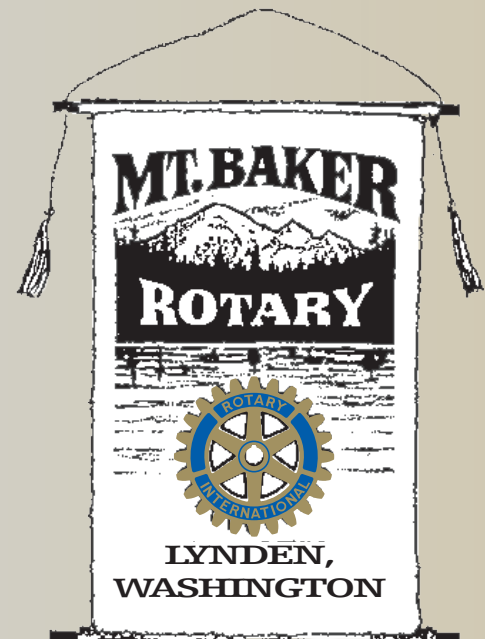


Wednesday, September 14, 2011

Mt. Baker Rotary Club *Celebrates* *30 Years* 1981-2011



30 Great Years of Community Service & Friendship

A special supplement of the Lynden Tribune



The Mt. Baker Rotary Club was chartered on June 30, 1981, at the Elks Club of Bellingham. Pictured from left are: front, Bob Crabtree, Randy Garberg, Rich Stipe, Chuck Myers; second row, Jim Baron, Jim White, Larry Vail, Harvey Lagerwey, Jim Helgath, Dick Bedlington, Verne Pedersen; back row, George Bowen, Ron Kelley, Mike Adams, Del Otter, Curly Hoksbergen, Pete Visser, Paul Kenner, Randy Bode, Doug Shephard. Other charter members not pictured were: Blake Bostrom, Larry Green, Ray Rupke, Don Smith, Larry Strengholt, Don Van Andel and Harold Visser.. — Lynden Tribune | COURTESY PHOTO

Charter members recall club beginnings, growth

Club began as friends having lunch at the Duke Restaurant

It may seem a bit strange that the club responsible for so many recognizable projects, both in Lynden and around the world, began as a group of friends and colleagues having lunch at a local restaurant.

But that's exactly how the Mt. Baker Rotary Club got its start. A number of prominent Lynden businessmen were approached by Larry Vail of the Rotary Club of Whatcom County North, then based in Ferndale.

"He just called a bunch of businessmen together and we started meeting," said Dick Bedlington, Mt. Baker Rotary charter member. "(North Whatcom) got together and got us together for the first year before we chartered. They were showing us what to do. They were hand-carrying us through it."

Like many of those involved at the beginning, Bedlington, a seed potato grower, had never been a member of a businessmen's club before.

"At that time it was just a bunch of guys getting together," Bedlington said. "We didn't really know what Rotary was all about. You almost have to get your feet wet before you realize what it's all about."

After a year of meeting with Whatcom North County at the old Duke Restaurant in Lynden and learning the Rotary ropes, the club began its long history of local service projects. Eventually, these projects expanded to include international ventures.

Growth

Of the 29 members who chartered the club, six remain. Bedlington is joined by fellow charterers Randy Bode, Curly Hoksbergen, Paul Kenner, Pete Noteboom and Rook Van Halm. Each had different expectations as to where the club might go from its humble beginnings, and all have seen the club through to what it is today, 30 years later.

"Early on, I think our auctions averaged somewhere in the neighborhood of \$10,000 to 15,000, and to see it now being 50 to 60 members generating 100-odd thousand from our auctions, and what we do for the community, it's incredible," Bode said. "I don't think any of us ever had any idea about that kind of growth and members and contribution that we make for the community. It's pretty incredible; it's neat to be a part of that."

Stipe, who recently retired and resigned from the club upon moving, said the club did see some tough times along the way.

"There were even times we struggled to have enough members here," Stipe said. "I would like to attribute the success of going on to Dick Bedlington, of course. There's been times when we struggled. He brought it back, got people involved, and the enthusiasm has just grown and grown."

Bedlington said the growth was tough to foresee, but the tenacity of his fellow members made that growth inevitable.

"I expected it to grow," Bedlington said, "just because of the personalities of the membership. They were so strong, and they were all go-getters. It did keep growing and growing."

A cursory glance across Lynden reveals dozens upon dozens of projects spearheaded by the Mt. Baker Rotary Club. These projects have grown exponentially in number since the club's first major project, the bocce ball field at Bender Fields.

Kenner's favorite project is the mobile house used to teach children the basics of

fire safety. Stipe's favorite is the FFA barn at Lynden High School. Van Halm's favorites are the scholarships and the water wells in Nigeria.

Bedlington's favorite is the track at Lynden High School, but he said the abundance of projects taken on by the club makes it tough to choose.

"There have been so many good ones," he said. "Lighting the ballfield at Bender Fields; we just did a lot of different things. The most beneficial one, the one that touches me most, is probably putting wells in Nigeria. Saving lives has got to be at the top of my list. That has to be a very strong one for me."

Other club activities are more social in nature. The club's annual Christmas parties are especially popular among the charter members. Stipe recalled a snowy night that still saw most of the club's members showing up at the party.

"Here we still came, most everybody, actually, in those older days, putting chains on their vehicles just to get to that Rotary Christmas dinner that was in the basement of Dutch Mothers," Stipe said. "The dedication that we all had to making sure that functions would succeed was unbelievable."

—Brent Lindquist

Annual club scholarships helps students headed to college

\$36,600 was given out to 24 academic and vocational recipients this year

In high school seniors' annual spring rush to finish scholarship applications, the Mt. Baker Rotary Scholarship has been a constant for the past 17 years.

Greg Helgath, who serves as the club's scholarship chairman, said he and his fellow members have three primary reasons for putting up the scholarship money each year.

"First, the members are all either business owners or in administrative positions, and we need well-educated people to staff our businesses," Helgath said. "Second, we wanted to recognize the hard work that these kids put in. Third, there's certainly a need, and it's a way for us to give back to the community that gives us so much."

Roughly 10 Rotary club members sit on the selection committee each year.

"I've been the chair for that committee for 10 years, probably," Helgath said. "The bulk of the committee is the same fellows every year."

The committee looks at a variety of criteria when choosing recipients, including grade point average and SAT scores, community involvement, special circumstances and leadership.

"We're not necessarily just looking for the smartest kids," Helgath said. "We're looking for people who are well-rounded and involved in the community. We also have scholarships that are specifically for kids that are in a vocational track."

The amount of money awarded every year depends on how much cash is generated at the club's annual auction.

The club donates a percentage of the auction's earnings for scholarship purposes. At the auction, attendees can purchase items or directly fund a scholarship.

"They can actually donate a fixed amount of money directly to scholarships," Helgath said.

This year, the club awarded \$36,600 to 24 students out of 143 applicants from public and private schools within the Lynden, Meridian, Nooksack Valley and Mount Baker school districts. Twenty-two recipients earned \$1,500, the standard amount. Two more earned the \$1,800 Harvey Lagerwey Memorial Scholarship, a one-time award honoring the memory of charter member Harvey Lagerwey.

The number of scholarships given out has grown significantly in recent years.

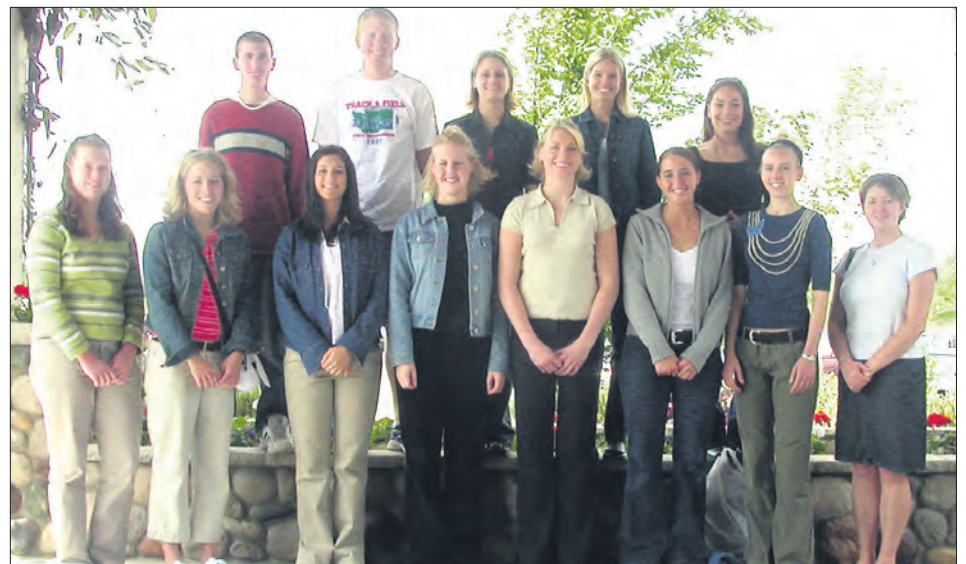
Lynden Christian graduate Mandi Vanderhage was a 2005 recipient of the Mount Baker Rotary Scholarship.

She attended Trinity Western University for three and a half years before finishing her schooling at Whatcom Community College and Western Washington University.

"I had to pull everything out of student loans, so every dollar did add up," Vanderhage said. "Every little bit helped. That's \$1,500 that I didn't have to pay back."

After graduating from college, Vanderhage worked around Lynden for a couple of years before recently obtaining a job with Nestlé in Salem, Ore.

— Brent Lindquist



Over the years, dozens of local graduating high school seniors have received Mt. Baker Rotary Scholarships. Pictured, counterclockwise, are students of the years 2007, 2002, 1992 and 1989. — Courtesy photos

Local projects enriched communities over the years

Schools benefit from agricultural and athletic projects aimed at increasing youth opportunities

It should come as no surprise that the Mt. Baker Rotary Club has sought to enrich its home community. What may be surprising is the long list of local projects that owe practically their very existence to the club.

From installing ballfield lighting at Bender Field over two decades ago to the more recent Million Smiles Playground in Lynden City Park, club members have had a hand in the creation of numerous community facilities — and beyond Lynden as well.

Educational and youth projects have always drawn particular attention, and especially since funds have dried up from many traditional public sources.

One of the first major projects with Rotary backing was the FFA barn built in 1993-94 at Lynden High School.

Local potato grower and club member Dick Bedlington said the project was born out of concern for students who wanted to be involved in agriculture, but lived in the city limits — without a family farm to conduct projects such as animal raising.

The solution was to have a building at the school for students to use.

Bedlington, who played a central role in planning and raising funds for the Lynden High School FFA livestock barn, said a project like this is central to the future of agriculture in Whatcom County, since fewer and fewer students otherwise will get experience with crops and livestock if they don't already live on a farm.

When Bedlington approached the Lynden School District with the project idea and available funding, Superintendent Howard Heppner was at first not sure how to proceed, since public schools didn't usually have privately funded facilities, Bedlington said.

Soon, however, Heppner became one of the driving forces behind the project, helping resolve issues as they came up, such as establishing adequate communication systems between the new building and the main school buildings.

The project was an early example of what could be accomplished in partnership with local schools. The barn cost \$128,000 of donated funds, not counting all of the donated labor and material that went into it.

Many projects with schools had been on a smaller scale, such as helping with the Lynden Christian High School salmon hatchery or adding Meridian High School shop equipment.

The Mt. Baker Rotary Club was occupied for four years, 2000-04, with paying for the construction of its namesake building on the Northwest Washington Fairgrounds. This facility is used for plenty of agriculture- and school-related meetings as well as wedding receptions.

Since then, the building projects for children have been nearly continuous:

- Meridian High School FFA continues to enjoy the livestock barn that was

built as the Mt. Baker Rotary Club's major local service project in 2005-06, said current FFA adviser Stacy Tronsdal.

The barn is a great resource especially for students who don't live on a farm where they can keep animals themselves, she said.

At busy times, the barn may have 20 lambs, goats or hogs in it plus dozens of fryer chickens. Yet the building at the back of the Laurel Road campus has room for growth.

"Our hope is we can teach animal science there next year," Tronsdal said.

- The Million Smiles Playground needed a big push leading up to its spring 2007 construction. Rotary primed the pump with a huge \$100,000 gift to prompt others to give.

At the time, club president Frank Mansfield termed it the "perfect project" because of its scope.

"We are able to give back to the community on a big scale," Mansfield said. "A large segment of the community will be able to make use out of this."

A delegation of Rotarians went to Oak Harbor to tour a playground already designed by the Leathers & Associates consultants. "We wanted to see what it looks like and if it was worth this much money," Mansfield said.

Then the discussion in the club was overwhelmingly in favor of going forward.

Construction of the imaginative colorful playground near Fishtrap Creek in the park made extensive use of community labor but still had hard expenses for all the materials.

- The vo-ag shop at Lynden Christian High School has been a busy place over the years. Many students have learned skills needed to build trailers, wagons and other useful equipment for the farm.

"We built a lot of large projects in our shop and we were about running out of space," recalls Curt DeHaan, who taught vocational agriculture until three years ago.

Although it was a goal to expand the building, it didn't happen until the Rotary club in 2008-09 added its financial support to what the school was able to raise, and a 2,000-square-foot expansion became a reality.

Rotary is an organization locally that has done a lot of community service, DeHaan said.

Lynden Christian has also benefited from the strong Rotary bidding at the youth livestock sale at the Northwest Washington Fair each year, helping give kids a decent return on all their investment in a market animal, he said.

- A stroll around the perimeter of the Lynden High School campus puts you in contact with three projects that are the fruition of plenty of Mt. Baker Rotary Club generosity.

The FFA livestock barn, a nice new track surface and the Curt Maberry Field-



Both Lynden and Meridian FFA have a livestock barn due to Mt. Baker Rotary support. — Lynden Tribune | COURTESY PHOTOS

house for ball teams — "we wouldn't be able to offer what we offer without any one of those three," said Todd Apple, school principal.

The track resurfacing was not just a beautification issue. It involved safety,

since concrete was showing under runners' feet on the original 1980 track.

Yet the school didn't have money in its budget, given other needs. So the help in 2009-10 came just in time.

— Mark Reimers and Calvin Bratt



Rotary keeps up the Boy Scouts Troop 4028 building at Berthusen Park and recently paid for a new track at Lynden High School. — Lynden Tribune | COURTESY PHOTO

Many, many community projects have been helped over the years

Proceeds of annual Mt. Baker Rotary auction go entirely for projects, scholarships

The list goes on and on.

Once you stop to actually tally up all of the community service projects helped by the Mt. Baker Rotary Club over the years, the list grows into the dozens.

Some are repeats. Even so, the specific projects funded may be different from year to year. These are some of the regulars: Whatcom Literacy Council, Blue Skies for Children, Lynden Pioneer Museum, Boy Scouts, Camp Fire USA, Relay For Life.

Some names appear once or twice over the last 10 years and represent a particular need that the Lynden Rotary club was johnny-on-the-spot to fill: Angels of Hope, Bicycle Safety Saturday, Ronald McDonald House, Vietnam Veterans, Lynden High School Media Center, Lighthouse Mission.

An Overview

Jeff Jansen, a 15-year member of Mt. Baker Rotary, just recently became chair of the committee that decides on the many requests that come in. "We get petitioned by quite a few local groups," he said.

Jansen noted that Rotary aims to help "community needs," not individual projects.

And it bears repeating that every dollar of the proceeds of Mt. Baker Rotary's annual spring auction "goes back to the community for scholarships, international projects and local projects," he said.

In recent years, that annual amount has been well over \$100,000 — plus some additional challenge donations thrown in.

Dues, meeting "fines" and "happy dollars" are used for Rotary operations at the club level and higher.

One major community project accounts for about \$40,000 to \$60,000 of the Mt. Baker Rotary's giving in a year, said current club president Chad Schulhauser. Helping out a variety of small projects — usually no more than \$2,000 each — totals \$20,000 to \$30,000 more. And local high school scholarships are an increasingly popular third area, topping \$36,000 in 2011.

Naturally, the push in any given year may reflect the interests of a president or the board of directors, Schulhauser said.

"It all depends. Everyone is a little bit different," he said.

Jansen cited, for example, the need of the Lynden Fire Department one year for mobile defibrillators at \$500 each.

The startup North County Cavaliers Lacrosse team desired their first set of uniforms, and Rotary stepped up.

And those don't count what the local club is giving for larger local projects such as resurfacing tracks and expanding shop buildings or helping buy X-ray machines for a hospital in Nepal.

A hefty sum was contributed toward the joy of little children with the creation of the Million Smiles Playground at Lynden City Park in 2007-08.

Boy Scouts support

Jack Foster, who also functions as Lynden's chief of police, is the point person for Mt. Baker Rotary when it comes to Boy Scouts of America.

The Lynden club is the charter organization behind local Troop 4028, which has been around for decades and has a Scout building to use and maintain at Berthusen

Park.

"The chartering organization is really the responsible partner with the Boy Scouts organization," Foster explained.

Each year, Mt. Baker Rotary pays the charter renewal fee, about \$600, for the troop. "Our club has always done that for them," he said.

Recently, Rotary installed new doors for the Scouts' building to keep rodents and burglars out and also used members' expertise to add a propane heating system to the place.

"The club is doing a ton of things around town," Foster said.

He remembers that when he mentioned the Lynden Police Department's need for a DARE vehicle in the early 1990s, one Rotary member promptly got a new Chevy Blazer ordered from the factory.

The club was behind the creation of the central clock tower on the Northwest Washington Fairgrounds about the same time.

The club helps five school systems in the area: Lynden, Lynden Christian, Meridian, Mt. Baker and Nooksack Valley.

"Our auction is just extremely successful. We have had fantastic help from the club as well as the community," Foster said. "I've really enjoyed being a part of the club. There are a great bunch of guys there and they do an awful lot for the community."

Literacy and Libraries

A few years ago, Rachel Myers of the Whatcom Literacy Council talked to the Mt. Baker Rotary Club about the mission of helping local people toward greater func-

tional literacy in the English language.

Since then, the council has continued to receive financial help — and the dollars even have a Lynden application.

Myers said that Fisher Elementary School and First Reformed Church have hosted small groups that aid in English communication skills, and another small group is soon to start up in a partnership with the Lynden Library.

The North Fork Community Library at Kendall was built over 11 months using community donations and volunteer labor.

Georgina Head, who coordinated the whole effort and is also the branch librarian, contacted the Mt. Baker Rotary about helping. A club member visited to see the progress being made, and in January 2011 a check for \$2,000 was given.

"They were able to help us finish the project. It allowed us actually open on March 1," Head said. "It's a top quality building and very professionally done. We're really happy with it."

Buying kids' livestock

If you know where to look in the audience during the annual Youth Livestock Auction at the Northwest Washington Fair, you will see a little huddle of Mt. Baker Rotary Club members being very active in the bidding on kids' hogs, lambs, steers and goats.

Every wave of their bid card helps a 4-H or FFA youth get a return on all the work and expense they have put into their market animal.

"We buy animals that aren't getting sold," said Rotarian Rich Waldemar, who

Turning the water On



Each well built in Nigeria is estimated to supply 400 people with clean water. — Lynden Tribune | COURTESY PHOTO

Nigerian wells draw local, international Rotary support

In all, 20 wells funded

The grass is always pretty green in Lynden, hometown for many members of the Mt. Baker Rotary Club. It's one of those places where an abundance of clean water is just taken for granted.

But many communities in the world are not so blessed, and some big-thinking Whatcom County residents recently took notice.

Several years ago, eight wells were dug in the Kambari region of Nigeria. Each of them, strategically situated between remote villages, is estimated to provide water to 400 people. So the overall benefit is to a total of 3,200 villagers.

But without the interest and generosity of local Rotary members and their national and overseas partners, those wells might still be waiting for someone to dig them. Instead, not only did members of Mt. Baker Rotary raise \$16,500 to put toward the project, but they have now also raised another \$20,000 in order to dig another 12 wells.

Dale Vander Giessen said the project was first brought to the club's attention by Carolyn Wynstra, who had been involved in smaller efforts through Sonlight Community Christian Reformed Church.

So compelling was the idea that when Wynstra presented it to the club, it immediately went to the top of the group's international services committee to-do list, said Vander Giessen, who chaired the

committee.

Clean water, while abundant here, is so scarce in the sub-Saharan country that the infant mortality rate is typically above 50 percent, Vander Giessen said. Access to water can effectively bring that rate down below 10 percent.

Not only are lives saved, but so are marriages, Vander Giessen said, since families are much more likely to be successful and not dissolve under the stress and tragedy of lost children.

As usual, local donations were first begun by the informal friends of Rotary group.

Local seed potato producer Dick Bedlington, an organizer in the group, said the club's usual service projects pale in comparison to the need that is being filled in Nigeria.

"This is actually saving lives," Bedlington said.

But local donations alone were only the beginning. The affiliated national and international structure of Rotary allowed the local club to apply for matching funds in order to create a bigger impact.

First, the district-level Rotary agreed to match the Mt. Baker donation. Then Rotary International made its own match to increase the total to \$40,000.

For all international projects, club rules dictate that a partner in the project country be present to sponsor as well.

In this case, organizers searched for and found a Rotary club in the city of Gboko, southwest of the project area in Nige-

ria. That club contributed a small amount in order to satisfy the rule, and the drilling work was begun by Water Wins, a ministry in the area dedicated to resolving the water crisis.

The challenges of coordinating all of the parts for such a successful project were daunting, Vander Giessen said. The various contacts that needed to be made tended to drag everything out. However, some of that was helped through the work of Christian Reformed World Missions affiliates in the area with connection to Lynden.

Using these lines of communication, missionaries working in Nigeria could personally seek out the needed information for the project organizers.

Working with Water Wins gave Vander Giessen plenty of confidence that the money was well-spent, since the group is diligent to build durable pump systems so that they aren't as likely to break down in remote areas and be rendered useless.

Protections are also usually put in place to ward off livestock contamination, and representatives work to install sanitation facilities a safe distance away from the wells.

Water Wins also reaches out to the villages being served to solicit a small buy-in. The goal, Vander Giessen said, is to create a sense of ownership.

The second project was almost initiated in Haiti instead of Nigeria, since some bureaucratic red tap briefly interrupted plans for a second round there.

However, the path was cleared and

the local club plans to grow their contributions to \$60,000 through the same matches as before.

For more information about Water Wins, visit the website at www.waterwins.com.

—Mark Reimers

Projects:

Continued from D5

is often on this duty. "Oftentimes we'll bid against ourselves until we've got the price up there a bit."

The club is adding to the floor price a butcher will pay for the meat, with the difference going to the student. At the 2011 fair, payout to youths amounted to about \$7,000. Over 200 animals were sold.

—Calvin Bratt

And more and more ...

These are additional causes helped locally by Mt. Baker Rotary over its 30-year history, starting with the most recent:

Lynden High School track resurfacing
Lynden Christian High School shop addition
Lynden Tribune Readers Care Fund
Nooksack Valley Baseball

Alzheimers Society of WA
 YMCA Strong Kids
 Miss Whatcom County Pageant
 Lynden Pioneer Museum
 Whatcom Literacy Council
 New Way Ministries
 Whatcom Community Foundation
 Big Brothers Big Sisters
 United Way
 Lynden Masons Lodge No. 56
 Samish Council Camp Fire USA
 Mt. Baker Youth Baseball
 Boys & Girls Club of Whatcom County
 Ebenezer Endowment - Rachel Vekved
 Judson Sculpture
 Berthusen Barn roof
 Whatcom Re-Entry Coalition
 Friends of the North Fork Community Library
 Lighthouse Mission
 Meridian High School softball field
 4-H/FFA Livestock Auction
 Nooksack Valley High School track resurfacing
 Curt Maberry Fieldhouse at LHS
 American Cancer Society Relay For Life
 Masonic Lodge CHIP program
 Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services
 Lynden Swim Team
 Boy Scouts Troop 4028
 Destination Imagination
 Christian Health Care Center
 LHS golf
 Whatcom Farm Friends
 Million Smiles Playground
 LHS football
 Lynden Youth Sports
 Blue Skies for Children
 Lynden Fire Department
 LCS agriculture, biology education
 Barnyard Kids 4-H Club
 Lynden Police Department Bicycle Safety
 Lynden High School ASB
 Meridian High School ag. barn
 Habitat for Humanity of Whatcom County
 Isom Intermediate School
 Lynden All-Star Baseball
 Nooksack Valley High School FFA
 Vietnam Veterans
 Angels of Hope
 Kendall Elementary PTA
 Lynden Cystic Fibrosis Bike-a-thon
 Lynden Co-op Preschool
 South Pacific Tsunami Relief
 Whatcom County Youth Fair
 Whatcom Hospice Foundation
 Meridian High School Ag. Mechanics
 Lynden High School FFA Barn
 9/11 Disaster Relief
 LCHS Enrichment Project
 Sardis Wildlife Center
 Mt. Baker Rotary Building at fairgrounds
 Ron Slater Memorial Foundation
 Lynden Airport berm and landscaping
 Lynden Boys & Girls Club after-school program
 NVHS baseball home run fence
 Boy Scout cabin restoration, Berthusen Park
 Nooksack Valley Middle School library
 Bender Fields playground equipment
 Lynden Fire Dept. defibrillator
 Lynden museum auto gallery mural
 Meridian High School shop equipment
 NVHS Even Start building
 Lynden YMCA computer system
 American Red Cross radio equipment
 Lynden Police Dept. DARE vehicle
 Firehouse on Wheels for Whatcom fire departments
 LCHS fishery and greenhouse
 Clock tower at Lynden fairgrounds
 Lynden City Park playground equipment
 Bender Fields playground equipment
 Bender Fields lighting and trees
 Lynden Middle School auditorium remodel
 Bocce bowling lanes at Bender Fields

'Above and beyond': Paul Harris award honors community leaders

Program named after Rotary's founder in 1905



Teacher Harlan Kredit's salmon hatchery at Lynden Christian High School has received support from Mt. Baker Rotary, and Kredit has also been named a Rotary Paul Harris Fellow for his leadership on salmon habitat restoration issues. — Lynden Tribune | COURTESY PHOTO

The Paul Harris Fellow designation is given in honor of Paul P. Harris, a Chicago attorney who founded Rotary in 1905.

What began as an association of Harris with three of his clients "in fellowship and friendship" has grown today to Rotary International with well over 1 million members worldwide.

The Paul Harris Fellow designation was created in 1957 to recognize a gift of \$1,000 to The Rotary Foundation. It still continues as such, but the honor may also be bestowed upon individuals who meet high professional and personal standards, as set forth by Paul Harris, and is not limited to Rotarians.

In the Mt. Baker Rotary Club, 76 per-

sons have been declared Paul Harris Fellows. Of those, about one-third are not members, including 13 women.

Among the honorees who have been deeply involved in Lynden's community life in a variety of ways over the years are: Curtis DeHaan, Hub DeJong, Rollie DeKoster, Howard Heppner, Henry Jansen, Jim Kaemingk, Harlan Kredit, Egbert Maas, Jake Maberry, Pete Noteboom, Henry Polinder, Reneé Reimer, Audrey Seaholm, Mary Snapper, Claire vg Thomas and Jim Wynstra.

A Rotary member may make someone else a Paul Harris Fellow — a friend, family member, spouse or colleague who has contributed significantly to the nominee's

life. In doing so, a \$1,000 donation is made to The Rotary Foundation.

A special committee of three Mt. Baker Rotarians was recently created to evaluate nominations for the award locally, said member Rich Waldemar.

The idea is to honor "those in the community who have given above and beyond," he said. Final decisions are made by the board of directors.

A selection can be spurred by someone in the club who wants to give \$1,000 to The Rotary Foundation. Also, in connection with the 30th anniversary, those remaining charter members still on the rolls may be rewarded with the opportunity to nominate a Paul Harris Fellow, Waldemar said.

• Audrey Seaholm has been the executive director of the Lynden Boys & Girls Club since 2004. She said it was both a surprise and a high honor to be announced as a Paul Harris Fellow a few years ago.

"I was under the impression I was there to present about the (Boys & Girls) club," she said.

It is rewarding to feel such support for programs that have been set up to serve a daily average of 75 elementary-age children, Seaholm said. Those include both before- and after-school programs during the academic year and a summer day camp program.

Just in the last two years, the Boys & Girls Club has found a unique way to fill a need while also honoring the memory of a 2000 co-founder, Curt Maberry, who also was a Rotary member. During the strawberry harvest, the Saturday Strawberry Camp picks up about a dozen kids at the Maberry farm's migrant camp and takes them out on an all-day excursion.

• Harlan Kredit is known in Lynden for his 35 years of directing a salmon enhancement program along Fishtrap Creek with his Lynden Christian High School biology students.

Kredit said he also is appreciative of having been named a Paul Harris Fellow.

He is a frequent speaker at Mt. Baker Rotary meetings, just recently again after returning from his 40th summer as a park ranger at Yellowstone National Park.

Kredit said Rotary financial support for the Fishtrap coho salmon hatchery has been significant over the years.

In one instance, Lynden Christian was able to buy a self-starting backup generator to kick into gear in the event of any power outage. That apparatus is critical to keeping the temperature of water at the right level for baby fish to survive. Otherwise, they could die within 15 minutes of a drop in water temperature, he said.

"They have been very important to us in terms of making improvements out there at the hatchery," Kredit said.

— Calvin Bratt



The namesake Rotary building on the Northwest Washington Fairgrounds was funded over four years, 2000 to 2004. — Lynden Tribune | COURTESY PHOTO

Mt. Baker Rotary Building a community pillar

Building helps non-profit fair and offers public event space

The Mt. Baker Rotary Club knew it had an opportunity to make a lasting impact on one of Lynden's most well-known institutions. And the club members knew that the impact would take a major commitment. But that big requirement didn't slow down the club in its efforts to give the Northwest Washington Fair something meaningful in the form of the new Mt. Baker Rotary Building.

Opened in 2002, the 6,000-square-foot event hall at the prominent northeast corner of the fairgrounds has given the fair a boost of rental income and a larger presence in the community.

Ron VanderYacht, the fair manager at the time of the project, said the entire idea started with a simple conversation.

"There were two or three of us kind of talking that we needed another facility on the fairgrounds and, of course, we knew we couldn't afford it," he said. "Somewhere between Curly (Hoksbergen), Jim (Hale) and myself, all of a sudden it was at Rotary as an idea. It just popped out of there."

With a handful of Rotarians also on the fair board of directors, the need became common knowledge within the Rotary club.

Jim Hale, Rotary member and fair board member, said he saw the project as having lasting value beyond just the fair.

Specifically, he wanted it to reflect the Mt. Baker Rotary's priorities of youth and agriculture.

Using property already owned by the fair, the construction costs of roughly \$400,000 were split evenly between the Rotary Club — donations spanned four years for the club — and the fair.

With the finances of the building figured out, the fair next had to settle on the exact location.

"There were a couple of other places we had considered, but (the Stremmer Drive lot) turned out to be the most visible, easily accessible and it fit right in," Vander Yacht said.

Lynden building designer Mark Ouellette created three wings. "We wanted to have a building that was functional for the community, but could also divide into classrooms for seminars," Vander Yacht said.

Hale said the timber-frame barn design wasn't always preferred, since it did add cost to the project. However, he was a fan of it since it fit in well with the ag theme. It also ended up setting the tone for other parts of the fair, as the main fair gate, redesigned more recently, followed a similar style.

The fair also added in a small kitchen to the building for use both during the fair

and other events. The grassy area behind the building was a must, allowing weddings and other events to spill outside when the weather allowed.

Construction, completed by Roosendaal and Honcoop, started on Feb. 1, 2002. Despite bad weather, it still opened in plenty of time for the August fair.

After opening, the building was "perfect in most aspects," but a bad interior echo plagued it at the start, Vander Yacht said.

The fair hired an acoustics expert from Seattle who immediately diagnosed the issue and prescribed insulated ceiling tiles, which solved the problem.

The only minor down side that Hale sees in the building is the fact that it doesn't always add much to the August fair itself, since it is a little out of the way. However, the Young Life food booth and the Haggen Festival Stage have continued to shine in the building's shadow year after year.

Hale said that even though the building became a major club project, not everyone was totally convinced at the time that it was a worthwhile expenditure.

"You can't have 50 guys agree on everything," Hale said.

Even so, once the final go-ahead was given, there were impressive displays of unity.

"I had one guy who voted against it come forward to find out what he could do to help," Hale said, noting that he is immensely proud of the way the club can come together and accomplish something.

Hale said the finished product has spoken for itself in the years since opening. He has personally attended many events at the facility, including agricultural meetings, funerals and banquets. He even attended his own daughter's wedding reception there.

With a finished product in hand, ready for use by the fair and the community, Vander Yacht said, there was no doubt that the building would be named after the group that made it happen.

"I was absolutely astonished," he said. "It was amazing how, when the Rotary group decides to do something, they gel together as a group. It was many, many people raising money. A few were most instrumental, but everybody was there."

Hale said it is nice for people to see the Rotary name on projects such as this (so people can see where their donated money goes). However, that is where the club's ownership ends.

"(The building) does not belong to Rotary," Hale said. "It belongs to the fair... but who owns the fair?"

— Tim Newcomb and Mark Reimers