

ROTARY IN BRACEBRIDGE

Fifty Years
of Service
above Self
in our Town



Rotary Club of Bracebridge

Ontario, Canada

Club 4045 — District 701

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ABOVE SELF IN OUR TOWN**

**Rotary Club of Bracebridge
Ontario, Canada**

**BY
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Foreword

BY SEAN KELLY

President 1986-87

Rotary Club of Bracebridge

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT M. A. T. CAPARAS chose as the motto for his year, "Rotary Brings Hope."

This theme concisely states the object of Rotary both now and through its history. By gathering men of integrity, enthusiasm and ability, Rotary has always inspired and mandated its members to give service above self to the local and global community.

Such has been the history of Rotary throughout the world and none the less in Bracebridge. The Club and its members have continuously responded to demonstrated needs and indeed have identified areas in which service could be and was given.

In the following pages, Robert J. Boyer describes not only the history of the formation and development of the Bracebridge Rotary Club but more importantly, chronicles of the many significant projects of community and international assistance sponsored and carried through by the Club.

It is vitally important that no Rotary Club should be or be perceived to be a "cheque-writing" institution. The population is increasingly deluged with requests for charitable donations and Rotary and other organizations will continue to feel the pinch as the discretionary dollars are spread more thinly. Rotarians must diligently evaluate and support worthy existing programs and to seek out and identify valid new needs.

The History of Rotary in Bracebridge reflects at many times a "hands-on" approach to service. This tradition must be continued for the greater good of our fellow human beings. Rotarians must relate directly to and with each other and to less fortunate people to "build good will and better friendships" and to provide assistance and contact which will be beneficial to all concerned.

We in the Bracebridge Rotary Club are determined to continue and to enhance the traditions of service which have been so firmly established by Rotary International and our local Club.

Introduction

IN FIFTY YEARS Rotary in Bracebridge has added substantially and effectively to the progress and well-being of the community as the following pages will attempt to show. Rotary has provided avenues for service by its members and a link with a respected international movement which were lacking before the Club's charter was delivered in December, 1936.

In 1936 Bracebridge was an established town but one with seemingly limited prospects, not to be compared with the expectations for the future or with the vitality of the community in this year of Rotary's local half-century anniversary.

The year in which Bracebridge became recognized on the world map of Rotary was near the end of that twenty-year period between the two world wars. In a view of the town's history from 1861 onward, those years of the 1920's and 1930's were not Bracebridge's best years, yet what happened or failed to happen in Bracebridge was a reflection of the country as a whole, of the continent and large parts of the world, when the rate of economic progress had its upswing and then slowed down.

Bracebridge, in the District of Muskoka, achieved some important things in those years, the building of the High School in 1925 offering a fuller range of educational opportunity, the establishment in 1928 of Bracebridge Memorial Hospital as the only general hospital between Orillia and North Bay, the paving of several Bracebridge streets, the steady growth of the summer tourist trade with increasing

business for boat building, and the beginning of winter vacation popularity.

Already it was known that the great heyday of lumbering in Muskoka had come to an end. Those years also meant the closing of the leather tanneries in Bracebridge, the big industries which for so many years provided the main push for the development of the town. The Beardmore tannery went away first, in 1922, when the company's operations, no longer dependent on Muskoka "tan bark," were concentrated at Acton. The Anglo-Canadian tannery, too, slowed down, but as its production was entirely now for the United States market, there was still a staff employed. Then came the time when protective legislation in the United States raised the tariff against Canadian products to fifty percent and tannery days were ended in 1930 for Bracebridge.

The late Captain L. R. Fraser wrote about Bracebridge slowing down, saying, "The dynamic driving spirit of those Old Timers who built up the town seemed to have disappeared. It began to look as if our town was one of those little places that have run half up the hill beneath the blazing sun and then sat down to rest."

Nevertheless it must be said that a more optimistic spirit did begin to prevail, and it is fair to say that this showed itself in the general recognition that Muskoka's prospects, at least for some time to come, must be based upon increasing the tourist business of the District. In January, 1935, the Muskoka Tourist Development Association was formed, the first of its kind in Ontario, to give greater publicity to the scenic and vacation advantages of our lakeland territory.

Summer visitors who were Rotarians were demanding an opportunity when in Muskoka to attend weekly meetings and keep up their attendance. Yes, admit it, all the benefits which have come to Bracebridge and other Muskoka communities through Rotary had their origin in our District's dependence on the summer hospitality business.

This is in keeping with Rotary's objective of promoting the highest standards in business, and of inviting into Rotary membership worthy representatives of every profession and business.

CHAPTER ONE

The Club's First Years

IN THE NINETEEN-THIRTIES the desirability of establishing a Rotary Club in Bracebridge was mentioned from time to time. Several summer residents in Muskoka were members of clubs in their home cities, not only Toronto, Hamilton and Brantford among other places, but also in Winnipeg and cities and towns in the United States. These visitors found it an inconvenience not to be able to make up their weekly Rotary attendance while vacationing in the District of Muskoka.

The first Rotary Club in Muskoka was formed in 1934 at Huntsville, with Harmon E. Rice as charter president. Perhaps it was the friendship between Bracebridge Mayor Wilbert Richards and H. E. Rice and their association in organizations such as Muskoka Tourist Development Association, organized in 1935, which led Wilbert Richards to understand the benefit a community could gain through the service work of a club like Rotary, in addition to promoting local fellowship with Rotary visitors.

In any event, Huntsville Rotarians, such as H. E. Rice, Bert Horton and others, visited Bracebridge and secured the names of 21 business-men willing to become Rotarians. This group had no other thought than that Wilbert Richards should be the first president.

On the last Friday in October, 1936, the club began holding weekly meetings in the dining room of

the Albion Hotel. There they made plans for their big charter night, when the District Governor and many other Rotarians would come to institute the Rotary Club of Bracebridge.

It was at The Queen's Hotel dining room (now Hotel Patterson) that the banquet took place December 4th, 1936, when the charter of the Rotary Club of Bracebridge was presented by the District Governor, George A. Barber, of Batavia, New York State, and was received by President Wilbert Richards. (Bracebridge was then in a Rotary district which included Toronto and Hamilton and a part of the State of New York. As more clubs were formed, the district included Toronto and clubs to the north, then was altered again with Barrie the southernmost city, from Collingwood and Elliot Lake on the west to Campbellford on the southeast and Val d'Or and other clubs in Quebec).

At the charter night banquet, the chairman was J. G. Fraser, president of Huntsville Rotary. Visitors came representing Rotary International and from several other clubs, most numerous from the Rotary Club of Toronto, who chartered a special bus.

With its charter in hand, Bracebridge Rotary was on its way, holding weekly meetings Fridays at the Albion and making a beginning with their plans for community service, particularly for the care of underprivileged children. Also, in its first year the club began sponsoring Bracebridge Boy Scouts. At first the club was not prominently before the public with its program for others or fund-raising for community work, but Rotarians were encouraged to do their part in helping with, for instance, the town's

big celebration in that pre-war summer of 1939, when a Home-Coming Week drew back to Bracebridge many former residents.

Rotary Fairs

It so happened that the first annual Rotary Fair took place not long after the declaration of war against Germany at the beginning of September, 1939. The first such Fair was held November 2nd and 3rd and set a pattern for the carnivals which followed in the succeeding years, and which were the chief source of income for Rotary's community service fund.

The first fair was held in the former Bracebridge Arena, privately owned by George Yearley, who himself became a Rotarian. Dates for the second and succeeding carnivals were changed to August, and each year the Rotary Fair increased in popularity. After the arena was destroyed by fire early in 1943, the fair took place at Muskoka Garage, Manitoba Street, where the proprietor, Earle Rosewarne, a charter Rotarian, cleared out the service area and showroom of his business place, practically giving up business in busy August periods for the three days of the Fair, in 1943, 1944 and 1945.

Immediately after the war ended, members of Bracebridge Curling Club, many of whom were Rotarians, began constructing a curling rink, having been without one because of the fire in 1943 which destroyed the arena and the adjoining curling rink. Even before the roof was on the rink, the Rotarians held their 1946 carnival within the concrete block walls of the structure. Bracebridge Curling Rink, Ann and James Streets, was the site of the annual

carnival for more than 30 years. The late John Giordmaine, of Toronto, magician, is remembered for the many years he came and provided entertainment, with two shows each on the three nights.

In all the years of dependence on the Rotary Fair as the source of the club's revenue for community services, the club members were assisted at carnival time by the Rotary Anns, as well as by a number of citizens willing to help the club in the work of the carnival.

War Bonds

During World War II, Bracebridge Rotarians, with the exception of a few who enlisted, were called on to do their part on the home front in several ways. To mention one item, in the community a number of ladies' knitting clubs were formed and Rotary gave the wool yarn (from the Bird Woollen Mill) to be made up into socks or similar comforts for servicemen overseas.

For Bracebridge Rotarians, however, their most outstanding effort associated with the war was the selling of Victory Bonds. In the country-wide campaigns each year of the war these government bonds for war purposes were sold through door-to-door canvassing. In 1943 the objective was \$260,000 for Bracebridge, and club members sold \$270,950 worth of bonds, the result of 640 applications.

The local advertising for the campaign included the following: "Rotarians donate time to this canvass. Every cent of commission paid to them for the sale of bonds goes into the Rotary Fund for local underprivileged children and war work." Every member of the club was listed as a canvasser.

The club also handled the Seventh Victory Loan in Bracebridge in April, 1944, and had to name official canvassers, who were Wilbert Richards, George N. Ecclestone, E. L. Burgess, Stanley Hornby, William Snazel, Roy Shier, Tom Ball and Bert Brown.

Community Service Fund

Bracebridge Rotary has always kept two main bank accounts, one into which members' dues are paid and which is used for all club expenses, and No. 2 account into which are paid all money received from the annual Rotary Fair and other money-raising activities.

The No. 2 account has been used exclusively for expenditures on assistance to the needy, underprivileged children, Boy Scouts, youth services, medical services, grant to the Children's Aid Society, high school bursaries, student loans, and taxes on Rotary properties.

Two other funds may be mentioned. The Easter Seals campaign revenue goes into a fund administered under the rules of the Ontario Society for Crippled Children, half of the campaign funds being sent to provincial headquarters, the remainder used locally.

The other fund, collected from the club members on their birthdays, is forwarded as a club donation to the Rotary Foundation, the international institution which funds educational projects throughout the world.

CHAPTER TWO

Assistance to young people

IN RECENT YEARS the success of Bracebridge Rotary committees in restoring Woodchester Villa is a good indication of the community service of the club. It must be said, however, that the main emphasis of Rotary locally over its 50 years since receiving its charter has been on what could be done to help young people, especially those handicapped or otherwise disadvantaged.

From its earliest years in Bracebridge Rotary had an association with the Ontario Society for Crippled Children. The club has raised funds to help those who were physically handicapped, and has had the satisfaction of seeing a number of crippled and handicapped boys and girls restored to normal health and activity.

Eventually Rotary took over the local annual Easter Seals campaign, with half the proceeds going to provincial headquarters of the Crippled Children's Society, the rest being retained for local assistance.

Thirty years ago the club provided for the attendance of children at the Blue Mountain Camp for crippled children, operated by the Ontario Society, and in most succeeding years continued to do so. In 1960 six children were sent to the camp from this community. That camp, known as Camp Northwood, expanded, and Bracebridge Rotary, with the concurrence of the Ontario Society, was able to con-

tribute funds towards the costs of projects for the camp's improvement.

Boy Scouts

It appears that in its first year Bracebridge Rotary assumed the care of Scouting in Bracebridge. In 1937 Scouting was revived in Bracebridge by the late Thomas W. Pierce as Scoutmaster and Rotary agreed to become sponsors. Ten boys from the high school became members of the first troop, the start of today's Scouts and Cubs. Other responsibilities during the war made it necessary to find another Scoutmaster, and it was a committee of Rotary which was responsible for keeping Scouting going.

At the end of the war leadership became less of a problem and in 1946 the Rotary Club of Bracebridge was officially recognized by the Boy Scouts Association as the sponsor of Scouts and Cubs in Bracebridge. Over the next ten years Scouts and Cubs, Guides and Brownies increased in numbers, limited only by the problems of accommodation. The young people were holding their weekly meetings in church halls and even private homes.

The Rotary directors and Scout committee sought a solution to the lack of a centre for all groups. This was finally solved when in October, 1956, negotiations with the provincial government resulted in Rotary being able to secure the property on Main Street (opposite the railway station), Formerly used by the Public Works Department, to be used as a centre and meeting place for Bracebridge Scouts and Guides. The building was then remodelled for their use. The agreement with the Government permitted use of the property as long as it remained a centre for Boy Scout activities.

In 1971 a substantial addition enlarged the usefulness of the Scout and Guide building. The total expense of more than \$11,000 was reduced by a work incentive government grant.

The relationship between Bracebridge Rotary, as official sponsors, and the Boy Scouts and Cubs was placed on a firmer basis in June, 1954, when the Group Committee was organized to assist the Scoutmaster and Cubmaster. Rotarian Gordon McIntyre was first chairman. Scouting has continued to advance, although at times hampered for lack of sufficient leaders. In 1960 a Ranger company was established. In 1977 a Beaver Pack for boys under seven was authorized.

Bracebridge Rotary pays the registration fees of boys in Scouting. It may be noted that for some years the club maintained a Scout camp on the Muskoka River on property leased from Beaumont Farms. In 1961 it was reported that the camp was no longer being used by local and visiting Scout troops to the extent it had been formerly, and the lease was given up.

Annual Clinic

As part of its program to help crippled children, in 1948 Bracebridge Rotary began sponsoring an annual clinic for crippled children in co-operation with the hospital. Specialists came from the hospital for Crippled Children in Toronto to examine children brought to Bracebridge from their homes in Muskoka, Parry Sound and Nipissing Districts. The response was surprising. In 1960, for instance, 73 children were brought to the clinic, and the next year 66.

It was only in 1980 that the clinic was discontinued, on the understanding that the need has diminished and that local physicians can care for their young patients.

Another activity deserving mention was that for several years there was an annual Christmas party for crippled children at Santa's Village, Bracebridge, arranged by the Rotary Club of Bracebridge and supported by the Rotary Clubs of Gravenhurst, Huntsville and Parry Sound. In addition, the North Bay Rotary Club in more than one year brought a busload of crippled children for their own party at Santa's Village.

Children's Aid

Bracebridge Rotary over many years supported the Muskoka Children's Aid Society, now known as Muskoka Family and Children's Services. For many years the club made an annual grant, said to have been the largest from any private source in the District of Muskoka. As well Rotary made special provision, as the Society requested, for children in the Society's care, to attend camp or go by bus for such treats as the Sportsmen's Show in Toronto.

CHAPTER THREE

Community Centre

EARLY IN 1943 Bracebridge lost its arena when the building, which also housed the curling rink, burned down. After the end of the war in 1945 plans were made for a new arena, with the determination that it be well constructed to last. Bracebridge Rotary in 1947 pledged a payment of \$1,000 annually for ten years, and exceeded that amount when funds permitted. By today's standards the yearly amount might not seem substantial, but it may be noted that \$1,000 represented the amount made for the club in the annual Rotary Fairs of the 1940's.

Bracebridge Memorial Community Centre was officially opened February 1st, 1949. To make certain that its facilities were well used, Bracebridge Rotary sponsored free skating periods at the Centre for boys and girls, and contributed through the Recreation Committee to figure skating instruction. For a few years Rotary also sponsored a Pee Wee team in the Minor Hockey League.

In 1970 the club contributed \$1,000 towards the cost of a new refrigeration plant for arena ice, to replace the original equipment.

The only part of the Community Centre building which originally had not been constructed to the standards of the rest of the building was the entrance. Funds in the first place had not permitted the entire scheme to be carried out. Time was to prove the inadequacies of the entrance structure, and in the mid-1970's when the Provincial Government

was examining all arenas in Ontario as to their safety and requiring the rebuilding of many of them, the report on Bracebridge Memorial Community Centre condemned as unsafe the entrance structure, in which large cracks had appeared.

The Council decided upon a plan of reconstruction which would permit the original scheme of an upper hall as well as a more commodious ground-level entranceway to be provided. In order to secure certain government grants it was necessary that, in addition to a municipal debenture, private funds be subscribed on a dollar-for-dollar basis.

Bracebridge Lions and Rotarians contributed \$5,000 each, and the Kinsman Club made a valuable contribution by completing the second storey hall.

Bracebridge Memorial Community Centre today is one of the busiest arenas in this part of Ontario. Its original concept was encouraged and supported by Bracebridge Rotary.

Swimming instruction

It was around 25 years ago that Bracebridge Rotary began annual support for the supervised swimming classes, a joint project with the Recreation Committee and the local Red Cross Society. About 200 boys and girls attended, travelling by bus to the lakeshore, and there learned to swim well each year, an accomplishment contributing to their safety and enjoyment in following years.

There were problems as to the location of the swimming classes, as a certain amount of space was required along a beach and this could interfere with others living nearby. The Rotary Club directors in

the 1960's and early 1970's spent much time investigating the possibilities of establishing their own beach, or alternatively helping to build a swimming pool, preferring that it be operated in conjunction with the Memorial Community Centre, but their investigations did not result in action, until 1975.

Bracebridge Town Council, supported by many citizens, decided that the municipality's 100th year of incorporation, 1975, should be celebrated. In addition to arranging for gatherings of people, including many former residents who came for Old Home celebrations, it was decided that the centennial should be made significant by the provision of a new building, which became the Bracebridge Centennial Centre.

The need for a large hall had been seen and it was agreed that the centre should incorporate such a facility. But more than that, the long-felt requirement of a community swimming pool was satisfied when the Council decided that the Centennial Centre would be built to house a modern and well-operated pool.

Bracebridge Rotary had long known of the need for such a pool because of their interest in swimming instruction, and in the early part of 1974 the club committed itself to donate \$30,000 over three years to the town's project. Also, in 1976, the club designated funds for a lift at the swimming pool for the benefit of physically handicapped persons. In 1977 Rotary granted money to the local branch of the Canadian Arthritis Society for a program of hydrotherapy and exercise at the pool.

The pool has proved one of the outstanding recreational facilities of Bracebridge. It has resulted

in the promotion of physical fitness for people of all ages. It has enabled young swimmers to prepare themselves to enter aquatic competitions and to succeed with distinction.

School library

At Bracebridge Public School it was the Rotary Club which was able in 1947 to form the start of an up-to-date library for the benefit of the pupils. Books were added each year under the supervision of Principal Bruce R. Minns, a Rotarian. After Mr. Minns' death in 1958 the club continued the policy of adding books, and saw the acceptance of their recommendation that the name become the "B. R. Minns Memorial Library" in the school.

In 1974 the club made a sizable donation to improve the library at Macaulay Public School.

Student awards

A regular part of Rotary's program for students of Bracebridge and Muskoka Lakes Secondary School has been the provision of awards annually, received by students at the annual commencement exercises. Two bursaries are provided each year, of \$300 each.

In the spring of 1974 the concert band of Bracebridge and Muskoka Lakes Secondary School with their leader, J. Rutherford, and Principal Kenneth Black, travelled to England for a tour, giving concerts in a number of cities. Rotary contributed \$1,000 towards this special event.

Student Loans

Towards the end of 1960 studies started by the directors of Bracebridge Rotary were so well advanced that a decision was made to establish for young

people wishing to extend their education beyond the local secondary school, and who found difficulty in financing university attendance, a Student Guidance and Loan Fund.

The plan was approved by the club membership in February, 1961, and began to function with funds voted from the community service funds and added to as required in subsequent years.

At that time it was shown that of 33 students in Grade 13 of Bracebridge and Muskoka Lakes Secondary School, ten would go to university and would require assistance. Later when the government brought in by legislation a plan for provincial student loans, the local Rotary plan was modified, and has continued in operation to the present time, the loans being repaid and money lent out again.

In 1962 arrangements were made with Bracebridge and Muskoka Lakes Secondary School to set up a student guidance library, and \$100 was voted for this purpose.

The club also arranged in a number of years a Careers Day program at the Public School, with Rotarians and others talking about their work.

Student Exchange

In 1974 Bracebridge Rotary committed itself to active participation in the Student Exchange program of Rotary International.

The result has been the presence in the community of students from other lands, New Zealand, Australia, Mexico and elsewhere, who have attended classes at Bracebridge and Muskoka Lakes Secondary School, while living for a few months each with families of Rotarians or others during their year here.

In turn, Bracebridge students have gone to Denmark, Holland, South Africa . . .

The sharing by these students with their acquaintances in the community of their impressions of other lands and telling of their experiences has been markedly helpful in aiding wider world understanding and concern.

Foster children

In 1964 Bracebridge Rotary decided to sponsor a child under the Foster Children program maintained by an international organization, and has since continuously sponsored one or two children of impoverished families in Third World countries.

Ottawa visits

For a number of years, depending upon acceptance by the Rotary Club of Ottawa of applications from Bracebridge Rotary, a high school student was sent to Ottawa with expenses paid, for the Ottawa Club's excellent "Adventure in Citizenship" program. The student from Bracebridge would meet at the nation's capital with other young Canadians of his or her age group from across Canada, and take part in a program of three or four days, visiting the Parliament Buildings and other national institutions, thus gaining a broader concept of Canada, its people and its administration.

As the result of a project arranged by Bracebridge Rotary in 1965, four girls from Quebec came to Bracebridge to spend two weeks with families of girls who had previously visited their families in Quebec.

Instances are recorded through the years when the Rotary Club agreed to meet the expenses of

students from Bracebridge and Muskoka Lakes Secondary School who were sent on courses for a day or two on special subjects, such as outdoor activities and care for the environment, as arranged by educational institutions.

Retarded Children

In 1959 Rotary Club directors learned of the beginnings of work for retarded children in the community. A number of people saw the desirability of aiding such children, and more particularly establishing a class for those not able to attend the public school. The Rotary directors made a commitment to help in any possible way, and it appears that this decision proved to be the start of the involvement of Rotarians and other local citizens in this cause.

Through the next year the matter was investigated, and in January, 1961, there was sufficient interest in the community that it was possible to organize the South Muskoka Association for the Mentally Retarded, as a branch of the Ontario Society for Retarded Children.

Eight months later the retarded children's class was placed on an organized basis, using a room in Bracebridge United Church, with a qualified teacher, used school desks and volunteer help. Eight attended the first year, the number almost doubling the second year. Some children had to come a distance to the class and were able to travel on the school buses.

Before long it was reported that the accommodation at the church was becoming unsatisfactory because of the numbers, and it was suggested that a

building either be purchased or built. A community fund was started for a new school building, and Rotarians assisted in canvassing residents. Then a change in school legislation made it possible for the Province to give grants to retarded schools, which encouraged contributions to the local fund. Over the next few years a fund was gathered together, totalling \$34,000, towards which Bracebridge Rotary had contributed \$5,000.

Tenders were called in 1967, but with the Province paying half, the building fund was still insufficient, and another \$5,000 was raised. After the school opened it was taken into the Muskoka Board of Education system, and the Association's work in this respect was completed.

The next work, in which Rotary was expected to assist, and did so, was the establishment of a sheltered workshop, now known as ARC Industries.

None refused

While Rotary's community service program is chiefly directed to helping young people, attention is given also to those of other ages where there is special need. No appeal to the Club for assistance to those in distress through unusual circumstances, such as fire, storm or accident, is refused.

Sister service clubs in Bracebridge are the Lions and Kinsmen, whose contributions in service to the community have been regularly acknowledged. These three clubs work together in certain projects, such as the Annie Williams Memorial Recreational Park, although Rotary organized the beginnings of club responsibility for this project. Rotary and Lions support the Kinsmen in such community events as

the annual Santa Claus parade before Christmas and the Victoria Day fireworks display.

Other organizations doing community work are numerous, but two may be mentioned whose efforts are those of service clubs, the Bracebridge Business and Professional Women's Club and the Central Muskoka Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion. Bracebridge Odd Fellows Lodge together with Snow Queen Rebekah Lodge have a program which provides, among other things, hospital beds and wheel chairs where required for home nursing. The Orange Lodge has frequently sent a contribution to the Rotary Club of Bracebridge for crippled children's work.

A very active group is the Senior Citizens' Club, and it may be recorded that Bracebridge Rotary was pleased to be able to help its members establish the first centre they occupied on Manitoba Street before moving to their own building on Dominion Street.

Helping elsewhere

It is not alone in the local community that appeals to Bracebridge Rotary have been answered. From time to time when a Rotary Club elsewhere in Canada or abroad made known a need due to the results of a catastrophe, funds have been sent. Earthquake or storm victims have been aided by contributions.

On one occasion some years ago, Bracebridge Rotary responded to an appeal from the Rotary Club of Tehran to help a health program in Iran to overcome leprosy. (The Rotary Club of Tehran, like other former clubs in Iran, appears no longer to be

functioning, since the seizure of power in that country by the Ayatollah).

At another time Rotary here collected more than 200 books which were shipped to Bombay, India, for a library project.

Bracebridge Rotary was a contributor to the Toronto Rotary "House of Concord" project. The club also contributed to a District 701 project of buying surgical instruments for three hospitals in India. A Paul Harris home in Bolivia for crippled children was aided by a grant. To mention these is not, however, to give a complete list.

CHAPTER FOUR

A Review of Service

IN THE FOLLOWING PARAGRAPHS are reviewed some of Rotary's community service activities and club affairs:

Street signs

The Bracebridge streets all had their names from long ago, but save for a few sidewalk pavements marked at street corners, lacked signs to identify the streets, which was inconvenient for strangers. At a cost of around \$500, street signs were supplied by Bracebridge Rotary in 1947 and were erected by the town employees.

Municipal building

In December, 1957, the historic Bracebridge Town Hall was destroyed by fire. The Town Council pressed ahead with a new building so that it was in use and officially opened one year later. Bracebridge Rotary granted \$500 for the purchase of equipment for the kitchen adjacent to the municipal auditorium, in addition to further gifts for the furnishing of the Firemen's room in the building.

In 1958, when Robert Fox was Probation Officer for Muskoka and was a member of the Rotary Club, it was decided to set up a fund to be administered by the Probation Office when there was an established need to give help to individuals.

In 1958 Rotary supported a community program for the supply of used clothing for aged persons in need. This was a few years prior to the establishment of the Muskoka Home for the Aged.

Blood donors

In January, 1960, a blood donors project was proposed to the club and a committee was appointed to work in conjunction with the Red Cross in sponsoring blood donors clinics on a regular basis. This has proved successful over the years since. Rotarians set up the clinics, held at the United Church Hall, and look after advance publicity and notification. Usually the attendance is well over 200 donors.

Also in 1960, a branch of the Canadian Cancer Society was being formed in Bracebridge and Rotary was asked to name two representatives to assist the executive, Robert Fox and E. P. Lee being the nominees.

Memorial Hospital

In the early 1960's the replacement of the building of Bracebridge Memorial Hospital (established 1928) was being planned by a new corporation, South Muskoka Memorial Hospital. A completely modern institution was determined upon to give a high standard of health care for the people of a great part of Muskoka District, including the summer population.

The project had the support of 19 municipalities of south Muskoka and would be eligible for substantial government grants, but as always in hospital construction a considerable part of the financing depended upon private contributions. In October, 1961, the membership Bracebridge Rotary passed a resolution pledging \$3,000 to the hospital construction fund, to be paid over three years. A further gift of \$500 was made in March, 1963, as a memorial to Dr. A. F. Bastedo.

South Muskoka Memorial Hospital was opened in the fall of 1963. Within a few years the desirability of adding a wing to the building and supplementing the hospital's equipment resulted in an appeal for funds for this purpose. In May, 1968, Bracebridge Rotary approved a donation of \$6,000, to be paid in three annual installments.

Beautiful Bracebridge

In 1969 Rotary directors discussed their hopes for a "Beautify Bracebridge" program and sent a letter to Bracebridge Council proposing the appointment of a Municipal Parks Board. This was to become town policy in the next year or so.

Donations made

Those who have served in executive positions in Rotary or any service club know that the general policy is that the club not become "a cheque writing institution" but rather that the members accept as a duty working for their own selected projects. For practical purposes no hard and fast line may be drawn. Like other clubs, Bracebridge Rotary has given support through a grant in most years to community organizations.

The work of the Horticultural Society, for instance, has been encouraged by such donations, and the Salvation Army Red Shield campaign has been supported. It may be mentioned that Rotarians and members of other service clubs helped "man the kettles" for the Salvation Army Christmas cheer appeal. The Heart Fund has been supported, and organizations such as Big Sisters, the Association for the Mentally Retarded and others.

One time when the Red Cross Fund of the

Public School children was robbed, the directors voted \$50, approximately the amount stolen.

Grants have been made to the Kinsmen Club both for the Santa Claus parade (in which Rotary enters floats) and for the Victoria Day fireworks.

Aid was given in 1969 for the children attending the Muskoka Co-operative Nursery School. On one occasion a donation went to the Police Boys' Club and at another time to a youth drop-in centre. In more than one year the Health Unit asked Rotary's help in paying for supplies of vitamin pills for school children. In 1971 Rotary contributed to projects at Gibson Indian Reserve.

CHAPTER FIVE

Williams Memorial Park

IT WAS FOR ITS INITIATIVE in taking over the care and management of the Annie Williams Memorial Recreational Park 15 years ago that the Rotary Club of Bracebridge received the cherished recognition of a significant achievement award from Rotary International.

In 1959 Bracebridge Rotary directors first discussed the possibility of "establishing a picnic park" at the long-neglected Annie Williams Memorial Park on the north side of the Muskoka River, just downstream from where the river's north and south branches flow together. The park property is reached by the Santa's Village Road.

It may be explained that this property of approximately 16 acres had continued to be held in trust by the Canada Permanent Trust Company, Toronto, as executor and trustee of the estate of J. Francis Williams, physician.

The property was originally owned as part of his land on the river by Charles W. Lount, who in 1868 became Stipendiary Magistrate for the newly-designated District of Muskoka. In the latter part of 1925 Dr. Williams, a highly-regarded physician, who had practised in Bracebridge since about the beginning of the century, purchased the land from the Beardmore Leather Company. This company had already terminated the operation of their large leather tannery, which was on land adjoining the park on the east.

Dr. Williams died in September, 1926, followed in 1928 by his wife, for whom the park was established after her death as her memorial, under the terms of the doctor's will. They were predeceased by one child, and the three are buried in the north centre of the park in a small enclosure surrounded by an iron fence.

In addition to setting up a fund for payments to patients in Muskoka suffering from cancer or tuberculosis and being treated in their own homes (this before there were public hospitals), the will of Dr. Williams placed the riverside park property in trust for his wife, later to be maintained in perpetuity as a park for public use, with the revenue from the established trust fund to provide for the park's care. The trust company administering the estate became the trustees following Mrs. Williams' death, and the park was intended to become available for public use. The Brobst Forestry Company, with tree farm properties in Willowdale and Bracebridge, was engaged by the trustees to perform caretaker duties, which they did from 1928 until the end of 1964. It was then apparent that a change was necessary because the revenue from the fund, amounting to just over \$900 a year, was said to be no longer sufficient to meet the rising costs of caretaker duties.

The study which Bracebridge Rotary directors had made of the park management situation, from 1959 on, was valuable at this point. Rotarians and other local citizens knew the park's potential had never been developed in any attractive way, and very few had made use of it.

To Rotary this appeared a challenge, to become responsible for the park and to establish it properly

as a summer place of recreation. It was decided to suggest to the trust company that the Rotary Club of Bracebridge enter into an agreement to oversee the care and the development of the Annie Williams Memorial Park. A favorable reply was received from the trustees to this proposition.

The proposal was submitted to the full club membership in October, 1964, and was approved. For one of their weekly meetings, club members visited the park property to view the possibilities of its improvement.

On January 8th, 1965, Bracebridge Rotary formally advised the trust company of their intention to conclude an agreement. The agreement was prepared after a number of discussions, and was formally signed by the Canada Permanent Trust Company and the trustees of the Rotary Club of Bracebridge on June 8th, 1965. Rotary had already enlisted the co-operation of the municipal councils of Monck and Bracebridge. It may be noted, too, that the Rotary committee began actual work on the property in advance of the formal signing of the agreement.

The agreement provided for such things as the appointment of Bracebridge Rotary as management agent for the purpose of supervising, maintaining, developing and operating the Annie Williams Memorial Park; payment of the net revenue from the estate's trust account to Rotary for the above purpose; establishment of a committee for park operation, maintenance and supervision, with provision for the appointment to the committee of representatives of Bracebridge, Monck and other contributing bodies.

Bracebridge Rotary thus established in 1965 a management committee of four Rotarians: E. P. Lee, Q.C.; John Hall, then district forester for the Department of Lands and Forests; G. Leslie Tennant, accountant, and Glen S. Coates, contractor. The councils of Monck and Bracebridge were asked to name representatives.

Bracebridge Lions enthusiastically volunteered to help in improving the park's facilities, and that club was invited to become represented on the management committee. Soon thereafter, Bracebridge Kinsmen, who contributed recreational equipment, likewise named a representative.

The committee was faced with the fact that all development work on the property had taken place in the 1920's and that practically no improvement of any lasting nature had been attempted in over 30 years. No facilities were available.

A program of improvement and development was obviously necessary if the park was to become the asset to the community that Dr. Williams envisaged when he established the trust in 1926.

The program in the first instance had to be one of reclamation. Dead and dying trees were removed, including elms killed by Dutch Elm disease. Spruce and pine trees were pruned. Brush, debris and some trees were removed from the river bank area and the remaining trees were pruned. The shoreline was protected by stone ballast. Much of the ground was levelled and grass restored throughout the whole park, with provision for regular mowing. Roadways were established.

Development work included the provision of sanitary facilities. Drinking water from the town

supply was piped in. Picnic tables and benches were provided, refuse cans placed and barbecue fireplaces built. A picnic shelter was erected. Children's swings and slides were contributed. Fencing was improved. Parking areas were established. A docking facility was placed. Signs were erected at the park and along roads and streets. (Later all the roadways were hard surfaced).

Through an arrangement with Bracebridge Council, it became possible to obtain a 50 percent grant from the Province under the Parks Assistance Act for the construction of a building for storage and washrooms, and for a number of other developmental projects on the property.

Not long after Williams Memorial Park assumed its reclaimed and improved character, with its lawns and beautiful trees showing to good advantage, it became the site for group picnics, company outings and even celebrations of lodges.

In those former years when the grand finale of the Muskoka Cavalcade of Colour took place each autumn, several thousands came to Williams Memorial Park from all parts of Muskoka and beyond, first in October, 1965, and for the great majority of visitors that was their first opportunity to view the attractions of this excellent waterside recreational park property. The grand finale was also held there in a later year.

Williams Park is the site of the annual exhibition and sale of Muskoka Arts and Crafts, and this popular July event has expanded significantly in both exhibits and attendance since it has been accommodated at the park. Another popular annual summer event at the park is the beef barbecue held

by the Lions Club of Bracebridge, which each August draws several hundreds of hungry patrons.

Bracebridge Rotary at first made an annual contribution to the expenses of the Williams Memorial Park of \$600.00, but the annual grant has now been increased in recent years, recently reaching \$3,000.

CHAPTER SIX

Woodchester and Rotary's 75th Anniversary

IN THE YEAR 1980, the Rotary Club of Bracebridge observed the 75th anniversary of the Rotary movement by presenting to the Town of Bracebridge the Woodchester property in restored form.

The residence, Woodchester Villa, a handsome building of unique octagonal construction, stands in a grove of white pine and other trees, and overlooks the north branch of the Muskoka River.

The house was built in 1882, four years before the railway reached Bracebridge, by Henry J. Bird, who had established his woollen mill at the nearby Bracebridge Falls in 1872, an industry which provided employment in Bracebridge and brought much business to the town for 80 years.

Also on the Woodchester property was the first church building (Presbyterian) in Bracebridge, built about 1867 but used for only a few years. The last use of the building was as a place to keep the Bird family automobile. This structure was completely restored, with a basement, and became a museum, housing principally the collection of Alvin Kaye, of Cobourg, kindly donated by him after several years of work as a careful collector.

The Bracebridge Council gave the operation of Woodchester Villa and the museum in the former church into the hands of the Bracebridge Historical Society.

How it came about

The story of the restoration of Woodchester deserves to be recorded. It was action by the Rotary Club directors in August, 1977, which got matters going, when they sent a letter to Bracebridge Council requesting that the former home of the late Henry J. Bird and his family be officially designated as a building of historical and architectural value.

On the part of those in Bracebridge and elsewhere who had known the Bird family, many of whom had enjoyed their hospitality, there was a concern as to the fate of the long-time Bird residence, and a hope that in some way it could be used for a community purpose. The Rotary directors responded to this concern by taking the first step towards Woodchester's restoration in their request to Council. To this request Mayor Lang and his councillors readily agreed and in due course passed a by-law to declare the Woodchester residence an especially historic site.

This municipal action led to the designation by the Ontario Heritage Foundation of Woodchester Villa as an historic site.

This done, Rotary began enquiries as to the purchase price of the Bird family property, which had already been placed on the market. The prospect of being able to acquire the property was enhanced by the offer of a member of the Bird family to donate \$32,500, provided that the house be used for one of three purposes, a museum, a recreation centre for senior citizens or an artists' workshop.

The attitude of the Ontario Heritage Foundation, who were already well aware of the uniqueness of the Woodchester residence from its description in

the book, *Building with Wood*, by John Rempel, was to encourage the restoration of Woodchester largely to what it had been at an earlier period. They did not favor the use of the house itself as a museum. It appeared, however, that the Foundation would consider financial assistance with the project.

After consulting the Senior Citizens' Club and others, it began to appear to Rotary that the possibilities of finding some way of ensuring a good use for Woodchester if restored were so limited that they might do well to abandon restoration plans.

Historical Society

In April, 1978, however, a letter from Ted Currie informed Rotary that he was taking the initiative of seeking to form a local historical society for the primary purpose of the rehabilitation of the Bird house, and he asked Rotary's cooperation. Rotary had no intention of trying to operate a town attraction themselves, so with the offer of interested people to carry through a special purpose, the club indicated it was ready again to tackle the actual restoration.

In June, 1978, Rotary decided to make a conditional offer to buy the Woodchester property. The conditions were to include approval of the restoration project by the Ontario Heritage Foundation, the acceptance of the \$32,500 grant, and the successful arranging of financing. The Rotary directors authorized a feasibility study by an architect familiar with building restoration work, Neil K. MacLennan, of Kingston, who, it was discovered, knew Muskoka as a boy.

In his report in September the architect outlined the work required on both the residence and the

old church. The club also received information as to indicated government grants. The architect was authorized to proceed with proposal drawing, to be ready in December, with working drawings by the end of January, 1979. Work was to start March 1st, 1979.

Rotary committee

The committee of Rotarians named to oversee the Woodchester restoration was: Kenneth Black, high school principal; Eric Booth, P. Eng.; Gilbert Scott and John McRae. Later when Mr. Booth moved from Bracebridge his place was taken by Jerrold Brooks, who gave a great deal of time in overseeing the construction work. The commitment of Rotary by now totalled over \$200,000, of which it was expected that government grants and donations from corporations and the general public would help the cause, leaving a manageable amount to be raised by the club itself. Total costs up to May 1980, had been \$286,000. Government grants totalled \$160,000. The Bird family donation was increased to \$45,000.

The agreement under which Rotary was working was that when the restoration and rebuilding at Woodchester was completed, the club would turn over the property to the municipality, and the town then would expect Bracebridge Historical Society to arrange museum displays, to begin furnishing the rooms of the house and to manage the property. The Rotary committee has worked harmoniously with the officers, directors and committees of Bracebridge Historical Society, of which Wayland Drew was first president and E. P. Lee, Q.C., chairman of the board. Rotarians have been directors of the society.

A decision of the Historical Society as to the theme of the Woodchester residence has been to create the appearance of the rooms as they could have been around the year 1915.

Kaye collection

Early in 1979 it became evident that Rotary and the Historical Society would receive a considerable benefit from the offer of W. Alvin Kaye, a native of Muskoka, who wished to contribute the major part of a museum collection which he assembled at his home near Cobourg. Mr. Kaye visited and spoke to meetings of both the Rotary Club and the Historical Society. An agreement was reached as to the terms under which the Kaye "collection of old and interesting things" was to be displayed, and the church building is being used for this purpose. Eventually Mr. Kaye's collection was moved to Bracebridge.

Campaign for funds

Rotary launched a financial campaign for the "private sector" contributions for the Woodchester project. There was on the part of many individuals and businesses a generous response. This campaign was required since certain government grants, such as from Wintario, are based on a dollar-for-dollar amount to be raised from donations. Honorable Frank S. Miller, M.P.P., was campaign chairman, with R. J. Boyer and E. P. Lee, Q.C., as chairman and vice-chairman of the special names committee.

Town ownership

On March 13th, 1980, the Rotary Club of Bracebridge turned over the keys to the Woodchester property to the Mayor of Bracebridge, Jim

Lang. It may be observed that the Woodchester land and buildings, above Bracebridge Falls, fit in with the municipality's development of the waterfront alongside and below the falls on both sides of the Muskoka River as a Bracebridge park. For those who come to Bracebridge by boat, they find the wharf area, as one of the town's entrances, to have been given a splendid attractiveness.

Special recognition was given to the Centennial of Woodchester Villa in 1982, when for the first time in 35 years that a Muskoka Lakes steamboat came to Bracebridge Wharf, the elegantly restored "R.M.S. Segwun" came up the river and was piloted carefully to the wharf. The steamer's arrival was a memorable day to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Woodchester.

In 1984 the Ontario Heritage Foundation placed a bronze historic site marker on the lawn at Woodchester, which was unveiled in a special ceremony.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Club Incorporated

BRACEBRIDGE ROTARY PROPERTY up until 1977 was held for the Club in the names of three members named as Trustees, but in that year steps were taken to obtain incorporation as the Rotary Club of Bracebridge.

Meeting Places

In its first quarter-century weekly Rotary meetings were held in the dining room of the Albion Hotel, one exception being the annual change of officers meeting at the end of June. This was held for many years at Dr. Bastedo's summer home on Lake Muskoka, then was each year at Milford Manor and since 1974 at Bangor Lodge. At both Milford Manor and Bangor Lodge the annual meeting became a ladies' night. The anniversary of charter night, early in December, always has been a ladies' night, held at various locations.

In May, 1963, Rotary's meeting place in Bracebridge was changed to Holiday House, the move being made necessary due to alterations in the business of the Albion. The piano at the Albion was owned by the Rotary Club and was moved to the Scout Hall. Except for a few months in 1975 when Rotary met at the Captain's Table at Riverside Inn, Holiday House remained Rotary's meeting place until October, 1986, when a change was made and the meetings are again at Muskoka Riverside Inn. Time of the meeting is 12:15 on Fridays.

Fund Raising

For several years the Rotary Fair in August represented the only time in the year the Club staged an event to raise money for its community service program. The time came when more community work was undertaken and additional means had to be used to bring in more revenue, such as, for a time, a 50/50 draw.

For a few years Rotary, Lions and Kinsmen co-operated in putting on a "Muskokafest" at Bracebridge Memorial Community Centre at the time of the Muskoka Cavalcade of Colour.

The Muskoka Winter Carnival was organized in 1971 and in the local program of events, Rotary was asked to take part. The club sponsored a popular "Sluiceway" location, first at Hotel Patterson and then after 1975 at the Centennial Centre. Now after 15 years the decision has been made to discontinue Rotary's participation in this event.

In 1978 and 1979 Bracebridge Memorial Community Centre was rented for big dances, with a name band, and both were attended by big crowds.

In December, 1979, Bracebridge Rotary went into the Christmas tree business, and the result well favored repeating this project from year to year. Christmas trees will again be available at the usual location at Canadian Tire and Dominion Store in 1986.

In 1983 the first of the popular Vegas Night events was staged, repeated now from year to year, again a success in 1986.

New Attractions Sought

The annual Rotary Fair was the big event of the year when it was held at the former Bracebridge

Curling Club, Ann and James Streets. The time came when that building disappeared, replaced by the larger and excellent facilities at the South Muskoka Golf and Curling Club. It was in 1976 that a new location for the Rotary Fair had to be found, and the carnival was moved to the then new Centennial Centre hall and adjoining space in Jubilee Park, plus a building of the Agricultural Society. The Fair was also there in 1977. The Agricultural Society building was destroyed when it collapsed under a heavy snow load, and the 1978 Fair for the first time was cancelled. In 1979, Bracebridge Memorial Community Centre (previously unavailable because of summer hockey and skating schools) was the site of the carnival, with a smaller attendance than normally, due in great part to the lack of a Fair the year before. The 1980 Fair was planned on more ample lines with special features and entertainment new to the Fair program in addition to bingo and games. Along these lines the Fair was continued but the greater expense and the discouragement of a couple of heat waves at times when the Fair was being held did keep the revenue lower than required, and it was decided to seek other means of fund raising.

With the help of a publicity campaign made available by radio station CFRB, the club sponsored a successful evening at the Community Centre in August, 1984, with the famous Spitfire Band as the attraction. The Spitfire Band was able to return to Bracebridge the next summer, but in 1986 it was necessary to sponsor another attraction. Thus in July, 1986, a popular concert of country and western music by Kitty Wells and her troupe was staged, attracting an audience of 900 to the Community Cen-

tre. At each of these three events the draw for an automobile was continued, since this was one of the best of the fund-raising efforts.

The present directors are now planning for a summer event for 1987, combined with a car draw.

Stage Shows

As much a contribution to community entertainment as for an event to raise community service funds, the Rotary Club of Bracebridge has sponsored at the auditorium of Bracebridge and Muskoka Lakes Secondary School each year in the late winter, first a concert and then in each recent year a stage performance.

Muskoka District Band was organized in 1960 and looked for sponsors for concerts. Bracebridge Rotary presented a springtime concert by the band each year, and a few times singing by a chorus of Rotarians was included, under the direction of Song Leader Glen Coates.

When Hugh Mackenzie became a member of Bracebridge Rotary he was called on to direct musical stage shows, "South Pacific" in 1978, "Fiddler on the Roof" in 1979, "Hello, Dolly" in 1980 and "The Man of La Mancha" in 1980. Hugh Mackenzie and his associate, Bruce Werry, decided to retire and for the 1981 show the club secured the services of Rotarian Cliff Whitfield as director of the musical shows. There followed five presentations under Cliff Whitfield's direction: "Sound of Music" in 1982, "Anything Goes" in 1983, "Finian's Rainbow" in 1984, "Mame" in 1985 and "Camelot" in 1986.

These presentations are entirely given by local

talent, drawn from the community and including a number of Rotarians themselves, not only for the acting parts but also in the extensive organization and preparation work required. The musical accompaniment has always been by an orchestra of District musicians.

It was regretted that Cliff Whitfield decided to retire from the work of producing the performances. The club has now appointed Rotarian Danny Brooks to take charge of the 1987 production, which will be "Oklahoma!"

CHAPTER EIGHT

District Governor

AUBREY OLDHAM became a Rotarian at Sarnia in March, 1933. Later he moved to Ottawa and in his years there became heavily involved in the committees of District 704. After retiring from his work with Mutual Life he and Joanne came in 1975 to make their home in Bracebridge. Not only had Aubrey's forbears pioneered in Watt Township, Muskoka, but he and Joanne had been summer residents for many years on Lake Muskoka, at Isle of Skye.

Upon coming to Bracebridge, Aubrey was able to resume his Rotary work in the Bracebridge Club, and once again his talents were recognized and he was asked to participate in committee work on the District level. He was invited to consider election as District Governor, and the Bracebridge Club not previously having been favored by a member being named to this office was pleased to support his nomination.

Aubrey took office as District 701 Governor on July 1st, 1979. Rotary had occupied a large place in his life and his 46 years of keen study of the Rotary movement and his awareness of the opportunities for service made his Governorship outstanding. He was an able speaker and was possessed of abundant energy. Soon he won the affection of Rotarians in the clubs of the District and beyond among those holding responsibilities in Rotary International.

Bracebridge Club members named by him to serve on the Governor's District committees included: Jack Abell, District Secretary; Raymie Lee, District publicity chairman; Bert Sugg, Foundation Scholarship awards chairman; Youth Exchange committee, Bob Petry; Group Study Exchange committee, Bruce McPhail.

It is the responsibility of the District Governor's own club to organize the annual District Conference, held in September, attended by about 400 people from 36 clubs. The work of organization began in advance of July 1st, 1979, when Aubrey officially became Governor after attending an R.I. incoming governors' conference.

From the Bracebridge Club Raymie Lee and Barry Graham were named co-chairmen of the arrangements committee and Jack Abell was registrar. To accommodate the numbers expected it was decided to hold the conference in two locations, at Cleveland's House and Elgin House, with the Governor's Banquet and Ball at Port Carling Arena. To the astonishment of all, Conference registration increased to 600, the maximum capacity of the two hotels. Since no room was left for 50 international exchange students and their leaders, the Oldhams made the Isle of Skye the place of the students' accommodation, under the direction of Bud Walsh, Conference Youth Exchange chairman.

The Conference, held September 21st to 23rd, 1979, was the largest Conference in the District's history, and was praised for its efficient organization and operation. The R.I. President's representative was Canadian-born Past World President Jack Davis, of Bermuda. A special guest was Govinda

Rajan, past District Governor of 701's twinned Rotary District in India. One of the speakers was the Honorable Frank Miller, Provincial Treasurer, a Bracebridge Rotarian. Bracebridge Mayor Jim Lang gave a civic welcome and Bracebridge President Ken Cumming also welcomed the delegates and their ladies.

During his Governorship year Aubrey, accompanied by Joanne, officially visited all the District clubs. The greatest significance of his term of office was that he gave the District new challenges in International Service. What was begun then with his urging has continued, and Rotarians of 701 have a wider view of the needs of the world and the opportunities they have to bring hope and help to many impoverished communities. For example, when Sean Kelly was installed as president in June, 1986, his address to the Bracebridge Club was on this theme.

Aubrey was made a Paul Harris Fellow. He had more than fifty years association with Rotary when he died at South Muskoka Memorial Hospital on July 29th, 1983.

CHAPTER NINE

International Service

A ROTARY PROJECT which to a club in India is described as Vocational Service, but to the Rotary Club of Bracebridge is part of this club's International Service, was the subject of a report in the October, 1986, issue of *The Rotarian* magazine, published at Evanston, Illinois, as follows:

The Rotary Club of Cochin, India, helped establish the Cochin Children's Centre, which offers instruction in painting, music and dance. Vocational classes in electronic data processing, computer applications, tailoring and photography are conducted for older students and adults. Rotarians volunteered their services to design and construct the building, which includes a library, auditorium and reading room. The project also was funded by the Rotary Club of Bracebridge, Ontario, Canada, a special grant from The Rotary Foundation of R.I., and a grant from the Canadian International Development Agency.

Some time after District 701 had been "twinning" with a Rotary District in India, a delegation from 701, led by Aubrey and Joanne Oldham, of Bracebridge, visited a District Conference in India in January, 1978, and at that time worked out a plan for Rotary and C.I.D.A. to help in restoring villages in Southern India which had been devastated by heavy cyclones. There were to be more visits by the Oldhams and others, from the Bracebridge Club and other 701 clubs to India, and there were a number of occasions when Rotarians from India paid visits here, to District Conferences or in-

dividual clubs such as Bracebridge.

The projects supported by clubs or districts are aided by the Rotary Foundation and the 3-H Fund of Rotary International. Rotary Foundation Scholars receive scholarships to study in another country and the funds are used to enable Group Study Exchange teams to travel from one country to another. Two years ago our representative, Bruce Kruger, travelled to Texas with a team led by Rotarian Fred Brueton, and a return visit was made by a team from Texas.

Rotary Clubs are assisted in financing development projects in Third World countries through grants from the 3-H (Health, Hunger and Humanity) Fund. For the project in Cochin, India, reported on by *The Rotarian*, the Bracebridge Club contributed \$15,000, a grant of \$15,000 was received from the 3-H Fund and a further \$75,000 was contributed by C.I.D.A.

It must be noted that the Cochin Rotarians upon completion of the Youth Training Centre advised that part of the building had been dedicated as the Aubrey Oldham Memorial Library, where a photograph of District 701's late district governor is exhibited.

This year a new project is the Polio Plus program designed to eradicate polio and other communicable diseases by the 100th anniversary of Rotary in 2005. Half of the contribution made to the Foundation funds by a local club to give Paul Harris awards is used for the Polio Plus program, and the Bracebridge Club has donated another \$3,000 to this significant cause.

CHAPTER TEN

Honored by Top Rotarian

THE FOUR NEIGHBORING ROTARY CLUBS of Huntsville, Bracebridge, Parry Sound and Gravenhurst can each point to a half-century of Rotary service. Huntsville Club received its charter in 1934, Bracebridge and Parry Sound in 1936 and Gravenhurst in 1937. It seemed to Tom Ewen, of Parry Sound, during his 1985-86 term as District Governor that the four clubs should unite to invite the President of Rotary International to recognize the 50 years of service of these clubs by paying them an official visit.

M. A. T. Caparas, from The Philippines, with a long record of R.I. service, is the 1986-87 World President, and he agreed that among his first visits he would come to Canada and that he would accept Tom Ewen's invitation.

The result was the most memorable Rotary occasion for this part of Ontario, when R.I. President Caparas and his lovely wife, Nita, were guests of honor at an evening banquet and ladies' night, attended by six hundred, at the Gravenhurst Centennial Centre on Monday evening, July 28th. Those attending included more than the membership of the four clubs, since most of the District 701 clubs were represented and visiting Rotarians from Toronto and elsewhere joined the party. The splendid Centennial Centre was an ideal location, with its reception space and with the beautifully decorated arena area used for the excellent dinner.

Tributes were paid to John Pike, newly installed president of the Gravenhurst Club, who was the general chairman for the organization of the evening. Each club sent members to assist in the committee work.

R.I. President M. A. T. and Nita Caparas arrived at Parry Sound and then came on to Muskoka Sands. Monday afternoon they were joined by club presidents and their wives from the whole of District 701 for a specially chartered cruise on the steamer "Segwun."

During the evening's banquet program, Tom Ewen presented, on behalf of the four celebrating clubs, the gift of a \$15,000 cheque to Rotary International for the Polio Plus program. Each of the four presidents spoke briefly. Tibor Gregor, of Toronto, introduced the R.I. President, who gave an outstanding address. He said fellowship is the bedrock of Rotary and noted the importance of smaller clubs tackling major projects, both locally and internationally. Rotary became big because it circles the globe, but despite that there are over 22,000 clubs around the world, it is the work of each club that is the strength of Rotary International. He was thanked for his address by District Governor Arne Schmidt, of North Bay.

During the program surviving charter members were introduced, also past R.I. officers and Paul Harris Fellows, as well as the Rotary Exchange students of the District. No Rotary meeting would be complete without a sing-song, and veteran song leader Glen Coates, Bracebridge, was called on to lead the songs. Chairman for the evening was Robert J. Boyer, Bracebridge. The banquet pro-

gram was concluded with a song recital by the North Bay Rotary Songsters, directed by Arne Schmidt.

It was an event which will live long in the memory of Rotarians who joined in the celebration.

Presidents in Fifty Years

THE FOLLOWING is a list of the presidents of Bracebridge Rotary, with the year in which they took office:

1936, Wilbert Richards; 1937, Henry J. Bird, Jr.; 1939, A. Roy Shier; 1940, John T. Andrews; 1941, Harry Wilson; 1942, George N. Ecclestone; 1943, Russell M. Best; 1944, Dr. A. F. Bastedo; 1945, John M. Johnson; 1946, William N. Spearin; 1947, Horace G. Parlett; 1948, Glen S. Coates; 1949, A. Sydney Bates; 1950, Earle Rosewarne; 1951, W. J. A. Brown; 1952, Walter L. Reynolds; 1953, Cecil W. Dickie; 1954, George W. Boyer; 1955, William C. Huckle; 1956, E. P. Lee; 1957, L. Wilbur Anderson; 1958, Edward J. Ball; 1959, I. Yorke Murphy; 1960, Don Boyer; 1961, Leslie Rosewarne; 1962, Norman Rosewarne; 1963, H. E. S. Sugg; 1964, Donald Hutton; 1965, Lou Specht; 1966, Frank Miller; 1967, Jerry Brooks; 1968, Ted Gervais; 1969, Dr. Lyle Black; 1970, Dr. Ray Savijarvi; 1971, Robert Petry; 1972, Stu Reid; 1973, Robert J. Boyer; 1974, Larry Giaschi; 1975, Ken Black; 1976, Eric Booth; 1977, Raymond Lee; 1978, John Biddle; 1979 Kenneth Cumming; 1980, Barry Graham; 1981, Ron Doty; 1982, John McRae; 1983, Gil Scott; 1984, Al Taylor; 1985, Dr. Kent Phillips; 1986, Sean Kelly.

Veteran Members

THE MEMBER OF THE CLUB with the longest record of continuous service is Cecil W. Dickie, 46 years a Rotarian, a member since March, 1940.

Others with 25 and more years of service are, with the date they became Rotarians:

Glen Coates, 1944; Leslie Rosewarne, 1945; R. J. Boyer, 1946; I. Yorke Murphy, 1946; William E. Towns, 1948; Bob Petry, 1954; Bert Sugg, 1954; Jack Page, 1956; Don Hutton, 1956; Jerry Brooks, 1958; Douglas Sieber, 1959; Frank Miller, 1960.

Paul Harris Fellows

In 1983 Leslie Rosewarne was made a Paul Harris Fellow of the Club, as was Joanne Oldham for her work for Rotary especially in the time her husband was District Governor. In 1984 Robert J. Boyer and Raymond Lee were awarded Paul Harris Fellowships, Raymie's having come from the District. Cecil W. Dickie was honored in this way in 1985 and Glen S. Coates in 1986.

25 Years of Rotary Presidents 1987 to 2018

1987	Les Wilson	Rotarians – United in Service – Dedicated to Peace
<p>Les became famous (or infamous) for his ability to arrange musical entertainment. One particular highlight was a performance by Kitty Wells which, as it turned out, failed to achieve the desired fundraising goal.</p>		
1988	Paul Hammond	Put Life in Rotary – Your Life
<p>Paul recalls the thrill of the International Convention as a lead up- that was held in Philadelphia and the excitement of the World Polio Plus Program. The Bracebridge Club had been assigned to raise \$35,000 for this project over 3 years when in fact it raised \$45,000 in a 12-month period- quite a feat! At our club we enjoyed a host of good speakers such as in Michael Wilson, Federal Finance Minister, Monte Kwinter, Provincial Minister of Industry and Trade, also China's Consul General was in Toronto and visited our club one Friday. We were able to hold a successful elimination draw for a new home, selling all 2000 of the \$100. We had a large fun-filled boat cruise in the summer, The District Conference was at Fenelon Falls and there was a good group of us who not only attended but entertained at breakfast complete with costumes and our own piano that we brought with us from Bracebridge. There was a very colourful District Governor in Tom DeGeer. A GSE team of Aussies visited in the fall and we have good memories of them. Elaine Young was named Citizen of the Year. A bunch of us were involved in `Snowarama`. Paul was overwhelmed to receive his first Paul Harris Award and is proud to be part of the 75-year history.</p>		

1989	Bob Jones	Enjoy Rotary!
<p>Bob joined the Rotary Club of Bracebridge in 1980. A highlight of Bob's Rotary career was the Rotary Centre for Youth project which was officially announced in July during his year, two years after negotiations with the Town commenced. The Ministry of Tourism approved a \$200,000 grant for the project and construction started in the Spring of 1990. During Bob's year the Club hosted a GSE team from India, Colin McDougald was named 1989 'Citizen of the Year' and the major fundraiser was the "<u>Dream Home</u>" Draw. For the Dream Home, the club participated and supervised the construction of the house as well as selling out with ticket sales. The Club received two awards - the 'Presidential Citation' from Rotary International and the 'Distinguished Club Citation' from District 7010 both of which were earned as a result of the Rotary Centre for Youth project. In addition, during Bob's year a new Club banner was developed through a design contest with the high school.</p>		
1990	George Irvine	Honor Rotary with Faith and Enthusiasm
<p>During President George's year, the Rotary Centre for Youth was constructed and was officially opened on June of 1991. The "Super Odds Cash Lottery" was our major fundraiser for the year with prizes totaling \$75,000. The Rotary International Convention was in Portland Oregon. George remarked that one of things he remembers most was the quality of the Bracebridge Club and how members always get things done.</p>		
1991	Cliff Whitfield	Look Beyond Yourself
<p>Bracebridge was the second Rotary Club to which Cliff belonged - his first club was Guelph Rotary which he joined in 1962. He then went on to be a member of the Victoria Harbourside club (B.C.) and currently the Orillia Rotary Club. Cliff has been a Rotarian for 49 years. Cliff</p>		

recalls being blessed with an outstanding Board of Directors which made his task as President both easy and enjoyable. Rotary International and our club in particular were still emphasizing the great need to support Polio Plus which required the energetic support of our entire membership to continue its successful trajectory. Another project was the production of the annual Rotary Musical. The successful production of the show required the energetic support of all members and they were always there to do what was necessary. The Musical was primarily a community service project which enabled us to showcase the vast performing arts talent we had in our community. The fact that we often ended with a small surplus enabled the club to assist additional community projects.

1992	John Morrison	Real Happiness in Helping Others
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During John's year the grand prize in the "lucky 7's Cash Lottery" was \$50,777 and was won by Jim Ratcliff. The interesting thing about this was that Jim Ratcliff also won the grand prize in the previous year's draw. A prominent guest speaker that year was Frank Mahovlich, a six-time Stanley Cup winner who played for the Montreal Canadiens and Toronto Maple Leafs. Earl Linn constructed the metal bench that still sits in front of the youth centre today.

1993	Larry Miller	Believe In What You Do – Do What You Believe In.
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It was a year of recovery from a deficit budget and Larry's main objective was to improve the club's financial health by improving revenues and limiting spending. Larry recalls that the club seemed to run itself as so many members have areas of specific interest and they run their area with almost no input required. The theme of "Believe in what you do- Do what you believe in", struck a chord with Larry as he had a strong

urge to leave the club in better fiscal shape, and he believed that the team came through and the Club finished the year firmly on its feet. Larry remembers wanting to start and end each meeting on time and during the whole year only two speakers had breakaways,- Bruce Evans-always very interesting, and Premier Bob Rae, who also had to field many questions. Larry is certain that Bob only showed up at the Club due to his friendship with his father, former Premier Frank Miller. It was a year of much fellowship and fun, including an Algoma Railway Trip in Frank Miller's coach.

1994	Basil Coote	Be a Friend
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Bracebridge hosted the District Convention in September of 1994 – the year that Sean Kelly was District Governor. This was a very successful event with over 500 attendees and 40 youth exchange students. The Club membership was at 85. The Convention activities took place in a 9,000 square foot tent that was erected adjacent the Rotary Youth Centre. Speakers included Catherine Swift from the Independent Association of Business, Frank Findley – the Uranium man of Chalk River's Atomic Energy Plant. A little-known fact is that the logo for the Convention was designed by Dave Brouillette and it eventually was modified to become the District 7010 logo.

1995	Keith Montgomery	Act with Integrity – Serve with Love – Work for Peace
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Stephanie Boag from Australia was the Rotary Exchange Student and Reverend Jim Thompson was named Rotary Citizen of the Year. Firsts included the Rotary Musical (Sound of Music) moving to the Opera House in Gravenhurst and the start of the Gala on opening night. Paul Hammond of Muskoka Transport started painting his trailers highlighting aspects of Rotary service for all of North America to see. Most

importantly, the Rotary Bursary Fund was created to help students pursue post secondary education with funds received from the Estate of Alvira Binks, a former teacher and a past recipient of the Rotary Citizen of the Year Award.

1996	Art Cox	Build the Future with Action and Vision
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In Art's year the Club sponsored the first Probus Club in Muskoka being the Probus Club of Bracebridge. That club reached its 200-member capacity within the year and became the biggest Probus Club in Canada. Since that time, three more clubs were established in Bracebridge alone to accommodate the rise in the retirement population in the Area. The Club celebrated its 60th anniversary in which we put on a Charter Night Celebration at the Rotary Centre for Youth. Dan Brooks acted as Master of Ceremonies for the "trip down memory lane" which included Ken Cumming and Sid Martin playing the honky-tonk piano. Accolades were received from the Mayor, the Premier and the Prime Minister. The Club resurrected the sponsorship of a Recreation League Minor Hockey Team and Art represented the Club in a 6 kilometre run as part of the first cross-Canada fundraiser for the Para-Olympics called "Why Not".

1997	Don Smith	Show Rotary Cares
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Throughout its 75 years, the Rotary Club of Bracebridge has shown how much it cares by being a catalyst for countless projects and causes. In the 1997-98 Rotary year, the club demonstrated it cared by bringing the community together to provide much-needed assistance to the residents of Drummondville, Quebec. They were victims of the ice storm of January 1998 that left Drummondville without power and basic supplies. Within 48 hours, a tractor-trailer full of supplies including food, water, generators, fuel and more was on its way to

Quebec, delivered by a team of Bracebridge Rotarians.

1998	Bill Caughey	Follow Your Rotary Dream
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1999	Dan Wyjad	Rotary 2000: Act with Consistency, Credibility, Continuity
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Dan's year was the lead up to the millennium and apart from worrying about what that meant, Dan felt that the one thing of significance was that we began planning for the start of a new club. Dan headed up the committee that sponsored the Bracebridge and Muskoka Lakes Club. The new club was eventually chartered in April 2001.

2000	Leon Braithwaite	Create Awareness Take Action
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The year 2000 – 2001 was the Millennium year. We chartered the first Probus Club and Interact Club in Bracebridge. Two memories I have are as follows. Frank Devlyn Rotary International President 2000 was the most enthusiastic person I have ever met. The second memory is that I was in a full leg cast for most of my year.

2001	Joy McCormack	Mankind is our Business
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Joy, together with Anne Marie Mathieu, was our first female Rotarian. As the first woman president of the Bracebridge Club (thanks to sponsor Sean Kelly) she enjoyed her year immensely. Joy believes all the other 100 Rotarians conspired to make her year a success. To a Rotarian they all lived service above self and indeed did make "mankind their business". "I will always remember my year with great fondness". The ongoing humour throughout the year was a highlight, even the inadvertent obscene kind. As a legacy, Joy initiated an annual report which is still a routine year end procedure.

2002	Jean Polak	Sow the Seeds of Love
<p>In this year we “sowed the seeds” of two significant long-term projects that grew into great success stories in the years that followed – the Rotary Centennial Gardens and the World Community Service project in Querétaro, Mexico. Our club completed (one year early) our \$150,000 pledge to the South Muskoka Hospital Foundation and almost reached the \$25,000 mark towards the Polio Eradication Campaign. We sponsored an active Interact Club (even though no international trip was offered that year)! Club members hosted our exchange student from the Netherlands, Yul Zengerink, and the GSE team from eastern Africa. We celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Rotary Annual Musical with a rousing production of Guys & Dolls. District activities became great fellowship events as we made the long trek to a terrific District Conference in Rouyn-Noranda and had a large (and boisterous!) group attend PETS in North Bay. The major fundraising draw run by Liam Cragg was a huge success, selling out almost completely (5922 tickets of the 6000 printed).</p>		
2003	Liam Cragg	Lend a Hand
<p>Liam's year involved lots of planning for the upcoming centennial celebration of Rotary. Our Centennial project, the Rotary Gardens, required special consideration. Liam was blessed to have Peter and Jan Rickard chairing this committee with enthusiasm and passion. Also of note was choosing a Rotary Club to ‘twin’ with. The Town of Bracebridge was trying to officially twin with Gol, Norway and discussions had stalled. Liam was able to call on Rotary International, the Zone Governor and the Norwegian District Governor to assist in bringing Bracebridge and Gol together, both on a Town and Rotary Club basis. It was an extremely interesting process. Sadly, Past District Governor, Sean Kelly passed away during Liam's term.</p>		

2004	Ron Walton	Celebrate Rotary
<p>The club celebrated the Centennial of Rotary International with a party in February and the construction of the Rotary Gardens. A bus load went to the International Conference in Chicago with refreshments on the ride keeping all in fine spirits. Long term commitments were made to supporting the Recreation Centre, hospital and theatre to make Bracebridge a better place to live. The international project in Quetero, Mexico provided a home for mentally handicapped adults. Our membership soared to just shy of 100.</p>		
2005	Ike Kelneck	Service Above Self
<p>During Ike's year he featured a Rotary Minute as part of the opening remarks for each meeting. He also initiated having Committee Chairs sit at the head table with him and they routinely updated the Club on their Committee's activities. That year we learned one of Ike's favourite words and attitude - "positude".</p>		
2006	Dave Brouillette	Lead the Way
<p>The year 2006-2007 was a transitional period in Rotary International. RI had implemented a new Leadership Plan and it was up to all of the individual Clubs to conform to new procedures. This included a re-organization of the entire Committee structure as well as preparation of new Club By-Laws. In addition, Dave – who joined Rotary in 1988 – finally got up the confidence to do his classification talk which apparently was a highlight of his year.</p>		
2007	Nancy Cox-Godfrey	Rotary Shares
<p>Nancy's most memorable experience was receiving the Presidential Citation from the Rotary International President himself – Wilf Wilkinson. The award was</p>		

presented at the District Conference in Peterborough and Nancy was suitably dressed in a never to be forgotten gown. It was during her year that the Club accepted the challenge of taking over the Canada Day Fireworks show from the Kinsmen Club. The Bracebridge Rotary Club also took on the task of running monthly blood donor clinics. We were the fourth highest donor to the Rotary Foundation with contributions of \$23,000. Nancy hopes to “Share Rotary” with Rotarians and members of the Community for many years to come.

2008	Darcy Hammond	Make Dreams Real
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In the year 2008 – 2009 some of the more memorable highlights were the “first match” being lit as part of our club’s commitment to the community to continue with the Canada Day fireworks celebrations in Bracebridge Bay Park. As part of Our Centennial Celebration project we dedicated the Miller Pavillion in the Rotary Gardens. The most memorable moment for me was watching District Governor Tom Bennett hanging on for dear life while he raced across Gull Lake with Rotarian Brian Ferguson, in Brian’s hand-crafted jet boat. Tom was a great District Governor, making my year as President enjoyable.

2009	Richard Borland	The Future of Rotary is in Your Hands
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Once the afternoon blue sky replaced the torrential morning rain storm on Canada Day allowing a fantastic fireworks display, we knew a good Rotary year was on the way. The year included the official opening of the Coates Pavilion at the Rotary Centennial Gardens, fantastic costumes at the musical “Beauty & the Beast”, a terrific exchange student from Mexico (Adrianna Izquierdo Gaxiola), and unbelievable World Community Support to the survivors of a major earthquake in Haiti –

not only did the Club give \$10k but the community provided an additional \$24K to the relief effort. This was also the year of the record snow storm – over 4 ft of snow shutdown Bracebridge & surrounding area but in true Rotary fashion, we still had enough members attend the club assembly to vote in next year's Board. We finished off the year in style on the Wenonah II.

2010	Margaret Walton	Building Communities Bridging Continents
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In 2010- 2011 the club started the year with a strong contingent attending the RI conference in Montreal. Inspired no doubt by the fun and fellowship of that experience the club embarked on a strategic plan to chart the course for the next presidents. Fellowship was a focus for the year with the club focusing on community projects. It was the first year of the ball hockey tournament, the club purchased a therapeutic aqua bike for the Recreation centre and the Annie William Park committee submitted a successful bid for Let Them Be Kids funding to the playground. The musical, the Drowsy Chaperone was a hit with even the men raving about it.

2011	Linda Brouillette	Reach Within to Embrace Humanity
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The year started with a big BANG on a beautiful July 1 day and evening with an ever-growing array of activities culminating with the best fireworks show ever! The board was able to share the strategic plan goals developed in the previous year with the new committee chairs. The committees are working diligently to accomplish many of the goals this year. In September, we donated funds and many members' helping hands to the very successful fundraising campaign and build day for the Let Them be Kids playground in Annie Williams Park. A team of 9 Bracebridge and 2 Gravenhurst Rotarians, partners and friends will spend 19 days

partnering with Cambodian Rotarians, the Red Cross and school officials delivering 700 bicycles to children in rural Cambodia so that they can attend far distant schools. We will celebrate the 75th Anniversary of our club's charter and the 20th anniversary of the opening of the Rotary Centre for Youth at our Charter Night on Dec 3. We plan to hold a public open house at the Rotary Centre for Youth in Spring 2012 to further celebrate with the local community "who we are and what we do". As this is written, we still have 7 months of good works to come!

2012	Steve Meadley	Peace Through Service
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This was a very successful financial year for our club with the receipt of \$130,000 in donations from three anonymous donors to establish the "Rotary Cares" fund and the receipt of a \$160,000 bequest from the estate of Mary Howard.

Club Foundation month in February raised \$9,000 for Polio Plus with 30 club members participating. In addition, \$5,000 was contributed from the annual golf tournament to Polio Plus. These funds were matched by the Canadian government and the Gates Foundation for a total of \$42,000 initiated by our Club for Polio Plus.

The Bracebridge Bay Restoration Project was a major community initiative that was launched by our Club, in partnership with the Town of Bracebridge.

The Club was awarded the Outstanding Contribution to Bracebridge award at the Bracebridge Chamber of Commerce Business of The Year Awards.

Our Club organized and hosted the GSE team from Taiwan for five days in April.

2013	Al Helmer	Engage Rotary, Change Lives
<p data-bbox="106 177 929 323">During 2013-14 the club completed its second project at El Arca in Queretaro, Mexico and started the shoreline restoration project in Bracebridge Bay, which was completed the following year.</p> <p data-bbox="106 326 929 506">Prompted by a generous estate bequest, the club set some new spending priorities, the most significant of which was a multi-year pledge of \$150,000 to the capital campaign of the South Muskoka Memorial Hospital Foundation.</p> <p data-bbox="106 509 929 689">President Al encouraged the establishment of a reserve for International Disaster Assistance, increased reserves for the Student Bursary fund, and set aside monies for the installation of an electronic sign at Rotary Center for Youth.</p> <p data-bbox="106 693 929 807">The Club nominated Past President Margaret Walton for 2016-17 District Governor and the club was delighted when she was chosen for this position.</p> <p data-bbox="106 810 929 918">The year ended on a tragic note with the death of Honorary Member Bruce McPhail and his wife Ruth Ann, in an accident while traveling in the United States.</p>		

2014	Ken Anthony	Light Up Rotary
<p>As well as having informative and well-attended meetings, the Rotary Musical production of <i>The Wizard of Oz</i>, was also well attended and wonderfully produced.</p> <p>After several years of discussion, the Club held a vote to construct an outdoor electronic sign at the Rotary Centre for Youth, which was overwhelmingly approved by the membership and, subsequently, installed.</p> <p>The Club worked with the Town of Bracebridge and the District of Muskoka to increase their commitments in support of the Rotary Centennial Gardens.</p> <p>Having met all their goals for 2014-15, the Club received the District Governor's Achievement Award and the Rotary International Presidential Citation.</p> <p>The Board began discussions with the Rotary Club of Gravenhurst to evaluate our continuing commitment to Rotary Bingo.</p>		
2015	Cheryl Kelley	Be a Gift to the World
<p>The Club supported President Cheryl's presidential project for the year which was to assist the Town of Bracebridge's Accessibility Advisory Committee in making Kirby's Beach swimming area more accessible. In addition to new accessible picnic tables, Rotary's contribution included the purchase of a "Mobi-Mat" that is installed seasonally. This mat allows those with wheelchairs, strollers, etc., to gain easy access to the water.</p> <p>The 25th Anniversary of the Rotary Centre for Youth was celebrated with an event that included a number of guests who assisted in developing the centre. Bob</p>		

Jones, who spearheaded the construction of the facility and who left Bracebridge and our Club in 2016, was recognized with a Paul Harris Fellow for his contributions. After much discussion, our Club agreed to sponsor two Syrian Refugee Families in conjunction with many great organizations in the community. Although the process to welcome refugees to the Bracebridge would be many months down the road, the decision was made in late 2015.

Brock and Willa Napier were recognized as our Citizens of the Year for their support of our Humanitarian efforts as well as their many gifts to Bracebridge and Muskoka.

2016

**Tim
Harvey**

Rotary Serving Humanity

Rotary year 2016-17 started with a very successful Major Fundraiser administered by President-Elect Gord Nielsen. Over 6000 car draw tickets were sold, with member Bob Jacob selling more than 1000 tickets himself.

During this year club member Margaret Walton served as District 7010 Governor and the District Conference was held in Minett at the JW Marriott Resort. The conference was well attended and well reviewed. Unfortunately, at the District Conference, Past President Jean Polak was badly injured in a fireworks accident. Thanks to the quick actions of other club members on the scene, Jean was quickly transported to hospital and thankfully, following a number of surgeries, was able to make a successful recovery.

During this Rotary year club members William Akinbinu and Nancy Cox-Godfrey successfully started a Nevada ticket fundraiser which replaced TV Bingo.

Working with our community partners, we welcomed our first Syrian refugee family to Bracebridge and members of our World Community Service committee worked hard to integrate them into life in Canada.

2017	Gord Nielsen	Making a Difference
<p>It has been my privilege to watch the members of our club make such a significant impact on our local and global community over this past year. From our role in bringing thousands of people together to celebrate Canada's 150th birthday, our support of our local hospital, our support of the Rotary musical, our commitment to local youth, and our ongoing care of our beautiful gardens, you have shown what leadership is all about.</p> <p>From the fulfilment of our contributions to accessibility improvements at Kirby's Beach, our role in helping members of our community that need a hand up, our role in supporting a second new Canadian family from Syria, and our contribution to a new hospice, you have shown what strong partnerships are all about. Through all of these actions, and the many other things we do, you have all lived this year's theme of "Rotary – Making a Difference".</p> <p>The broad spectrum of interests, ideas and talents in our club are our strengths. We are lucky to be part of a club with such a rich history, and where fellowship and a shared belief in the betterment of our community make for such an exciting future. Leadership, partnerships, fellowship, the three words which to me best summarize who we are! It has been an honour to serve as our club's President this past year, and I look forward to Andrew's leadership and dedication in the year ahead.</p>		