

Harold V. (Hal) Tipper

December 14, 2013
Frank Daskewich, President
Rotary Club of Grande Prairie
PO Box 235
Grande Prairie, AB T8V 3A4

Dear Frank,

I was perusing your club's Internet site for another purpose entirely, when I came across your club history page.

As a Grande Prairie Rotary Club member 1954 to 1968 and a Past President, 1963/64, you may, or may not, be interested in a few bits of information.

The fairgrounds snack bar we operated for many years was perpetually managed by one of our most active members, Jack Lyall, who followed me as president.

My presidential term was originally to be 1964/65 but Gotfried Sprecher, whose term was to be 63/64, resigned in September due to business problems so I was parachuted in. When my rightful term arrived, I declined the honour, saying I felt the club had seen enough of me.

It was during my term that your very successful Rotary Campground was originated by City Engineer John Meidema. He asked our club for \$8,000 to fund the preparation of sites and the construction of windbreaks and toilet facilities. We gave him \$4000 in my term and Jack Lyall agreed to supply the other \$4000 during his year.

It was my misfortune to be chairing our Friday meeting on November 22nd, 1963. On my way down to the meeting I heard on the radio that President Kennedy had been shot, but at that time his status was unknown. We were still eating lunch when a note was handed to me saying that Kennedy had died. That disturbing news added to the fact that the natural gas pipeline from the Burnt Hills had developed a leak, shutting off the city's gas supply on a day when the temperature was 20 below zero FHT (without adding the considerable wind chill effect), was more than my charisma could handle and we adjourned the meeting. Gas was restored at around 7:00 PM and along with many of our members; I spent a couple of hours helping folks get their furnaces lit again.

In September of 1967 Bill Beattie, later to be a club president, organized a Rotary excursion to Expo in Montreal. He chartered two CN Rail cars, to leave from Edmonton, take us to Montreal and then return us to Edmonton a week later. He also arranged accommodation in a newly built apartment building which was very adequate. Stories from that trip are legion. On the way down it was a three day party, with the bar running out of scotch on the final evening. The return trip was quieter but a few of us spent most

of the trip in the baggage car, playing poker with the train crew. As I recall, about 30 Rotarians and their spouses, along with a small number of non Rotarian but fun loving couples made the trip, a once in a lifetime experience.

It was the same Bill Beattie who persuaded me and our board of directors to take over sponsorship of the local Air Cadet squadron. The mysteries of that sponsorship left me in a daze but Bill recruited a new commanding officer and with absolutely no help from me, or the club for that matter, was instrumental in turning what had been a dying squadron into one of the best in Canada. Bill went on to be active in national Air Cadet affairs, chaired the Canadian organization and joined the board of whatever the international group is known as. He attended conventions in both Great Britain and Australia.

Having missed the pre-presidential trip usually awarded to incoming presidents, Maxine and I decided to attend the Rotary International Convention being held in Toronto in the spring of 1964. Being from what to Toronto was almost a foreign country, we were included in the "home hospitality" event and enjoyed a lovely evening in a home that we could only dream about. We drove down and back, and it was on the way back that we discussed the possibility of seeing a bit more of the world, a discussion that eventually led to our leaving Grande Prairie in 1968.

The writing of this memo brought back many pleasant memories, both of Rotary and of Grande Prairie and the wonderful folks who live there. Most of my old friends are gone now, but from what I see on your web site, your club is going stronger than ever.

Best regards,

Hal Tipper