had the pleasure of seeing the fruits of their

labor when they attended the open house of the Carroll Addition Community Center.

### THE FREE ENTERPRISE PROJECT

In 1976, Club President James Acheson appointed Dave Downey to head a new committee entitled Free Enterprise, with this charge: "Offer the students and faculty of the Champaign schools the expertise of members of our club on the Free Enterprise System."

*James S. Acheson,  
Club president—1976-77*



"Because of strange ideas being expounded in schools today about the magic of the marketplace, operation of a business and the nature of economics," Acheson and other Rotarians felt that an educational program was needed—for *teachers*. As UI Professor Larry Metcalf, long associated with the Joint Council for Economics Education, pointed out (summarized by *The Fizz*):

It is interesting that economics is usually not taught in high schools—except in more affluent areas and, even then, just in the senior year—but is lightly included in social studies courses, taught by those who have earned social science certification without ever having had to take an economics course.

Thus, the free enterprise system—a key to our way of life—and the interplay of government, education, business and labor, are largely unknown by those who are in the preparatory stage for assuming leadership roles.

The idea caught on and for the next several years many Champaign teachers attended classes (funded by the Joint Council) which were developed and taught largely by Champaign Rotarians. Prominent among those teachers were UI Professor of Economics Don Kemmerer, Bill Froom, Walt Lewis, Dick Foley, and Clarence Thompson. Lectures such as "The Economic Costs of Inflation" and "Money Management" typified the practical nature of the program. Rotarian Bill Staerkel provided classroom space at Parkland College.

The Free Enterprise Committee is actually a hybrid, starting off under Youth Service and later making its way to Vocational Service. While teachers were a key target, the Club's emphasis on youth never faded. Club members visited schools to speak on free-enterprise economics to children as young as fifth-graders. Moreover, the Club conducted essay contests, in which entrants wrote about specific visits to their classes by free enterprise speakers. For several years, winners of the annual essay contests read their winning essays to the WGRC membership at a regular club meeting.

As an example, here are excerpts from a 1983 winner, Liesa Benn, a senior at Champaign Central High School:

The free enterprise system views man as a pleasure-seeker and incorporates this idea into the work ethic. The work ethic encourages a person to work more than would be necessary to satisfy basic needs for survival. As a result, we develop savings which we re-invest, resulting in growth and a higher standard of living.

The private and public sectors work together to provide opportunity for man in the marketplace. Government encourages competition to prevent monopolies that would upset the market. Competition ensures fair wages, prices, and profits. This encourages businesses to be efficient and to produce better products at lower prices. Competition also protects the consumer from paying for necessities at horrendous prices.

Once we establish these two sectors in society, future growth is possible. Growth is achieved through productivity . . . [measured by] the number of units produced per unit of labor . . . Manipulation of land, labor, capital and management may provide for greater savings and increased profit. This, too, means growth.

Growth . . . is a prerequisite for additional personal freedom . . . The opportunity for Americans to achieve a higher standard of living is what the United States is all about.

Though less active in the late 1980s than in its first several years, the Free Enterprise Committee is still appointed annually. The charge has evolved to: "Communicate to the students and faculty of the Champaign schools the benefits of the free enterprise system and the importance of its preservation."

## INTERACT AND ROTARACT

Rotary International's long history of working with boys and girls

preceded its inauguration in 1962 of Interact, conceived by a committee of five Rotarians of different nationalities. Interact is actually a service club for young people of secondary-school age, who work under the guidance of a supervising Rotary club on a variety of community (and even international) projects.

In 1988 there were 5,567 Interact Clubs in 85 countries, and in 1978, thanks to the efforts of Rotarians Stu Clark and Dick Knieriem, Champaign Rotary became the first club in Rotary District 649 to establish an Interact Club. With the cooperation of principal Al Davis and Interact's first faculty sponsor, Rick Romero, Centennial High became the correspondent school. Jim Forrest served as WGRC's Interact chairman in 1981-83, and then Tom Cornell stepped in for the next four years.

*Tom Cornell  
Rotarian of the Year  
1985-86*



It was during Cornell's tenure that girl student leaders, members of the Senior Council, began helping Interactors with their projects. Cornell wanted to include the girls under the Interact banner, but Principal Davis thought it best to maintain a separation of powers, so to speak. Cornell then came up with the name Interserve for the participating girls. Stu Jenkins and Kate Foster became faculty sponsors of the companion clubs.

It's interesting that girl student leaders, fully as committed to the concept of service as boys, beat Rotary International to the punch in transcending the gender barrier. Though under two names, the two groups at Centennial functioned as one until 1988, when Davis agreed to Interact as the sole name for a unified group.

Interactors serve as advisers to incoming freshmen and assist with the orientation of foreign exchange students. They hold an annual chili supper to raise funds for a freshman dance and an annual dance-a-thon to raise money for the local Special Olympics. Each year, Rotary sends two Interactors to the Youth World Affairs Seminar in Whitewater, Wisconsin.

Since 1986 the Interactors have selected a teacher at Centennial to receive the Eugene H. Mellon Award. This award, named for the



long-time Unit 4 Schools Superintendent and Champaign Rotarian, recognizes teaching excellence.

At least once a year the Interactors (undoubtedly future service club members) are introduced to WGRC at a regular meeting, and their officers report on their activities.

Rotaract was organized by Rotary International in 1968 to bring the service club concept to older youth (ages 18–28), and more than 5,500 active chapters quickly sprang up in 112 countries around the world. It is in the United States, including District 649, that Rotaract lags. The exception, once again, is Champaign Rotary, which succeeded in establishing, in conjunction with Urbana Rotary, a Rotaract Club at the University of Illinois in 1985.

Rotarian Robin Herron, UI Dean of the College of Applied Life Sciences, got the ball rolling, and Gary Wackerlin took over the following year. Rotaract might be seen as a breeding ground for the next generation of Rotarians. But unlike the membership of a normal Rotary Club, or even an Interact Club, few members of the UI Rotaract Club have roots in the local community and so their Club lacks needed continuity.

Nevertheless, these young people embraced the concept of service. Projects undertaken included: reading for the blind; volunteering at the UI Rehabilitation-Education Center, as well as at local nursing homes where they helped patients with such tasks as writing Christmas cards; helping the Champaign Park District with cleanup and other projects; helping international students adjust to campus surroundings; and assisting with campus solicitation for PolioPlus, a major Rotary project (see page 59).

## JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT

1983–84 Club President Ron Kiddoo and President-Elect Tod Dawson appointed Gary Wackerlin to head a committee that would get a Junior Achievement program going at one of the two Champaign high schools. Junior Achievement is an independent activity begun in 1919 as a program to introduce young people to the free enterprise system through the hands-on experience of operating small companies. Today it serves more than one million young people in more than a thousand communities.

With the aid of his eventual successor, Kip Pope, and the characteristic cooperation of the School's administration, Wackerlin formed a Junior Achievement company at Centennial High in the spring of 1985. Pope later succeeded in introducing Junior Achievement at Central High, as well. As of the spring of 1988, few Rotary-sponsored youth projects were on sounder footing. The

companies have averaged 18 student participants, and the Centennial company boasted 36, including girls and minorities, in 1988. Based on the enthusiastic response of students and business faculty to Junior Achievement, Champaign Unit 4 School leaders have approved in concept the change of Junior Achievement to a daytime, in-school activity, and also its expansion to middle and grade schools.

Important support to Junior Achievement in terms of sponsors and dollars has come from several Rotarians through their firms: Rolland Kelley, Bank of Illinois; Al Anderson, Illinois Power; Joe Garrett, Colwell Systems, Inc.; and Bob Wallace, Champaign National Bank.

The enthusiastic acceptance of Junior Achievement in the two high schools is particularly gratifying to Champaign Rotary, in light of its commitment to find ways to convey to young people the advantages of the free enterprise system.

#### ROTARY HILL, WGRC, INC., AND ACTION AUCTION

The largest single community service project undertaken by Champaign Rotary in its first 60 years was the construction of the Rotary Hill picnic pavilion, completed in 1977. For many years, there had existed in Lake of the Woods Park, Mahomet, a spot known as Rotary Hill. This name dated back to 1957, when Lake of the Woods was first being developed.

There is no better place to mention the inspirational work of Rotarian Hi Gelvin, who during his terms as president of the Champaign County Forest Preserve District, almost single-handedly brought about the creation of Lake of the Woods, the county's finest multi-use park. In the process, he apparently received enough help from various Rotarians to motivate him to designate a wooded knoll, set well back from main park roads, as Rotary Hill. He placed a \$25 wooden sign on the spot, which was promptly forgotten by just about everyone.

For the next 20 years, Rotary's connection to the Hill existed only through that sign. The area was secluded, rough and undeveloped. But one Rotarian, Art Skelton, remembered and began to remind each new Club administration of the potential for community service at Rotary Hill. 1975-76 Club President Tom Morgan took enough interest in the site to schedule a Board of Directors meeting there to have a close-up look at the area. They concluded that Rotary Hill was the ideal project to arouse the interest and participation of the Club and the community.

For it was "a unique site," as Rotarian Harrison Phillips later said:

A heavily wooded peninsula extending into the golf course with natural prairie grasses and a single entrance road, it is an ideal spot for family reunions, open-air conferences, Rotary parties, company picnics, naturalist lectures, or a base camp for cross-country skiing. The Forest Preserve District has a great demand for these kinds of activities; they need Rotary Hill developed.

But it was to take time. Architecture Professor Walt Lewis, a member of WGRC's Project Planning Committee, asked his class to design a picnic ground for the area, including a pavilion. In late 1975 the student projects were displayed at a regular Club luncheon meeting. The displays evoked great excitement and, though no single design was accepted in all its aspects, the Board had received the impetus it needed to vote \$15,000 for construction materials for the Rotary Hill Pavilion (\$5,000 per year for three years). The Forest Preserve District would provide the labor.

Harrison Phillips, in the first year of his 1976-80 tenure as chairman of the Rotary Hill Committee, said: "The Rotary Hill project is local, real, and tangible. It will promote human fellowship and Rotary's identity." True, but a financial commitment of this size threatened to occlude the Club's support of all other projects, large and small. The only solution was to mount an unprecedented fundraising effort. But in what form?

*Harrison Phillips*  
*Rotary Hill chairman*

[Photo courtesy of The News-Gazette]



Bill Kuhne provided the idea—an auction—and 1976-77 Club President Jim Acheson appointed Don Moyer Jr. to run the Club's first "Action Auction," to be held on June 4, 1977. The goal was to raise \$15,000 for Rotary Hill, and Moyer's 10-man Acquisitions Committee acquired donated items to auction with a total value well beyond that. The question: Would anyone actually bid for them?

It's worth listing some of the 67 auction items (55 donated by club

members) that were creatively described in that first Action Auction catalog:

- \*Parties — A Champagne Breakfast for 20; a New England Lobster and Clambake; a Cocktail Buffet for 24; and a Cocktail & Hors d'Oeuvres party for 200 guests staged at the purchaser's home by 14 young Rotarians and their wives.
- \*Real Estate — Use of a cottage at Lake of the Woods, Ontario; use of condos at Vero Beach, Lake Tahoe, Tarpon Springs or Breckenridge; a week at a resort in Durango; plus yours to buy—a 10-acre tract of timberland in Michigan.
- \*Rides — From the sublime to the ridiculous: in Garcia's Flying Tomato balloon, or on a Ringling Bros. elephant from the circus train's railhead to the Assembly Hall.
- \*Commodities — A freezer full of beef, a whole hog butchered and packaged, Smithfield hams, and \$500 worth of Illinois grain to trade or hold.
- \*Services — From a quail hunt to piano lessons; from a new deck to a new driveway or fireplace; from dry cleaning to an eye exam and glasses; from tax service to a commission-less real estate transaction; to TV and radio advertising.
- \*Travel — Trips to Stanford for the UI football game, to Busch Stadium (a box) to see the Cardinals; 300 miles anywhere in your own chartered bus; or a six-person golf weekend at Point of Woods, complete with meals, green fees, and hospitality room.
- \*Products — Antiques, art and crystal, jewelry, a shopping spree, and others too numerous to mention.

When the bidding came to an end that fine June evening in 1977, the Action Auction revenues totalled an unbelievable \$32,000. That

covered not only the entire cost of the pavilion, but also several other projects, including the first three of what became the Fred H. Turner Vocational Scholarships—these to Parkland College, Illinois Commercial College, and the National Academy of Arts.

Needless to say, this inaugural Action Auction set the precedent for what became a regular Club event, held every third year. The first four Action Auctions all attained revenues of \$30,000-plus, comprising the major portion of funding available for all Rotary projects.



*Forest Preserve Director Ron Pennock and keynote speaker David D. Henry at dedication of Rotary Hill Pavilion.*



*Rotary Hill Pavilion from Southeast.*



*Bronze plate at Rotary Hill Pavilion.*



*1977-78 Club President Frank Keck speaks at dedication ceremony of Rotary Hill Pavilion.*

The sudden infusion of this amount of money might have had tax ramifications but, as though in anticipation of a dramatic increase in project monies, the Club had formed its own non-profit foundation in October, 1976.

WGRC, Inc. was established to receive and administer tax-exempt contributions under section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code. Its members are the Club members, but its Board of Directors, which normally includes several former Club presidents, is elected and operates independently of the Club Board.

Major project funding thus undergoes a three-tiered examination. The Project Planning Committee makes prioritized recommendations to the Club Board of Directors, which makes its award decisions. Those awards must then be approved by WGRC, Inc. before funds are dispensed.

The sum of all these related events elevated the Club to a new plateau in community service. The Board and its standing Project Planning Committee, able to forecast revenues based on the Action Auction and growing individual donations because of WGRC, Inc., could now look beyond the current year's budget. Previously, any expenditures of more than several hundred dollars required a special appeal to the Club. Now the Committee could consider more and larger potential projects in much greater detail and could operate on a more business-like basis.

With the funds raised, Don Moyer Jr., now chairman of a special Rotary Hill Board, got things moving. Four months later, on Sunday, October 16, 1977, a dedication ceremony took place at the completed, 3,000 square-foot Rotary Hill Pavilion. Among those making remarks was David Dodds Henry, University of Illinois President Emeritus and honorary Rotarian. A time capsule was sealed—not to be opened until 2077 by the Champaign Rotary president. It included a record of Club activities in 1977, newspapers, magazines, and photographs.

*Don Moyer, Jr.  
Club president—1978-79*



Also included were letters of greeting from District 649 Governor Herbert Heaton—a Champaign Rotarian, appropriately enough—and from Club President Frank Keck. The contents of the capsule, noted Club Historian Oscar Dodson, would be read in the next century "with keen interest by citizens of Illinois and with deep emotion by the great-grandchildren of members of Champaign Rotary."

At the Rotary District 649 Conference in Normal that year, the Rotary Hill project won top honors in the community project competition. Rotary has continued its involvement with Rotary Hill, funding such improvements as playground equipment, and holding its annual Rotary Corn Roast at the site. More importantly, in the 10 years since the Pavilion opened, more than 50,000 area citizens have made use of its facilities.

It is nothing short of remarkable, when we consider the pleasure brought by the pavilion, the enthusiasm its construction inspired among Rotarians, and the great new source of project funding spawned by the auction, to remember that it all started with the vision of Hi Gelvin, and one small \$25 sign bearing the name of Rotary.

## THE DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES CENTER (DSC)

Because it became the largest single WGRC community investment, one final project merits special mention: the Rotary Vocational Service Building at the Developmental Services Center. DSC provides vocational training and employment for developmentally disabled individuals in Champaign and Ford Counties. In 1986 it was serving more than 1,000 clients annually; about 350 were pre-school children, and the rest were educable adults. DSC's goal is to make its clients as independent as possible—to make them "tax payers rather than tax receivers." To that end, DSC clients learn and pursue such skills as printing, packaging, janitorial services, and concrete-product fabrication.

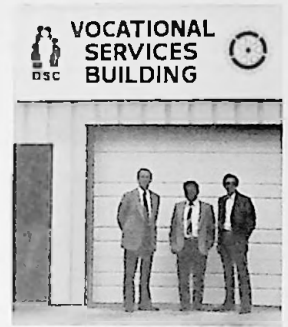
DSC's support comes from state, federal and private sources. With federal funding diminishing due to automatic cuts mandated by the Gramm-Rudman Bill, DSC looked to other possible sources of funds to expand their facility and, thereby, their client capacity. Rotarians serving on the DSC board of directors submitted the remodeling of a garage on the premises to a training/operations facility as a possible community project for Champaign Rotary. After extensive WGRC committee review, the DSC project was selected as the major focus of the 1986 Action Auction.

Anticipating another \$30,000 success at the Auction, 1985-86 Club President Leonard Flynn committed that amount, not to remodel the



old garage, but to build in its place an entirely new building which could be adapted to a variety of vocational training missions. In turn, DSC agreed to come up with the balance of funds needed for the expanded project.

*Standing outside new Rotary  
Vocational Services Building at  
Developmental Services Center: 1985-86  
President Len Flynn, 1986-87 President  
Ken Gunji, Project Planning Committee  
Chairman Bill Brunkow.*



The Auction succeeded, and a new building now faces Bradley Avenue bearing the Rotary Wheel emblem and the words, Vocational Services Building. It was initially used for hand-cleaning and detailing of automobiles for both local dealers and private individuals. After several DSC clients were trained and placed in regular jobs of this nature, the building was converted for training clients in assembly-line work in cooperation with Kraft-Humko training programs.

In 1988, Dale Morrissey, DSC's Executive Director, became a member of Champaign Rotary.

#### OTHER SERVICE PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

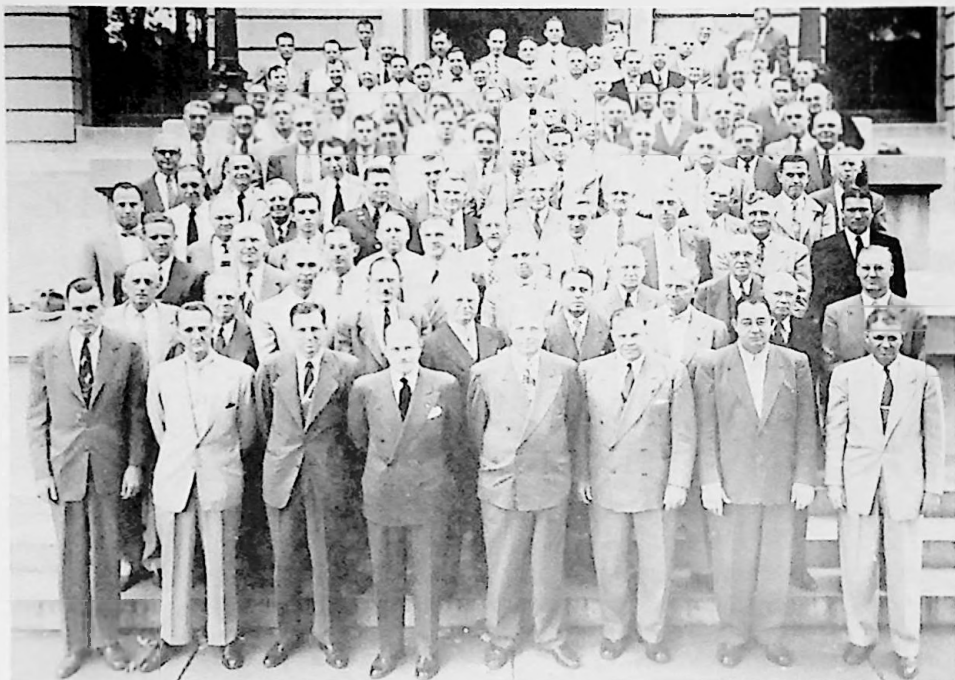
The preceding overview of Champaign Rotary's projects obviously omits many, some of which have been significant. For example, another project Champaign Rotary did solely on its own was to construct, at a cost of \$1,500, a two-mile physical fitness trail in Centennial Park with 20 exercise stations. And Club members dependably throw their support to worthy projects of other organizations, such as the annual bike-a-thon staged by Champaign West Rotary on behalf of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, Memphis, Tennessee.

To catalogue all the Club's activities is infeasible, both because of the sheer volume of them and because of inadequate records. Some are simply difficult to categorize, such as the fire engine Champaign Rotary bought for the city in the 1920s, or iron lung funding in the days that polio afflicted our young people, or the generous support always forthcoming in response to epidemics and natural disasters that strike people in all parts of the world.

It seems appropriate, however, to list—arbitrarily and with no attempt at completeness—some of the organizations and projects not mentioned elsewhere which the Club has in some way helped:

- AFROTC children's basketball clinic
- Arbor Day tree planting
- Boneyard Creek improvement
- Champaign 4th of July Freedom Celebration
- C-U Symphony Children's Program
- Champaign-Urbana Youth Council
- Christie Clinic PACT (Parents & Children Together)
- Circus tickets for County Nursing Home residents
- Council for Interracial Projects
- Courteous Driving Campaign
- Downtown Senior Citizens Center—pottery kiln
- Goodwill Industries
- Illini Glee Club ("Singing Illini") good will tour to Belgium and Switzerland
- Jerry Traylor (cerebral palsy victim running cross-country to fund recreation for elderly and handicapped)
- Meals on Wheels
- National Academy of Arts
- Operation Snowball (teen drug counseling and support)
- Proposed parking and traffic solutions
- Tot-Lot Nursery School
- UI Black Chorus
- UI Gizz Kids (wheelchair athletics)
- Urban League
- USO
- Wilber Mansion—Champaign County Historical Society
- Willard Airport Beautification Project
- William M. Staerkel Planetarium at Parkland College

To glance over such a list begs the question: what would the local community be like without the work of Champaign Rotarians? But to ask the question is to realize how fortunate it is that it need not be answered.



Club picture of October 2, 1950, on steps of Masonic Temple.

First row, left to right: Club Directors Cannon, Thompson, C.A., and Mulliken, President Harris, B.F. III, Vice President Everitt, Secretary Daniel, Treasurer Hodges, Director White.

Second row: Past Presidents King, Millard, Peterson, Turner, F.H., Kiler, Jacquin, Ramey, G.E., McClure, Carledge.

Third row: Past Presidents Amsbary, Hagan, Sullivan and Cone; Stouffer, Riley, Morrissey.

Fourth row: Murphy, F.D., Jr., Murphy, F.D., Sr., Pope, Beaty, Dallenbach, Koehnemann, Tuxhorn, Robb, Healy.

Fifth row: Hunt, Burvash, Hatch, Andrews, Gallivan, Jorgensen, Skelton, M.B., Weller.

Sixth row: Thomas, Nogel, Karher, Cunningham, Peach, Willis, Harris, N.M.

Seventh row: Bresee, H.R., Mellon, Whetzel, Peck, Wise, Kuhne, C.F., Graham, Burke.

Eighth row: McConnell, Wiese, Hecker, Bacon, Dickerson, Knappenberger, Huxtable.

Ninth row: Ford, Price, Vance, Bash, Lewis, A., Grindley, Noble, Davis, Delbridge, Higgins.

Row 9½ center: Strong, Thomasson, Dillavou, Campbell.

Tenth row: Kelley, S., Parkhill, T.D., Mills, Dawson, Julian, Skelton, A., Clegg, Kent, McClelland.

Eleventh row: Eisner, R., Jr., Greenstein, Rice, Ryder, Chester, Bryan, Murphy, L.W.

Twelfth row: O'Neil, Overshiner, Hansen, Hudelson, Legg, Nelson, Bresee, P.D., Eisner, A.

Top row: Brownell, Younger, McCumber, Petry, C.A., Sr., Gillingham.

THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS WERE ABSENT WHEN THE PICTURE WAS TAKEN:

Atkinson, Boulware, Bowen, Bunn, Capel, Clifford, Colwell, Corcoran, Corazza, Davis, W.C., Eisner, R., Ekbohm, Fletcher, Gelvin, H.E., Gelvin, P.D., Gristner, Harding, Heffernan, Hindsley, Hudson, Hurd, Johnson, Kelley, R.L., Kemmerer, Kuhne, R., Lewis, H., McCarthy, Magdsick, Mayes, Meaney, Mittendorf, Monier, Parkhill, W., Peterman, Petry, C.A., Jr., Powell, Ramey, F., Reed, Shapland, Shaver, Stipes, Thompson, E., Turner, I., Vincent.



*Club Board 1954: seated from left: Vice-President Les Bryan, President Slew Daniels, Secretary Morry Hecker; standing from left: Directors Art Skelton, Dean McCumber, Phil Gelvin.*



## INTERNATIONAL SERVICE PROJECTS— THE ROTARY FOUNDATION

It is impossible to follow Rotarians along the Avenue of International Service without knowing about The Rotary Foundation, established in 1947 with this objective:

The furthering of understanding and friendly relations between people of different nations through the fostering of tangible and effective projects of a philanthropic, charitable, educational, or other eleemosynary nature.

Rotarians participate in international service by being donors to The Rotary Foundation, and by involving themselves in the Foundation's major activities and programs: Scholarships for a year of study abroad, Group Study Exchange, Special Grants, and the 3-H Program (Health, Hunger and Humanity).

To encourage contributions to the Foundation, Rotary International promulgated a formula for measuring club participation: any club which has contributed \$10 per member to the Foundation earns "100% club" status. To clubs which had always concentrated on community-based programs, that first 100% level was the hardest to attain. But thanks to the persistence of Club president Bob Eisner Sr., Champaign Rotary had the distinction of becoming the first Rotary club in the world to attain the 100% plateau, delivering a \$1,130 check to the Foundation on April 2, 1945.

*Robert Eisner, Sr.,  
Club president—1944-45*



It is interesting that, among the many WGRC Rotary Foundation Committee chairmen, Bob Eisner Jr. served with special distinction in 1977–80, and Robert Eisner III has done likewise since 1985. The fact that three succeeding generations of Eisners have distinguished themselves as Champaign Rotarians would be particularly gratifying to Albert Eisner Sr.

Contributions to the Foundation built slowly until 1957, when a new individual recognition program really got the ball rolling. Anyone—Rotarian or otherwise—who contributes \$1,000 to the Foundation is designated a Paul Harris Fellow. Entering the 1988–89 Rotary year, Champaign Rotary proudly boasted 152 Paul Harris Fellows, including friends and relatives of Rotarians. The Club also had 136 Paul Harris Sustaining Members—people who had contributed at least \$100 toward their declared \$1,000 goal.

As this history went to press, Champaign Rotary was an 8900% member of the Foundation, and that based on more than twice as many members as in 1945. When the Club attains the 10,000% plateau, that will represent total contributions to the Foundation equivalent to \$1,000 for each member. At that time, while not every member will be a Paul Harris Fellow, each will be part of a remarkable Paul Harris “fellowship.”

The Club’s donations to the Rotary Foundation, now well into six figures, go to support Rotary’s international service activities. Consider that Champaign Rotary’s Foundation support, substantial though it is, has been matched or exceeded by many Rotary Clubs throughout the world, particularly those in Japan. Through the Rotary Foundation, then, Rotarians have truly become a worldwide community dedicated to service—a major force for the good of mankind.

International Service has a dual mission. Through its Rotary Scholars and Group Study Exchange teams, Rotary builds two-way bridges of understanding throughout the world. Scholarship recipients are the very top young people, the future leaders of their nations, who act as cultural ambassadors while learning about their host countries. In the Scholarship and GSE programs, as well as in other exchanges fostered but not funded by Rotary, *people* are the focus.

In contrast, although it takes the volunteered services of many people, *money* is the key in Rotary’s Special Grants and in its 3-H Program. Already the Foundation’s accomplishments in alleviating human suffering and improving the quality of life are significant, but the plans from now into the next century are wonderful to contemplate. Rotarians reading this history in 2005, for example,

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should be able to look back with pride and satisfaction over the part they, as individuals and as members of Champaign Rotary, have played in some marvelous good works throughout the world.

Not the least of these achievements will be PolioPlus.

## POLIOPLUS

1978 was a landmark year in terms of the 3-H Program. Enjoying an influx of special donations tied to the upcoming 75th Anniversary of Rotary (1980), the Foundation urged the RI Board of Directors to involve Rotary in the World Health Organization's program to immunize the world's children against the six major childhood diseases: polio, measles, whooping cough, diphtheria, tuberculosis, and tetanus.

But by 1982, the Foundation Board saw that the resources of 3-H were small in comparison to the need; only 10 percent of the developing world's children had been immunized against the worst killer andcrippler, polio. The Foundation launched "Polio 2005," a crusade to eradicate polio by the year of Rotary's 100th anniversary. The long-term plan involved purchasing vaccines, providing refrigerators and other "cold chain" facilities, and organizing teams of experts and Rotarians to plan and carry out national immunization programs. But soon even this plan was reevaluated. If money could be raised, why stretch the campaign out to 2005?

And thus, in 1985, came PolioPlus: the Foundation's commitment to raise \$120 million in just *five years*. This sum was calculated to be that needed to protect all newborn children in the world by administering three doses of oral vaccine (cost: four cents per dose) in their first year of life. Never before had Rotary International asked its clubs to raise a specific amount of money—by any means—and the RF took two more years to gear up for this unprecedented effort.

Walter Maddocks, a past Rotary district governor in Great Britain now living in Kentucky, agreed to direct the international campaign. The 1987–88 Rotary year was selected as "the year" when the clubs would be asked to raise the entire amount in cash or pledges. To serve as examples to clubs around the world, Maddocks and his campaign organization selected 10 "Model Clubs" to conduct their campaigns in early 1987.

Enter Champaign Rotary. Out of the blue, Champaign was one of those chosen from among 22,576 Rotary clubs to be a Model Club. It was handed a goal of \$120,000—.1% of Rotary's total goal.



Champaign Rotary doesn't back away from challenges, but this was a tall order. Never before had the Club individually solicited its members. Furthermore, the timing was bad; the United Way drive was just concluded, and several other major capital campaigns were about to begin—headed, of course, by Champaign Rotarians.

Club President Ken Gunji asked Scott Anderson, 1963–64 Club president, to head WGRC's Model Club PolioPlus drive. Anderson quickly organized a committee and addressed the Club. "Will we be WGRC, ha-ha? Or will we be WGRC—you betcha!?" he challenged. Anderson translated the dollar goal into human terms. "We're not out to win laurels," he said, "we're immunizing children. \$120,000 will immunize one million children." And then he added: "That's our official goal. But my *personal* goal for this club is \$160,000."



*Scott Anderson  
addresses 1978  
District Conference*

The audience visibly swooned. There were grumblings, excuses, criticisms. But the drive received a boost when Anderson got Walter Maddocks to address the Club. "I was asked to give up five years of my life for PolioPlus," Maddocks said, "and I didn't want to. But in the end my wife helped me out. 'This is too important,' she said, 'to say no.'"

The show opened locally without benefit of a dress rehearsal. A couple of actors withdrew, others were out of town. "What do you think?" the fundraising consultant privately asked Anderson's committee. "Can you guys raise \$120,000?" The answer came without hesitation: "This Club has never fallen short of any goal it sets for itself."

Nor did it this time. Within weeks, Champaign Rotarians achieved their goal. Not the Foundation's \$120,000—Scott Anderson's \$160,000. There were small pledges and there were large ones, but one Rotarian and his wife merit special mention. To help leverage the drive to its goal, Dick and Anne Tryon pledged to match each \$4



*Dick and Anne Tryon*



donated with \$1 of their own—up to \$25,000. This extraordinary challenge set the tone, and before long, the Tryons were gratified to fill out their pledge for the full \$25,000.

PolioPlus was a remarkable example of how Champaign Rotary takes "Service Above Self" beyond the sphere of its own community. As a May, 1987, *Fizz* put it: "They'll never shake our hands or congratulate WGRC, but somewhere 1,250,000 children will be grateful."

That estimate was low. As of June, 1988, WGRC's PolioPlus drive had passed \$200,000. The Club can always be proud that their officers and a great many individual members saw the Model Club mantle not as an incoming mortar round to be ducked, but as an honor and a challenge to measure up to. WGRC's dedication to international and world community service through the Rotary Foundation means more than 1,750,000 children will grow up free from the ravages of polio.<sup>1</sup>

## ROTARY SCHOLARS

Aside from its classification system for membership, one of the signal distinctions of Rotary is the extraordinary breadth of its international programs. Its Scholarship program considerably exceeds the Rhodes Scholarships, for example, both in numbers of scholars and in the diversity of countries in which they study. Rotary sends abroad not only outstanding graduate students, but also teachers of the handicapped, aspiring journalists, and vocational and secondary school teachers. Awardees invariably emerge from their experiences with new respect for Rotary, both at home and abroad.

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<sup>1</sup>In a moving ceremony at the June, 1988, Rotary International Convention in Philadelphia, Walter Maddocks announced that PolioPlus contributions worldwide had reached not \$120 million, but \$220 million—\$119 million from the United States alone.

Each year, based on their annual contributions to the Rotary Foundation, Rotary districts qualify to select candidates for scholarships. Several applicants sponsored by Champaign Rotary have been chosen by the district screening committee, and have gone to such places as Germany, Italy, Israel and England.

In 1949-50, Champaign-sponsored Howard Shuman spent a year in England at Oxford University. While there, he became only the third American to be elected to the Oxford Union, training ground for members of Parliament. *Time* magazine commented:

Oxford had never seen anything quite like Shuman . . . never had it seen anyone rise in debate garbed in an American lumberman's jacket and red baseball cap and self-billed as "the original public schoolboy"—from the schools of Morrison, Ill.

While at Oxford, Shuman debated British Prime Minister Clement Attlee and also French Prime Minister Georges Bidault. He finished his degree at Oxford and later became an administrative assistant, first to U.S. Senator Paul Douglas of Illinois, and then to Senator William Proxmire of Wisconsin. While working for Proxmire, Shuman selected the recipients of the Senator's famous "Golden Fleece" awards for misuses of taxpayers' money.

Rotary Scholars may not, by rule, be related to Rotarians, but Howard Shuman was certainly an unofficial offspring of Champaign Rotary. He attended Morrison High School under future Champaign Rotarians Gene Mellon and Bob Wright, and took English from a



*Don L. Kemmerer,  
Club president—1952-53*

teacher named Mary who became Mrs. Bob Wright. And at the U of I, he was a graduate student under 1952-53 Club President Don Kemmerer.

The international stature of the University of Illinois attracts many Rotary Scholars from abroad. In an average year, Champaign and Urbana Rotarians serve as counselors to five or more (12 in

1987-88) of these international students. The students, who come from literally dozens of countries, stay on campus and their expenses are paid by the Foundation; but counselors are their surrogate parents and include them in club meetings and other events whenever possible.

### GROUP STUDY EXCHANGE

GSE is a reciprocal exchange of teams between Rotary districts. If District 649 sends a team to Austria (as in 1988), the following year an Austrian team will return the visit. Since in many ways Champaign-Urbana is the hub of District 649, the visiting teams always spend several days in the community, stay at Rotarian homes, and make a presentation about their country to a regular Club meeting.

Like Rotary Scholars, members of Group Study Exchange Teams cannot be Rotarians or relatives of Rotarians. The team leader, however, is a Rotarian selected by the district governor. Champaign Rotary has provided two GSE leaders: Tod Dawson led the 1974 team to District 255 in Australia, and Ken Gunji led the 1984 team to District 258 in Japan.

*Thomas O. "Tod" Dawson,  
Club president—1984-85*



### INTERNATIONAL YOUTH EXCHANGE

Another activity which scatters young people about the globe is International Youth Exchange (IYE). This is not strictly a Foundation activity because Rotary provides only the vehicle, not the funding. This program involves the exchange of young people (mostly of high school age) between countries essentially on a district-to-district basis. The exchange can be of individuals or groups of students, for a full school year or for periods of two to several weeks. Travel and maintenance costs are paid by parents, but the receiving district must provide host families for each young person. While abroad the students live as members of their host families, attending school where the exchange is sufficiently lengthy.

International Youth Exchange began in 1939, and WGRC hosted an occasional student from abroad in the 1960s; but as late as 1973, District 649 was little involved. That year, thanks to the adventurous spirit of 16-year-old Phyllis Perkins, Champaign Rotary exported its



*Typically heterogeneous group of IYE students—"outbounds," "inbounds," and "rebounds"—at district conference in mid-1970s. At left in checkerboard slacks: Champaign's Phyl Perkins.*

first-ever school-year youth exchange "guinea pig"—to Australia. There was no functioning exchange mechanism at either district or regional level, so Club member Peter Tomaras arranged the exchange on a club-to-club basis through personal correspondence.

The next January, Peter Robson of Lithgow, Australia, began his reciprocal year in Champaign. Soon after, the Champaign Club sent three young ladies to Brazil for a vacation-period exchange and, by the late 1970s, District 649 had established the most active district IYE program in the country, with 400 outbounders in 1988 alone. Many hundreds of local young people have expanded geographical and cultural horizons as guests in Rotary homes in Australia, Argentina, Brazil, Denmark, Finland, France, Italy and Mexico.

### SISTER CLUB PROGRAM

Yet another form of international exchange is club-to-club through the voluntary Sister Club program. At the suggestion of Kimiko Gunji, wife of Rotarian Ken, Champaign Rotary established a Sister Club relationship with the Rotary club of Yanai, Japan, Kimiko's hometown. The first Champaign Rotarian to visit the Yanai Club was none other than Scott Anderson (yes, he of PolioPlus). Yanai is a

small city in Yamaguchi Prefecture on the Inland Sea in Western Honshu. Since none of Yanai's 50 Rotarians spoke English, a Rotary scholar from Japan gave Scott an intensive briefing in Japanese before he departed.

Communication remained a problem, but not a barrier to Anderson's royal reception by Yanai Rotarians. He bore gifts



*One of Club's earliest IYE students, Miguel Ortega Chaurand of Mexico, flanked by host Carl Greenstein (left), 1974-75 Club President Peter Tomaras, and Oscar Dodson.*

representative of Illinois, including a coal ball (lump of petrified coal) and a leaf nodule (leaf fossil petrified in stone). But by far the most "pop-ular" was some Jiffy Pop popcorn—which Anderson proceeded to pop at the Rotary meeting, creating a sensation among the Yanai members, none of whom had ever experienced this phenomenon.

Anderson's hosts sent him home with fifty fans (Japanese symbols of love) and, upon his return, Scott had American Home Foods send 50 packages of Jiffy Pop to Yanai. But the Sister Club experience produced more than popcorn exchanges.

At the February 23, 1981 meeting of Champaign Rotary, Scott Anderson presented 28 pieces of colorful artwork by elementary school students of Yanai, sent in observation of World Understanding Week. Three students from each of the ten Champaign elementary schools received the Japanese artwork to display in their schools. In April, Anderson returned to the Yanai Club and delivered artwork from Champaign's students, who included a letter with each picture giving a brief biographical sketch and inviting an exchange in correspondence.

Champaign Rotary further strengthened ties to its sister club when Ken Gunji scheduled a visit to Yanai Rotary on the itinerary of the 1984 District 649 Group Study Exchange team which he led to Japan.

### STUDY ABROAD FOR THE DISABLED

The Champaign-Yanai art exchange was the latest of several mentions Champaign Rotary and its members have received in *The Rotarian*. But never was WGRC more prominently recognized in Rotary's international magazine than in September, 1976. The lead story that month was an account of a prototype international project brought about through the cooperation of several organizations, one being Champaign Rotary. The project was a 1975 study-abroad program for physically handicapped students.

When L'Institut Franco-Scandinave in Aix-en-Provence, France—a branch of the University of Stockholm—was seeking qualified handicapped students to form a pilot group for a foreign study program, all referrals led to Dr. Timothy Nugent of the renowned Rehabilitation-Education Center at the University of Illinois. Nugent had the disabled students; Champaign Rotary's World Community Service Committee was looking for new ways to export some unique local expertise in the name of international service.

When Nugent and Dr. Erik Mortensen of the L'Institut outlined their proposed project at a Club meeting, WGRC launched a drive which raised more than \$4,000 toward the students' expenses. 1974-75 Club President Peter Tomaras wrote to the presidents of two Rotary Clubs in the Aix-en-Provence district, asking for help on that end. The response from the French presidents was typically Rotarian, and the nine students—six of them with severe disabilities—boarded an Air France flight in Chicago for 15 weeks abroad.

The students returned enthusiastic about their experience. They had done as much teaching as learning, however, because no institution in the world has handicapped facilities to match those developed at the University of Illinois. They taught their hosts at the L'Institut about ramps, shower seats, and handrails by the toilets and beds, as well as about architectural barriers to locomotion and buses with hydraulic lifts.

They taught the French Rotarians something, as well. "I would like to say that this group has given us a lesson," wrote one of the host Rotary presidents. And the lesson was, "It's ability—not disability—that counts."

The editor of *The Rotarian* asked Tomaras to submit a 1200-word

article about the project. In addition to relating the story, Tomaras' article proposed that Rotary create a special class of scholarships for disabled students, bringing together small groups at Aix or equivalent institutions throughout the world. The study-abroad experience should embrace all kinds of students, Tomaras suggested, "and should be world-wide in scope as befits Rotary Foundation programs."

So far, international study for the disabled remains a good idea whose time is yet to come. At least, Champaign Rotary and the UI Rehab Center have shown the world the way.

### INTERNATIONAL SPEAKERS BUREAU

The dependable presence at the University of Illinois of Rotary Scholars from other lands provides a special pool of speakers who can provide interesting programs to Rotary clubs throughout the district. Rotary Scholarships carry ambassadorial responsibilities to host districts; after all, they are funded by the Rotary Foundation. The students are usually more than willing to speak; the problem is getting them to and from distant clubs.

Soon after the first Scholars appeared at the UI, Champaign Rotary appointed a committee whose sole charge was driving foreign students to other Rotary clubs around the district for speaking engagements. The Club advertised its willingness to perform this service, and outlying clubs have taken advantage of it. Don Kemmerer recalls that during two years in the early 1950s, his committee logged more than 500,000 miles ferrying speakers.

As more Americans traveled abroad, the thirst for information about other countries slaked. The International Speakers Bureau Committee continued to be named until the 1986-87 Rotary year, when its duties were incorporated in the charge of the International Hospitality Committee.

### OTHER INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS

As with community service, it is not feasible to write about all the international service projects Champaign Rotarians have embraced. For example, World Community Service in RI officially began in 1962, and one of its arms is the Matched Districts and Clubs Program. The Matched Club Program brings together clubs seeking assistance for specific projects with clubs which are in a position to provide that assistance. It differs in concept from the more recent Sister Club program which promotes cultural exchanges between clubs of equivalent resources.



WGRC has always appointed a World Community Service Committee, whose basic charge is to look into projects through the Matched Club program. Not many "matches" have been made, but Committee Chairman Bob Prath made 1987 an exemplary year by responding to appeals from two foreign clubs with special needs.

The first involved the Rotary Club of Bogota, Colombia, which asked help in acquiring a much-needed operating microscope for an eye clinic. Committeeman Vic Feldman arranged for a Zeiss microscope suitable for ocular microsurgery to be sent from West Germany to Bogota. Zeiss donated the instrument, but delivery would cost \$2,000. A request at a luncheon meeting for \$10 from each Club member garnered the needed funds in a matter of seconds.

The other, spearheaded by Prath himself, involved completely equipping three little league baseball teams in The Philippines.<sup>1</sup> WGRC, Inc. provided \$4,000 to cover the cost of uniforms and other accouterments, and Prath—a U.S. Navy Captain—arranged for "special delivery" channels.

These are examples—good works that are always there for the doing. From time to time more urgent needs arise, such as from the devastation of natural disasters. Along with Rotary Clubs throughout the world, Champaign Rotary has typically done its part in such cases.

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<sup>1</sup>In cooperation with the San Pablo South Rotary Club.

## INSIDE ROTARY: INTERNATIONAL, DISTRICT AND LOCAL ACTIVITIES

As one might assume from its selection as a PolioPlus Model Club, Champaign Rotary has always maintained an outstanding record of participation with Rotary International. Since it was chartered, the Club has been represented at each annual International Convention.

Moreover, several presidents of Rotary International have addressed Champaign Rotary. In the early years, the Club was visited three times in four years by RI presidents. The first was occasioned by an event which was both an honor and a tragedy in the Club's history. In June of 1920, Champaign Rotary put forth B. F. Harris as a candidate for the RI presidency. Whether or not he might have won that position will never be known; Harris soon fell seriously ill and could neither campaign energetically nor attend that year's convention in Atlantic City. By December he was dead.

Estes Snedikor, the man who won the presidency, addressed the Club on October 16. He paid eloquent tribute to Harris, who was too ill to attend, and asked that the basket of flowers from the banquet table be delivered to a ward of a local hospital as a small tribute to the deeds of B. F. Harris.

On November 4, 1922, RI President Raymond M. Havens attended the inter-city meet (a precursor of the annual district convention) hosted by Champaign Rotary; and on November 10, 1923, RI President Guy Gundaker addressed the Club during another inter-city meeting. The fact that RI Headquarters was, and is, in Evanston—and that the geographic scope of Rotary was far smaller in those years—made possible such frequent appearances by RI presidents.

As Rotary spread throughout the world and as more efficient transportation facilitated travel to locations further from Evanston, a visit from an RI president became a rarity for any Club. Even so, Champaign and Urbana Rotary were jointly addressed by RI President Charles Wheeler on September 21, 1943. And on December 13, 1978, RI President W. Jack Davis spoke to Champaign Rotary. Urbana Rotary was invited to attend, as well. Davis was

accompanied by Herb Pigman, who would later become RI General Secretary.

But the visiting speaker who made November 23, 1942, one of the most outstanding dates in Champaign Rotary history was not a sitting RI president. On that date, RI founder Paul Harris made the trek to Champaign, accompanied by his old friend and co-founder, Silvester Schiele, Rotary's first president. Unfortunately, records that might reveal what Paul Harris said to Champaign Rotary do not exist.

Other prominent RI-connected guests have included: RI Past President Bob Hill (1935); RI Directors Clifford Randall (1952) of Milwaukee and Adan Vargas (1958) of Callao, Peru; and Carlos Mendez (1968) of the RI Secretariat, Ibero-American division.

Champaign Rotary has gained attention in *The Rotarian* on several occasions in addition to the article on the disabled study-abroad project. Fred Turner was a frequent contributor of articles to the magazine; David Kinley was published in a 1935 magazine debate over whether there were too many students in college. Incidentally, University of Illinois buildings named for Turner and Kinley (in addition to Bill Everitt and David Dodds Henry) attest to their stature in American education.



*Fred H. Turner,  
Club president—1932–33*

Through its many international programs, Rotary's goal of international understanding is served by bringing together some of the best representatives of any culture—Rotarians themselves. A 1953 *Fizz* reflected a Club member's impressions of good will and cooperation at an RI Convention in Paris in this way: "Maybe they should throw away the UN and put in Rotary—its business and professional people could do a darn sight better."

A bit simplistic, perhaps, but a thought echoed by RI President Charles C. Keller at the First Rotary Peace Forum in 1988, as he quoted former U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower: "The people of the world want peace so badly, that someday the governments are going to have to get out of the way." Certainly, there is ever-

increasing reason to perceive Rotary as an authentic force for peace and understanding. It was also Eisenhower who said, "Rotary is the golden cord on the banner of international understanding."

#### DISTRICT

On the district level Champaign Rotary has always been a leader. The Club has produced five district governors: James M. White, 1923-24; Edwin Jacquin, 1937-38; Arthur J. Skelton, 1959-60; Herbert F. Heaton, 1977-78; and Robert Eisner Jr., 1982-83. In addition, District Governor Will C. Robb (Maywood) later became a Champaign Rotarian.



*Club's 5th district governor, Bobby Eisner, Jr., addresses 1983 District 649 Conference at The Chancellor.*

[Photo courtesy of The News-Gazette]

Although both jobs demand a heavy investment of time and a genuine commitment to Rotary, the job of district governor differs substantially from that of club president. Bobby Eisner saw it in this way:

As president of the Club, maybe one-fourth of my time was consumed by Rotary and three-fourths by my own business. A *good* president should devote at least that much time. As district governor, I spent perhaps half a year at district work, with an especially heavy concentration in the first two or three months. The governor must travel throughout the district, meeting with all the clubs in the early months of his administration.

Once you're elected district governor, you become a representative first of Rotary International, and only incidentally of your home club. In many ways, you must divorce yourself from your club, because you're actually the head of all clubs in the district. You must visit with their officers and directors, and persuade them to pursue whatever it is that the RI President would like to see accomplished that year.

When you're president of a club, you have a whole board of directors and a framework of committees working for you, and you *run* that club. When you're district governor,

you have just a secretary and a treasurer. And you can only recommend things to the various clubs; you can't force them to do anything. I will say that while I was governor, perhaps 38 clubs did a good job, and six or seven of those were *outstanding*. By the same token, there were seven or eight which did absolutely nothing.

Champaign Rotary has been represented at every District 649 Conference ever held, with Club members frequently presenting seminars or program segments. WGRC has hosted many district conferences. The records, admittedly incomplete, show that Champaign hosted the conferences of 1933, 1940, 1950, 1965, 1974, 1978, and 1983. The last two followed the more recent tradition whereby the conference takes place in the home city of the incumbent district governor, if hotel facilities are adequate.

There is no set district policy as to awards that a governor may present to deserving clubs, but Champaign Rotary has received more than its share—especially of awards or citations for outstanding community and international service projects. One of the high points in Champaign Rotary's district history came in 1974, when the Club hosted the District Conference and also received recognition as "The Outstanding Club of District 649" for 1973-74. The award was based on an announced evaluation of clubs in the Four Avenues of Service.

This incentive by district governors continued for a few years, though it was discounted the very next year when the district governor privately told the Champaign Rotary president: "Well, clearly your Club is the outstanding club again, but we thought it best to give the award to the next-best club, so the other fellows won't get discouraged and lose interest." A hollow reward, perhaps; but the fact remains that Rotarians do good works in the spirit of service, not for prizes or laurels.

An equally humorous development in the "outstanding club" contest at the culmination of a Rotary year came some time thereafter. Champaign's members, responding to the organizational skills of a particularly active president, had reached new plateaus of service in terms of both funds raised and good works. This Club president then proved he was human as well as extraordinary by forgetting to submit the Club's well-documented application for the judging.

WGRC has also been a leader in expanding the opportunity of Rotary to other towns in the district. Champaign Rotary has sponsored no less than a dozen new clubs: Gibson City, Gilman,



*District Governor Kurt Schmidt (Urbana) presents Outstanding Club 1973-74 banner to Champaign President Bernie Dunn.*



*1978 District Conference Luncheon at Ramada Inn. At table in forefront, from left: Joe and Laverne Smith; future (1983-84) District Governor Arlan McPherson of Urbana and his wife; Past District Governor (1974-75) Virgil Judge of Mattoon and his wife; Art and Audrey Skelton; Kyle and Phyllis Robeson.*



*Conference Chairman Dwyer Murphy addresses 1978 District 649 Conference at Champaign Ramada Inn.*



*Past President Guy Duker (1962-63) leads singing at 1978 District Conference luncheon. Foreground: future District Governor Steve Bellinger of Decatur and Art Skelton. At speaker's table: Bernie Render, Jane (Mrs. Dwyer) Murphy, Joe Smith.*

Lincoln, Monticello, Oakland, Piper City, Rantoul, Tuscola, Villa Grove, Urbana, Champaign West, and (in conjunction with Urbana and Champaign West in 1987) Champaign-Urbana Sunrise. People involved know the considerable personal investment necessary to getting new clubs off the ground.



*At Feb. 14, 1979 chartering ceremony of Champaign West Rotary Club: Champaign Rotary sponsors Dick Foley (left) and Frank Keck (right) present bell, gavel and lectern to Champaign West officers John Remsen, secretary, and Randy Moore, president.*

[Photo courtesy of The News-Gazette]

## LOCAL

Establishing new clubs in communities of this size is always subject to debate. As early as 1973, a district governor was pressuring Champaign Rotary to split off a percentage of its membership as a nucleus for a second Champaign club. A new club in any district is a feather in the cap of a governor, but WGRC's leadership looked askance upon the idea of incubating a new club by reducing the size—and the strength—of Champaign Rotary. The Club directors refused to do it in that way; there was too much pride and tradition involved.

However, with membership hovering around 225 members, Champaign Rotary was the largest club in the district; many members felt it could grow no further without surrendering the level of personal familiarity and fellowship so valued by most



Rotarians. Hence, in 1978, in a decision that proved to be timely and well-advised, the Champaign West Club was chartered—with the sponsorship of, but no members from, WGRC.

It is too early to predict whether the newest club, C-U Sunrise, will thrive. Certainly Champaign West did, quickly growing to more than 100 members and undertaking ambitious service projects. As a breakfast club, C-U Sunrise offers the opportunity of Rotary to persons whose schedules do not permit them to attend luncheon meetings. The attendance requirements for Rotarians are stringent, but Champaign-Urbana Rotarians of 1988 enjoy an ideal situation. They can receive credit by attending the weekly meeting of any of the four local clubs which convene on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday at noon, and on Thursday morning. Most important, there is now room in Rotary for a higher percentage of the energetic, service-minded leaders of the community.

## INSIDE WGRC

The most universally-shared experience for Rotarians is that which Paul Harris originally intended: the personal friendships enhanced through committee work, traditions, and shared projects, but most of all through weekly meetings and programs. In the beginning Champaign Rotary held its Monday noon meetings at the Beardsley Hotel. Within less than two years, however, the Club was alternating its meetings between the Inman Hotel in the winter and the Champaign Country Club in the summer. These were pre-air-conditioning times, and only in the spacious Country Club could a large group of men find room to breathe on sweltering days. That arrangement continued until the Club moved to the Hotel Tilden Hall in 1939, and then in 1965, to the Ramada Inn (renamed The Chancellor in 1984).

Staples of the meeting have always included: food, which has varied in quality over the years, as Rotarians will tell you; singing, likewise of variable quality; and humor, with jokes delivered in some cases with great style and in other cases with great courage. Certain individuals, particularly presidents armed with control of the rostrum, have been known to add a few characteristic wrinkles.

*William L. Everitt,  
Club president—1951-52*



Bill Everitt, even in his eighties, was willing to stand on his head at the drop of a hat, and made a habit of showing up in a Santa suit at Christmastime, especially on Salvation Army bell-ringing day. Scott Anderson performed physics experiments from the podium, some which fizzled (as experiments will) and some which had electrifying effect. Ben Harris III started the "Christmas Tie Contest" which continued for many years.



*Ben F. Harris, III,  
Club president—1950-51*

Until his untimely accidental death, Wally Mulliken delivered weekly one-minute lessons in the history of Champaign. Carl Greenstein was lightning-quick with a quip, and Dick Foley wore (out) the same jacket every Monday. Ron Kiddoo heckled Ken Gunji, apparently not anticipating that three years hence, Gunji would become president and relish his revenge. Whether president or not, Bobby Eisner Jr. heckled everyone—Morry Hecker in particular.

As Rotarian Bill Bash put it, "In my 39 years in the Club, the special events, the fun, and the fellowship have made my membership enjoyable as much as all the good works we've done."

Part of the fun has often been—not always intentionally—the after-lunch singing. Many Rotarians have subjected themselves to the barbs of the Club's music critics as they have played or waved their arms to lead songs; some of them have undeniably benefited from such vulnerable visibility by springing onto the Board of Directors and into other positions of leadership.

If there's been a storied musical duo, it was pianist Bob Eisner Sr. and songleader Irv Peterson. Long-time members say that these two were often the main show. The 1980s musical tandem—the unflappable Jim LeGrand backed by the talented Dave Thies at the piano (a physician and an attorney, respectively)—had finished, as this history was published, their sixth year of what will probably be remembered as the musical dynasty of the latter half of the century.

Rotarians derive a mix of information and fellowship from their meetings. Thanks both to the presence of the University of Illinois and to the size and composition of the Club, Champaign Rotarians have enjoyed many extraordinary speakers at weekly meetings. Champaign Rotarians become spoiled by consistently excellent programs and, when making up, often find that programs of other clubs leave much to be desired. Indeed, Champaign Rotarians are frequently asked to speak at other clubs, sometimes on the spot. For that matter, some of the most enlightening and best-delivered programs have been presented by members of the Club, whose

classifications span so wide a spectrum of careers and experiences.

The membership always responds well to in-house speakers. As Rooney Stipes once said, "My idea on interesting programs would be to hear Hi Gelvin talk about his cap and gown company. Or have Frank Murphy speak on insurance, or Quin Kiler take us on a trip through a furniture factory."

*Oscar Dodson and Ralph  
Duffy share fellowship  
at 1983 District 649  
Conference dinner.*



#### THE VISITING SPEAKERS

Paul Harris himself (November 23, 1942) deserves top billing among the thousands of visiting speakers who have addressed Champaign Rotary. However, over the years a number of other prominent individuals have appeared on the program. One of the earliest was the exquisitely-named Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis on July 9, 1917, in whose speech "the private banks, loan sharks, and slackers were mercilessly flayed." Three years later, Landis became the first commissioner of baseball.

November 24, 1919, brought another prestigious guest—Sgt. Alvin York. The humble soldier's WWI exploits, including his single-handed capture of more than 100 German soldiers, would later be extolled on film by Gary Cooper. York appeared on behalf of the York Foundation for Education in Tennessee, and he paid tribute to Rotary in a speech cut short because, as his assistant explained, it was necessary to preserve his voice for the many speeches he was scheduled to give.

Other celebrities to have visited the Club include: player-manager Lou Boudreau of the Cleveland Indians (a UI alumnus), and St. Louis Cardinal relief pitcher Al Hrabosky; UI physicist and two-time Nobel Prize-winner John Bardeen, co-inventor of the transistor; nationally-syndicated columnist Godfrey Sperling of the *Christian Science Monitor*; author/film critic Roger Ebert, a former Rotary Scholar to South Africa sponsored by Urbana Rotary; and General Motors Chairman Thomas Murphy.

Presidents of the University of Illinois who have spoken to

Champaign Rotary include David Kinley, Arthur Cutts Willard, George Stoddard, Lloyd Morey, David Dodds Henry, John Corbally, and Stanley Ikenberry. UI presidents have always accepted honorary membership in Rotary, and a few, such as Kinley and Henry, have been active members of the Club.

Many people seeking support for some cause that stands to benefit the community, the state, the nation, or mankind in general make it a point to appear before Champaign Rotary. This inevitably includes politicians of state and federal rank. In 1977, Governor Jim Thompson delivered his first "state of the economy" message to Champaign Rotary. Secretaries of State Paul Powell, Michael Howlett, Alan Dixon (later U.S. Senator from Illinois) and Jim Edgar all addressed the Club, as did U.S. Congressmen D.C. Dobbins, Evan Howell, William Springer, Edward Madigan, and Terry Bruce. Springer and Dobbins were Champaign Rotarians.

Virgil Wikoff, Everett "Nub" Peters, and Club member Ora Dillavou are on the list of state legislators who have appeared. Among other political figures have been U.S. Treasury Secretary Joseph Barr; U.S. Representative Mike Monroney of Oklahoma; Senator Joseph Ball of Minnesota; and Senator Harrison "Jack" Schmitt of New Mexico, a former astronaut.

Of the many high-ranking officers of the armed forces who have spoken to the club, the most prominent was 4-star Admiral James B. Busey IV, Vice Chief of U.S. Naval Operations. The address of Admiral Busey, who graduated from Urbana High School and the University of Illinois, was the catalyst for the first-ever combined meeting of all Rotary and Kiwanis clubs in the twin cities. The luncheon event took place at the UI Assembly Hall, coordinated by Assembly Hall Director and Club member Tom Parkinson.

The Club also pulled off a coup of sorts when it snared U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Richard E. Lyng to address a special Club dinner meeting on March 16, 1987. At the time Lyng was touring on behalf of the new farm bill, and each Rotarian was urged to bring a central Illinois farmer as his guest. Augmented by Rotarians from other local clubs and from Monticello, Tuscola, Villa Grove and Rantoul, a crowd of 650 jammed The Chancellor's Midwest Ballroom for the occasion. Bob Wendt chaired "Farmer's Night," and Dick Burwash introduced Congressman Terry Bruce who introduced Secretary Lyng.

The University of Illinois has always been a magnet, not just for students from abroad, but for visiting professors from other countries. For quite a few years in the post-WWII period it was the



*"Farmer's Night" at Rotary, March 16, 1987. Seated at center is U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Richard Lyng, flanked by Champaign Rotary President Ken Gunji (left) and Illinois Director of Agriculture Larry Werries. Standing are Rotarians Bob Wendt (left), event chairman, and Dick Burwash.*

habit of Champaign Rotary to invite some of the more renowned professors to address the club.

In 1980, Rotary International's 75th anniversary year, Club President William Kuhne decided to commemorate the February occasion with an appropriate banquet. While Champaign Rotary's policy is not to pay speakers, an exception was made in the name of the celebration, and the committee secured David Frost, British humorist and television talk-show host. Frost had become famous in America through his wide-ranging TV interviews with Richard Nixon, and he contributed to a memorable evening for a large crowd of Champaign and Urbana Rotarians and their wives.

Other frequent speakers are: the commanding generals of Chanute Air Force Base; coaches of various UI teams; and other prominent sports figures, such as Sharon Rahn Hedrick, the world's preeminent woman wheelchair athlete, and Bonnie Blair, Olympic speedskating gold medalist. When Blair visited on May 2, 1988, President Bud Roderick made her the Club's first female honorary member.

*Edward E. "Bud" Roderick,  
Club president—1987-88*



The following *Fizz* excerpts further speak to the diversity and caliber of speakers Champaign Rotarians are privileged to hear:

July 29, 1946: Linc Williston of the *New-Gazette* gave us some extremely interesting inside dope on the atomic bombing of Japan. As he was one of those who both selected the targets and briefed the crews for their missions, Linc was well qualified to tell us what happened. We learned, for instance, that the second raid, instead of being on its primary objective, was actually on its secondary one. That was a fact which was not generally known. . . .

June 30, 1947: For U.S. economists, the office of president of the American Economic Association is one of the highest honors. Among his other accomplishments our speaker last Monday is the current president of said organization—Mr. Paul Douglas of the University of Chicago, the Marines, etc. Truly a remarkable man. . . .

October 5, 1953: Leonard Hicks' talk on "Don't Let Tomorrow Tire You Today" was quite a scintillating one capable of provoking some serious thought. Amidst his jokes, which for the most part were quite good, he mixed the aphorisms he has collected over the past forty years or so when he was Harry Houdini's assistant. . . .

May 16, 1955: Britain's views of the unification of Germany were ably summed up in last week's meeting by Consul General Robert W. Mason, headquartered in Chicago, who emphasized that there is a real effort to make it come about despite considerable difficulty. . . .

April 19, 1965: John Cribbet, Professor of Law at the University of Illinois [later Dean of the College of Law, and then Chancellor of the Urbana Campus] spoke on "Condominium—Home Ownership for Megalopolis". . . .

May 18, 1987: When it comes to electronics and the auto industry, we're already close to 2001. That's the observation of J. Bruce Cristal, GM Hughes Corporation Director of Public Affairs . . . Imagine all the world's communications being carried on a single optic fiber. The capability is close at hand as are many more things that would have sounded like far-out science fiction a few years back. . . .

The nature of the weekly programs has varied through the years, of course. Both World Wars were major topics of interest in their time, as was the Depression. Not surprisingly, almost no one chose to speak on Vietnam. In the 1960s and 1970s, a greater emphasis was placed on youth work and generational relations. And for the last decade, programs have reflected an increased focus on projects and problem-solving which characterize the thrust of the Club as a whole.

For all the importance of the educational portion of the program, however, fellowship remains a large part of Rotary. In Champaign Rotary's 50th anniversary year, Frank Stamey, who with Frank Clark was one of the two living charter members, recalled:

Rotary was the best thing that ever happened to businessmen in Champaign. You know how little cliques are formed . . . [and there is] too much formality in many ways among men. But Danville came in with a rush, greeting Champaign members without the formality of "mister" preceding the name . . . just Tom, Dick, Harry, Bill and so on. Really took most of us by surprise, but it loosened up the men and gave all of us a freer feeling.

Rotary International's initial reservations about a club in Champaign—that jealousies would arise—proved to be unfounded. It might also have been expected that here, as in some other university towns, a split might occur between business and professional men on one side and professional academics on the other. But no such separation of "town and gown" is evident in Champaign Rotary. Most members avoid sitting with the same few cronies each week. By and large they circulate, often making it a point to chat with unfamiliar members. Guy Duker, 1962–63 Club president, probably speaks for many Rotarians: "Many times I've wished that the program hadn't come on so I could have gone on with the conversation."

#### ANNUAL TRADITIONS

Probably the event of longest standing which Champaign Rotary stages is the annual University of Illinois football banquet, honoring the team at the conclusion of the season. The history of this venerable tradition actually predates that of the Club. The first banquet was hosted in 1901 by J.M. (Jake) Kaufman, owner of a clothing store, and C.B. (Charlie) Hatch, owner of the Beardsley Hotel where the fete took place. These two civic leaders continued to host the banquet through 1918. Meanwhile, they had become



charter members of Champaign Rotary, to which they turned over the hosting of the banquet in 1919, "relinquishing the privilege," as the 1926 program stated, "so that the dinner might become in larger measure representative of the pride of the city of Champaign in the achievements of the Fighting Illini."

Those early banquets featured some of the big names in Fighting Illini annals. One was George Huff, who played with the first UI football squad in 1890, coached briefly, and later, as director of athletics, presided over some of the UI's most distinguished athletic achievements and the building of Memorial Stadium. Huff was, not surprisingly, a Champaign Rotarian. Another prominent figure was Bob Zuppke, whose tenure as coach spanned an incredible (by today's standards) three decades (1913–1941) and seven conference championships. Zuppke was also a member of Champaign Rotary.



*George Huff*



*Bob Zuppke*

Yet another immortal figure was Red Grange, the Galloping Ghost, to this day one of the most dynamic players in football history. Subsequent years have featured men of the caliber of Ray Eliot, who coached from 1942 through 1959, winning Rose Bowl games in 1947 and 1952.

Apart from the banquet, the football and basketball coaches speak to the Club at the outset of each season, previewing their personnel and expectations. In 1949 WDWS Station Manager and Rotarian Larry Stewart began broadcasting this annual "Pigskin Preview" live on his station. Eventually he began recording it for later



TM



**illini** FIGHTING

## 65th Annual Football Banquet



Champaign Rotary Club  
December 5, 1983 Ramada Inn

broadcast, carried over a statewide network. The practice was discontinued in the 1970s. In the present decade, the football banquet is taped and replayed over cable television for the general public.

One traditional event which no longer takes place, for obvious reasons, is the dinner for veterans of the Civil War. In early times these affairs drew sizable numbers of guests. A printed program from May 4, 1926, lists 31 veterans of the Grand Army of the Republic attending a Memorial Day luncheon featuring Civil War songs and a 21-gun salute. This tradition continued through 1938, but by 1940 the Club had conceded, as a *Fizz* announced, "time has taken its toll, and the one or two representatives who might yet be found in the community would not have the strength to carry them through the day."

Two other annual events that got their start within the first few years of the Club's existence survive today. Just three months after its founding, the Club invited members' wives to the first Rotary Ann<sup>1</sup> Ladies' Night party on February 12, 1917. While this event has not always been scheduled near Valentine's Day, Rotary Ann Committees have continued to organize one or more events each year. Rather than dances or parties, such events during the 1970s and 1980s have usually been planned around a play or symphony performance.

On July 16, 1919, the first Rotary Picnic was held, an event which has evolved into the annual Corn Roast. According to Rotary records:

The picnic held at the home of State Senator and Mrs. Henry Menzo Dunlap . . . was a great success. 160 were present. Ray Sparks, L. B. King, and M. L. Hecker were among the participants in races. Bert Eisner won the horseshoe pitching contest, Burnham Harris, second. C. A. Kiler also participated. Herbert Johnson and Roger Zombro were captains of the baseball teams. Zombro's team lost. Bert Nelson's defeated J. M. Kaufman's. Ed Swigart was umpire. John Stipes knocked the only home run.

Today the Corn Roast may be the most eagerly-awaited event of the year. On a Monday evening in July, when Dick Burwash's special sweet corn varieties are ready for eating, Rotarians descend on Rotary Hill like a swarm of bees. The corn, picked early in the morning at the peak of sweetness, has been soaking in a tank of cold

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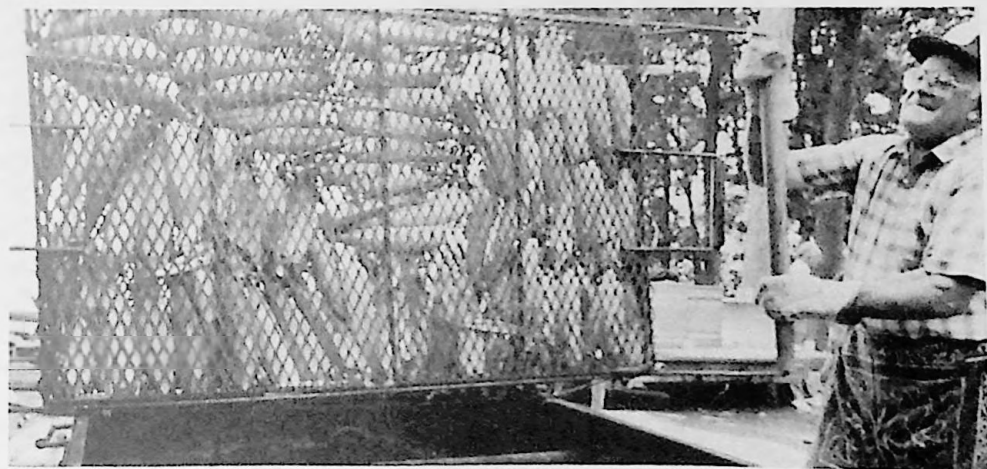
<sup>1</sup>Generic name for a Rotarian's wife, likely to disappear from the vernacular with the admission to membership of women.

water. Then it's roasted (with steaming effect) over the glowing coals of an open-pit barbecue. Members and their guests "belly-up" and, with ample dosage of butter, salt and pepper, make pigs of themselves. Today's Rotarians do not play ball or pitch horseshoes; all energy goes into corn-consuming. No one has calculated the average number of ears consumed per eater, but it's generally acknowledged to be one too many.

A "tradition" which periodically languishes has come back stronger than ever in the 1980s—the Christmas Program. With the leadership of Ray Blackwell, Champaign Rotary becomes an extended family at a regular Monday meeting in December. The Chancellor sets aside a large room to accommodate the many wives



*Enjoying the 1958 Corn Roast: J.C. Dallenbach, John Mittendorf, Maurie Skelton, "Nogie" Nogle, Irv Turner.*



*Dick Burwash wrestles a rack of sweet corn over the charcoal pit at the 1986 Corn Roast.*

and children who join Rotary for a celebration complete with entertainment, singing of carols, and Santa Claus with gifts for all the children.

## THE FIZZ

The Club newsletter has always been a key ingredient of Champaign Rotary, keeping the members up to date on Club projects, on the meetings, and on one another's activities and accomplishments. Although *The Fizz* was first published on September 8, 1919, the oldest surviving issue dates back only to 1926. But in a 1942 issue, the first editor, Edwin Filson, recalls the newsletter's origins:

Lou King and I attended the president and secretary's conference at Bloomington, Illinois, presided over by Jim Craig of Chicago, District Governor of Illinois. Among other things Jim strongly emphasized the importance of a weekly publication in each club. Coming home, Lou and I talked it over and decided to publish one in the Champaign Club. In fact, we became so interested that Lou lost his way and we found ourselves at Holder instead of LeRoy.

The next week I sent out a notice of the meeting with a few statements on a postal card to all the members. In two or three weeks, it had grown to an ordinary-sized bulletin. In those days, the executive committee of the local Club met at Cooper's Cafeteria each Friday noon and the bulletin and the name for it was discussed.

Father Richard (Dick) Flynn, pastor of St. Mary's Church, then a member of the Board, suggested *The Fizz*,<sup>2</sup> and Harry Millard took it over and made a real bulletin out of it. For years it was printed on different colored heavy paper about six inches wide and a foot long. Because of its peculiar name, it was known far and wide and received considerable publicity.

Harry Millard's 10-year stint as editor was considerably longer than the norm for most of his successors. He was an extraordinarily energetic man, even by Rotary standards, and *The Fizz* tone of the 1920s and early 1930s was characterized by a good deal of cheerleading to urge members to throw themselves into projects. That was Millard's natural approach and, when the Depression hit, the tone became still more urgent—appropriately so, since the Club had suffered a depression of its own and membership had dropped some 20–25%. For 1932–33, President Fred Turner announced a goal

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<sup>2</sup>A word-play on the lively essence of champagne.

## WORKING & GIVING

As a bridge player Dr. Finch is one of our leading—well you know his classification.

L. B. Souder's first question after coming to from a major operation last week was "What's the score."

Yes dear Tad we are with you all the way old man.

THE FAMILY WELFARE  
THE BOY SCOUTS  
THE GIRL SCOUTS  
THE RED CROSS  
THE HUMANE SOCIETY  
THE ANTI-TUBERCULOSIS  
SOCIETY  
THE SALVATION ARMY  
THE UNIVERSITY Y. M. C. A.  
THE R. R. Y. M. C. A.

These organizations comprise the list in the COMMUNITY CHEST ASSOCIATION.

YOU were asked to give to every one of them—every one made a campaign in these Twin Cities.

YOU were asked to help work on these campaigns or would eventually have been asked to work.

It is Now One Drive for the Entire Year.  
Their Accounts Are Audited Each Year.  
Their Budgets Are Carefully Analyzed.  
There Is No Duplication of Effort.  
You Are Asked to Give Once.  
You Are Asked to Work Once.

ARE YOU READY TO DO YOUR PART?

See you Monday noon,

Rotarily yours,

*Harry J. Millard.*

P. S.—

**DUES ARE PAST DUE**

*A typical page from a "Millard Fizz".*

of finishing his term with no fewer members than at the start of it, and he finished with one more. That turned the tide, and the ensuing years saw a resurgence of membership.



*Harry J. Millard,  
Club president—1923–24*

As the tenor of Club meetings changes with each president, the style of *The Fizz* changes with successive editors. To be sure, it has remained a cheerleader over the decades, applauding members for honors received, emphasizing news about projects, and reminding members of the obligations of good Rotarians, to wit this exhortation from a 1938 issue:

A ROTARIAN SERVES HIS CLUB BY:

being present at meetings  
participating in their fellowship  
taking part in their programs  
assisting in welcoming new members  
serving on committees  
serving as an officer  
paying his dues  
representing the club in community service  
attending conferences, other clubs, assemblies  
assisting in organization of new clubs

But *The Fizz* also took on a friendlier, more sociable aspect. Editor Forrest (Woody) Colwell, responding to criticism in 1940, laid out the bulletin's philosophy:

With all respect to Governor Lew . . . we like the name *Fizz* and wouldn't change—for less than five dollars, anyway. We were somewhat concerned at his comment that there is nothing frothy about the sheet. Life, your staff feels, is full of a number of things, but the things that seem to lurk behind every bush nowadays are mostly cold facts, and we must have some escape. Among other tokens of civilization that it may be up to America to guard is the light touch. Heaven help us if we begin to take ourselves too seriously—we'll be "heiling" in no time. We doubt there is much whimsy in England today."

*The Fizz* has, generally, continued to reflect that philosophy. Each *Fizz* era sports its form of tongue-in-cheek wit, but mainly the bulletin represents Champaign as one special cog in Rotary's worldwide wheel. It reports on Rotary affairs on local, district and international levels; on issues of the day; on programs upcoming as well as on those just concluded; personal notes about members and their families; short bios of new members and brief recaps of minutes of board meetings; and announcements pertaining to specific committees or the club as a whole. Many district awards attest to how well Champaign's club bulletin does its job.

No complete record of *Fizz* editors exists, but in addition to the three mentioned above, the list includes Eddie Jacquin, Royal McClelland, Dean McCumber, Herb Heaton, Chuck Petry, Terry Davis, Lott Thomas, Harry Bird, Don Radcliffe, Norm Ritchie, and William Krahling. However good Millard and others may have been, it will be a long time before somebody serves longer or better than Bill Krahling, and he who has written so much about so many merits a bit of ink himself.



*William D. Krahling*

Krahling came to Champaign in 1970, joined Rotary in 1972, and on July 3 of that year, put out his first *Fizz* as co-editor with Norm Ritchie. He soon assumed major responsibility for writing and editing *The Fizz*, and in 1976 was named editor when Ritchie left the city. His assistant editor for the past ten years has been Gene Oliver. It was Krahling who first began printing copy on the back of the (now) legal-sized sheet, initially for special messages, then simply for expanded news and other text. In 1986-87, he filled the back page in 47 of 52 issues (90%)—the most ever.

Krahling: "How many issues, how many words? I think I'd rather not know . . . but it's been fun."

It's nice that it's been fun for Bill, because his bulletin has certainly been fun for the hundreds of Rotarians who have received their *Fizz* like clockwork over the years—thanks to the skills and



priorities of men like Krahling and Morry Hecker, who sees to its weekly printing and mailing.

## ROTARIAN PROFILES

The difficulty of describing WGRC's projects pales alongside the task of writing about its personalities. During its seven-plus decades, Champaign Rotary has attracted the community's most outstanding men to its ranks. Indeed, some suggest that every *good* community organization has a Rotarian as its founder, or its president, or as a member of its board of directors. More than one thousand men have enjoyed membership in Champaign Rotary. There is no way to measure all that they cumulatively have achieved—in Rotary activities, in charitable endeavors, in their careers, and in their families. Nor is it appropriate to select some as more worthy than others of being profiled herein.

Therefore, this collection of profiles—like the earlier list of projects, but emphatically more so—can only be an arbitrary sampling. The profiles are included because the surest way to understand Champaign Rotary is through understanding the men who have served it.

Most of the profiles below appeared, for one or another good reason at the time, in issues of *The Fizz* and are reprinted in their original form. As you read them, bear in mind the date they were written, which is given. Those written well before the retirement of their subjects do not encompass the entire careers of those men. Yet they have the marvelous quality of reflecting the context of the men and their activities while they were still active. This honors the book's guiding principle: to convey a feeling of the times—especially the older times—in which events occurred and men lived.

Other than those of past district governors, the Editorial Committee chose to omit profiles of all living Rotarians. We leave it to other chroniclers to someday record the special attributes and worthy deeds of outstanding Rotarians of today and tomorrow.

### **Charley Kiler (June 25, 1937):**

Born in Urbana Sept. 8, 1869. Graduated Urbana High School, then University of Illinois in the class of '92 . . . In '93, ran a hotel

in Chicago during the Chicago World's Fair. Started in [furniture store] business in Champaign in 1895, just 42 years ago.

Has always been one of Champaign's most active citizens. Is a member of Sigma Chi fraternity, being one of the charter members and its first president. Has been president of the University of Illinois Alumni Association and a member of the board. Was state counselor of the Red Cross.

*Charles A. Kiler,  
Club president—1934-35*



A member of the Athletic Board of Control of the University of Illinois for 32 years. A pioneer in the early movement for good roads in Illinois. Is a director of the Illinois Chamber of Commerce. Has been president of the Chamber of Commerce, is a past president of Rotary, a charter member of Rotary in Champaign. Was Champaign Park Commissioner for 20 years—a member of the Library Board—in 1906 was a member of the National Immigration Commission.

**Harry Clifford Northcott (December 24, 1937):**

Born in Exeter, Canada. When he was three months old, he moved to Western Chicago and his boyhood days were spent in Austin, Illinois. He graduated from Evanston Academy, received his B.A. at Northwestern University, his M.A. at Northwestern University, his B.D. at Garret Biblical Institute, and studied on his Doctors at the University of Chicago. Later he received his Doctor of Divinity degree at Illinois Wesleyan. Was very active in his undergraduate days at Northwestern, for three years being on the debate team, and captain of the team his senior year. He is a member of the Wranglers fraternity.

He waived his exemption and enlisted during the World War, later to earn promotion as an officer. He has travelled extensively overseas. Was married in 1919 and has one daughter. Joined Rotary ten years ago; was president in 1931-32 and has been active in Rotary work at all times. He is a member of the Masons, a Trustee of Wesley Foundation, a Trustee of Northwestern University, and is Chairman of the Illinois Conference Commission of Citizenship. Cliff is one of our most outstanding citizens, has

been prominent in every worthwhile community activity, and is respected by every man who has had the privilege of his acquaintance. He enjoys his work so much that he feels this must be his hobby.

[After nearly a quarter-century of service to Champaign Rotary, Cliff Northcott left the city as newly-elected Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the Wisconsin Conference.]

**Frank C. Amsbary Jr. (March 25, 1938):**

Is carrying on the family tradition of prominence in civic affairs.

[His father was a charter member of Champaign Rotary.]

Directorships are his specialty—twice Director of Rotary, twice Director of the Chamber of Commerce, Director and Secretary of Champaign County Country Club, Director and Secretary of the Illinois Water Service; is head of the Illinois section of the American Waterworks Association and in this capacity is responsible for a convention of that organization next month in Decatur.



*Frank Amsbary, Jr.,  
Club president—1946-47*

Frank was born in Champaign, graduated from the University of Illinois in 1922 with a degree in civil engineering; since the Delts have lately been enjoying all Rotary publicity, he is almost afraid to mention his fraternity, Phi Delta Theta; Theta Tau, Professional Engineering Fraternity, also claimed him.

In his spare time, Frank works with iron and wood—or in his flower garden, claiming not to know much about either, but finding pleasure in both.

**Eddie Jacquin (April 8, 1938):**

Has followed sports ever since fifth grade, when he was waterboy of Bradley's football and basketball teams. Sports and Rotary are meat and drink to him; he works hard, serves well at both.

Born in Peoria, April 20, 1899, he graduated from Bradley Academy, winning letters on the teams he earlier had watered, went to the University of Missouri, joined Beta Theta Pi, was

elected to Sigma Delta Chi (now an honorary journalism fraternity—Eddie says in his day anyone could belong), graduated from their famous School of Journalism in 1922. He was Business Manager and Editor of the *Lavitar*, University Annual.

*Edwin N. Jacquin, Club president—1935–36,  
Club's second district governor, 1937–38*



His career in journalism started at the age of fifteen, reporting Bradley sports for the Peoria *Journal-Transcript*; his first job after graduation was with the St. Louis *Globe-Democrat*. Soon the Peoria paper called him back as sports editor, a position held until the summer of 1924, when illness forced temporary retirement. On January 1, 1925, the late George Chapin, to Eddie's complete surprise, telephoned him to ask him to take the editorship of his fourth hyphenated newspaper, the *News-Gazette*.

Association with Rotary began in 1927; after valuable service as president in 1935–36, he was elected District Governor, reflecting considerable honor on our Club by his competence in that office. Two international Conventions—at Nice and Mexico City—have seen him. He edited *The Fizz* for two years, not the least of his Rotary efforts, as we can testify.

Sportswriting-Rotary-officiating-broadcasting—[all] leave little time for fishing or stamp collecting. Whatever Eddie undertakes, he does well.

**Pete Peterson (July 3, 1967):**

A professional landscape designer, Irving L. (Pete) Peterson has been a member of Champaign Rotary since 1920. For 30 years, he was the Club's song leader, and with Bob Eisner Sr. as accompanist made Champaign the top singing Club of the District—as witness the demand that Pete and Bob take charge of the songs at every District Conference.

Born in northern Illinois, Pete attended DeKalb Normal before coming to Champaign in 1916. He completed his studies at the U of Illinois in 1920 and taught landscaping here for 40 years.

Always a strong Rotarian, Pete was president in 1926, the same year he was married. He had a prominent part in establishing nine or ten Rotary Clubs of this District, including Tuscola, Monticello,

Urbana, Rantoul, and Lincoln. He has attended two International Rotary Conventions, Los Angeles and Denver.



*Irving L. "Pete" Peterson,  
Club president—1926-27*

Now retired from teaching, he continues to practice landscaping from his home at 1408 South Prospect. Pete showed the Club what we've been missing since he retired as song leader when he and Bob performed at the 50th Anniversary Banquet in February!

**Fred Turner (October 16, 1967):**

Historian Fred was born in Hume, Ill., at the turn of the century, came to the Twin Cities and here won international fame as a university administrator.

Entering the U of I in 1918, he began to work for the late great Dean Thomas Arkle Clark . . . [while still] a freshman. After graduation he became Asst. Dean of Men 1922-31, Dean of Men 1931-43, Dean of Students 1943-66. After having Greek Week dedicated in his honor he stepped up to University Dean of Students and Director of the Centennial, his present dual role.

Writing and being president are his two hobbies. He headed Champaign Rotary in 1932, two years after joining. (We knew a good thing!) Since then, among other jobs, he has presided over the National Assn. of Student Personnel Administrators, Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity, and now the National Interfraternity Conference, which awarded him its Gold Medal in 1955.

For 20 years he wrote articles for *The Saturday Evening Post*; he has had a department in *Banta's Greek Exchange* [for] many years; edited the *Interfraternity Research Bulletin* 1953-66, to name a few. [Also frequented the pages of *The Rotarian*; see p. 70.] He has yet to write his first book.

Fred married Elizabeth Weaver in '24 and they live at 507 West Washington in Urbana. He has been a captain on the Governor's staff in the Illinois National Guard since 1931.

**Rooney Stipes (December 19, 1967):**

This is a double 40th anniversary for Royal A. (Rooney) Stipes. In 1927 he received his sheepskin from the U of Ill. and joined Champaign Rotary.

It's more than 40 for Stipes Publishing Co. He started his own business as an undergraduate, and it has grown in volume ever since. Besides Champaign *Fizz*, they publish much printed matter and books for educational and general clients.

Rooney loves golf and has been Club champion several times. His other hobby is helping Illinois colleges gain in size and status. He was head of the Teachers' College Board that paved the way for DeKalb, Normal, and the others to become universities. He has also been president of Champaign and Illinois State Chambers of Commerce.

His two daughters, Mrs. Babette Bartholow and Mrs. Emily Watts, both here in Champaign, have made him a five-time grandfather. Rooney heads the Board of University Retirement System but at 62 has no thought of retiring, himself.

Rooney volunteered for service in World War II though past draft age. On leaving the enlistment office he fell down the steps, broke his leg, and that was that. He's a member of First Presbyterian Church and Delta Tau Delta, and a former Community Chest chairman.

#### **H. I. "Hi" Gelvin (April 1, 1968, updated in 1988)**

For ten years after leaving Northwestern University (where he was a Phi Gam), Harold I. Gelvin had a men's store on the U of I campus. From that modest beginning, Hi founded Collegiate Cap & Gown Co. in 1926 and served as its president until it merged with Cenco instruments in 1966. He then served ten more years as consultant for the Cap & Gown operation, one of the leading such suppliers in the world.

In 1947 he spearheaded the organization of the Champaign County Forest Preserve, and served as president until 1975. Under his leadership Lake of the Woods Park was developed at Mahomet—one of the outstanding public recreational facilities in this part of the state, complete with swimming and picnic areas, two golf courses, and public pavilions. After a fund drive by appreciative local people, the park's carillon tower was built and named "Hi Tower." Hi also endowed the botanical garden at the park in memory of his wife, Mabry, who passed away in 1971.

Hi was a past president of the Champaign Chamber of Commerce, and a member of the County Steering Committee on Parks and Open Space. He was active in Champaign Rotary since 1926, and in 1949, Hi's son, Phil, became a Champaign Rotarian. Hi was a charter member of the Community Foundation of Champaign County and the Champaign-Urbana Symphony. He was a member of the First United Methodist Church of Champaign.

Hi was a contributor to the Kentucky Colonels and held dear that membership and his annual trip to the Kentucky Derby with friends. He took pride in having attended 60 consecutive Derbys.

Hi always met challenge with challenge, and his death on November 18, 1984, terminated an illustrious career of leadership and involvement in civic responsibilities.

**Stew Daniels (June 3, 1968):**

When Stewart Daniels takes on a job, he stays with it! Joining WGRC in '34, he became Secretary in '39 and held the post until elected President 15 years later.

But this was nothing compared with his life work. Named Executive Secy. of Alpha Tau Omega Fraternity in '25, he served 41 years, again topping it off by being chosen Worthy Grand Chief (Nat'l President), the post he now holds.

Stew's other presidencies include U of Ill. Alumni Association ('59-61), Campus Business Men's Assoc., College Fraternity Secretaries Assoc. and Illinois Interfraternity Alumni Assoc. He is currently Treasurer and a Director of University Federal Savings & Loan Assoc., with which ATO shares that handsome mall on Green St.

Recently Stew and Edna moved from 311 W. University, their long-time abode, to Hessel Manor Apts., 1616 Valley Road. The Daniels' have a son, Stew Jr., a daughter Marilyn, and five grandchildren.

**Les Bryan (June 10, 1968):**

The students of two universities selected Dr. Leslie A. Bryan as the faculty member who contributed most during the year; Syracuse in 1943; Illinois 1955. Two Presidents, Eisenhower and Kennedy, consulted him on aviation matters. He has served on the State Board of Aeronautical Advisors for 19 years, and was Illinois' Big Ten Faculty Representative for eight years.

These are but a few of the innumerable honors earned by Les; his record in Who's Who is 5 and 1/2 inches long. Joining Champaign Rotary in 1946, he was our president 1955-56. He retires this Fall as Director, Institute of Aviation and Professor of Management.

At Syracuse U, Les was a track star, Class Marshall, and a member of Zeta Psi. He then was on the faculty for over 20 years as professor of transportation and law before coming to UI in '46. In '52 he was chairman of the Community Chest, and from 1954-60 was President, Arrowhead Council of the Boy Scouts, also on regional and national boards. He is author of seven books and contributor to seven encyclopedias, including the Brittanica.



Les now devotes more time to his passion for genealogy. Married 37 years, the Bryans have two sons, three granddaughters, and live at 1016 West John. They are members of First Presbyterian Church and the Champaign Country Club. If space permitted, we could tell you a lot more—about Les.

**Woody Colwell (March 31, 1969):**

R. Forrest Colwell was born, not in a log cabin, but in a summer cottage in Wisconsin. His nickname comes from his middle name. The "R" may stand for Rotary, as he has been a WGRC stalwart for 33 years, a past club director and vice president, and long-time *Fizz* Editor.

Woody came to town in the late 1920's to work with his uncle's firm, the Colwell Publishing Company. A 1930 U of I grad, active in Alpha Sigma Phi and ROTC, Woody went out for football but "Zup decided I had too many left feet." In 1964 Colwell Publishing acquired Twin City Printing Company, and Woody became president of R.F. Colwell Printing Corporation. He is also managing partner of the Colwell Co., which produces bookkeeping systems and appointment forms for the medical professions.

In WWII he was Publicity Chairman for six bond drives, County Chairman for another. He is a past VP of the Chamber of Commerce and United Fund; past president, Council of Social Agencies; Director, Bank of Illinois; a trustee of the Methodist Church and Illinois Wesleyan University. In the late 1960's, through the Colwell Co., Woody became a benefactor of Wesleyan.

Woody married Dorothy, daughter of former Rotary Sec. Carl Dieckmann; they have two daughters and five grandchildren—the latter being his main hobby. You never hear a knock on Woody, one of our most popular members.

[Woody Colwell's legacy to Rotary was admirably carried on by his son-in-law, Dick Tryon, referred to elsewhere in this history.]

**Bill Everitt (April 14, 1969):**

Officially, Bill has become Dean Emeritus of the UI College of Engineering but he continues to be active in his life's work.

A Cornell graduate, he taught there, at Michigan and Ohio State before coming to Champaign. He holds an M.S., Ph.D., and eight honorary degrees. He has served as an engineer and consultant for North Electric, A. T. & T., and numerous other firms.

He was a teen-age Marine private in WWI and Director of Operational Research for the Signal Corps in WWII.

Being president comes naturally to Bill. WGRC tapped him in '51, only six years after he joined. He has also headed the Institute of Radio Engineers, Engineers Council for Professional Development, American Soc. of Engineering Education, Associated Midwest Universities, National Academy of Engineering, and the University YMCA. Married 45 years, the Everitts have a son, two daughters and six grandchildren. Bill is an elder in McKinley Presbyterian Church. His hobbies are swimming and "do-it-yourselfing."

[Other references to Bill in the history amplify his impact on the Club.]

**Frank Murphy Sr. (May 5, 1969):**

One of several father-and-son combinations in Champaign Rotary, the Murphys already have a total of 57 years as members. Frank, born in Chicago in 1889, was a star pole vaulter at the U of I, being the Conference champion in 1910, tied in '11 and '12. He captained the 1912 varsity track team. That same year, he and Avery Brundage went to the Olympics in Stockholm, Sweden as the first two Olympians from the U of I. Frank won the bronze medal in the pole vault.

In WWI he was a 2nd lieutenant and instructor in the Air Corps. After that, with a bachelor's in Engineering, he became southwest Texas sales manager for Certain-teed Products. In 1923 he returned to the U of I at the request of the athletic director, George Huff, to be athletic business manager during the construction of Memorial Stadium. It was his idea, now quite common, to have the aisles in the middle of the section so that you didn't come into a large assembly at one side of the section and have to climb over everyone to reach your seat. He was concurrently ticket manager, now a separate job.

Later, Frank became an agent for Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance. He joined WGRC in 1931. Son Dwyer and daughter Dorothy (Van Nest) have presented him with seven grandchildren. Like his son, WGRC Secretary Dwyer, Frank is a member of Phi Delta Theta. He was a member of the Community Chest, later part of the United Fund, for 41 years (president in 1935-36) and served 12 years as a trustee of U-C Sanitary District. We look forward to singing happy birthday Sept. 21, when he reaches his 80th birthday.

[As a point of interest, Dwyer was himself chairman of the United Health & Welfare, later the United Fund, and has been a member for 38 years as of this writing; he also followed his dad with nine years as a trustee of the Sanitary District.]

**Art Skelton** (January 22, 1968):

President of Champaign Rotary '56-57, Arthur J. (for Jones) Skelton didn't just work at Rotary those two years—he's been working for WGRC and RI since 1947. He joined Rotary the same day as Chuck Petry and Scott Kelley, each one an Additional Active in his father's classification. Maurice Skelton, who originally joined Rotary in Urbana in 1927, had brought his family back to Champaign after having a drug store in Gas City, Indiana. Art graduated from U of I during WWII in marketing. He was a member of ROTC, Scabbard & Blade, Caisson Club and Sigma Chi. Already married and a father, he joined the army and served three and one-half years. Then he went to work as a druggist and became a Rotarian.

Art's dedication to Rotary was such that in 1959, he became the Club's third District Governor. He was just 37—the third youngest District Governor in the world that year. He attended 10 straight RI Conventions, from Tokyo to Switzerland, and 13 in all—more than any other RI committee member and co-chairman. In March he'll be RI President Hodges' personal representative at a Rotary District Conference in Kentucky.



*Art Skelton, Club president 1956-57,  
Club's third District 649 Governor  
(1959-60), speaks at 1978  
District Conference.*

Art and Audrey moved to White Heath on 11 acres of timberland two years ago—the better, perhaps to play willing hosts to the frequent international house guests whom they've befriended in the course of Art's Rotary work. They have a son, Dan, and a daughter, Kathryn. Very active in the Springfield Shrine, Art is a member of the Divan.

[Art's devotion to Rotary continued. After serving on various international committees, he was the Nominating Committee's choice to be RI director from Zone 3. In all, Art estimates he has represented RI presidents to at least 18 district conferences in this country and abroad. Appropriately, Art became the Club's first Paul Harris Fellow. He served many terms as Club Secretary, and in 1979 became Champaign Rotary's first and only Executive Secretary. He is known throughout the district as "Mr. Rotary."]

**Bob Eisner Jr.** (August 22, 1966):

President Bob was born in Champaign August 26, 1920, and has been a life-long resident. He graduated from Champaign High School, earned his degree at the U of I in 1942. He comes from a long line of Rotary presidents. Grandfather Albert Eisner Sr. headed the Club for two years, 1917-1919. Father Bob Sr. was president in 1944, and in that same year, Bob was married to the former Betty Robinson of Anna. They have six children.

Bob's profession is the Eisner-Murphy Insurance Agency, formed when he purchased the Goodman-Murphy Agency in 1958 after Jewel Tea acquired the Eisner Grocery Company. Until then, Bob had served Eisner Grocery in various capacities.

Bob is on the Board of Directors of the Bank of Illinois and First Federal Savings and Loan. He is president of the Mercy Hospital Advisory Board—fitting, since he and Oscar Koehnemann co-chaired the eminently successful fund drive for the first major addition to the hospital. He is a member of the First Presbyterian Church, and his social fraternity is Beta Theta Pi.

[In 1980, Bob was selected as WGRC's first Rotarian of the Year. He served in 1982-83 as the Club's fifth district governor. A year later, he established the annual Robert Eisner Jr. Award recognizing the Club's outstanding new member. In 1978, his son, Robert Eisner III, became a Champaign Rotarian—the only fourth-generation member of the Club until, in 1988, Bob's daughter, Nancy Martin, became the Club's second woman Rotarian.]

**Herb Heaton** (August 27, 1969):

It's his tenth anniversary for past president (1968-69) Herbert F. Heaton—he moved here from his native Hoopeston in 1959. And what a decade! Not only boss of the World's Greatest Rotary Club, but also of Faith Methodist Church Trustees, President of the UI College of Dentistry Alumni, editor of Illinois Dist. Dental Society Bulletin, advisor three years to Illinois State Dental Assistants, 1967 recipient of UI Alumni Loyalty Award—to name a few of his many honors.

Herb lettered in four sports at Hoopeston High, earned his B.S. at UI in '39, D.D.S. '41. As a captain in WWII he saw service in

*Herb Heaton, Club president 1968-69,  
Club's 4th district governor 1977-78.*



England, France, Belgium, and Germany. Then came practice in Hoopeston where he was president of Rotary, Board of Education, Danville District Dental Society and Methodist Church Trustees. Whatever Herb joins, they start heatin' up the presidential chair for him!

Herb and Mary Jane have a son, Bill, and a daughter, Jane. They say good cooks always use herbs to add zest to a dish. This Herb has done it for WGRC.

**[Unlike the preceding profiles, the following are not taken from *The Fizz*, but from tributes written under other circumstances. In the case of Ernie Stouffer, the salute was presented at a Club meeting to mark Ernie's 50th year of perfect Rotary attendance.]**

**James McLaren White (May, 1988):**

James M. White was born in 1867 in Chicago and enrolled in the UI in 1886, where he became known as "King Jim." He graduated in 1890 from the College of Engineering and became an assistant in architecture, progressing to full professor of architectural engineering in 1901. He was named dean of the College of Engineering in 1906, then relinquished that position in 1907 to accept the newly created office of supervising architect.

As supervising architect, Jim had an active hand in the design or erection of most of the University buildings prior to 1933. His first important building was the old Library (now Altgeld Hall). It was followed by the Horticulture Building, the Agronomy Building, the Mechanical Engineering Laboratory, the Ceramics Building, the Vivarium, the School of Education, and Smith Music Hall, among others. He designed buildings outside the University and in other states, and also acted as consulting architect for several other universities. He was a member of the American Institute of Architects, and was made a fellow of that body late in his career.

In 1921, "King Jim" took on additional duties as superintendent of

business operations for the University, adding Saturdays and holidays to his work schedule. Still, he managed to play an active role in community affairs, serving as president of Champaign Rotary in 1921–22. Devoted to the principles of Rotary, Jim became the Club's first District 649 Governor in 1925–26. He was also president of the Champaign Chamber of Commerce, of the Illinois Union Corporation, and of the University Club—another building which he designed.



*James M. White, Club president—1921–22,  
and the Club's first district governor—1925–26*

Jim married Edith Shattuck in 1899, and their daughter, Adelaide, was born in 1903. Following a bout of influenza, Jim succumbed to heart failure in 1933. His funeral took place at the White home, 804 W. University, where Jim was eulogized by several community leaders, including the following Champaign Rotarians:

"I never knew a more sincere man," said the Rev. H.C. Northcott, "I like to think of him as 'Jim the Builder,' for it typified his life."

"Jim has done more for the Champaign Rotary Club and for Rotary in this part of the state than any other man," said Irving L. Peterson. "He gave willingly of his time and energy . . . his favorite work was helping to build new clubs for Rotary. His memory will never be erased as long as the Champaign Club exists."

"What the University owes him and, through the University, the state and the country, only those can understand who have seen its physical and artistic development under his guidance," said UI President Emeritus David Kinley. "I have seen him constantly spending himself for others—for his University, his profession, and society—ever seeking to put before them ideals of life that rest upon the foundations of true culture—artistic, ethical, spiritual."

**Ernie Stouffer (May 24, 1976):**

Born in Decatur, Ernie graduated from the U of I with a degree in architecture in 1918. He achieved his Master's in that discipline from the U of I in 1931.

Ernie first became a Rotarian in 1925 in Streator, where he was a practicing architect. He was soon elected Club secretary. In 1930 he accepted a position as assistant supervising architect at the U of I. His superior was the University Architect [and first district governor from Champaign Rotary] James M. White. To keep his attendance perfect, Ernie made up at Champaign Rotary. With White's sponsorship, he joined the Club as an additional active in 1931.

Ernie was introduced as a new member by Club President and State Senator Cass Clifford, and he remembers H. C. Northcott followed Clifford as president. He vividly recalls UI President David Kinley and his boss, James White; both were Phi Gams, both were Scots, and both were ardent Rotarians.

Upon Professor White's death in 1933, Ernie became the University Architect. From then until his retirement in 1965, Ernie presided over all construction both on the Urbana campus and at the Medical School in Chicago. He supervised construction of such buildings as the President's House, Women's Gym, Chemical Annex, Metallurgical Addition, the Student Union, Band Building, Gregory Hall, the south addition to McKinley Hospital, and the first Men's Residence Hall Group at Fourth and Gregory.

When Ernie retired, the University of Chicago asked him to serve as its consulting architect. Ernie accepted but set his own terms. For the four years of his association with Chicago, since he did not wish to miss Champaign Rotary meetings, his work in Chicago commenced each week on Tuesday.



*Ernie Stouffer  
59 years of perfect  
attendance.*

Ernie has been nationally recognized in his field. In 1940 he helped to form the National Association of University Architects, and served as president of this group. Since 1924 he has been a member of the American Institute of Architecture and served as president of the Central Illinois chapter in 1937.

In maintaining his perfect Rotary attendance record, Ernie has made up at clubs from Massachusetts to California, from Washington state to Florida, driving as much as sixty miles on

occasion. He prefers small clubs where all members know each other, meetings are informal, and visitors are warmly welcomed. Once after a fifty mile drive to a club in a Mississippi logging community, the speaker failed to show, and Ernie was drafted to speak on the University of Illinois.

So let us honor Ernie Stouffer, an eminent architect, and one who stands tall in loyalty and devotion to Rotary.

[Ernie stretched his perfect attendance record to 59 years before his death in 1986 at the age of 90. His record was one of the longest ever achieved in the world of Rotary.]

**Albert Austin Harding (February, 1988)**

Though Aus was born in Georgetown in 1880, he spent all of his boyhood and youth in Paris, Illinois. In 1902 he enrolled in engineering at the University of Illinois and spent the rest of his life here. In 1905, as a junior in engineering, he began directing the UI band. After completing his degree, he became director and conductor of the band and held that position—never taking a leave or sabbatical—until his retirement in 1948. In those early days he directed the marching band as well as the concert bands; from 1918 to 1931 he also conducted the University orchestra.

Aus's pioneering leadership in the concert band field was acknowledged throughout the world. He believed he was the first to have his band perform letters and then moving letters on the football/baseball field, and is confident his was the first band to sing on the field (the Iowa game in 1913). John Phillips Sousa and Harding were close personal and professional friends. Sousa stayed with Harding the three times he visited the University of Illinois.

Very early in his career, Aus became a Champaign Rotarian, starting an unbroken succession of UI band directors as members of this Club. Mark Hindsley (1934), 1962–63 Club President Guy Duker (1954), and current Director of Bands Jim Keene (1985) all owe their membership to Austin.

In 1913 he married Margaret Frances Rogers, and in 1927 built his home at 710 South Elm Boulevard (in the old Harris Place subdivision), where he lived the rest of his life. On the occasion of his 68th birthday and imminent retirement, WGRC had a party honoring him for his service to Rotary, his community, and his profession.

Albert Austin Harding—a leader in his field and an exemplary Rotarian.

**Dr. William M. Staerkel (March, 1988)**

Bill Staerkel was the founding president of Parkland College, established in 1966. He is a native of Kansas and received his B.A.



from Bethel College. While in college he was prominent in forensics and athletics, winning state oratorical and debate honors. After college he played both professional football and baseball. In WWII he served as a lieutenant in the Navy, and was awarded the Bronze Star for valor in combat.

After receiving his doctorate from Stanford University, he served as director of educational services for Booz, Allen & Hamilton, the nation's largest diversified management consulting firm. In this capacity he directed and participated in major educational studies for school districts, colleges and universities in more than 20 states. He also was an educator and superintendent of schools in California, Kansas and Nebraska.

*William M. Staerkel*



In a 20-year span, Bill guided Parkland College from a scattered downtown assortment of offices and classrooms to a multi-acre campus with more than 8,000 students—one of the nation's premier community colleges. He served as chairman of the State Council of Public Community College Presidents, became the dean of Illinois Community College Presidents, and in a nationwide study conducted by Exxon Foundation, was selected as one of the nation's outstanding college presidents.

In 1967 Bill became a valued member of Champaign Rotary, heading several key committees and serving two three-year terms on the Board of Directors. He was much in demand as a speaker and delivered four memorable speeches to the Club. Bill made his last public address before his fellow Rotarians just a few days before his untimely death on December 10, 1987.

Bill served in leadership roles with other civic groups and spearheaded the Parkland Foundation's Twentieth Anniversary Fund drive, which made possible completion of Parkland's campus by the addition of a performing arts center and the largest and most advanced planetarium in downstate Illinois. In fitting tribute, the William M. Staerkel Planetarium will stand as a unique educational resource for people of all ages well into the 21st century.

## CHANGING TIMES, CHANGING FACES

We could go on and on with "representative" profiles. But this sampling illustrates the diversity and the caliber of the men who have made Champaign Rotary the great club that it is.

Speaking of greatness, by 1988 the term WGRC had endured three decades as the call letters for "World's Greatest Rotary Club"—a call to members to be the best that they could be. Whether or not they have actually earned the title, Champaign Rotarians never stop trying to live up to it. Though the names and faces change, the river of fellowship and good works flows on, cutting an ever deeper and wider channel.

Beyond that, the face of the Club itself changes—slowly, but inevitably. With the 1987 Supreme Court decision that Rotary clubs in the United States may no longer exclude women from membership, Champaign Rotary, like thousands of other clubs, has entered a new era. Some members rejoice, some cringe, others accept the demise of the gender barrier with equanimity. It is fitting that, in this country at least, Rotary must reflect the course of human events—to borrow Mr. Lincoln's phrase.

Two Club members who undoubtedly prefer to be known simply as Rotarians are Champaign Rotary's first black Rotarian and its first woman Rotarian. But for them to remain nameless in this history would do a disservice to future generations of Club members. Joseph H. Smith, UI professor of English, associate vice-chancellor, and nationally-prominent Episcopalian layman, in 1967 became the community's first black Rotarian. And in no way is that the most noteworthy thing about this man.

After Joe Smith served Champaign Rotary with distinction for a dozen years, including three terms as Club Secretary, his somewhat pensive picture disappeared from the roster. Then newly appointed to the University's top academic affirmative action post, Joe communicated to the Club leadership his objections to Rotary's discriminatory policies and resigned as a matter of conscience. For his several personal and professional strengths, he was missed.

Ten years later, following the admission to membership of Bonnie Kelley, the Club's first woman Rotarian, Joe Smith returned to

Champaign Rotary. By opening its door to women, Rotary International had removed Joe's primary objection, enabling him to renew associations he greatly valued.



*Bonnie Kelley "presides" over Kelley Burial Vault Co. Besides being Champaign Rotary's first woman member, Bonnie is a two-term trustee of Parkland College.*

[Photo courtesy of the News-Gazette]

Bonnie Kelley was also much more than a symbol. Although she happened to be the wife of a Champaign Rotarian, as chief executive of her own business Bonnie was, as were the outstanding women who followed her into the Club, fully qualified for an open classification.

Ultimately, Rotary is not about race or gender, but about people—about voluntarism and compassion. Rotarians do not define compassion as a willingness to spend someone else's money or time or effort on putatively good works; they get out and give of themselves. In the words of 1967–68 Club President Carl Greenstein: "The members of our Club are *doers*. During my term in office, I never had anyone tell me, 'I'm too busy.' They had many other projects of their own, but as the old axiom says, 'If you want something done, ask a busy man.'"

Now that club leaders can ask busy men and busy women, Rotarians look to even broader horizons of service. We leave it to future historians to detail in what ways its service-minded members will make WGRC even greater.

Someone once wrote a eulogy to an anonymous Rotarian. It read like this:

"Everyone in the club knew him as a 100 per cent attender. For 27 years he had not missed a meeting. Every member pointed him out as the man who had attended 1,400 consecutive meetings! But what many members did not know was . . .

"That it was he who first suggested sending a young boy to the specialist to have a serious eye defect corrected, and that he made the main financial contribution. Or that he helped the dispossessed family up on the hill until they were back on their feet.

"Or that when a boys' softball team lost their playing field, he 'found' a vacant lot for them. And that when tragedy befell an unfortunate family, it was he who, with a few quiet words spoken amongst kindred spirits, opened up an entirely new world of faith and hope for these stricken ones.

"He was never found at the head of the parade, but always somewhere on the sidelines. And when the trumpets were sounding and the cymbals clanging, he slipped down a side street and helped someone.

"The club records listed him merely as a 100-percenter for 27 years, but there was so much more . . ."

Similar tributes could be written about countless Rotarians, including quite a few from this club. Time passes and faces change, but the spirit and good works of Rotary go on.

And so does the Champaign Rotary Club: 3,710 meetings so far and climbing—steps always going up.

—15 June, 1988



## APPENDIX A

### CLUB OFFICERS (1916-1988)

Year	President	Vice-President/President-Elect
1916-17	O. F. Clark	C. M. Pearson
1917-18	Albert Eisner	Frank Chester
1918-19	Albert Eisner	Tom Smith
1919-20	L. B. King	C. L. Adams
1920-21	Ed S. Scott Jr.	B. E. Spalding
1921-22	James M. White	L. L. Glen
1922-23	L. L. Glen	John Prettyman
1923-24	Harry J. Millard	Jack Lawder
1924-25	B. E. Spalding	B. L. Kirk
1925-26	B. L. Kirk	I. L. Peterson
1926-27	I. L. Peterson	W. E. C. Clifford
1927-28	O. B. Dobbins	Bert Eisner
1928-29	C. D. Brownell	Chas. W. Bailey
1929-30	Chas. W. Bailey	Wm. Berryman
1930-31	W. E. C. Clifford	H. C. Northcott
1931-32	H. C. Northcott	George Huff
1932-33	Fred H. Turner	M. L. Kennedy
1933-34	M. L. Kennedy	O. B. Dobbins
1934-35	Chas. A. Kiler	R. D. Carmichael
1935-36	Edw. M. Jacquin	Frank Murphy
1936-37	J. W. Watson	M. T. McClure
1937-38	J. E. Atkinson	L. W. Murphy
1938-39	S. E. Nelson	C. M. Pearson
	C. M. Pearson	
1939-40	George E. Ramey	Will C. Robb
1940-41	Ray C. Sparks	J. H. Finch
	J. H. Finch	
1941-42	Wm. H. Lee	C. E. Bowen
1942-43	M. T. McClure	Forrest Colwell
1943-44	C. E. Bowen	Forrest Colwell
1944-45	Robert Eisner Sr.	A. Ray Cartlidge
1945-46	A. Ray Cartlidge	F. C. Amsbary Jr.
1946-47	F. C. Amsbary Jr.	Tom A. Hagan

1947-48	Tom A. Hagan	Giles Sullivan
1948-49	Giles Sullivan	Russell Cone
1949-50	Russell Cone	B. F. Harris III
1950-51	B. F. Harris III	Wm. L. Everitt
1951-52	Wm. L. Everitt	Don L. Kemmerer
1952-53	Don L. Kemmerer	C. B. Younger Jr.
1953-54	C. B. Younger Jr.	S. D. Daniels
1954-55	S. D. Daniels	L. A. Bryan
1955-56	L. A. Bryan	A. J. Skelton
1956-57	A. J. Skelton	Dean R. McCumber
1957-58	Dean R. McCumber	W. M. Mulliken
1958-59	W. M. Mulliken	W. S. Hansen
1959-60	W. S. Hansen	Robert O. Harvey
1960-61	Robert O. Harvey	J. G. Thomas
1961-62	J. G. Thomas	Guy M. Duker
1962-63	Guy M. Duker	Scott Anderson Sr.
1963-64	Scott Anderson Sr.	C. A. Thompson
1964-65	C. A. Thompson	R. H. Foley
1965-66	R. H. Foley	Robert Eisner Jr.
1966-67	Robert Eisner Jr.	Carl Greenstein
1967-68	Carl Greenstein	H. F. Heaton
1968-69	H. F. Heaton	R. C. Dickerson
1969-70	T. A. Hagan Jr.	H. S. Dawson
1970-71	H. S. Dawson	Eugene Vance
1971-72	Lott H. Thomas	Oscar H. Dodson
1972-73	Oscar H. Dodson	B. A. Dunn
1973-74	B. A. Dunn	Peter T. Tomaras
1974-75	Peter T. Tomaras	W. Thomas Morgan
1975-76	W. Thomas Morgan	James S. Acheson
1976-77	James S. Acheson	Frank Keck
1977-78	Frank Keck	Donald Moyer Jr.
1978-79	Donald Moyer Jr.	William M. Kuhne
1979-80	William M. Kuhne	David B. Lawrence
1980-81	David B. Lawrence	Richard A. Knieriem
1981-82	Richard A. Knieriem	Ronald H. Bates
1982-83	Ronald H. Bates	Ronald Kiddoo
1983-84	Ronald Kiddoo	Thomas O. Dawson
1984-85	Thomas O. Dawson	Leonard T. Flynn
1985-86	Leonard T. Flynn	Ken Gunji
1986-87	Ken Gunji	Edward E. Roderick
1987-88	Edward E. Roderick	Calvin L. Owens
1988-89	Calvin L. Owens	Dan M. Crispin

## APPENDIX B

### RECIPIENTS OF THE ROTARIAN OF THE YEAR AWARD

1979-80	Robert Eisner Jr.
1980-81	William D. Krahling
1981-82	Ralph A. Duffy
1982-83	James S. Acheson
1983-84	Richard H. Burwash
1984-85	Donald E. Moyer Jr.
1985-86	Thomas R. Cornell
1986-87	Scott Anderson Sr.
	Thomas M. Good
1987-88	David C. Thies

### RECIPIENTS OF THE ROBERT EISNER JR. AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING NEW ROTARIAN

1983-84	David C. Thies
1985-86	Robert P. Prath
1986-87	Anthony L. Peressini
1987-88	Monte D. Kramer



## APPENDIX C

### ROTARY CLUBS OF DISTRICT 649

Arthur	Litchfield
Atlanta	Marshall
Bloomington	Mattoon
Blue Mound	Metamora-Germantown Hills
Casey	Monticello
Champaign	Mt. Pulaski
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Danville	Paxton
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