Making The Turning of the Wheel  
By Morda C. Slauson

This book records over six decades of accomplishments by Rotary members in Renton. The good times and fellowship of the boat cruises, golf matches, firesides, the steak fries, the humor at the meetings, and the everlasting friendships made can never be recorded. To these happy memories, this book is hereby dedicated to: Ned Stokes

The Story of the Renton Rotary Club
Renton, Washington
Club Number 5620 of Rotary International
Chartered June 7, 1943

This is the story of the formation of a small service club and tells how a handful of business and professional men saw an idea transform into a vital, active part of their community. This story describes the type of community, of the men who pioneered the idea, and relates briefly some of the highlights of the years since the founding.

The Cogged Wheel, symbol of Rotary International, has been one of the catalysts in the transformation of a pioneer coal-producing town into a modern jet aircraft manufacturing center, known around the world wherever Boeing airplanes fly.

Our thanks to the Renton Historical Society and in particular, Mrs. Morda C. Slauson, author. The research, interviews and writing were done entirely by her and to her we owe sincere and grateful thanks.

Historical Committee of Renton Rotary - Ned Stokes, Chairman - W. Stewart Pope - Charles Ruud - Alex Cugini - Hugh White - Alden See - John Swanson - George Dobson

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The Turning of the Wheel - Part 1  
Written in June, 1972

Introduction

For more than half a century Renton was a coal mining and lumbering village, its streets lined with small houses, each on its narrow strip of land. These streets ran north and south, east and west, until stopped by Lake Washington and the surrounding hills. In the few central blocks were Si Tonkin’s general store, Priebe's blacksmith shop, Custer Hardware, Raymond’s Emporium, Harold Evans livery stable, McPherson’s Hardware, Renton Ice & Cold Storage and a few other stores.

Coal trains puffed through the town at all hours of the day and night. At the corner of 3rd and Mill streets the long steel cars of Seattle & Rainier Valley Railroad backed slowly around to start their return journey to the city.

At the foot of Earlington Hill the cows from Smithers and Hardie dairies grazed on lush pasture at either side of Black River. The Cedar River, bordered by giant cottonwood, cedar and maple trees meandered unchecked across the flat where Renton stood to join the Black. In times of high water it washed out streets and bridges and occasionally sent the lowland residents hurrying up Renton Hill to spend a few days with friends until the floods subsided.

About where Renton High School stands today the Moses family lived in a small cottage. They were among the last of the original Native Americans of the valley. Henry Moses and three brothers grew up here, fished, swam and went to school with the other young folks of Renton. Henry attended old Central school, later Henry Ford and now Renton School District headquarters.

He was a fine basketball and baseball player. Later at various times he was a member of the Renton, Hobart and Taylor baseball teams. Since 1916 Renton High School has called its teams the “Indians” in honor of Henry who was one of the players on the champion high school basketball team of that year. His death in January 1969 marked the end of a long line of Duwamish tribal chieftains.
His grandfather, Chief William Moses, had been an eye witness to the battle of Seattle in 1855. Henry lived to see giant Boeing bombers take off from his family’s former lands, now Renton Airport.

In those earlier years black-faced miners with lunch buckets and “tea kettle” caps thronged the streets late every afternoon. They came from the two dozen or more coal mines being worked within a radius of 25 miles of the town. Since the first deposit was found in the early 1860’s near present Cedar River Park, coal had been the “black gold” which meant prosperity for southeast King county. Great seams of the black rock were found in almost every hill and ridge, enough to last for many years, according to glowing reports made by mining experts of the time.

Then oil tankers began to appear from the South. Householders replaced coal burning stoves with oil furnaces and electric ranges. The many ships on Seattle’s waterfront were no longer “coaled.” Would Renton follow the coal-producing areas of the east into poverty and oblivion? The grandsons of the miners who had come from all the countries of Europe to find a better life in America said “no.” Rather than sit and wait for the mines to reopen they learned other trades, acquired more education, opened other businesses.

The town was fortunate in having Renton Clay Works which had started in 1901 on the bank of Cedar River. First finished products were turned out in April 1902. Operating continuously ever since, it was absorbed by Denny-Renton Clay & Coal Company in 1905; bought by Gladding McBean in 1927 and merged in 1962 with International Pipe & Ceramics.

Two other firms which helped to give the town a slow but steady growth were Pacific Car & Foundry, begun in 1905 to build railroad cars and large castings for industrial purposes and the present Puget Power Company which evolved from Stone & Webster, Seattle Electric and in 1912, Puget Sound Traction & Power Company, predecessor to Puget Sound Power & Light. These three firms kept Renton solvent until the big change came.

The Change Came

The onset of World War II and the arrival of Boeing brought dramatic changes to Renton. Almost overnight, or so it seemed, increasing numbers of men in business suits with brief cases replaced the miners and their lunch buckets. The good swimming beach at the mouth of the Cedar, Barbee sawmill, a small shingle mill, the house boat, labeled “Capt. Burrows – Summer and Winter Pleasure Resort,” Ted White’s boat launch – all these disappeared or relocated away from the south end of Lake Washington.

Lowlands and swamp were filled rapidly. The old channel of former Black River disappeared as the new Renton Airport was filled and graded. Farther east on former Lake Washington beaches, which had been donated by the late Dr. Dixon, huge buildings of concrete, brick, steel and glass rose higher day by day.

Thousands of workers poured in from all over the United States and many foreign countries to bend over blueprints, miles of wiring, pipes, steel, aluminum and all the intricate mechanism which constitutes a modern airplane. Hundreds of cars were parked twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week on what had been a tangle of willows and swamp grass.

Renton Rotary Arrives

The spring of 1943, the Renton Boeing plant had just been completed and the building of Boeing B-29 bombers transformed Renton from a small town of 4200 people to a modern industrial center. At this time, Renton businessmen and other professionals began to meet once a week for lunch. They discussed challenges both of their own businesses and professions as well as the rapidly growing city in which they lived and worked.

After a few such meetings George Dobson, Elmo Wright, Harley Drake and J. H. MacDowell decided to enlarge their small group to make it of more service to the community and greater benefit to themselves. They discussed their ideas at length and thought they would be more effective as part of a larger organization. Others became interested and eventually Seattle Rotary offered to sponsor a new club.

From this came Renton Rotary Club which in 1972,, the 29th year of its existence, had grown from four men to a membership of 101, representing all phases of business and professional life. The coal mining village has expanded into a truly cosmopolitan city.

Four members of Seattle Rotary met with the Renton group a number of times. They were Frank Barrett, known as the “father” of Renton Rotary, Bill Driver, Nat Rogers and Gordon Scott. Fred K. Jones, Governor of District
101, gave much help. It was decided the territorial limits of the new club should coincide with the boundaries of Renton School District 403.

**Charter Members of Rotary**


Of these John Swanson, first president, George Dobson and A. Alden See (at time of this writing) are still members. Other first year officers were: Dr. Bates, vice president; Johnson, secretary and Arnold, treasurer.

On the evening of June 17, 1943, at one of the largest social affairs held in Renton up to that time, Renton Rotary No. 5620 received its charter with 260 persons present in the new Renton Highlands clubhouse. Nat S. Rogers, president of Seattle Rotary, gave the address of welcome; the Seattle Rotary Glee Club sang; Ernest L. Skeel talked on “Rotary’s Part in World Affairs” and the charter was presented by Fred. Jones.

This night, while Renton was giving birth to a Rotary Club, war raged in Europe and Asia.

The Seattle police chief announced a new policy “tightening the lid” on gambling.

Arthur B. Langlie was governor and Victor A. Myers lieutenant-governor.

Popular brands of cigarettes were advertised at $1.55 per carton; coffee $.21 per pound and oranges $.33 a dozen.

The Washington State Grange, in convention in Yakima, resolved to ask government authorities to keep Japanese-Americans in relocation centers for the duration of the war.

Barbee Marine Yards and Seattle-Renton Mill Company began a move across Lake Washington from Bryn Mawr to Kennydale. Included in this move was a 140-foot high water tower which was barged across the lake intact, as was much of the other major equipment.

Gifts came from seven other Rotary clubs in the area; 22 letters arrived from clubs in other states, England, Canada and Alaska, together with 15 telegrams of congratulation.

All members were quickly given jobs on a variety of committees. Under the heading of community service were grouped inter-club activities and cultural and recreational improvement of the community. Vocational service included employer-employee and competitor relations as well as occupational information. Club service covered a great variety of activities, ranging from welcome to new members to special conferences and from public relations to social aspects of the club.

**The First Year**

“We had a lot to learn,” said John. Swanson, looking back on those early days when he was starting to pilot the new club through the shoals of proper membership and accomplishment. “Fully 95 percent of the 26 charter members had never belonged to any sort of service club. Most of them had heard little about Rotary.”

“Here in Renton we knew more about Kiwanis. The Renton Kiwanis Club at that time had 85 members and the Lions Club, 65. With so few members and no money in the treasury, we charter members of Rotary had a really insecure feeling.

“We spent a lot of time, studying the manual, deciding on committees and finding projects. We began weekly programs and organized a membership committee to interest new men and then needed an attendance committee to keep them coming. And of course we needed money. We added 50 cents to the price of lunch tickets, started fines for non-attendance and later had suit and rummage sales.

“Starting with 26 charter members, we added 13 new ones that first year but lost six of them and dreamed of a day when we might have 50 or 60. Since Renton was full of Boeing workers, we were obliged to move our weekly
luncheons to four different restaurants. Thursday noons found us first at Tonkin’s Café, then the Renton City Club in the old Smithers home, Pacific Car & Foundry lunch room and the basement of St. Luke’s Episcopal Church.

“We introduced the club to all city officials, bringing each one in as part of a program. We also introduced our wives to Rotary by having a special party for them in February 1944 at White River Lodge. The Chicago office sent me letters of advice, giving ideas on my duties as president. All of this combined with the long list of committees sounded quite formidable. We felt at first that we were tied to a stiff, unyielding program. However, we discovered that this did not need to be true. We started to work on the fellowship aspect of Rotary and this has continued up to the present.”

“We all need to remember the fellowship and social aspects of Rotary,” comments Charles Ruud, one of the present active members. “Rotary started originally to promote friendship among business men and is still doing that. It has been very effective here in Renton.”

International Rotary – 1905

International Rotary, oldest of all service clubs, began in June 1905. Paul Harris, a Chicago attorney, had the idea that men in different vocations, rather than competing with each other, should get together and exchange ideas, maybe even promote each other’s business.

He and six friends started to meet in offices. Each was active in a different business. The meetings were moved from one office to another. As the group grew in size, this type of meeting became impossible. However, from it evolved the idea of “Rotary.” Soon it was decided to eliminate promotion of themselves and expand to service in the community.

The main purpose of the new group became “service above self.” The cogged wheel became the symbol of Rotary International and still is.

The four way creed by which Rotarians operate is spelled out on plaques which hang in members’ offices around the globe: “We use the FOUR WAY TEST of the things WE think, say or do – Is it the TRUTH? Is it FAIR to all concerned? Will it build GOOD WILL and BETTER FRIENDSHIPS? Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned?”

On March 23, 1972, there were 15,161 Rotary clubs and an estimated 710,000 Rotarians in 149 countries and geographical regions. Western District 502 to which Renton Rotary belongs has 56 clubs with 4278 members. It includes 13 clubs in British Columbia and 43 in western Washington from Longview to the Canadian border.

Dr. Gene Campbell, Seattle, was the current District-Governor and served as the direct contact to Rotary International.

Rotary International is administered by a board of directors composed of 14 Rotarians elected at the annual international convention. The organization maintains its headquarters at 1600 Ridge Avenue in Evanston, Illinois.

When Renton Rotary began in 1943, many prominent citizens were members. These included the mayor, superintendent of utilities, two members of the school board, three out of five men on the local war-time housing authority, five out of 12 on the Renton planning commission and the president of the chamber of commerce. Since it was war time all members were active in various war and defense activities, including air raid wardens, defense police, U.S.O. programs, Red Cross, ration boards and listening posts.

During 1944, first full year of club activities, there were a few members and a small treasury. The campaign to recognize and aid young folks in the Renton area began with a $10 donation to help the Washington State Patrol entertain patrol boys at Playland. In the spring another $10 was given to help with improvements at the city ball park and at the suggestion of Hamilton Church, then director of recreation for Renton School District, three baseball uniforms were purchased for boys who played in the county league.

Under James Morrison, president during the second year, the club headed the Red Cross drive, sponsored Air Scout Troop #483 and cooperated in the community campaign which resulted later in an outdoor swimming pool. Since the world was still at war, members collected 26,119 pounds of clothing and 2,996 pairs of shoes to send overseas. Fourteen new members were added, making a total of 45 Rotarians.
Iron Lung is Purchased

In 1945-46 under the presidency of Alan Lane the first large gift, an iron lung, was presented to Renton Hospital and $500 was donated to the cancer drive, honoring the memory of E.K. Arnold, a charter member. The “iron lung” used at that time was officially known as the Drinker-Shaw resuscitator. This large chamber was used to aid polio victims and was badly needed in hospitals of that era. Since the inception of the Salk Vaccine, and the reduction in the incidence of polio, these chambers are no longer used, but at that time, this was a major contribution to the health of the community. The practice of sending weekly bulletins to members was started, the membership having increased to 53. This year also saw the average attendance record built to 90.33 percent.

With Frank Mathewson as president in 1946-47, the club started a campaign for bicycle safety, putting Scotch Lite tape on youngsters' bicycles. More than 2,000 were handled in one day alone. Rotary also had a paper drive for the benefit of Renton Hospital; gave a trophy to the community league basketball champions and cooperated in a variety show to aid the cancer fund. The champion football team of Renton High School was honored with a banquet and service club signs were installed at several places in Renton. The club grew to 57 members.

From then on Rotary each year increased its assistance to community endeavors. Under Robert Osborne in 1947-48, when the high school stadium was built, the club started the purchase of the large score board, still used at all games and again held a banquet for the football team. Members also helped support various Little League football teams.

The next year with Thomas Dobson as president, the club completed payment for the score board; sent two Renton girls to Girl Scout summer camp and joined the Renton Kiwanis and Lions in helping the high school band go to Portland for a concert.

Youth of the Month Started

Probably one of the most important club activities, connected with young people and one which after 23 years, is ongoing, is the Youth of the Month program. Feeling that good students, as well as fine athletes, should be honored, this idea was begun in 1949-50 during the reign of A.M. Roberts. The initial individual recognition was made in October, 1949 to a student at Renton High School, Beverly Quistorff Sheller.

Each month an outstanding boy or girl are selected from each high school and honored with a pin, designed by Jerry Rutherford. The student and parents are guests at a regular Rotary luncheon and all introduced to the members. These young folks came first from Renton High and beginning in 1969 from Hazen High. Soon they will be picked from new Lindbergh High School. A scholarship fund was started with awards of $100 and $150 to high school students.

It was about this time that the club moved its weekly luncheons to the former Chamber of Commerce building on Wells Street. Here in the rooms used by the U.S.O. during the war, Nellie O'Brien served delicious, home-cooked meals to the men of Rotary, Lions and the Chamber of Commerce. She also catered for the Business and Professional Women's Club. She was assisted by four other Renton women: Flora Monaghan, Christina Carey, Regina Katzer and Ann Hood. When this arrangement was finally concluded, a farewell luncheon was given at the Towne House, honoring O'Brien and her crew.

To raise money for Rotary activities two programs were held in the Renton High School auditorium in 1950-51 while Randall Rockhill was president. The University of Washington band was brought in January and the All-University student show in March. The first Valentine party for Rotary wives was held in February 1951; also, a box lunch and dance, following the installation of officers.

Hayden Williams, president in 1951-52, attended International Rotary in Mexico City. The Rotary Club of Victoria, B.C., visited Renton; later the visit was returned. In addition to carrying on the usual programs, the club gave $50 to buy color films for the Renton Boy Scouts who attended the World Jamboree. Williams started the idea of recognizing members on their birthdays. Each contributed $1.00 or more to the club treasury and was given a small token. It was thought that this added an atmosphere of fellowship and good will to the regular meetings.
Needy Neighbors Remembered

Lost somewhere in the records but probably in Williams' tenure, the Rotary Christmas program began. About December 15 each year a collection is taken. Renton school nurses were asked to pick five to seven families in the district who, because of illness or bad luck, are in especially needy circumstances.

$150 was spent for food and children's clothing for each family. This was distributed by the members about December 20, far enough in advance of Christmas so the adults know their children will not be forgotten.

Lewis Argano became president in 1952-53. Under his guidance the club decided to support Little League football teams and sponsored one Renton boy to the Boy Scout Jamboree in California. Financial help was given so that outstanding musicians of Renton High could attend the Northwest Washington Music Conference; the high school band was sent to play at a concert in Ellensburg. A trophy was purchased for the inter-club tourney.

Under the guidance of Stewart Pope in 1953-54 the club started a very large undertaking. Following requests from students Rotary sponsored an all-night graduation party for the seniors of Renton High School. Taken in buses to a large country club, they danced the night away, chaperoned by Rotarians, and were then returned to Renton where breakfast was served. Approximately 98 percent of the class took part in this affair. It was continued for two years after which the mothers of the senior class took it over.

During the spring of 1954, Rotary International held its world-wide conference in Seattle. Pope remembers that all the clubs in the district were asked to help. Renton members drove cars in car pools, acted as hosts and tour guides on various occasions.

William J. O'Neil, president during 1954-55, also remembers the big international meeting and said that practically all Renton Rotarians assisted in some way. Renton also had a large representation at the district conference in Victoria. Two anniversaries were celebrated with a banquet and much publicity; the 50th anniversary of Rotary International and the 12th of Renton Rotary.

During December 1954, while Rotary International was getting ready to celebrate its golden anniversary, Renton Rotarians decided as part of their program to give prominence to the Youth of the Month project. Questionnaires were sent out by a committee, headed by Randall Rockhill, to the Renton high school students who had been selected as Youth of the Month from 1949-1952.

It is interesting to note what these young folks had been doing since they graduated from Renton High School. Six had already received a college degree; two in history, one in drama; one, education; one, physical education and one, religious education. Seven had been married and 25 were attending college at that time.

One of the girls was modeling for Saks Fifth Avenue store in New York City; another was studying to be a stewardess. Two of the boys had seen army service, one with many months in Korea. Another had served in the naval aviation where he formed an acting group, composed entirely of military personnel, and after discharge was on the staff of the Houston, Texas, playhouse, a professional stock company.

After reading comments from these letters Renton Rotarians realized the value of the Youth of the Month program. Members. “Serves as an inspiration to good citizenship” -- "rewarding feeling to know that your organization is still interested in us after high school" -- “Youth of the Month program meant much to me and I hope it will always be carried on” -- “being selected Youth of the Month made my last year a very happy one” -- “Since entering college, the full significance of being selected Youth of the Month has become apparent. The achievement was not in being recognized but in proving myself worthy after being honored. Thank you again.”

Beachcombers Started

Sports-minded members organized the Beachcombers’ Club in 1955-56 when George Dobson was head of Rotary. The Beachcombers, in existence for years, was the “fun” group within Rotary. It sponsored golf tournaments, crab feeds and other social events for the club. Special dues were paid by its members. All members were invited to take part in all Beachcomber activities.

The Beachcomber concept was the result of incoming President Dobson’s trip to Chicago, Illinois, to attend the Rotary International convention. This marked the first year that the club agreed to pay some of the cost toward such a trip for an incoming president. This practice was to be revived many years later. At this national
convention the theme was for clubs throughout the world to initiate more “fun” into Rotary meetings and Rotary in general. Dobson formed the group within the group and it has been a popular concept ever since.

In addition to the other projects, designed for high school students, the club started to give $5.00 a month spending money to the first foreign exchange student to come to Renton High under the American Field Service program.

Three social events were held which included the wives: a Christmas party, Valentine party and small fireside meetings. All of these are now annual affairs.

Salute to Scholarship

“Salute to Scholarship” was inaugurated the following year, 1956-57, during the tenure of Hugo Toschi. This observance took the form of a banquet and gifts for the top scholars in each graduating class. Rotarians felt that outstanding athletes and musicians were honored and praised while too often there was no recognition for the students who study hard and make the most of their scholastic opportunities. This program still continues with Renton, Lindbergh, and Hazen students being honored.

Each student was assigned a Rotary member who picked him up at home and acted as escort to a Seattle restaurant where dinner was served. A college dictionary engraved with his or her name was given to each student. This is still one of Rotary’s top projects.

The club also added $54 a year for school lunches and $50 clothing allowance to the exchange students. Two other special gifts were $100 to Rotary clubs in Austria to help Hungarian refugees and a similar sum to buy prayer books for St. Luke’s Episcopal Church in memory of Tom Dobson.

In 1957-58 when Jerry Shellan was president, a new Rotary Club was sponsored at Kent. The Renton club became 15 years old in June 1958 and membership grew to 72.

A banquet and gifts again honored the top scholars in the high school graduating class. From this time on, both a boy and a girl were picked each month from Renton High School for the Youth of the Month program.

The Renton Rotary became known internationally in 1958-59 under Rudy Seppi. Plaques were sent to the Rotary Clubs of Paris and Brussels, aboard the first flights of Boeing 707 passenger airplanes. After sponsoring two new South End clubs, Kent and Midway, the local club developed the idea of area cooperation by arranging joint luncheons for the clubs of south King county: Burien, Des Moines, Midway, Kent, Auburn and Renton.

Senior Citizen Award

A strictly local idea was the establishment of the Senior Citizen award the same year. This was changed in September 1967 to Community Service award. A number of framed certificates were presented each year to citizens picked by a committee which consisted of Rudolph Seppi as chairman, assisted by Lewis J. Dowell, A.M. Roberts and Hayden Williams.

On the certificate are the words: Rotary Achievement Award to _______. “For his past distinguished service and whole hearted cooperation in those undertakings which has been influential in making Renton a friendly, pleasant and most desirable community in which to live.” Each certificate was dated and signed by the Rotary president.

Up to date these certificates have been given to the following citizens: Frank Aliment, Dr. Con Ambrose, Mrs. George Beanblossom, Miss Dusalina Cavaletto, Hamilton Church, Alex Cugini, Sr., Miss Winifred Daniels, Mrs. Rosalie Evans, Jack Fink, Oliver Furseth, Mrs. Dorothy Grabner, Thor Henrikson, Ernie Henry, William Hillier, Floyd Lawrence, Mike Lotto, William O’Neill, Lewis Peretti, Elmer Pistoresi, Ernie Shearer, Miss Virginia Shook, John Swanson, Ivan Unbedacht, and Hayden Williams.

During the administration of Will Hillier, 1959-60, two new ideas were implemented for raising funds: the weekend pancake feed and the suit sale at Renton Shopping Center. Members provided discarded but still wearable suits, sport clothes, sweaters, and top coats which were cleaned by a Rotary member, Frank Raphael, and sold at bargain prices at a weekend shopping promotion.

Hard work by the entire club netted $300 or $400 which, according to Hillier, seemed like a bonanza in 1959. In less than ten years came the present CAPER activity which now raises up to $100,000 or more in a single night.
Hillier remembers the amusement, produced by former member, Ed Shekter, who at some time during the year photographed every Rotarian and then, at the close, presented a unique slide program, consisting of candid shots of the members.

In 1972, Hillier was recognized for his many years of service to the club with the Community Service award.

Harry Benton presided over Rotary in 1960-61 and J.L. Davidson in 1961-62. The club grew in numbers and continued all of its youth programs and support of community projects.

In 1962-63 under the presidency of Harold Thevik the first flying visitation of 16 Renton Rotary members in private airplanes was made to Chilliwak, Canada. The program for the day was supplied by the visitors with much good will and friendship resulting.

During the year the club continued the project of aiding foreign exchange students who come to Renton. One came from Germany and one from Finland. Each youngster took part in some Rotary function; also, contact was made with a Rotary club near their home to explain the exchange program.

The club kept in touch with International House at the University of Washington so that speakers could be obtained for local programs. The club also worked out an idea where local club members offered hospitality in their homes to foreign guests.

**Rotary at World’s Fair**

During the week of September 23-30, 1962, the Renton club hosted the Rotary Friendship room at Seattle’s World Fair with various members and their wives in attendance from 10 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. each day.

A letter from Gordon Tongue of Seattle, at that time governor of District 502, should be remembered since it congratulates the club on achieving 100% attendance at the four meetings in November.

A new community proposal was begun in 1963-64 while C.G. Myers was president. The club worked with Renton Recreational Council on the preliminary survey to get a new swimming beach on Lake Washington. The cooperative effort has resulted in the present city park at the south end of the lake. A gift of $100 was made to Renton Creative Arts group to help with their annual festival.

In May 1964, H. Raymond Johnson, club secretary, was honored by a special program presented by KIRO radio and his name was inscribed on a “distinguished citizens” plaque which was presented to him at a Rotary meeting.

B.G. Morrison served as head of Rotary in 1964-65. Morrison remembers beginning the year with the District Conference in Longview in which all Renton officers attended. Continuing all the programs, this year marked the start of the annual Joshua Green Age-Handicap Golf Tournament. Green, long a part of Pacific Northwest history had always been a frequent honored guest at Renton Rotary meetings. The Green tournament aided “older” golfers by awarding additional strokes for each year over age 55. Winners have been Tony Porcello, Herb Williams, Earle Bigler, Hayden Williams, Rudolph Seppi, Glenn Wallin and Mike Roberts. The trophy, a handsome sterling silver vase, rotated yearly to the winner. At a special meeting that year, Green was made an honorary member of the Beachcombers and in a letter to R.E. Theinhardt, his host for the day, said:

“Thank you for the honorary membership in the Beachcombers. I shall keep it among my other intimate family and business framed pictures, Board of Directors and Membership Certificates in my upstairs sitting room at 1204 Minor Avenue. There are about one hundred and twenty of them, almost papering the walls of the room. I am proud of them and hope my children will be when I am gone, but never enjoy them as I do where my wife and I look at them every day of the year.”

After Philip Buck assumed the presidency, 1965-66, the club moved the weekly luncheons to the Renton Inn banquet room which gave more space for the larger group. A sustained membership drive was started which resulted in 15 new members during the year.

First discussions were begun on the concept of a large money-making plan which resulted in the present yearly presentation of CAPER. This idea was approved by the board and planning started.

Rotary board members agreed to pay the expenses of the incoming president each year to attend the Rotary International convention anywhere in the world.
Marilyn Anderson, a gifted high school artist, was adopted by the club and helped with a scholarship so that she might continue her art education.

**CAPER Starts**

John Schaeffer, president 1966-67, became the first president to represent Renton Rotary at an International Convention since 1955. The convention was held in Nice, France, and Reverend and Mrs. Schaeffer attended.

After months of planning, this year’s highlight was holding the first CAPER in Rotary history. This function was the first large-scale fund-raising activity and the membership participation was unprecedented in Rotary history. The planning and committee work by President Schaeffer, Chairman Thor Henrikson and the CAPER committee consumed virtually the entire year and the results enabled Renton Rotary to distribute funds to the selected agencies to an extent never dreamed of before.

**CAPER Supports Rotary Activities**

1972 marks the sixth year of CAPER, originated by Renton Rotary to raise funds for youth activities and special community projects which require large amounts of money. Before starting this project Thor Henrikson, now deceased, and Alex Cugini, Jr. made an exhaustive survey of all similar money raising plans in the Pacific Northwest, particularly that of PONCHO in Seattle. From the ideas of other groups Renton Rotarians picked those they considered best.

In March 1967 the first dinner and auction was held at Hyatt House with Henrikson as chairman and Cugini, co-chairman. This was an outstanding success and assured the continuance of CAPER.

Income has ranged in the initial years from $10,000 to $15,000. Succeeding chairmen were: Rev. John Schaeffer, 1968; Philip Irwin, 1969 and J.L. Davidson, 1970,’71 and ’72.

“This is one club activity in which practically all members take an active part,” commented Davidson, reviewing his three years as chairman. “Participation is high. Each member has different contacts which can be used to bring in saleable articles for the auction. In addition to providing funds for much needed and highly useful community projects, CAPER also has made Renton Rotary well and favorably known. I believe it is one of the most successful such endeavors on the West Coast.”

**CAPER** is, of course, a coined name, evolved by three couples: the Cuginis, Angus Tierneys and C.L. Divelbisses. The letters stand for: **Community Auction Promoting Endeavors of Rotary.**

These Rotarian endeavors lead in many directions, although they are concentrated under two main heads as had been mentioned before: help to young folks and funds for community programs. Under the former come of course the scholarships, Youth of the Month, foreign exchange students help, Friends of Youth and a special fund of $1000 which helped send the Renton High School Choir to Japan.

Two important community projects were starting and helping to finance the South King County blood bank and the purchase of a station wagon to transport blood plasma; also, buying expensive equipment for the intensive care cardiac unit at Valley General Hospital. During the last year of financial stress, as has been mentioned previously, special sums were given to Neighbors in Need and the Renton Booster program for the local schools.

Other aspects of enriching community life were not forgotten. A bronze sculpture was placed in the entrance of new city hall, paintings were given to that building and the Renton library and prizes donated for the Renton Annual Art Show. Landscaping, a lookout platform and kiosk or outdoor picnic shelter have added to the charm and usefulness of Cedar River Park.

Some of the items auctioned during the early years at CAPER include two vacation cabins; a two-bedroom Cascadian model home; three golf memberships; set of golf clubs; use of a Ford, Volkswagen Super Beetle, Vega or Mazda automobile for one year; charter boat fishing trip at Westport; Shetland pony; use of horse trailer for three days; family portrait; miniature silver poodle; a chance to carry a spear as part of the chorus in a Seattle opera production (this was sold for $75); dinner for two on a Japanese ship; Renton mayor as baby sitter; painting by Kenneth Callahan and drawings by Tsutakawa.
The 1972 auction included 127 items where the bids were written before the dinner; 8 auctioned orally. Forty artists contributed 89 articles, ranging from paintings to pottery, which were also sold by write-in-bids.

The other saleable ideas and items, contributed by imaginative Rotarians, ranged from weekends at Hyatt House and Sheraton-Renton Inn to breakfast in Renton City Jail; season basketball tickets, four shares of People’s National Bank stock, courtesy of Joshua Green; Dungeness crabs or a stag steak dinner; geraniums for the flower bed or firewood for the hearth; motor and fuel oil, as contrasted to an antique vase; landscaping or tickets to the opera.

All the above and many more produced total sales of $12,189.93 in March 1972. After expenses were deducted, a sizeable sum remains to be budgeted by Rotary for community needs. Approximately $3600 went into the usual scholarships for Renton high school seniors; $2000 to the South King County Activity Center for handicapped children and $1200 for a copying machine for Griffin Boys Home.

Rotary Anns Help With CAPER

For more than a quarter of a century, the wives of Renton Rotarians, known as Rotary Anns, have worked with the club in many ways and particularly have been of great assistance with CAPER. With the wife of the president as unofficial head of the group, they began in the first year of CAPER to collect paintings, pottery and sculpture, all by northwest artists. The sale of these brought in a large amount of money each year. Also, the artists benefited by having their works seen and appreciated by local citizens.

In 1967, first year of CAPER, Mrs. Alex Cugini, Jr. was asked to be chairman of a committee to collect perhaps 25 paintings which could be auctioned. She gathered a committee and started looking for possible ideas. Before the date of the auction the women had found 125 different art works, paintings, sculpture and pottery. From then on there was no thought of a CAPER without the Rotary Anns.

Mrs. C.L. Divelbiss was co-chairman with Mrs. Cugini for the second year; Mrs. Florian Koenigs, the third year. For two years a pre-CAPER art display was held to give prospective buyers a chance to see and bid on the items. About 100 persons attended these special evenings, staged and managed by Rotary Anns.

The art portion of CAPER rapidly grew so large that it became a huge task to collect and catalogue the offerings. The Renton Annual Art Show which had been helped by Rotary offered to take over the job. Mrs. Gordon Clark and Mrs. Philip Irwin of the above group were in charge the fourth year; Mrs. Irwin in 1971 and Mrs. Rudy Cumberbatch in 1972.

During the presidency of C.L. Divelbiss, 1967-68, the scholarship grants were increased to the amount of $205 with a total of $3205 which made it possible to give awards to 10 students. The club in Fairbanks, Alaska, was sent a check for $1100 to aid in the rebuilding and restocking of a hospital, damaged in the 1967 flood.

Renton Rotarians helped to form a new South Center Club which was chartered on September 28, 1968. A letter was received from a club in Sweden, thanking Renton Rotary for hosting Bengt Randholm during the school year of 1966-67. Good natured assessing of fines of various members earned Divelbiss the name “Charlie the Cruel.”

Work on City Parks

Florian Koenigs was head of Rotary in 1968-69 when a committee was appointed to investigate the needs of the city parks: Jones, Liberty and Cedar River. Later $2000 was given to help with the river bank plantings which had been started a number of years before by the women of Sunset View Garden Club.

“A very successful CAPER was held, netting about $13,000, I believe,” said Koenigs. About $3500 went for scholarships to Renton High seniors and $500 was allocated for three or more paintings from the Renton Art Show to be hung in the new Renton Municipal Building. We also discussed spending up to $3000 for an intensive care unit in the new Valley Hospital”.

Two other interesting events of the year which Koenigs remembered were attendance at a dinner in Seattle, honoring William Togaski, International President of Rotary, and pinning a Sea-First button on Joshua Green to open the Joshua Green Golf Day.
The club, with Gary Dime as president, 1969-70, concentrated on helping to develop the new Cedar River Park. After much discussion it was decided to use $1500 from CAPER funds to complete the landscaping around Carco Theater and to build an observation platform with benches at the rear, overlooking the river.

“All of us in Rotary are involved in an effort to improve the community and make it a better place for all,” said Dime. “We felt that this park on the river would help greatly in giving Renton a unique and very usable civic center.”

Expansion of Rotary Aid

“It is a great privilege to be part of an organization which is a leader in community affairs,” said Alex Cugini, Jr., president in 1970-71. “Renton Rotary operates in three general areas: youth activities, community health and local affairs.” CAPER funds were used for 12 scholarships to graduating high school seniors; the usual assistance was given to foreign students at Renton high school; $375 to Renton area Boy Scouts; $500 to help a deaf child attend the Vancouver school.

“Another scholarship fund of $750 was established to honor H. Raymond Johnson, secretary since the beginning of our club. He died in October. Rotary also misses CAPER originator and charter member, Thor Henrikson and Herb Williams, long-time members.”

One of the highlights of this year was the celebration, October 8, 1970, of Columbus Day. Rotary Anns were guests; wine was served and University of Washington Professor Angelo Pellegrini was the speaker. During this one day the club displayed quite a partiality toward Italians.

Other social events of the year included the annual Christmas party for Rotary families; the Beachcombers crab feed; a May boat cruise on Lake Washington; participation in the Joshua Green golf tournament as well as the Inter-City match.

No Rotary history would be complete without mention of the part taken by H. Raymond Johnson, Secretary of Renton Rotary since it was chartered. “Secretary Johnson was skilled in the facets of the operation of the Rotary Club and helped me by giving sound advice,” said one former president. Ray Johnson’s untimely death during this year was mourned by all Rotarians, especially the many past presidents who had relied on him heavily during the first few months of office.

A letter was written to Renton School District, offering full support for the proposed drug education program. Later $1000 was given to Renton Youth Service for Berry House, a drop-in center for local youth.

City Officials Recognized

With Paul W. Houser as president in 1971-72 city officials, including the Renton policemen, were weekly guests of the club. Contact was made with local service clubs, such as Kiwanis and Lions through a new inter-club committee under Bill Ellis.

Contributions included $1000 to fight drug abuse; $500 to the School Activities fund to help after the school levy failures; $250 to Renton Food Bank; $250 to Little League; $250 to Boys’ Club; $1200 to Griffin Home; scholarships, totaling $3500 to graduation seniors and $2000 to South King County Activities Center, an organization aiding retarded youth.

An historical committee under Ned Stokes as chairman commissioned the Renton Historical Society to write a history of the Renton Rotary.

CAPER under Judy Davidson was again a success. Membership rose above 100. Despite inclement weather and partly because of George “Try it, you’ll like it” Kawachi, Rotary smiled in 1971-72. Social events by Beachcombers under Rockhill and Davidson included a crab feed, Chinese dinner and boat ride. Alex and Norma Cugini co-hosted a lovely spring luncheon, featuring May wine and Father McGoin. Rotarians began wearing their pins at meetings, birthdays were duly recognized; meetings ended on time.

At the special request of J.L. Davidson, Renton Rotary in May offered some help to the new track program at the tiny high school in the mountain town of Lester. After reading in the Seattle Times of the students’ wish to start an
athletic program, the club sent high jump standards, two crossbars and a stop watch. After the article appeared, Lester athletes were invited to compete in several meets in King County.

The Wheel Keeps Turning – Part 2
1972-1987

In preparing this update of The Turning of the Wheel, the History committee attempted to record the highlights of the Rotary years 1972 to 1987 as seen through the eyes of each year’s president. The intent is that this material will recreate interesting memories for our present members and serve somewhat as historical background for Renton Rotary members of future generations.

Sincere thanks are extended to Mary Swift, a prominent Renton writer, for the actual writing of this update. We appreciate her ability to put our story in such an interesting form.

We also extend our deepest gratitude to the Boeing Commercial Airplane Company who as a public service has made the actual printing of this booklet possible.

Historical Committee Members were: Randy Rockhill, Gerry Edlund, Jim White, and Gary Anderson.

By 1987, Renton Rotary had moved clearly to the forefront of local community service efforts, undergoing a number of changes as it did. The Renton community, which had moved from being a small town in the early 1900s to a major suburban industrial center in the years following World War II, had grown up; so, too, had the Rotary Club that bears its name.

The club, which had begun with just 26 charter members back in the summer of 1943, now numbered 107 prominent local citizens. Membership had more than quadrupled over the four-plus decades of Renton Rotary’s existence.

If anything, time had strengthened the club’s already strong sense of purpose and dedication to community service. Just as the city had grown, so had the club’s increasingly active role in the community.

The legacy that had begun with Renton Rotary’s first steps into the arena of community, international, vocational and club service continued in the years that followed, success building upon success as a steady stream of business and community leaders moved forward to accept Rotary’s challenge.

For those familiar with Rotary’s efforts, the contributions to the community were hard to miss. From support for public art projects to donations to social service organizations, arts groups, the schools and a variety of other causes, Renton Rotary continued its tradition of working to make a difference in the quality of community life.

The fact Renton Rotary could make such extensive contributions wasn’t accidental, but the result of hard work and an innovative fund-raising formula that incorporates generosity, fun and commitment to service.

In developing the concept of the Rotary CAPER, the fund raising auction of donated goods and services, the Renton club had hit upon a fund-raising plan that was to become the model for a number of other clubs.

The first gala dinner and auction was held at the Hyatt House in March 1967 and marked the beginning of an activity in which almost all members participate.

The Rotary CAPER, a successful fund-raising formula developed in the 1960s, gained momentum in the years that followed its inception and enjoyed the compliment of being copied by a number of other clubs. It is said imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. If that’s the case, then Renton Rotary must be flattered indeed.

In the years since the first Rotary members turned out for an evening of fun and frivolity to benefit community projects, Renton Rotary has raised some $350,000 through CAPER.

The pages that follow detail 15 years of Renton Rotary
Harry Haight  1972-1973

Renton Rotary continued to play a major role in the community during Harry Haight’s term as president in 1972-1973.

Haight called one of his money-making ventures “fun with fines.” Other members probably had more descriptive terms for it. It was a year in which Rotary introduced a $1 “buck out” fine, a penalty levied against members who came for lunch but left before the program started. Regardless of what it was called, the end result netted $1020.82 for Rotary coffers.

Rotary’s annual CAPER continued to turn hard work and community generosity into an evening of fun and a healthy profit for Rotary. CAPER, under the able direction of Bob Larsen, netted $10,294 and, as usual, Rotary had no trouble finding ways to spend CAPER funds for community benefit.

The club channeled more than $2000 into its foreign exchange program, donated $1000 for Lindbergh High School band uniforms and provided $750 for the Ray Johnson Scholarship Fund. Other monies were spent for Little League, Boy Scouts, the Renton-Maple Valley Family Concert, the Salute-to-Scholarship program and to purchase art objects for CAPER ’74.

Phil Irwin guided the student foreign exchange program and Rotary hosted two students, Rosemary Johnson of Australia and Rita Pera of Brazil.

Meanwhile, Chuck Divelbiss arranged two special “Ladies Day” meetings, “Lunch with Nancy Evans” and "Ladies and the Law."

Also during 1972-1973, Renton Rotary began to work on a plan to host – for the first time ever – a Rotary District Assembly. Haight appointed president-elect Harry Blencoe to direct the event.

Harry Blencoe  1973-1974

Right from the start, it was evident his fellow Rotary members expected a “super” year from Harry Blencoe, who donned a Superman costume for his June 30, 1973, installation party at the Bush Gardens.

True to expectations, Renton Rotary experienced a number of significant events during Blencoe’s tenure as president in 1973-1974.

As president-elect, he had served as Renton Rotary’s delegate to the 64th Annual International Convention in Lausanne, Switzerland, in May, 1973. Switzerland’s natural beauty made a lasting impression on Blencoe and his wife, Janet, who accompanied him to the gathering. But even more impressive was the strong sense of commitment and service he encountered in Rotary members from around the world. “I would certainly like to recommend all incoming presidents to try to attend the International Convention because it gives you an appreciation of the worldwide dedication to Rotary that these men demonstrate,” Blencoe said.

Renton became the focus of district attention June 16 and 17, 1973, when the district assembly was held at the Renton Sheraton. It is said to have been the first time Renton had hosted that event.

A series of interesting programs helped boost Renton Rotary attendance and the local club finished fourth in attendance for the district. Highlights of the noon meetings included a fashion show featuring both men and women and chaired by Janet Blencoe; a special meeting chaired by Nina Tobacco that involved members and their wives in a wine-tasting party; and a noon luncheon featuring former Lieutenant Governor Vic Myers, a one-time band leader, who set a nostalgic mood for many of the club’s old-timers.

Once again, CAPER proved a success, netting more than $12,000 for scholarships, the foreign exchange program, Parks Department donations and other causes.

The local club also reached out an international helping hand, donating $2000 to a flood relief program in Brisbane, Australia. The donation was made from the Renton Rotary through a club in Brisbane.
George Kawachi 1974-1975
Rotary members knew something special was coming when George (“Banzai”) Kawachi took the helm in 1974-75, proclaiming a year of “Fun with Fellowship and Service.” They weren’t disappointed. Harry Blencoe turned up in his Superman costume to turn over presidential duties to Kawachi, who donned a top hat for the occasion.

Kawachi’s first move as president was to declare a national holiday and absolve all Rotarians from attendance at the usual Thursday meeting. In retrospect, this move proved a stroke of leadership genius – it just so happened the Fourth of July fell on Thursday that year.

Visitors to regular meetings of the Renton Rotary were guaranteed a lively time. Under Kawachi’s careful and enthusiastic leadership, Renton Rotary adopted a tradition of giving a “banzai” cheer to greet guests and mark other notable occasions.

More than a decade later, the tradition lived on, part of Kawachi’s legacy to his fellow Rotarians. “We greeted visitors, ‘One, two, three…banzai!’” Kawachi said. The practice had its imitators, but none managed to mount the kind of enthusiasm Kawachi counted vital. “Rainier Rotary copied it, but they don’t do it the right way,” Kawachi said. “I always say to say it from the bottom of the stomach. I tell them to start from the navel…and raise your hand as high as you can when you say it. You can use it for happy occasions.”

A successful CAPER organized by Roger Nelsen netted $10,000. Besides the money raised through CAPER, Kawachi’s wife contributed to Rotary fortune by designing a centerpiece for each meeting. The centerpiece was auctioned off at the end of each session. By the end of the year, that novel idea had blossomed into more than $1200.

Kawachi had promised an interesting year and, true to his word, members got just that. A program on “Sex and Aging” and another on “Prostitution” were among the interesting program offerings. One of the year’s special highlights was a luncheon honoring the Rotarians. It was held on April 24, the birthday of the Emperor of Japan. Guest speaker was the Japanese Consul General.

Bob Larsen 1975-1976
Bob Larsen’s tenure as Rotary president in 1975-1976 was highlighted by hijinks in honor of members’ birthdays, another successful Rotary CAPER, a change in the way CAPER leadership was assigned, a protest by picketers, and an early indication of an issue that would face Rotary in later years.

Honoring members’ birthdays added a lighthearted flavor to many of the club’s meetings as motorcycles, horses, cows, barmaids and a variety of unannounced guests were used to illustrate some particular interest of occupation of the birthday victims.

There was a minor controversy of sorts, too, when a Saudi Arabian was invited to speak at a time when Arab-American relations were definitely strained. The scheduled appearance upset some community members, sparking a protest and causing some concern for the speaker’s safety.

Protesters picketed the Renton Sheraton, site of the Rotary meeting. But no major confrontations resulted from the appearance of that speaker and Rotary struck a note for international understanding in a year when Arab “bashing” was popular. “He gave a good presentation and left without incident,” Larsen recalled.

It was during this year that CAPER chairmanship became the duty of the president-elect, a move that meant the member organizing the CAPER one year would be at the helm when funds from the event were dispersed the following year.

Funding sources included the ever-successful CAPER, an abundance of fines, and an international gift exchange organized by Ned Stokes. The project involved the monthly auction of gifts provided by clubs from around the world.

As a Renton Rotary delegate, Larsen attended both the District Conference in Juneau, Alaska, and the International Convention in Montreal, Canada.
In recalling his year in office, Larsen noted that a vote was taken at the International Convention to exclude women from Rotary. A decade later, that same issue would continue to haunt Rotary International.

**Calhoun Jorgensen 1976-1977**

Rotary's success continued in 1976-77, Calhoun Jorgensen's year at the helm, as 10 new members, all still active a decade later, were added to the Rotary roster. Those members include three who have served as president, a fact Jorgensen believed attested to the quality of the recruiting done during his presidential year.

Bill Ellis was CAPER chairman and the annual Rotary fundraiser continued to spawn good fun and good funds for Rotary. The 1977 CAPER was staged at the Hyatt House, netting $14,245. That figure, added to $14,515 already on hand, made a total of about $28,000 available for an array of worthy causes that benefited from Rotary generosity. Rotary spent $4600 on scholarships and nearly $3000 on various Renton area projects during Jorgensen's tenure, leaving a healthy balance for the incoming administration. In keeping with Rotary tradition, the club continued to support a strong foreign exchange program and to recognize outstanding students from the Renton area.

The club's membership stood at 104 at the end of the year.

**Bill Ellis 1977-1978**

As Rotary president for 1977-78, Bill Ellis saw that his fellow Rotary members enjoyed some unusual opportunities.

At one point, Ellis arranged for club members to tour a Japanese freighter and enjoy Japanese cuisine at a dinner served in the officers' dining room. A decade later, members who participated in the outing still recalled the experience with special nostalgia. In looking back over his year as president, Ellis noted that the year's programs included several "big" name speakers including John Spellman, then a candidate for the County Council, and Wayne Cody, a popular (and rotund) Seattle area sports announcer who reportedly ate three plates of food.

The Rotary CAPER produced $21,000 under the direction of president-elect Roger Nelsen. The club, now 107 members strong, continued to hold its regular Thursday meetings at the Renton Sheraton.

The club's special programs including the Youth of the Month program, the Salute-to-Scholarship and the foreign exchange program continued to be key focal points of Rotary interest. As usual, the community benefited from a variety of special Rotary projects.

**Roger Nelsen 1978-1979**

Roger Nelsen's term as Renton Rotary president during 1978-79 left its mark on the community in a number of very visible ways. It was a year in which Rotary's contribution to public art became difficult to miss.

Rotary commissioned Seattle artist Richard Beyer, perhaps best known for his sculpture "Waiting for the Interurban," to create two bronze wolves for the city. These lean 300-pound animals now lurk on the grassy bank near the Cedar River Trail in downtown Renton. Positioned near a boulder on the west bank, the wolves poke their noses into two Indian baskets, also fashioned from bronze, offering passersby a glimpse at the area's past and fulfilling a need for public art in the city.

Rotary also donated an 11- by 15-foot mural — a huge porcelain baked-on-steel artwork, for the new Charles K. Delaurenti Fire Station, located in downtown Renton across from City Hall. The club also provided a second mural for the same building, commissioning artist Scott Fife to etch the mural directly onto the wall. The etching is covered with a protective plastic coating.

But Rotary largesse didn't end with public art. The Griffin Home for Boys, a nonprofit, residential treatment center for troubled youths, also benefited when Rotary donated a large food freezer and a commercial mixer to the home. In addition, Renton Rotary made a substantial contribution to the Salvation Army; a donation that benefited many of the area's needy. The contribution was one more example of the increasingly active but still behind-the-scenes role Rotary has played within the Renton community. Numerous gifts to local charities, community groups and
arts organizations in addition to the many contributions that have become almost a tradition with Rotary, marked the year as a period of outstanding giving and community involvement.

The year also marked the establishment of the Renton Rotary Foundation, an organization created to receive, invest and administer funds and other properties and to use those funds for philanthropic purposes.

Social highlights included a crab feed at the Fairwood Golf and Country Club, a dinner at the Snoqualmie Falls Lodge, a boat trip around Puget Sound, and a “big game” safari to Tony Sulak’s home in Edmonds as well as a variety of special functions held for the Rotarians.

In assuming the reins of leadership, Nelsen had adopted a theme of “participation,” challenging all Rotary members to become involved in the plans and objectives of the organization.

“By working together, we generated a spirit and enthusiasm that strengthened our club and made us all better Rotarians,” he said in recalling the year.

“Each assignment given was one more opportunity to apply the ideal of service to a practical situation, one more challenge as an individual Rotarian.”

**Will Flaherty 1979-1980**

Renton and Southcenter Rotary clubs combined in an undertaking that produced major fireworks under Will Flaherty’s leadership in 1979-80 – not that Flaherty didn’t get a little unexpected help from Mother Nature.

With Flaherty at the helm, Renton joined with Southcenter in hosting the District Assembly at the Red Lion Inn, May 15-18, 1980. The conference, remembered as being well-planned and very successful despite some attendance problems, also is remembered for another reason. It concluded with a bang – literally – as Mt. St. Helens blew its stack at the conclusion of the event.

There were some familiar – and some not-so-familiar – speakers during the course of the year. Renton’s own Father John Schaeffer, then serving as district governor, “visited” the club for the annual message on July 26, 1979.

The club got a message with an international flavor, too, when Past Rotary International President Clem Renouf and his wife, residents of Nambour, Australia, were club guests on May 15, 1980.

The Cedar River Trail sculpture commissioned under Roger Nelsen was placed during Flaherty’s term, providing visible evidence of Rotary’s role in the community.

It was during Flaherty’s tenure that club members voted to change their meeting place from the Renton Sheraton to a more comfortable location at the Longacres Race Track.

In recalling the year, Flaherty noted that the club had to cancel its January 10, 1980, meeting due to a snowstorm. “First of its kind in my recollection,” he said of the cancellation.

**Paul Falco 1980-1981**

Hijinks and high expectations characterized Paul Falco’s term as Rotary president in 1980-81.

The year was Rotary International’s 75th anniversary and Falco looked forward to an exotic meeting place for the organization’s international convention. The meeting was held in Chicago.

Falco found the international fellowship and commitment to Rotary ideals in evidence at the convention, and returned to his leadership role in Renton inspired by the sense of dedication he found among convention attendees.

In recalling his year of Rotary leadership, Falco noted that attendance was a problem for the Renton club, as it was for many other clubs. Attendance Committee Chairman Jim Norman tackled the problem, vowing to call all absent members at 2 a.m. to remind them of the next meeting.
Falco, hopefully tongue-in-cheek, noted that Norman’s somewhat unorthodox approach to inspiring good attendance habits produced “death threats” for Norman “but it did show positive results.”

George Lewis headed the club’s International Community Service project that year, coordinating the foreign exchange program. The year was an active political year and Jack Riley organized a number of programs featuring political speakers. He is said to have a letter from then presidential nominee Ronald Reagan declining an invitation to speak due to a scheduling conflict.

President-elect Dwight Thomas had charge of CAPER that year, an event that netted $25,000 which in turn was used to support a variety of worthwhile causes and organizations.

Meanwhile, the highlight of the year for many local Rotarians may have been a “joint meeting” between the Renton and Southcenter clubs which went beyond the bounds of traditional Rotary meetings.

The hijinks began when Renton Rotary was invaded by Southcenter’s President Geno, accompanied by a host of Mafia henchmen and their molls. The would-be Mafiosos came suitably attired and bearing violin cases and foul-smelling cigars.

“Apparently, Southcenter was having a difficult time with their finances,” Falco recalled. “The highlight of the meeting was the fitting of cement shoes for those who did not freely contribute to their whims.”

Renton Rotary wasn’t about to be outdone, however.

When it came time for Renton to visit Southcenter for a meeting, His Highness Sheik Abdul Paul showed up with six gorgeous members of his harem. Rumor has it that the “sheik” arrived in a special Boeing jet, commuting to Southcenter in a private 12-passenger limousine, complete with his wives, bodyguard and American interpreter.

**Dwight Thomas 1981-1982**

With Dwight Thomas firmly enthroned as “Robbing Hood,” the tone of the 1981-82 presidency was set. Thomas, Rotary’s 39th president, would be an eager and enthusiastic collector of fines. Moreover, he was no slouch about taking from those who could afford it and giving to those who couldn’t, either.

CAPER, headed by president-elect George Lewis, again set new records, netting $26,000 for Rotary projects. With Randy Rockhill in charge of solicitation, Rotary members were divided into four “teams” that competed against each other to see which one could do the best job of soliciting donations for the ever-popular charity event.

CAPER success continued to pave the way for increasing amounts of community contributions as the club made donations that spanned a wide range of groups and organizations. Youth groups and the elderly, art groups and sports organizations alike shared Rotary generosity.

The club earned the heartfelt thanks of the Renton community when it made a major contribution to public well-being, donating $12,500 in matching funds for the purchase of a cardiac rehabilitation unit at Valley Medical Center. CAPER also provided $7500 in scholarships for local students.

Other contributions ran the gamut, from $1500 for Community Opera Productions to $1200 for the Green River CAPRI program, $1500 for the Chief Seattle Foundation Project chaired by Gerry Edlund as well as donations to 10 other projects.

**George Lewis 1982-1983**

Renton Rotary’s role as a major community benefactor continued to expand under George Lewis’ leadership during 1982-83.

As usual, young and old alike benefited from the energetic efforts of a committed Rotary membership.

Fueled by the repeated success of its CAPER auctions, the club found itself reaching deep into its pockets to fund a wide range of community projects. In a move that may someday pay benefits to Rotary itself as a new generation of business and community leaders moves to the forefront in Renton’s business and professional community, the club contributed $3000 to fund high school leadership camps. Such leadership seminars have
become very popular with youth and youth leaders in the area, providing a program that helps teens develop communication skills and gain an understanding in human relations.

The club also initiated a program to honor outstanding students from Renton Alternative High School, marking the first time that students in an alternative high school setting have received official Rotary recognition.

Rotary also made a $5000 contribution to help complete work on a cooperative effort between the Renton School District and Renton Parks to develop ball fields in the area west of Renton High School. The completed ball fields now are used both by school teams and by various community teams using Parks Department facilities.

And once again, Rotary reached out to the area’s senior citizens by purchasing a new van which was used to provide transportation for low income elderly in the Renton community. The van made daily runs to and from the Renton Senior Center in downtown Renton.

It was also during this year that work on the Chief Seattle Fountain Court was finished, adding yet another Rotary-sponsored project to the list of city beautification projects.

College scholarships totaling $7500 were awarded to outstanding local students and a number of needy families found Rotary playing Santa at Christmas – and again in the summer.

Renton Rotary continued to generate large amounts of funds with its annual auction. CAPER ’83 netted $24,000. In addition to CAPER, the club also initiated a raffle with half the proceeds going to the winner, half to the club for operating expenses.

Chuck Pepka headed the year’s Program Committee, Don Mayer chaired the Youth of the Month Committee, and Paul Falco chaired a committee that organized the sale of entertainment coupon books.

Brian Barker 1983-1984

Urging members to “go forward in seeking new areas of service within our community and within Rotary,” President Brian Barker embarked on an ambitious plan for the future during his 1983-84 term.

Continuing the club’s tradition of strong and positive leadership, a Renton Rotary trademark, Barker’s goals included efforts to increase member participation, create a membership development program, and improve knowledge and understanding of Rotary programs in international, vocational and club service.

CAPER ’84, chaired by Don Morrison, netted $32,000.

Barker was proving a big spender, finding ample ways to share CAPER proceeds with the Renton community.

Donations and major service projects included an $8000 donation to the Renton Multi-Services Center for partitions and doorways at Renton Area Youth Service (RAYS); $8000 in scholarships; $3000 for Community Opera Productions; $2500 for blinds for the Renton Senior Center; and $1500 to the Redmond Rotary Wishing Well Fund for terminally ill children.

Other Rotary contributions went to support high school Business Week participation, provide dictionaries for outstanding high school honor students, and for a donation to the Renton Rotary Foundation which provides “rainy day assistance” for club projects.

The year saw yet another change in Rotary’s meeting site as the club’s comfortable digs at Longacres had to be abandoned when officials at the race track decided to close the clubhouse during the off-season. Regular meetings were moved to the Renton Elks Club.

Club by-laws were reviewed and revised during the year and the board was expanded from six to seven members. The year’s events included new member orientations and a breakfast and recognition day for Rotary past presidents. Howard Sheridan helped coordinate the Renton Rotary Run, an event co-sponsored by the American Diabetes Association.

At the district level, the club was recognized and presented with the International Presidents Citation, an award that reflects members’ work in community service, membership, attendance at the district convention and foundation participation.
Don Morrison 1984-1985

Rotary’s generosity had exceeded the limits of its budget under Brian Barker’s administration. But incoming president Don Morrison already had done his bit to put the budget back in the black, organizing the 1984 CAPER that produced $32,000 in net profits.

The figure was enough to pay off existing bills and have money left over for Morrison to spend during his term as president in 1984-85. Rotary members point to it as a good example of the value of having the president-elect run the auction that will fund the club’s service projects during the following year.

In recalling his year as president, Morrison credited his board and some key club members for Rotary’s accomplishments during that time. “While I enjoyed the prestige and position of president, the board and officers did the work,” Morrison said.

As is tradition, the club continued providing strong support for its foreign exchange program and programs to recognize outstanding local youth as well as contributing to a host of other worthwhile community causes.

Morrison’s year at the helm also was marked by the arrival of a student from South Africa, Lynn Adler, whose ability to speak out on behalf of her country during troubled times earned her the admiration of Rotary members.

CAPER ’85, chaired by Gerry Edlund, netted $32,000.

Gerry Edlund 1985-1986

Gerry Edlund’s term as president, 1985-86, saw Renton Rotary continue to expand its role as a major community contributor.

CAPER ’86, headed by president-elect Dr. Gary Kohlwes, netted $45,000, an all-time record.

Meanwhile, proceeds of CAPER ’85 were being used to support a wide range of worthwhile community activities. Rotary donated $7500 to the Mt. Rainier Kidney Center, the only kidney dialysis center in south King County. Other contributions included $5250 for Fall Harvest, a $6000 increase in Renton Rotary Foundation funds, and $1000 donated to disaster relief efforts in both Mexico and Colombia. That donation in turn was matched by an equal amount from the Rotary International Foundation.

Continuing its tradition of support for education, the club also donated some $8000 in Rotary scholarships, provided $4500 to buy band uniforms at all three Renton high schools, and continued to honor outstanding students from area high schools during regular meetings.

Stimulating and informative programs included a presentation by Dr. Lester Sauvage on heart bypass surgery; a talk by author Ann Rule, writer, confidant and friend of convicted murderer Ted Bundy; and a Christmas party with entertainment by foreign exchange students living in the Seattle area.

Many activities had an international flavor that year as foreign exchange activities played a key role in club activities.

The club’s three foreign exchange students included Lynn Adler, a resident of Johannesburg, South Africa, who found herself in the United States at a time when tensions were mounting between the two countries. She appeared on two TV programs and spoke to more than 60 groups, schools and Rotary clubs regarding South Africa at that time.

Simone Muruci arrived from Brazil. She spoke almost no English when she arrived but enrolled immediately in an English as a Second Language class. After nine months in the country, she spoke English with almost no accent.

The third exchange student was Malin Hanson of Sweden. Malin became a favorite “daughter” of many Rotary members. In April, 1986, her parents paid a visit to Renton and were hosted by members of the club. Gerry and Carole Edlund hosted an informal reception for these Swedish visitors. Malin’s father, Bjorn, is a Rotarian and past president of the Rattvik (Sweden) Rotary Club.

The Edlunds represented Renton Rotary at the Rotary International Convention in Kansas City, Missouri in May 1985.
“The real power of Rotary International became evident as people from free nations throughout the world joined together to promote the ideals of Rotary,” Edlund noted in recalling the experience.

**Gary Kohlwes 1986-1987**

As President Gary Kohlwes assumed his position of leadership in 1986-87, there were no known crises or controversies facing the Renton Rotary.

But outside the local arena, a controversy that could have major implications for Rotary clubs everywhere was brewing. Long a male-only bastion, Rotary now found itself challenged to accept women into the organization. A club in California – and a club in Renton’s own District 5030 – both had admitted women and been dropped from charter by Rotary International. Both clubs challenged this action in the courts, with the outcomes uncertain.

But in Renton, at least, Rotary tradition remains unchallenged. CAPER success – fueled by the energy and enthusiasm of dedicated Rotary members – remains a given. CAPER ’86, which Kohlwes had chaired, had netted $45,000 and as CAPER ’87 approached, hopes ran high that kind of success could be repeated.

The year’s operating budget totaled $58,000, a figure that included some $2000 in fines, and Kohlwes had indicated that figure could be “a slight underestimate.”

Increasing membership was a major club goal for 1986-87, one Renton Rotary appeared well on its way to achieving. Kohlwes indicated that membership was up seven during the first four months of the year alone.

As in the past, the club’s tradition of active community support was marked by numerous donations to various community groups and organizations. Rotary budgeted $20,000 to provide a portable “community stage” which can be moved around to different sites as need requires. Other significant contributions include $5146 for the Renton Historical Society, $1562 for Renton River Days, $8200 for high school scholarships, $4500 for high school band uniforms, $500 for Ronald McDonald House, $1500 for high school leadership camps as well as donations to Operation First Harvest, Natural Helpers, the Renton Clothes Banks and a variety of other organization.

Social events included a crab feed, a theater viewing at Carco Theater, a tour and tea with Jean Gardner, wife of Governor Booth Gardner, and a tour of the State Supreme Court.

“My year as club president will have to stand on its history,” Kohlwes said, responding early in his term to questions about his year as president. “It is very difficult to project a depiction.”


This update is dedicated to **Lewis Argano**, Past President, 1952-1953, in celebration of his 56 years of perfect attendance in Renton Rotary.

This is part 3 of Renton Rotary’s history. Founded on principles of truth, fairness and goodwill, Renton Rotary has steadily grown and provided exemplary community service. It is the foremost service organization in the community.

It is fitting that we recognize the contributions of our past and present members. Hundreds of people have dedicated time, money and energy to make Rotary what it is today. This history update reviews some of their accomplishments through the eyes of each year’s presidents. It will give the reader a glimpse of the qualities that have allowed Rotary to prosper over the years.

As we move ahead, this book can help us remember the good that Rotary does in Renton and internationally.

**Gary Kohlwes - ‘The Rest of the Story’**

Renton schools Superintendent Kohlwes was used to controversy, but the issue of admitting women into the traditionally all-male Rotary was of a different dimension. “The issue wasn’t on the horizon when I started my term as president, but it heated up about the first of the year,” Kohlwes said.
Two clubs had admitted women and were dropped from charter by Rotary International. The subsequent lawsuit worked its way through the courts in early 1987, but even before the final ruling came down, Rotary clubs knew the decision in all likelihood would be in favor of the clubs that had admitted women. Consequently, Renton Rotary was prepared to admit its first woman member when on May 4, 1987, the Supreme Court ruled Rotary could not continue as a male-only organization. Renton’s first woman Rotarian was Cathy Regele, owner of a Renton sign company, who was initiated by Harry Blencoe on June 11, 1987.

In retrospect, Kohlwes said it was a “great advancement” for the club. “The women who have come into the club are no different than the men – they want to support the community and are willing to assume responsibility,” he said.

The controversy didn’t distract Rotary from its primary goal of helping the community as it continued a vigorous schedule of contributions and fund raising, highlighted in the first part of the report on President Kohlwes’ year.

Building club membership, a major club goal for 1986-87, was achieved with a 6 percent increase – up to 113 members. The club also completed an update of “The Turning of the Wheel,” a revision and update of the club’s by-laws, and an increase of Paul Harris Fellows or Sustaining Members by six.

The club also hosted foreign exchange students Sapna Shah of India and Roland Bent of Zimbabwe.

The International Conference in Munich, Germany, was held on June 7-10, 1987. Mitch and Lisa Hungate and Russ and Mary Jane Price attended. The District Conference at Whistler, B.C., on May 22-25 was attended by the Hungates, the Prices, Jack and Lois Gannon, Don and Pearl Jacobson, Pat and Rita McLendon, Al and Barbara Wallis, Gary and Betty Kohlwes and Bob Logue.

Kohlwes said his year as president of Renton Rotary gave him the kind of one-to-one contact with other members of the community that he hadn’t had previously. “It gave me a better understanding of the areas of the community that I wouldn’t have gotten to know without the leadership role of Rotary.”


The term of President Mitch Hungate was the first full year for women in Renton Rotary, and if there were any lingering reservations, they soon vanished.

After the controversy of the previous term, particularly in the winter and spring of 1987, club members had no trouble adapting to the change. In fact, President Hungate said it made for a better club. “It greatly added a new dimension and vitality to the club,” he said.

It was also the year in which the worldwide fight against polio, led by the Rotary International Foundation, gained momentum. The Rotary International Foundation, working with the World Health Organization, had set a goal in 1985 to eradicate polio from the face of the Earth by Rotary’s centennial, 2005. Rotarians around the world contributed their time and energies to help volunteer medical personnel distribute and administer the oral vaccine used to fight the dreaded disease that crippled so many children.

The efforts included the involvement of Dr. Albert Sabin, who developed the original oral vaccine at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital and the University of Cincinnati. The first tests of the live-virus polio vaccine, in which two drops are placed on a child’s tongue, were conducted in 1957 outside the United States because American doctors were not convinced that the method was better than Jonas Salk’s killed-virus vaccine. The American tests began in 1960, and in the years since, the Sabin vaccine has replaced the Salk vaccine throughout most of the world.

The club also continued its vigorous support of community programs, most notably strong support for Renton high schools. Rotarians contributed scholarship money to graduating seniors headed for college, honored the Top 10 seniors at the end of the school year and contributed to leadership camp for outstanding high school leaders. Rotarians also supported the Renton Historical Society, the Valley Literacy Council and Renton River Days.

The club netted approximately $47,000 at CAPER ’88, which was chaired by President-elect Don Jacobson. About 400 people attended the gala at the Marriott Hotel at SeaTac.

Membership reached a vigorous 125 during President Hungate’s term, which made for lively meetings at the Renton Elks Club. Two of the most notable meetings were the guest appearance of U.S. Sen. Daniel J. Evans,
the state’s former governor, and the June meeting conducted by women Rotarians, including Cathy Regele, the club’s first woman member who joined in June 1987, and Joan Dubie, who joined the following month.

The club hosted two foreign exchange students, Roland M. Bent of Zimbabwe and Edgar Catano.

President Hungate’s term was notable for one other reason:” his reluctance to fine members in any substantial amounts of money. Though constantly kidded about his thrifty ways, President Hungate refused to fine a member more than a dollar or two, prompting member Chuck Pepka to term him “the cheap piker.” All in the good fellowship of Rotary, of course.

Don Jacobson 1988-1989 - ‘The Education President’

Under President Don Jacobson’s leadership, Renton Rotary significantly expanded its support for education in the Renton community by starting scholarship programs for Renton Vocational Technical Institute and Renton Alternative High School, and beginning the Teacher of the Month recognition program.

Jacobson’s career in labor relations gave him a unique perspective on the importance of vocational training for students who don’t choose to pursue an academic education. In addition, vocational education was a major thrust of Rotary International, so the initiative was right in line with Rotary goals.

“It was in keeping with Rotary’s thinking concerning vocational training and it was an area that wasn’t being met,” Jacobson said. Voting unanimously, the board of directors allocated to RVTI an amount equal to the annual scholarships for the Renton School District.

The club also began a $2000-a-year scholarship to the University of Washington School of Nursing for a deserving student from Renton.

At the suggestion of President Jacobson, the club also began recognizing three outstanding teachers in the Renton School District each month, contributing $100 per teacher for classroom projects and expenses.

These programs were made possible by a major change in the club’s distribution of money collected through CAPER and other fund-raising activities. Breaking with tradition, the club began distributing to local agencies and organizations all or nearly all the money it had collected for the year. Instead of holding money in reserve for a few large donations, the club came to the conclusion it was better to spread its funds to a wider variety of recipients.

“Spreading the wealth” not only helped more organizations, but it made the community more aware of Renton Rotary.

A good example of the impact of this increased spending was the club’s purchase of a $20,000 portable “community stage” that could be used for events such as Renton River Days. The two-year project came to fruition in President Jacobson’s term.

And President-elect Robert Logue assured a financially strong position for the following year when CAPER 1989 at the Marriott Hotel at SeaTac raised $65,000.

The club’s Christmas party for the children and grandchildren of Rotary members was expanded to include less fortunate children in the community who were identified with the help of school district nurses. And Rotarians continued to recognize Students of the Month and Top 10 Seniors.

President Jacobson attended the International Conference in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania during the year that Rotary International achieved its financial goal for the eradication of polio.

The club also recognized the long and active service of George Kawachi by bestowing on him a Paul Harris Fellowship.

During the year, the club changed its meeting location from the Renton Elks to Renton Vocation Technical Institute.
Renton Rotary continued to uphold its reputation for having fun while performing the serious work of community service. In two notable instances, President Jacobson was on the receiving end of the club’s sense of humor. As Jacobson rang the bell at his first meeting as president, the entire assembly walked out of the dining room – and didn’t come back. In the second instance, on the occasion of the president’s 60th birthday, a casket was carried into the dining room and the Rev. Kirby Unti proceeded to “eulogize” President Jacobson to the delight of members. President Jacobson, never lacking a well-timed quip, was speechless.

Humor and good will have always been a part of Renton Rotary, but as Jacobson’s example reinforced, the club’s mission continued to be “Service Above Self.”

Jacobson said his year as president was rewarding because he saw what can be accomplished when members pitch in. “When people take on a task, you don’t have to worry about it. They’re responsible people and they do it. When they say they’re going to do something, it gets done.”


Robert Logue’s cheerful personality set the stage for a lively year of weekly programs, but the self-confessed “class clown” in his high school days was mighty nervous when he looked out at four or five former teachers in the club.

“Renton is my hometown. I’m a product of football, basketball and baseball scholarships – I learned it all in Renton,” Logue said. “When I was a kid, these guys were presidential. I was so proud to be president, but so scared, too. I wanted to do a good job.”

According to his former teachers – and the rest of the club membership – Logue not only passed, but he got an “A” for an outstanding year.

Renton Rotary continued its tradition of giving in the community: Scholarships for high school, alternative high school and vocational students; $2000 to the Renton Senior Center; money to the Apartments for Battered Families program; and a donation to the Future Business Leaders of America program. In addition, the club again recognized the leading scholars at the local high schools, naming the Top 10 Seniors and Students of the Month. The club also continued to recognize three outstanding teachers in the Renton School District each month, donating $100 for their class projects and supplies.

The club contributed $7000 to the Mount Rainier Kidney Center to buy a modern dialysis machine that had three times the capability of old technology. With this state-of-the-art machine, patients need to come to the center for treatment only once a week instead of daily as before.

Renton Rotary continued to act as a patron of the arts by buying blocks of tickets for Renton Theater performances and reselling them to community residents.

President-elect Charles Divelbiss Jr. headed CAPER ‘90, which raised $70,000. About 450 people attended the gala at the SeaTac Marriott Hotel.

During Logue’s tenure, the club addressed two issues of concern to the well-being of the club, attendance and members leaving weekly meetings early. A renewed effort was made to ensure good turnout at meetings, and to avoid early leavers during the programs, the programs were moved toward the beginning of meetings.

Because of Logue’s and the club’s efforts to foster an interest in vocational education among high school students faced with making career choices, District 5030 awarded the club its Vocational Service Award. President Logue and other Rotarians personally visited vocational classes at the local high schools to advise students about job possibilities through vocational education.

Club members were busy during the year with a number of social events and fund-raising activities, including two golf tournaments, a boat outing, the crab feed and Christmas program. A poinsettia sale and fuchsia sale added to the club’s budget.

The International Conference in Portland, Oregon was attended by Charles Divelbiss and President Logue.

A foreign exchange student, Micha Rhode of Germany, was hosted by the club and spent most of the year in the home of Mary Jane and Russ Price.
Logue said he got a new appreciation for the work of Renton Rotary in his year as president. “I personally received new insights into Renton Rotary and Rotary at large, including Father John Schaeffer’s role as club secretary and a large number of Rotarians and Renton citizens.”

“It was a great year,” Logue said.

Charles G. Divelbiss 1990-1991 - ‘The Ugly Ties’

In the annals of Renton Rotary, Charles G. Divelbiss will always be known as the president who wore the ugly ties to weekly membership meetings.

No one could deny that the Renton antique dealer had good taste, but he also had accumulated a collection of old, out-of-fashion ties that were so ugly, no customer was going to buy them. So he hit upon the idea of wearing a different ugly tie to each meeting and auctioning it off as a fine-free protection if worn. Sometimes he would bring four or five ties, selling them for no less than $20 and up to $100 each. The idea was a hit with members, maintaining the proud Renton Rotary tradition of humor and good will at weekly meetings.

The club’s financial resources were exceedingly healthy during Divelbiss’ tenure based on the $70,000 raised at the previous CAPER ’90. The record amount allowed the club to donate significant amounts toward scholarships for high school, alternative high school and vocational students, the Teacher of the Month and Student of the Month programs.

A healthy budget was assured for the following year when CAPER ’91, headed by President-elect Alan Wallis, raised $60,000. The function at the Bellevue Hyatt Regency was attended by approximately 320 Rotarians and guests.

Rotary continued its support of the Valley Community Players by acquiring blocks of tickets and selling them in the community as a fund-raising activity.

The club also participated in a Save Planet Earth tree-planting program with Bellevue Rotarians by planting trees along the freeway between the two communities. Trees were also planted at Maplewood Golf Course for a Community Service project chaired by Gerry Edlund.

Membership during the year reached approximately 130.

Eight Rotary members attended the District Conference at the Coeur d’Alene Resort in North Idaho on May 2-5. And a month later, Charles Divelbiss and his wife and family, Al Wallis and Robert Logue attended the International Conference in Mexico City.

For President Divelbiss, the International Conference was an awakening to the wider power of Rotary. “The diversity of cultures and people, the way they dress. Yet everything comes together to better society and the world. Everyone’s thinking the same thing,” he said. “You hear of the strife in the world, but through Rotary International everyone is working for the betterment of the world.”

During Divelbiss’ tenure, the English “Chunnel” project was much in the news, so it was timely to have the Kent-based Robbins Co. as a program to discuss its tunnel-boring equipment that was used to bore beneath the English Channel between England and France. Another program of note was the joint meeting with the Kent Rotary at Southcenter.

President Divelbiss, who never missed a meeting and maintained perfect attendance, said holding the office was a challenging but rewarding experience. “I never thought it possible to conduct a meeting every week and keep it interesting,” he said. “I think I did it for the most part.”


Building Renton Rotary’s ability to raise funds and in turn better serve the community was a primary focus of the club during Alan Wallis’ term as president.

The club began sponsoring the Rubber Ducky Derby at Renton River Days in conjunction with the American Heart Association, which had held similar derbies at other events around the state. Renton Rotary considered sponsorship an opportunity to enlarge its annual budget and expand the number of programs it could contribute to.
In its first year, the Rubber Ducky Derby added approximately $13,000 to the club's coffers, under the chairmanship of member Bill Davidson.

As part of the club’s focus on expanding its reach into the community through donations, the club formed a Finance Committee to assess the many requests for contributions from agencies and organizations. Adding this important step in the review process aided the board of directors in making final decisions about giving.

The club continued its scholarship program to Renton high school and alternative high school students as well as vocational students at Renton Technical College, with $23,000 in scholarship money. Additional support for students included recognition of the Top 10 Seniors at the end of the school year and Student of the Month recognition.

Rotarians also contributed $3500 to Renton Area Youth Services, $1078 to King County Special Olympics, $3500 to River Days Youth Circus and $1500 to the Sexual Assault Research Center.

The year’s CAPER ’92 event at the Hyatt Regency in Bellevue, headed by President-elect Kirby Unti, raised $62,000. Nearly 400 people attended. Approximately 120 people counted themselves Renton Rotary members during President Wallis’ term.

Four Paul Harris Fellows were inducted during the year: President Wallis, Phil Irwin, Bob Raphael and Charles Keeslar.

The club hosted a foreign exchange student, Rodrigo Albar of Chile. He lived with the David Dean family for part of the year and then with the Clark Petersen family.

Having attended the Mexico City International Conference just prior to assuming his duties as president, Wallis said he gained a new appreciation for the work of Rotary. “It emphasized to me that what we are doing worldwide as opposed to locally and the diversity of programs that we were involved in,” he said.

Wallis, the Renton police chief, whose regular rejoinder at meetings was “Don’t call me chief,” said he thoroughly enjoyed both his year as president-elect and as president.

“I learned a lot more about Rotary in the process. It gave exposure to broader areas of the community that I hadn’t been involved in,” Wallis said. “And I felt we moved the club forward.”

Kirby B. Unti 1992-1993 - ‘A Year of Pride’

The tenure of President Kirby Unti was memorable on several fronts, most notably the “pride” he brought out in Rotarians and the club’s celebration of its 50th anniversary.

By asking the simple question “How proud are you?” of Rotarians who spoke of their accomplishments during the weekly luncheon meetings, President Unti collected an astounding $8700 in “fines” compared to the average of $2500 to $3000.

Admitting he “got away with murder” by extracting so much money from willing Rotarians, Unti said he felt Rotarians had one of the more enjoyable years “because of the wonderful willingness of the club to engage in (these) humorous exchanges all done in the spirit of Rotary."

The year was memorable, too, for the club’s celebration of its charter on June 17, 1943. The club noted the occasion with a lavish dinner at the Marriott Hotel at SeaTac on June 17, attended by the District Governor and Rotarians from many other clubs. In honor of the club’s service to the community for half a century, Renton Rotary was selected as the Grand Marshal for the Renton River Days Parade. Past President Randy Rockhill was general chairman of this successful event.

More honors came Renton Rotary’s way when it received the Presidential Citation for completing work in all four areas of service: International, vocational, club and community. The award cited the club’s financing of water wells in Zimbabwe, its vocational scholarships, attendance and support of community projects.

CAPER ’93 began with the retirement of President-elect Gene Brain and the election of Bob McBeth to be president-elect and CAPER chairman just six weeks before the fund-raising gala. With the tremendous help of Renton Rotarians, especially Gary Kohlwees, President Unti, Don Jacobson and many others, CAPER was a great success with $65,000 raised. It was held at the Hyatt Regency in Bellevue and attended by about 350 people.
Participation in the Rubber Ducky Derby at Renton River Days in conjunction with the American Heart Association continued for its second year as the club’s second-biggest fund-raiser.

Rotary continued its outstanding program of giving to the community. Some of the major contributions were: $9000 in academic scholarships to the high schools; $9000 to Renton Technical College; $4500 to the Teacher of the Month program; $6000 to the YWCA Emergency Housing program; $10,000 to the pergola project for the covered shelter in Tonkin Park across from the downtown train station; and $5000 to D.A.R.E.

To provide a higher level of clarity as well as checks and balances in oversight of Rotary funds, the club, under the guidance of attorney-member Dan Kellogg, began a corporate reorganization. The club created three separate legal entities: Rotary Club of Renton; Renton Rotary CAPER; and Renton Rotary Foundation.

Bob Larsen, who served as Rotary president in 1975-76, was gifted with a Paul Harris Fellowship.

President Unti and his wife, Kim, attended the International Conference in Orlando, Florida in 1992 when the AIDS epidemic was a mounting global concern. Discussions at the conference focused on ways Rotary could make a difference as it had done in fighting polio worldwide.

"To realize the power that Rotary has to function on a global basis, to exercise a program like polio – I was really impressed with that ability to hold hands around the world to get things done," President Unti said. "Other than the churches and UNICEF, there are not that many global organizations."


As Renton Rotary’s financial contributions to the greater Renton community continued to expand and broaden, Rotarians also started contributing more “sweat-equity” during President Robert McBeth’s tenure.

Rotarians contributed approximately 400 hours to the construction of a playground at Renton High school for its daycare center for the sons and daughters of student parents. Though many individual members participated, special recognition went to Gerald Edlund, whose landscape service supplied the bulk of the equipment and plenty of muscle-power for the project. In addition, Edlund was instrumental in designing the park and planning the work. The project included a financial contribution of $3500.

And on the international front, Rotary and Renton High school students provided financing and labor toward building a school in an impoverished area of Tijuana, Mexico. Making a $4500 contribution for expenses and material, two Rotary members and seven Renton High School Spanish language students and their teacher spent a week working alongside Mexican citizens building an elementary school. The program, Los Ninos, meaning “The Children,” exposed students to the nature of poverty in a Third World country.

The outstanding fund raising at CAPER 93 allowed the club to expand its financial contributions to the community. One of the notable projects was a $7500 contribution as matching funds to secure the purchase of a senior citizens’ van for the Renton Senior Center, a project organized under the strong leadership of Rotarian Dan Kellogg. The van, complete with wheelchair lift, would be used to transport volunteers and participants to and from the senior center’s daily activities.

The club continued its vital support to area students, contributing $18,000 in academic scholarships to high school students and $9000 to students to attend Renton Technical College. Rotary also contributed $6000 to the YWCA Emergency Housing program; $2000 to the King County Sexual Assault program; $3500 to Operation First Harvest and another $2000 toward purchase of a refrigerated van for First Harvest; and $2600 for the D.A.R.E. program.

Assuring a continuation of its active giving, Rotary raised about $69,000 during CAPER ’94, headed by President-elect Gene Kolczynski. The Rubber Ducky Derby raised approximately $12,000 during Renton River Days.

Rotary’s work to establish three separate legal entities – Rotary Club of Renton, Renton Rotary CAPER and Renton Rotary Foundation – was completed under the direction of attorney-member Dan Kellogg. By compiling three separate financial statements, the club achieved better accounting practices and gained a clearer perspective of the tremendous accomplishments made by Renton Rotary.

Rotarians continued to recognize Students of the Month as well as Teachers of the Month. And Washington Governor Mike Lowry attended a meeting in the spring to help honor the Top 10 Senior from Renton high schools.
The year’s International Conference was held in Melbourne, Australia, attended by President McBeth and his wife, Kathy. The District Conference was held in Vancouver, British Columbia.

President McBeth, a District Court judge, said he tried to focus on the needs of the community during his busy term at the podium. “My emphasis was on community involvement – an attempt to try to address as many of the needs of the community as we could,” he said, “recognizing that we couldn’t do everything, but that there’s a tremendous variety of ways we could help.”


No one ever accused Gene Kolczynski of being the shy, retiring type and the master of the one-liners and quick comebacks proved it during a lively year as president, a year which also saw the club grow in financial strength that allowed its contributions to the community to also grow.

President Kolczynski’s weekly rejoinder, “We don't make change,” when collecting fines from members kept meetings light-hearted and also added $4200 to the club’s coffers, an amount exceeded only by the “proud” year of President Kirby Unti in 1992-93.

Kolczynski said he was immensely pleased with members’ willingness to contribute not only their money but their time and energies to the betterment of the Renton community through club activities.

“I was particularly impressed with members’ willingness to step up and be involved with running the club,” President Kolczynski said. “I could count on one hand the number of times I was turned down when asking for help.”

Under President Kolczynski’s leadership, the club expanded its reach into the community and the world through its contributions and direct involvement in projects. The club supported the construction of two water wells in Zimbabwe for a senior citizens’ home and a home for AIDS patients, each with a $2500 contribution. The program was made possible through the partnership with a Rotary club in Zimbabwe and the involvement of former Rotary exchange student Roland Bent, who brought the need to the club’s attention.

The club continued its sponsorship of the Los Ninos program, which sent about a dozen Renton High School students and their teacher, plus three Rotarians, to Tijuana, Mexico, to help construct a community center in an impoverished neighborhood of this teeming city.

As in the past, the club provided approximately $10,000 in scholarship funds to high school seniors and $9000 to vocational students at Renton Technical College. Other major contributions included $6000 to the YWCA Emergency Housing program; $2500 for the Way Back Inn program; $2400 to D.A.R.E.; $2400 to Renton Area Youth Services; $2000 to King County Sexual Assault; $2000 to Operation First Harvest; $1500 to the Northwest Burn Center; $1500 to the Talbot Hill community project; and $2400 for an adult day-care program.

The club continued its support of Teacher of the Month and Student of the Month programs. Other highlights included the annual crab feed and the annual Christmas party, and a feature on member Pat Newbury in the District newsletter.

President Kolczynski’s wife, Natalie, lent her artistic abilities to Rotary efforts by painting two 60 foot-long murals of an African savanna landscape in the pediatric wing of Valley Medical Center in connection with the WIC (Women, Infants, and Children’s) program. Rotary members solicited furnishings and purchased other equipment and games for the wing. Rotary’s total contribution was about $2000.

President Kolczynski attended the International Conference in Taiwan, which he said opened up his eyes to the need to stay involved on an international level. “Although the focus should stay on local involvement, our impact on our local communities would not be as great without the work of Rotary International,” he said. “I was especially impressed by the influence RI has had and continues to have on a global level.”

During President Kolczynski’s term, the club raised about $14,000 through its co-sponsorship with the American Heart Association of the Rubber Ducky Derby during Renton River Days. And it raised $72,000 at CAPER ’95 under the leadership of President-elect Jim Sullivan.
President Kolczynski’s term was the first full year in which the newly established legal/financial entities – club, foundation and CAPER – operated separately. In January 1995, Father John Schaeffer retired after 24 years of service as secretary-treasurer of Renton Rotary. Bob McBeth took over those responsibilities on an “interim” basis.

Kolczynski said his year as president was a rewarding experience. “Renton Rotary is the most remarkable group of people I have ever been associated with. Their love of their community and their willingness to help those less fortunate than themselves is evidenced in everything they do,” he said.

James E. Sullivan 1995-1996 - ‘Delegate and Deliver’

Renton Rotary achieved several firsts during a busy year headed by President Jim Sullivan, from the selection of the first woman president-elect to the club’s first District Community Service Award to the first year of two significant hands-on projects helping the Renton community.

The club received its Rotary District 5030 Community Service Award for rolling up its collective sleeves in starting a house-repair program in conjunction with the City of Renton. Numerous Rotarians donned their Saturday work clothes to paint or fix up the houses of senior citizens selected by the city. The one-day projects, in which members divided up into teams to work on separate projects simultaneously, gave participating members a real sense of pitching in.

The same feeling was created by putting on a Thanksgiving dinner at the Renton Senior Center, an idea originated by member Don Persson, who happens to own a self-made mobile barbecue for just such occasions.

Renton Rotary, which had first initiated a woman into the club in 1987, named Sandra Mootry, a banking vice president, as club president for the following year. Another milestone: the club’s first woman president.

The club’s community reach expanded in other areas during President Sullivan’s tenure. In conjunction with Valley Medical Center, the club began sponsoring an immunization program during Kids’ Day at Renton River Days. The club also became involved in an “Adopt-A-Road” project by helping to keep a stretch of Rainier Avenue litter free.

On the international front, the club donated $5000 to the Children of Chernobyl organization, which helped bring several children of the radiation-plagued region of Belarus, Russia, to the United States to receive free medical and dental care and temporarily escape the environment they were living in. President Sullivan, who spearheaded the two-year project, said that after about six weeks of eating a good diet and away from exposure to radiation helped the children build up their immune systems. Though most children were generally just unhealthy, one 11-year-old girl was diagnosed with thyroid cancer and underwent a successful operation.

The club also continued its support of the Los Ninos program in Tijuana, Mexico, financing about 10 Renton High School students and their teacher, plus two Rotarians, Bob Jones and Ted Rodriguez, to help build schools and community centers in impoverished areas.

Locally, the club’s contributions included: $12,500 for college scholarships and $6000 for vocational scholarships; $5000 for the city’s Summer Camp project for underprivileged children; $3800 to support Kids’ Day at Renton River Days; $6000 for the YWCA Emergency Housing program; $5000 to Renton Area Youth Services; $5000 to the Valley Medical Center Infant Center project that was started the previous year under President Gene Kolczynski’s term.

The club also continued to recognize Students and Teachers of the Month as well as Top 10 Seniors of each of the district’s three high schools.

If the year wasn’t busy enough, the club moved its weekly meeting from downtown Renton to the city’s newly expanded Maplewood Golf Course. Delighted members considered it a great move forward.

One success followed another: President-elect Mootry’s supervision of CAPER ’96 brought in $75,000 to ensure a strong year to come. Another $10,000 in net income from the ‘95 Rubber Duck Derby added to the club’s operating budget.
President Sullivan attended the International Conference in Nice, France, in June 1995, which he said had a major impact on his view of Rotary. “It helped me to understand that we can make the world a better place for all of us if we cooperate and combine our efforts toward a common goal,” he said.

As for his year as president, which saw the club embark on several new projects, Sullivan gave a lot of the credit to fellow members and an increased reliance upon the committee system.

“I learned what a high-quality group that we have in Renton. Most people are very helpful when called upon,” President Sullivan said.

**Sandra Mootry 1996-1997 - ‘A Historic Year’**

Expanding efforts in International Service, recognition from the District for the club’s Community Service and internal changes to make new members immediately involved were major events during a watershed year, the year a woman became president of Renton Rotary.

Banking executive Sandra Mootry broke this new ground nine years after the club admitted its first woman member, and under her leadership the club advanced on several fronts.

Internally, the club began a program to orient new members to the world of Rotary through a formal presentation to the club, close follow-up by the sponsoring member and immediate integration into the greeters program. President Mootry said the program contributed to new members becoming active and feeling truly involved right from the start. Another change which affected the membership at large was the ability to make up meetings up to 14 days before or after a scheduled meeting. The change recognized members’ busy schedules but also acted as an incentive to keep up attendance.

Under President Mootry’s direction, the club continued its active reliance upon committees and their chairpersons for individual projects. Like President Jim Sullivan before her, President Mootry felt the burgeoning list of community and international projects required leadership from an increasing number of members.

Recognizing Renton Rotary’s hands-on contributions to the greater Renton community, the club received the prestigious Presidential Citation at the District Conference in Wenatchee for the club’s house painting and repair program in conjunction with the City of Renton.

The club expanded its reach across the ocean by donating $2500 toward an international project in South Africa that was brought to the club’s attention by a visiting Rotarian from that country. The money was used to obtain a matching grant from the district and an additional matching grant from Rotary International to help finance construction of day-care facilities for low-income workers.

Rotary funds also went to another one-time project, construction of a weather-reporting station at the new McKnight Middle School in the Renton Highlands. Other major contributions to the community included: $11,000 in academic scholarships; $4000 in vocational scholarships; $4000 to Kids’ Day at Renton River Days; $2800 to the American Heart Association; $2300 to the Northwest Burn Foundation; $1500 to Renton Area Youth Services; $3000 to the Children of Chernobyl program in Russia; and $7000 to the Los Ninos project in Tijuana, Mexico.

The club also recognized Students and Teachers of the Month and, at the end of the school year, the Top 10 Seniors based on academic achievement at each of the district’s three high schools.

Ten Rotarians stepped forward to become Paul Harris Fellows, ensuring a $10,000 contribution to Rotary International’s Paul Harris Foundation.

When Rotarians weren’t giving away money, they were making it: CAPER ’97, under the direction of President-elect Bill Davidson netted $82,000 for Rotary programs. About 300 people attended the event at the Meydenbauer Center in Bellevue. The Rubber Ducky Derby at Renton River Days netted about $12,000.

President Mootry attended the International Conference in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, developing a wider appreciation for the work of Rotary International.

Among the club’s social events, Rotarians enjoyed a day at the races at Emerald Downs in Auburn in the fall and the annual crab feed in December.
President Mootry said she was most gratified by the participation of many club members. “I tried to personally ask for support and invite members to participate in projects. I feel the involvement by more members built morale and made Renton Rotary a fun and rewarding experience for a greater number of members,” she said.

“I loved being president!”

**William R. Davidson 1997-1998 - ‘Show Rotary Cares’**

The battle cry of Rotary for the year, from the international level to local clubs, was “Show Rotary Cares.” Led by President William Davidson, Renton Rotary certainly showed it cared.

Club members maintained the momentum of a full plate of Community Service projects, from house-painting and repair projects to road cleanup to serving Thanksgiving dinners to Renton senior citizens. The club’s involvement in International Service was epitomized by the Los Ninos project and funding for a day-care center in South Africa. It maintained a strong membership roll with the addition of new blood into the club, and it continued its strong support of educational and vocational programs.

The club’s efforts in a variety of areas were recognized with a Presidential Citation at the District Conference at Whistler, British Columbia. The club also received a Community Service award for its multiple projects serving the greater Renton community.

Following the program of Rotary International President Glen Kinross, President Davidson and the club reached out to other service clubs in the community to explore the possibility of cooperative efforts. The club invited members of the Soroptomists, Kiwanis and Lions clubs to join Rotary for the State of the City address by Mayor Jesse Tanner in January. Discussions began for future cooperative efforts to benefit the community.

CAPER ’98 was another success story, raising a net income of $78,000 for Rotary projects. The event at the Meydenbauer Center in Bellevue was chaired by President-elect Joan Dubie. The club’s other major fund-raiser, the Rubber Ducky Derby at Renton River Days, brought in an additional $11,000.

The funds were allocated to numerous charities and organizations, from the Northwest Burn Foundation to the Way Back Inn homeless shelter. A total of $16,000 was allocated for high school and vocational scholarships, and additional funds were distributed for the Outstanding Graduates, Education Appreciation Day, Boys and Girls State, Washington Business Week and Rotary Youth Leadership programs.

Rotary continued its efforts to help those less fortunate by providing $3000 to the Renton Food Bank, $2000 to Operation First harvest and $6000 to the YWCA Emergency Housing program.

Hands-on efforts continued unabated under President Davidson’s leadership. A team of handy Rotarians built a deck for a senior citizen whose old deck had become a danger. A two mile stretch of Rainier Avenue was cleaned up in the Adopt-A-Road project. And Rotarians led by Don Persson prepared Thanksgiving dinner for seniors at the Renton Senior Center. During the holiday season, Rotarians held their Christmas-Hanukkah fund-raiser, which assisted a dozen families in having a more pleasant holiday. A number of members also braved the cold and rain to assist The Salvation Army in its bell-ringing at the Fred Meyer store.

Charles Westcott led a group of Renton High School Spanish class students and their teacher to Tijuana, Mexico, for the Los Ninos project, working closely with Mexican residents on a building project.

Recognition went to Gary Kohlwes, who was honored as Renton Citizen of the Year by Renton Rotary and the Renton Chamber of Commerce. Doug Gibbs was recognized as Rotarian of the Year for his outstanding work at CAPER.

The Rotary International Convention in 1998 was held in Glasgow, Scotland. President Davidson, incoming President Joan Dubie, Russ Price and Bob McBeth attended along with their spouses.

President Davidson said the year was a rewarding – and busy – experience, one he wouldn’t have missed for the world. “In retrospect, the real reward from having had the privilege of serving as club president was the enthusiastic support and participation of so many members in so many ways,” he said. “No matter what the need, a service project or a club service matter, there was always someone volunteering to serve.”
Renton Rotary’s impact on the greater Renton community and far-flung locations around the world significantly increased during President Joan Dubie’s term.

In a continuing effort to work more closely with other organizations and have a greater impact upon the Renton community, Renton Rotary began the initial stages of organizing a Rotary Foundation Board to work under the umbrella of a new Renton Community Foundation, comprised of the City of Renton, the Renton School District, the Renton Chamber of Commerce, Valley Medical Center and Rotary.

Each group was to contribute its own funds, to be pooled for greater impact on worthwhile projects. Renton Rotary decided to contribute about $120,000 from its foundation account, plus add 25 percent annually from proceeds of CAPER. Choosing how its funds are to be distributed became the responsibility of the new foundation board.

President Dubie said the board was formed to develop a true endowment fund “and provide greater investment oversight and management and to promote the foundation as a significant part of Renton Rotary.”

While those efforts were under way, Rotary made a substantial contribution of approximately $17,000 to Renton Technical College toward construction of a day-care center. It was the largest single contribution in a year in which Rotary continued a vigorous giving program to Renton high schools and service agencies and charities. This effort was made to support the State of Washington’s “Work First” program encouraging welfare recipients to move from the welfare rolls to full-time employment.

While broadening its impact in the Renton community, Renton Rotary also reached out to Bangladesh by beginning a “micro-credit” project in which local, district and Rotary International funds were to be combined to provide small bank loans to help entrepreneurs get started in business. The club earmarked $5000 from its 1998 and 1999 International Service funds, to be matched by another $5000 by District 5030 and $10,000 by Rotary International. The club also continued its financial support of the Los Ninos project in Tijuana, Mexico.

With Renton Rotary, President Dubie said she made a special effort to bring as many members as possible together in active roles, such as asking past presidents and other Rotarians to act as sergeants at arms for one month at a time as a way to recognize past presidents and their talents. The resulting fines reached near-record level, $7200, while creating a humorous and healthy competition among members. Doug Gibbs and Bob Logue won the “Gold Digger Award” for most money collected in one month.

CAPER ‘99 netted approximately $78,000. Chaired by President-elect Don Persson, the event at the Renton Community Center was attended by approximately 400 people. The Rubber Ducky Derby at Renton River Days netted an additional $12,000 for club giving.

Rotary increased its scholarships to Renton high schools and Renton Technical College, giving $18,000 to high school graduates and $4000 to vocational students. This was an increase of $6000 from the previous year. Additional funds were contributed to other education-related programs, such as Education Appreciation Day, Boys and Girls State, Outstanding Graduates, among others.

The club continued its support of worthy charities, including $6000 to the YWCA Shelter, $5000 to the Homeless Youth Fund, $4700 to Operation First Harvest and $2500 to Renton Food Bank, to name only a few. Rotarians also honored Students and Teachers of the Month and Top 10 Seniors.

Rotarians maintained their support of the Renton Senior Center, preparing Thanksgiving dinner for appreciative elderly Rentonites. They also distributed $3600 worth of holiday food in the Christmas-Hanukah program.

Highlights of the club’s social calendar included a Christmas musical program presented by a local high school choral group; a program by an exchange group from India; the Gary Kohlwes-led crab feed; and the hosting of the president-elect of a Russian Rotary club for two weeks.

Robert McBeth was named Rotarian of the Year for his outstanding dedication to consistent and valued guidance to the president and board of directors and his impeccable attention to financial matters.

Several Rotarians were key leaders at the District Conference in Victoria, British Columbia: Russ Price, Jim Sullivan, Sandy Mootry, Rick Meinig and President Dubie.
President Dubie said her year in office reinforced to her the importance of what Rotary does “and the tremendous impact that we make on people’s lives both locally and internationally. It has made me more aware of the goodness and generosity and dedication of our members.”

THE WHEEL KEEPS TURNING - Part 4
2000-2012

In the preparation of this update of the Turning of the Wheel, the committee continued the process of recording the highlights of the Rotary years as seen largely through the eyes of each year’s president. Our hope is that this document continues to have value to the members as a source of historical background and grounding for the future work of the club in the community.

The members of the history committee were Rolland Dewing, Richard Brooks, and Jim Baker.


Don had a goal of making Rotary events fun and worthwhile for everyone. He accomplished this in many ways including maintaining the annual Rotary activities: the night for club members at Emerald Downs race track, the annual Renton Rotary Golf Tournament, the house painting project, and other ongoing Rotary activities. He lowered the fines at club meetings for those members who left early to encourage members to come to meetings. An important event to Persson and other club members was the annual Thanksgiving Dinner at the Renton Senior Center. He has led a crew of Rotary volunteers to prepare and deliver that special dinner to many hundreds of people who gather at the Center on that holiday. His wonderful barbeque and cooking skills have been at the center of Rotary Club events for many years. He was also responsible for leading the effort to bring CAPER back to Renton after it had been held in other locations.

Joann Lee 2001-2002

Joanne was known by members to be very aware and supportive of the traditions and history of the Renton Rotary. For example, she “encouraged” members to wear their Rotary pins to meetings, and members would be fined if they were not wearing a pin. She would also make a financial contribution to the club on meeting days when everyone present would be wearing their pin. That tradition continues to the present. Joann matched a sharp with a dry sense of humor, and kept meetings lively. She also had a strong interest in international projects, and supported the club work in this endeavor. Additionally, she has served as club treasurer for many years in a most capable manner.

Rick Ross 2002-2003

Rick was known in the club as a creative thinker who brought lots of energy and enthusiasm to his tasks as president. His year was the Centennial Year for the City of Renton, and the club participated in many events including a club meeting at the Veteran's Park in downtown Renton. The club also made a contribution to support families in New York who were impacted by the 9-11 attack. Articles on Renton history were included in the weekly bulletin. Traditional and annual Rotary events continued including the Rubber Duck Derby at the Renton River Days, CAPER, Teacher and Student of the Month, distribution of a portion of CAPER funds to local charities, and student scholarships. The president's discretionary fund was set aside to be combined with Lee Wheeler's fund in 2002-03 for a contribution of $50,000 to the Renton Technical College in a capital campaign to upgrade the Technology Resource Center.
Lee Wheeler 2003-2004

Lee recalled his presidential year as one of “fun, fellowship, and good deeds.” He felt very positive about the planning and development of the RotaCare health clinic in Renton during his year. The clinic provides free medical and dental assistance and referral for low income people who do not have other service resources. It is done in partnership with Valley Medical Center and the Renton Technical College. The club continued its community grant program in support of local nonprofit organization as well as the gift referred to above in support of the Technology Resource Center. The regular annual events, including CAPER, the Crab Feed, the holiday bell ringing to support the Salvation Army, First Harvest, and the Rubber Duck Race continued. It should be mentioned here that for many years, Lee has sold amazing numbers of raffle tickets for Rotary and other community events. His ability to sell raffle tickets is legendary and has benefited many in need.

Denis Law 2003-2004

Denis’ term as president of Renton Rotary began in July of 2003. His term was preceded by a memorable trip for he and his wife Patty to Rotary International that was held in Brisbane, Australia. They were accompanied by Denny and Bernie Dochnahl and Jim Shepherd, and spent a wonderful two weeks exploring Australia’s beautiful cities and countryside.

He felt that “attending Rotary International is a must for every Rotarian. You will meet the most interesting people from all over the world and learn about the wonderful projects that are being done to improve the lives of millions of people.”

In addition to Brisbane, they spent time in Adelaide, Sydney and, of course, the famous wine country.

His year as president was filled with significant accomplishments by the membership and milestones for the club. Lewis Argano was honored for achieving 60 years of perfect attendance. Another significant event in 2003 was the opening of the RotaCare clinic referred to above. During the first eight months of operation, volunteer physicians treated more than 300 patients and that number has continued to grow. Rotarians Bob McBeth and Dr. Bob Thompson were responsible for the implementation of this valuable community service that has become one of Renton Rotary’s primary community service projects each year.

Another significant accomplishment was a pledge by Renton Rotary to donate $100,000 towards the construction of a new Salvation Army food bank. The facility, which was named Renton Rotary/Salvation Army Food Bank, broke ground in the spring of 2004 and houses Rotary’s RotaCare Clinic in addition to providing a greatly expanded community food bank.

Under the leadership of president-elect Dolores Gibbons, we instituted a new emphasis on membership to establish a better-organized effort in recruiting quality members – those who truly want to give of their time and resources to help others – and ways to better engage our membership.

In addition to all of Renton Rotary’s regular charitable giving, we funded a water well in Ethiopia and also donated $10,000 to the capital campaign of Vision House towards the building of transitional housing for women and children.

Dolores Gibbons 2004-2005 - “The Centennial Year”

The 2005-2006 year was a special time to serve as president because this was the 100th birthday of this important international organization. The Rotary Club of Renton took this auspicious occasion seriously. Joining President Gibbons on the Rotary Board for this once in a lifetime and busy year were: Jim Amandus (president-elect), Jerene Battisti, Don Bressler, Denny Dochnahl, Marilyn Edlund, Mary Fitzgerald, Andee Jorgensen (secretary), Denis Law (past president), Marcie Maxwell, Bob McBeth (treasurer), Russ Price, Larry Rude and Chuck Tiernan. This was an outstanding board that worked hard, had fun and were faithful to the spirit of Rotary.

Highlights of the 2005-2006 year include:

Centennial Project
Every Rotary Club in the world was asked to develop and complete a special, lasting project for their community to mark 100 years of “Rotary Service Above Self”. Rotary Club of Renton selected the Salvation Army food bank
capital project. This was a project already in progress but badly in need of help as their goal was to build an entire new building for the storage, display and distribution of food to the local community. Our Rotary commitment of $100,000.00 earned us the honor of having our name on the building. Today it stands as the Renton Rotary Salvation Army Community Food Bank on Tobin Street. Club members participated in the ground breaking in September, topping off in February and grand opening in June.

Lewis Argano 100th Birthday
We were blessed to have as one of our perfect attendance members Mr. Lewis Argano, who was also celebrating his 100 birthday in October of 2005. The club took this opportunity to honor him with a surprise birthday celebration. Denny Dochnahl loaned the limo and we rolled out the red carpet for the occasion. RTC provided a birthday cake and the club presented him and his daughter, Kathy, with Paul Harris Foundation awards. There were ten different people who volunteered to do something special for this occasion; to a person every Rotarian kept their word and the party was a highlight for Lewis and everyone in attendance.

Paul Harris
Jim Amandus led this effort to new heights during this centennial year. With his dedication and motivation, the club hit an all-time high level of participation in the Paul Harris Foundation. A total of 81% of the members participated and there were 18 individual Paul Harris Awards that were presented during the year.

Rotacare
Bob McBeth led the effort to launch a Rotacare Clinic. The clinic operated on every Saturday morning out of a location on the RTC and was staffed by doctors from Valley Medical. Dr. Bob Thompson led the doctor volunteer part of this effort. Local schools communicated, in several languages, the availability of the clinic. It is funny how good works can turn around and smile at you. Mid year Bob McBeth was able to negotiate space at the new Salvation Army food bank to house the Rotacare Clinic! This was a perfect location on a bus line, easy to find and directly behind the high school. The clinic continues to serve community members without insurance every Saturday morning.

Habitat for Humanity
Rotary District 5030 also had a centennial project which was Habitat for Humanity. The district goal was to raise funds and participate in the construction of three houses in the district. Our Renton Club sold wine (Marcie volunteered spouse Steve to schlep and haul the wine) to raise dollars and also participated in the physical work. This district goal was met thanks to all of the help from many Rotarians.

First Harvest
Rotary club of Renton was honored as one of the top 10 clubs in the District for both participation in the Saturday work parties and financial donations. Jim Baker was the faithful leader of this effort.

Operation Warm
Russ Price stepped up to a leadership role and helped our club join a national effort to distribute warm winter coats to needy children in the community. If ever you want to see a smile as wide as the room, volunteer to give young children the opportunity to “shop” for a coat that fits, is new and in a color that delights them. Russ and the club delivered 1,500 coats on October 15 in the cafeteria of Renton High School. Participants were selected by the family liaisons with Communities in Schools of Renton who work directly with needy families in the Renton School district.

Wine Tasting Party
Rotarian Denny Dochnahl and spouse Bernie hosted a spring wine tasting party at his lovely home. In addition to fellowship and community-building, this party raised about $10,000 to fund the Rotacare operation. There was a small auction associated with the party and a selection of regional wine merchants helped with donations of wine.

CAPER
We had a wild and wonderful CAPER event during our centennial year. The chair was none other than the ever-faithful Bob McBeth. It was held at the Renton Community Center, raised $120,000 and was a huge success. This year the raffle item was a Harley Davidson bike. Denis Law and Larry rude cooked up this successful idea and then took the bike out for display in the community to hype the ticket sales.

Crab Feed
Oh my we did have crab! This social event was held at McGowan’s and 135 people attended. Gary Kohlwes secured the crab and directed the cooking, cleaning and cracking of the critters. It was a fabulous meal enjoyed by every sticky finger that attended. This was the 19th year Gary had chaired this event.
Budget Issues
We donated $14,000 to NW Medical for the tsunami relief, $1,000 to the Houser Terrace group when their cars were vandalized, made an adjustment in the quarterly facility dues by $10.00 to balance the lunch charges, funded a water project in Ethiopia and generally ran the club with a positive balance.

Reflections
What you read here are just some of the measurable highlights. The immeasurable gifts are those associated with lasting friendships, true community building, working toward world peace, building a better Renton and a whole bunch of secret cell phone numbers! I would encourage every Rotarian to seek leadership roles, at a level they are ready to accept, and share in the bounty of being a ROTARIAN, not just a member of Renton Rotary Club.

*Jim Amandus 2005-2006 - “Changing lives through service above self”*

Through the efforts of the entire club I was able to accomplish all seven presidential goals for my year.

The first goal was to have FUN! From the moment a prospective member or guest walked in the door they were greeted with a warm smile from Al Talley, Ken Taylor, and Clark Peterson and a welcoming handshake from Harry Blencoe and his team of greeters. Sally Rochelle and her team of program leaders ensured club programs were relevant and compelling. And we ended our club meetings with Gene Kolczynski and his team of fine masters helping us have FUN as we emptied our wallets! And through the year our club spirit was strengthened by Marci Maxwell’s initiative with events like the summer Lake Washington picnic, Gary Kohlves’ crab feed, the wine tasting party at the Dochnahls, and other events.

Another goal was to tell our story. Renton Rotary is one of the best-kept secrets so James Lambka, Bruce Hudson, and Terri Briere began to get the Rotary-story out into our business community through an intentional strategy and upgraded PR resources. We produced a new flier, banners to be posted in businesses, and a DVD brochure for new members with three-year longevity, to motivate our club members and prospective members on the amazing ways Renton Rotary is changing lives.

The third goal was membership plus one. Jerene Battisti and I wanted to end our year with a net of one member more than we started. But the amazing momentum of the club spirit and the PR efforts was seen by beginning the year with 94 members and ending the year with 109 members and receiving recognition at the District Conference in Whistler, B.C. as the club with the highest membership gain for the year!

The fourth goal was paid in full! Three years ago our club committed $100,000 to help fund the construction of the new Renton Rotary-Salvation Army Food Bank. During my year we committed the Presidential Project money of $25,000 and presented a check to the Salvation Army to complete our $100,000 pledge in a record twelve months! This newly constructed facility is housing the RotaCare Clinic to provide medical care and pharmaceutical prescriptions free of charge for those in our community without medical insurance. At our 2006 CAPER fundraiser we met a patient and heard the miraculous story how the RotaCare Clinic medical staff was used to save her life.

Lives in our community were changed in other ways as well. No public school teacher should have to try and teach a child who is cold, because they do not have a winter jacket. We can change that! So, our club raised over $15,000 to purchase and distribute 1,500 coats to every needy child in our school district. This year Marilyn Edlund and her team lead our club to sponsor our exchange student Lek Taknarjarisan, from Thailand. During Lek’s last club meeting she introduced her mother and sister and shared how her life was different because of her year with Renton Rotary. Volunteer time and club money continued to be invested in Rotary First Harvest. Under Mary Fitzgerald’s leadership club members sorted food to assist Emergency Operation Center in Skyway in feeding the poor.

A sixth goal we had focused on serving internationally. Doug Keyes provided a vision to establish a literacy project in Cuautla, Mexico and we helped supply their community library with resources. In addition we assisted with a clean water project in Asia. These projects, and others, are made possible through Rotary International and the funding through the Paul Harris Fellowship. We closed our year accomplishing our seventh goal of by having ten Rotarians complete their Paul Harris Fellow.

These life changing service projects mentioned here and so much more were made possible because behind the scenes there was the consistent and dependable leadership of our board members and committee members all
served by our club secretary Andee Jorgensen and our club treasurer Joann Lee. This was an amazing year of club growth and community impact.

**Jim Baker 2006-2007 - “Lead the way”**

With a club like Renton Rotary, this year’s theme, “Lead The Way” seems a bit unnecessary. Maybe “Get Out of the Way” would be more appropriate because good things were going to happen.

This was the second year in a row that our club hosted an exchange student. In July we said good bye to Lek Taksinvarajarn our delightful guest from Thailand and welcomed Morganne Tassez, her replacement from France. A lot of hard work by Marilyn Edlund and her International Committee made this a rewarding experience for our club and those wonderful students.

Sadly, on July 20 Renton Rotary lost an icon with the passing of Lewis Argano at the age of 101. Our club was chartered June, 1943; Lewis became a member six months later, and with an amazing tenacity maintained perfect attendance for over 62 years. He served as Renton Rotary’s President in 1952-1953. As a tribute to Lewis, our club established the “Lewis Argano/Rotary Renton High School Scholarship Fund” with $5,000 in seed money.

Our Renton River Days Rubber Ducky event, chaired by Larry Warren, eclipsed previous years by netting over $18,000. Thanks to Larry and to Lee Wheeler, our master salesman!

With the beginning of the school year we continued our recognition of students of the month from our three high schools. Recognition of teachers continued with one change; this year, to fight the ravages of inflation, we doubled our teachers' gifts to $200. As in the past, our club generously supported local educational goals by providing over $21,000 in high school and vocational scholarships.

Certainly one of our most important projects this year was our continued operation and financial support of the Renton Rotacare Clinic. Much credit should go to Dr. Bob Thompson and Bob McBeth for making this service happen. This Rotary year our clinic treated 579 patients during those Saturday morning sessions at a cost to the club of $17,000.

“Operation Warm”, ably chaired by Russ Price, celebrated its third year with the purchase of 1,000 coats that were then distributed to elementary children in the Renton School District. We funded this program with $14,000 and worked with “Communities in Schools” who identified the needy kids, passed out vouchers and then helped with distribution.

If October wasn’t busy enough giving out coats, we also participated in a big way in District 5030’s newly adopted “Third Grade Dictionary Project”. For just under $10,000 we were able to provide a beautiful hard bound dictionary to every third grader in our school district. This involved visiting all thirteen elementary schools where our members passed out over 1,000 books and provided an additional 200 for late enrollees, libraries and classrooms. One of the most enjoyable aspects of this program was observing the school principal lead the students through their first exercise looking up words. This activity was chaired by Rolland Dewing.

We received a request to help fund the purchase of a much needed piano for the IKEA Performing Arts Center at Renton High School. With $5,000 from our club, augmented by a $5,000 grant from District 5030, we were able to donate about 35% toward that purchase. In February an informal Rotary “piano party”, catered by Armondo, featured a number of “piano demonstrators” including a Renton High School student and our own talents, Dan Kellogg and Sally Rochelle.

This was the first year of the “Renton Rotary Book Club” as many of us read “Mountains Beyond Mountains”, an activity generated in the mind of Dolores Gibbons. This idea, which grew out of a U. of W. Freshman program, proved very stimulating to our membership and it was topped off with a program by Christine Ingebritson who was responsible for the U. of W. activity.

In March Terry Higashiyama chaired our participation in the district’s “Service Above Self” day which involved building a wheel chair ramp plus extensive yard work at a home in the Earlington area. A big turnout of Rotarian workers made a huge difference to that home.

Renton Rotary’s commitment to supporting Rotary First Harvest, District 5030’s premium service project, remained strong during this year with donations of $6,685 including $4,800 from the club and $1,885 in individual contributions. We also volunteered 87 hours at RFH work parties, sorting and packaging food.
So, how do we fund all this? CAPER of course is our major source and this year under the leadership of Dolores Gibbons and Terri Briere it netted over $129,000! An additional $17,000 was raised at the wine tasting party held at the Dochnahl’s where proceeds were earmarked for Rotacare support.

Parties, there were plenty! Of note were the Seafair picnic at the Maxwell’s, the Kohlwes crab feed in November (good for the 170 diners but a bit hard on 375 pounds of crustaceans), the annual Thanksgiving dinner for seniors (catered by Don Persson and Larry Sleeth) where the servers almost outnumbered the guests, plus innumerable parties which were incubated at CAPER and given birth throughout the year. Another “party” the District conference held this year in Coeur d’ Alene, promoted by Vicky Persson and Milt Snyder, featured a good turnout of 27 boisterous Renton Rotarians. Good fun!

This enumeration obviously does not cover everything this amazing organization did in 2006-2007. In fact by March 1st the president was heard to say “Welcome to the Rotary Club of Renton, the best little club west of Washtucna!” By the end of June as the accomplishments of Renton Rotary mushroomed it was chronicled as “the best little club west of Millinocket, Maine”.

During the busy year President Jim made numerous inquiries about Rotary’s impeachment process but no action was taken. However, minutes before Marcie Maxwell’s induction replacing Jim, Norm Abrahamson and Doug Kyes mounted a campaign and had President Jim impeached, setting a precedent in Renton Rotary. It should be noted that Jim sponsored both of them for membership!

**Marcie Maxwell 2007-2008**

Marcie’s presidential year was marked by many successful programs and club experiences. These included traditional services such as the rubber duck race, the dictionary distribution to 1150 3rd graders, Operation Warm where 700 coats were given to youth in the community, student scholarships, and grants to nonprofit agencies. Marcie hosted the summer picnic for members and their families once again at her home, and the club participated in the University of Washington Common Book Project. The Teacher and Student of the Month programs continued, and were of particular importance to Marcie, who served on the Renton School Board, and later as a State legislator.

Other events and projects included the wonderful wine tasting event held at the home of Denny and Bernadine Dochnahl to raise funds for the dictionaries, the student summer exchange for students from Siberia and India, and of course, CAPER. CAPER was very successful, skillfully led by Dolores Gibbons. $128,000 was raised, with $20,000 from Fund a Need going to support RotaCare. The president's discretionary fund was given to the Griffin Home to upgrade athletic courts at that facility. Finally, to top off this year, the club was awarded a Presidential Citation by the Rotary District 5030.

**Al Talley Sr. 2008-2009**

For Al Talley, the goal of his presidential year was “greater involvement by more people all year long.” He was most proud of the club’s work to support the education of children in a variety of ways. These included the contribution of his presidential discretionary funds to purchase calculators for middle school math programs, initial funds to support the Friends of Renton Schools Program, funds to support math tutors, funds for English Language Learning materials, and financial support for a sport court and running track at the Griffin Home in Renton. To continue the theme of service to young people, Rotary supported a school project in Ethiopia with the purchase of furniture. Operation Warm continued with the distribution of over 600 coats to young people. The club also held a special program in May to honor the service of veterans. Since 1998, Al has served on the Club Service Committee, week in and week out, to set up the meeting room.

**Dan Kellogg 2009-2010**

Our club has always had a great tradition of service to our community through our Community Service and Vocational Service Committees, and to the world through our International Service Committee. We had continuing
strong leadership in those committees, and there was little need for change in our traditional service projects. We continued our involvement in the Dictionary Project by distributing over 1,000 dictionaries to all third graders in the Renton School District and two other private schools. We also distributed nearly 1000 warm coats to elementary students through the Operation Warm project in association with Communities in Schools in Renton. We re-instituted our participation in the Rotarians at Work Day, joining up with Rotarians around the world and other groups in our city to, in our case, clean up the landscaping in one of the senior housing communities in Renton. We continued our support of the Students and Teachers of the Month programs as well as scholarship programs for worthy students. We also supported our own RotaCare program, and the Community Service Committee distributed grants to nonprofit organizations in the community.

On the international side, out Youth Exchange committee hosted a student from Argentina, Maria Jose Salido. We supported a team, including members of our own club, who traveled to Belize with a new portable dental chair and other equipment. We supported additional in other parts of the world, and made contributions to relief efforts for victims of earthquakes in Haiti and Chile.

Our efforts also included support of the Rotary Foundation. In addition to the support of donations to the Paul Harris Fellowships, club members made donations of almost $3,000 to the Polio Plus project, which exceeded the goal set by Rotary International for club support of the project.

A particular area of emphasis was the development of additional leadership capacity in the club who could carry on our service traditions in our club, as well as in the community and in the world. One of the focal areas was on our own club programming. Under the exceptional leadership of Rolland Dewing, we made improvement in the consistency of programs at our weekly meeting. Throughout the year, and even after the year ended, I received indications of how much our members appreciated the high level of club meeting programs. In appreciation of his efforts as our club Program Chair, I designated Rolland Dewing as Rotarian of the Year for 2009-2010.

A second priority was the enhancement of our membership recruitment process. Under the very capable leadership of James Lambka, the Membership Committee was able to recruit, educate, and induct fourteen new members. Each new member went through an education process including the customs and expectations of membership. In addition, the Membership Committee conducted the first membership satisfaction survey in the recent history of the club. There was significant work done to develop and increase membership. The development of future leaders was encouraged through the timely election of future club presidents, participation in the District Assembly, the District Conference, the International Convention, and the District Rotary Academy. There was also a successful effort to develop a collegial relationship and continued interaction between the current president and future presidents to insure a continuity of service throughout our organization.

Jerry Higasiyama 2010-2011

The year had many memorable moments for me, including the celebration of Dr. Bob Thompson as Renton Citizen of the Year. He continued to give time and support to the RotaCare Clinic along with Jim Sullivan and Bob McBeth. The clinic could not continue without his continued dedication. The club also acknowledged Dr. Mary Alice Heuschel as one of the four top school district Superintendents in the United States, and Al Talley as the top mentor for Communities in Schools. All of them are great Rotarians, and wonderful examples of people who give unconditionally to their community.

Significant activities in terms of club programs and services during this year included: The Vocational Service Committee provided over $5800 in scholarships to send students to Washington Business Week and Boys and Girls State. Students from the Sartori Education Center and Renton Technical College also received scholarships. Community Service Grants to nonprofits totaling $44,740 went to CAST for Kids Foundation, ARISE Homeless Shelter, City of Renton Community Services, Vision House, Luther’s Table, New Horizons School, RotaCare, Renton Clothes Bank, the Salvation Army, Coal Creek YMCA, and Communities in Schools of Renton. Over $12,000 in academic scholarships was awarded to graduates of the 3 Renton High Schools.

1302 dictionaries were given to third graders in the Renton School District. Operation Warm gave out over 650 coats to youth in the Renton area in cooperation with Communities in Schools of Renton and the Renton School District. RotaCare served over 1,000 patients and, in partnership with Valley Medical Center, provided $20,000 for prescriptions. The International Service Committee granted $15,326 to seven different countries to support disabled children, provide medical and dental care, and to provide support to survivors of the earthquake in Japan.

Other special programs that took place this year included club participation in Earth Day Activities, and recognition of 9/11 along with 800 community volunteers. We also supported Books for the World, and the club
was one of the largest donors in District 5030. This earned us an award from the District for the outstanding contribution.

The CAPER event was moved to the Tea Palace this year with the theme of “Raising a Fortune for our Community”. Denis Law was the chair, and over $192,000 (gross) was raised. This was an amazing event, given the difficult economic times.

Finally, we had an amazing Board who attended meetings, gave to events and many activities, and who were supportive of me throughout the year. What a great experience I had…but it is always nice to pass the torch to the next president and to wear the title of past president with pride.”