



Centennial Moment #16

Greetings fellow Rotarians,

We are all thrilled that, in 2 years, RI will have its first female President - and she's Canadian!

Female Rotarians have come a long way. Until 1988, women were not even allowed to join Rotary. Then the RI Constitution was changed. In 1989, after much discussion, our own club Constitution was changed. Our club inducted its first 2 women members in 1990 (and one later became our first female President in 2001 - Susan Mackle).

Wives of Rotarians often shared a keen interest with their husbands in the work of Rotary (and many spouses still do today!). Wives - then referred to as "Rotary Annes" - did considerable work on club projects. For example, the wives sewed and hung curtains for Camp Kawartha prior to its opening in 1922, and fundraised to provide CK with kitchen equipment, plates, cutlery, chairs, tables, mattresses, blankets, Coleman lamps, library shelves with 200 books, and other necessities - including a war canoe and a motor boat! The "Rotary Annes" had their own organization (founded in 1921, the same year as our club) with its own set of books, separate from the main club.

From Frances' ongoing research in the Examiner archives of 100 years ago, comes this article about when the "Rotary Annes" took over an evening - on All Hallows Eve!

From *The Evening Examiner*, Peterborough, Tuesday, October 31, 1922:

ROTARY-ANNES MAKE A HIT ON LADIES' NIGHT

Original and Clever Programme Provided for Most Enjoyable Gathering in History of Club.

AMUSING "STUNTS"

The members of the Peterboro Rotary Club are prepared, after the success of last night's Ladies' Night, to swear that what Kipling really meant was that "the female of the species is more original than the male." The "Rotary-Annes" took charge of the whole programme and the result of their efforts is best summed up in the verdict of one of the Rotarians: **"the best and most enjoyable meeting since the club was organized."** It was a memorable night and there was not a dull moment from start to finish. Formality was checked with the hats and wraps, and the

gathering entered thoroughly into the spirit of one of the songs sung during the evening:

*"Let other meetings be forgot
Let this one be the best
Join in the songs we sing to-night
Be jolly with the rest."*

The affair was held in the Empress dining room. The ladies took advantage of the Halloween season to indulge in a decorative scheme of witches and black cats and pumpkins and bright coloured festoons to turn the room into a riot of warm colours.

Each guest found a bizarre paper hat at his or her plate, and when these were donned, the effect was, to say the least, striking. President John Crane of the Rotary Club presided during the first part of the evening, but after the enjoyable dinner had been disposed of with interludes of Rotary songs, he turned the meeting over to the ladies. Rotary-Anne Mrs. Fred L. Roy (*wife of our founding President*) took charge for the next section of the programme, which consisted of an unusual toast list in which various well-known members of the Rotary Club were lampooned in a manner that was responsible for gales of laughter. These "tributes" were all paid in verse, and cleverness had been shown in their preparation.

The second part of the programme, with Rotary-Anne Mrs. Claude H. Rogers presiding, provided a most enjoyable list of vocal and instrumental numbers. Mrs. Walter Reesor of Lindsay, a vocalist with a rich and true soprano and a remarkable clearness of enunciation, sang two numbers and had to respond to an encore on each occasion. Rotary-Anne Mrs. W. R. Widdiss and Rotary-Anne Mrs. J. M. McHardy each contributed vocal solos in most excellent voice. Rotary-Anne Mrs. Peter Westbye enlightened the gathering with a piano solo, and a violin number cleverly rendered by Rotary-Anne Mrs. Percy Hooper was a thoroughly appreciated contribution. Miss Agnes Logan was the clever accompanist.

Here the ladies showed their keen appreciation of the frailties of their husbands by declaring a ten minute intermission to allow the male of the species to indulge in a smoke. (*Bruce's note: "proper" ladies of the early 1920s never smoked - in public.*)

Then came the "stunt" portion of the evening with Rotary-Anne Mrs. (Dr.) M. A. Morrison in charge. The Rotarians suddenly found themselves included in the programme in an unexpectedly and thoroughly amusing manner and Rotary-Anne Morrison proved a strict and forcible presiding officer, whose edicts had to be obeyed to the letter. The result was that Rotarian H. R. H. Kenner had to make a two minute speech **with an egg-beater** as a subject. Rotarian J. W. McDermid found **a medicine glass** assigned to him for discussion and Rotarian W. R. Morris, Thoe. Barrie and Frank Linton had to speak on the respective merits of **a pair of spoons, a lemon squeezer and a poker**. Rotarian Reg. H. Turner was sentenced to **tell twelve fortunes**. Rotarian Barrie's oratorical effort was adjudged to be the best one and he was awarded the prize, a vanity case.

The laughable "slum" was followed by the first annual "Kiddie Kar" Derby, which had to be run in three heats amid roars of cheers and laughter. There was a remarkable field of entries

including E. B. Fowler, B. D. Hall, City Clerk Armstrong, Dr. A. W. McPherson, Dr. M. A. Morrison, Rev. Harold Young, Leon Frazer, and J. J. Turner.

B.D. Hall proved the ultimate winner, showing himself the most expert "Kiddie Kar" chauffeur in the contest, and was awarded the "prize", which was **a fine of 25c** for being the "fastest" man in the competition.

The Rotary-Anne Glee Club contributed a hidden chorus number, singing "Carry Me Back to Old Virginia" in splendid style and had to respond to an encore.

The charge to a new member entering into the ranks of the Rotary-Annes was most cleverly given by Rotary-Anne Mrs. W. R. Morris with Rotary-Anne Mrs. Roy acting as proxy for the baby member. The examination of the applicant produced a series of mirth-provoking questions and equally amusing answers, and the obligations that the candidate had to assume were such as to convulse the audience.

Rotary-Anne Morris then introduced that remarkable organization, **the Rotary-Anne Jazz Band**, and incidentally the introduction deserves more than a passing tribute for the number took some time to prepare and Madame Chairman had to hold the floor in the interim. Her amusing speech was a masterpiece under the circumstances.

The Jazz Band, in costumes that had to be seen to be appreciated, gave a musical version of that favourite of nursery days "Old King Cole". The children would not have recognized it and a captious musician might have complained of the intrusion of a few "blue" notes. But what of that when the number left some of the Rotarians weak from laughing. The performers were twice recalled before the applause would subside.

This concluded the programme and President Crane took charge of the meeting for the closing ceremonies. Before the "Prairie Flower" brought a red-letter evening to a close, Rotarian Rev. Harold Young gracefully expressed the thanks and gratitude of the Rotary Club to the ladies for their most enjoyable programme, and the appreciation of the members was demonstrated by their cheers and a tiger.

What a night! (A "tiger"??)

Stay healthy everyone!