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# **ANACORTES ROTARY HISTORY**

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## **Chapter 5 – Dick Johnson Club History**



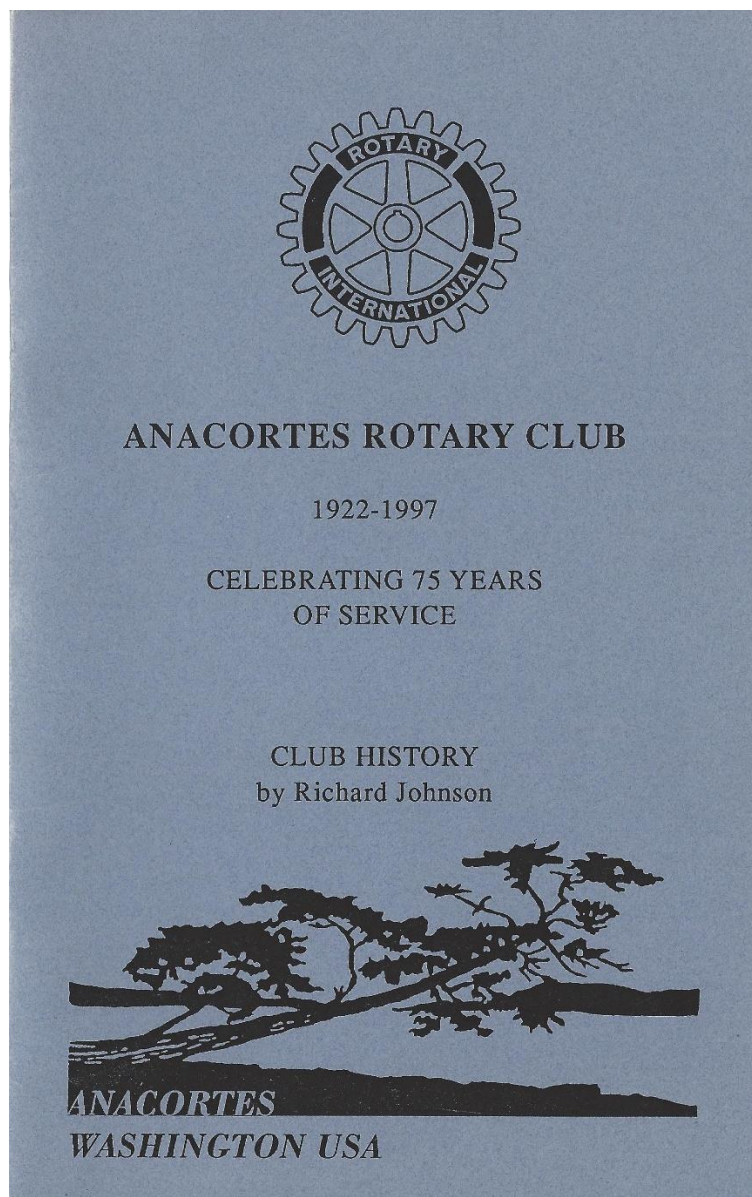
**BY DUANE CLARK**

## **Anacortes Rotary History**

### **Chapter 5 – Dick Johnson Club History**

The only Anacortes Rotary history document was started by Dick Johnson in the early 1990s, and completed by others in 1997, celebrating the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Anacortes Rotary.

The booklet is an easy read that highlights some of Anacortes Rotary's activities.



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## **The History of the Anacortes Rotary Club**

By Richard D. Johnson

### **Acknowledgement**

The Anacortes Rotary Club owes a great deal of gratitude to Dick Johnson, a Senior Active member who joined our Club in 1970. Dick served as Club Secretary/Treasurer from 1972 to 1975 and again from 1984 to 1986. He also was our President for the 1976-77 term.

Dick spent countless hours at the local public library examining newspaper accounts as well as reviewing all of our Club's official records. The following pages are the culmination of his efforts. Thanks, Dick.

Ray Witzel  
President, 1992-93

In 1997 Dick Johnson passed away.

We would like to dedicate this book in memory of Dick and his contributions to the Anacortes Rotary Club.

This book has been updated to include events after 1993.

Mary Mansfield  
President 1997-98

It was front page news in the Anacortes American on November 24, 1922. A Rotary Club had been organized and an application had been made to Rotary International for a charter. The article contained the goals of a Rotary Club and could be used seventy years later for the same purpose. At that time, Rotary International had 30,000 members in 26 countries. By 1942 there were 210,000 members with 5,085 clubs and in April 1993 there were 1,163,614 members in 26,156 clubs in 187 countries.

The charter was granted December 22, 1922. On February 23, 1923, the chartering dinner was held with more than 250 Rotarians and guests in attendance from the Northwest and British Columbia. The 17 charter members were:

Ben Driftmeir, Pres.	E.E. Haugen
Charles Stapp, Sec'y	Gus Hensler
Howard C. Sackett	E.C. Kaune
Wallie V. Funk	W.A. Lowman
E.P. Barker	John Brisky
Fred D. Cartwright	W.F. McCracken
H.L. Dodge	J.D. McNary
John A. Douglass	Douglas Allmond
C.D. England	

The sponsoring club was Bellingham. They presented a chartering gift of a brass Rotary bell which had been forged in Bellingham. Skagit County was the first county in Washington state to have three Rotary Clubs. Anacortes was Rotary Club number 1301. At that time this area was in Rotary District 1.

Records of the club are very sketchy, but most meetings were covered by the local newspaper. Meetings seemed very similar to those today. For example, wood products, port activity,

economy, new business and even tourism were subjects covered. In these early years, the Anacortes Club set a pattern which continues in 1993 by recognizing youth of the community. The Boy and Girl Students of the Year were established and continue to the present. Recognition of athletes, scholars, musicians, etc. became annual events. One thing that is different is that they had singing at every meeting. They had a Rotary quartet and solos. The club also was a co-sponsor of the annual 4th of July celebration and the annual reception for new teachers.

Attendance has been very important to Rotary International since it was founded in 1905. The rules of Rotary contain attendance criteria for continued membership. In 1924, the Anacortes Rotary Club went 32 consecutive meetings with 100% attendance. In 1925, the club was divided into 3 teams. The losing team had to put on the anniversary charter dinner. The teams attendance were: 98.13; 97.43; 97.31. Much ado was made of a Rotarian who came from Victoria on the morning ferry to continue 10 years of perfect attendance. It was front page news when, in 1927, a visiting Rotarian was from Council Bluffs, Iowa.

Nine committees existed in the 1920's which followed three of the four avenues of service which exist today -- Club, Community and Vocational. The committees were: Program, Fellowship, Public Affairs, Education, Boy's Work, Classification, Correspondence, Business Relations and Luncheon. The first mention of an International Service does not appear in the Anacortes Club until 1938.

There were many joint meetings in the pre-World War II years. They had numerous social events with the Mount Vernon and Sedro Woolley Clubs. In World War II, they even scheduled a dinner-dance with these two clubs -- "blackout rules permitting". The first attendee at a Rotary International Conference

was Father Gustave Truenet, who attended the 1927 conference in Ostend, Belgium.

The club grew steadily in the 1920's, growing to 39 members by 1930 with good attendance. Dr. Lyle Packard and Paul Luvera, Sr., joined in 1926 and 1929 respectively starting over 50 years of active Rotary service for each. The depression had an immediate effect on membership. By 1932, membership stood at 29 and by late 1933 had dropped to 16. Though they were close to losing the charter a few held the club together and by 1940 the membership topped 30 again, and by 1947 had topped 40. In 1993 membership is in the 80's.

Fund raising is an important element of Rotary. In the pre-war years there is little evidence of noteworthy fund raising events. The first major event appears to be in 1941 when a play was performed called "Just Married" which was a spoof with all Rotarians and others playing parts. This was widely advertised with the funds raised being used for eyeglasses for needy kids. There are no other fund raisings of note until the 1960's. In 1960 with the start of the Anacortes Arts and Crafts Festival, the Rotary Hamburger Stand was started and continues to the present. It is the most consistent of all club fund raisers. In the 1960's White Elephant sales were popular. In the 1980's and 1990's this theme continues as Shipwreck Days. Citrus sales were used twice in the early 1960's and the late 1980's, and the early 1990's. The largest amount of money ever raised by a Rotary fund raising was the 1992 auction which netted over \$20,000.00. Here are some of the projects which have been funded by these monies. This is not a comprehensive list, but is meant to give a representative listing. Minutes for a February 1925 meeting states that the "deed for the Guemes property is ready at the bank". This is probably the park property. The cost was \$250 with the minutes stating that \$225 had been raised by



the members, the balance from the treasury. In the early 1970's the club paid for the options to hold the property where the Fidalgo Pool is located. This was necessary while the various votes took place to form the district and authorize money.

Rotary also joined with other organizations to fund the first elections. Two construction projects built the Salvation Army food bank building. The Rotary Park at Cap Sante was a joint Rotary/Port of Anacortes/City of Anacortes project. Rotarians built the announcer's booth at Volunteer Park. Small projects, such as the library book drop are too numerous to mention.

Rotarians have taken part in beach cleanups, recycling projects and many other "work" projects. All of the above and many others have involved cash and work, but the major recipients of Rotary funds have been youth projects and the Rotary Foundation.

Since 1922, the Anacortes Rotary Club has supported youth by providing recognition, audience, and scholarship funding. The earliest years there appear to be no direct funds given to students although the club agreed to underwrite a track star who had won the state discus championship and wanted to go to the nationals in Chicago. In the 1950's and 1960's a Girl Scout troop was supported. Each year recognition lunches were held for various high school teams. Over the past 20 years, a scholarship for a boy and girl high school graduate has been awarded with the value currently \$1000 each. We also honor the boy and girl student of the month throughout the school year. Since 1972, the Anacortes Rotary Club has welcomed exchange students sponsored by Rotary clubs throughout the world and have sponsored students from Anacortes going to their countries. Though the students must pay their travel, they are hosted by local Rotarians and given an allowance by the hosting club. The club has hosted students from such countries as Japan, Brazil, Argentina, Australia, Finland and Germany.

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The Rotary Foundation was formed in 1919 as an endowment fund for international understanding. Prior to World War II some grants were made but in 1946, as the Foundation , it started to take its current form. At the 1946 RI Conference, \$20,000.00 was set aside to fund "Rotary Foundation Graduate Students" and a commitment was made to fund 10 scholarships for college graduate students. Actually 18 were funded. This was the first of many programs of the Foundation. Four Anacortes residents have been fortunate to be recipients of these awards. They are: Joyce Strandberg - 1969-70- University of Goteborg, Sweden, Nancy Genung - 1972-73 - University of St. Andrews, Scotland, Constance Hansen - 1974-75 - Western Teachers College, Adelaide, SW Australia, Karen Smalders - 1983-84 - University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

Another Foundation program is the Group Study Exchange. This is a program where young adults age 25-35, non-Rotarians, visit another Rotary district for a month under the leadership of a Rotarian from the sponsoring district. The first Anacortes resident to participate was in 1970 to Japan. Teams are usually about six. They are hosted in the homes of Rotarians throughout the hosting district. Mel Farnsworth of the Anacortes Club led a GSE team to Australia in 1993. The travel is funded by RI.

The Undergraduate Fellowship is a program in which the Anacortes Club has not participated since it is generally used for bringing individuals from underdeveloped countries to technical institutes, teachers colleges, etc. It is through this program, however, that Gus Cruickshank of Grenada visited the Anacortes Club. He was a student in hotel management at British Columbia Technical Institute and impressed all with his presentation about his country. Through this contact we have been collecting books to build up the Grenadian library which was destroyed by fire on that island nation.



By far the largest project which the Rotary Foundation has undertaken is Polioplus. In 1987, the Foundation announced that it would eradicate polio by 2005, the 100th anniversary of Rotary International. Since 1987, \$220,000,000. has been raised and 300,000,000 people have been immunized worldwide, with the help of local Rotary clubs, the UN and the World Health Organization. When this commenced there were thousands of cases per year in Central and South America. In 1992 there were none reported. The Anacortes Rotary Club donated \$10,000 to this project. The Foundation has also funded medical teams to India to combat cataracts, Malawi to operate on "Crawlers" stricken by polio and other places in the world.

How are these projects funded and how has the Anacortes Club been involved? As stated, \$220,000,000. has been raised, with only \$12,000,000.00 from governments, etc. The bulk has been raised by Rotary clubs. For years, the Anacortes Club donated monies raised by birthday fines. But in 1976, this system was changed. The Club started designating Paul Harris Fellows. This award is designed to be a special acknowledgement of those who give \$1000 to the Foundation or have \$1000 donated on their behalf. The first two awards were made to Paul Luvera, Jr. and Dr. Lyle Packard. A number have been made to leading citizens of the city of Anacortes. In 1985, the Club agreed to match funds of those who donated \$100 per year for five years ensuring a continuing donation of funds to the Rotary Foundation. Total funds contributed by the Anacortes Club through the years, including that to Polioplus, totals \$38,914.00 through December 1992.

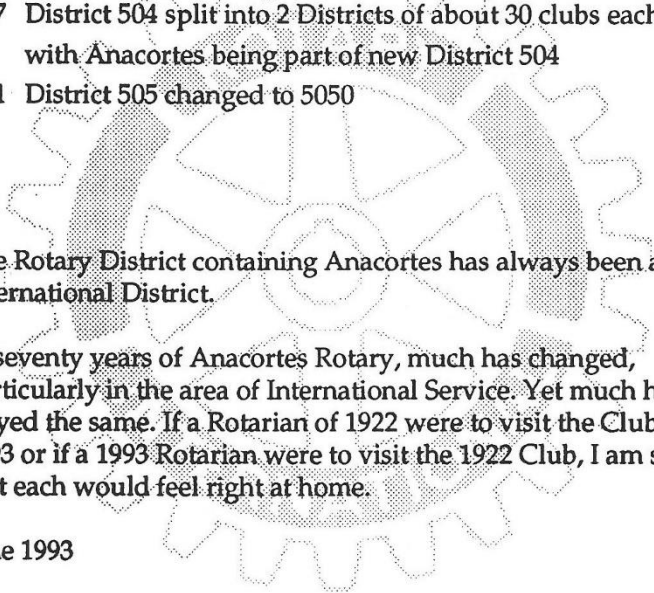
Fellowship has always been an integral part of the Anacortes Rotary Club. There has been a fellowship committee since 1922. Although the dinner-dance of the 1920's has been replaced by

picnics, sports events and even white water rafting, the Club is always looking for new ideas to promote Rotary fellowship. A related project has been Rotarians participating in parades and public events. Prior to World War II one of the big events for Anacortes was the Mariner's Pageant. In 1941, Rotary had the winning float. They were so proud they entered it in the Seattle Potlatch Days the next week and also won first prize. Today the Club participates in the ROKOSOKI race each summer.

Other things of note. Rotarians in Aviation was founded in the 1960's. This group sponsored aviation fly-ins and other related events. John Carabba of the Anacortes Club is a charter member of this organization.

In the late 1980's women joined the ranks of Rotarians. In 1990 the first woman was inducted into the Anacortes Rotary Club.

Rotary, founded by Paul Harris in 1905 in Chicago, was followed by clubs in San Francisco and Oakland. Seattle was club number 4 in 1909. Vancouver, BC was club number 61 in 1913. The Anacortes Club is now in District 5050. Following is a history of district membership of 5050.

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- 1915 RI established District and District Governors. District 15 covered Washinton, Oregon, Alaska, and British Columbia.
- 1918 District 15 changed to 22
- 1922 District number changed to 22 to 1
- 1937 District 1 renumbered 102, Idaho added
- 1938 District 102 changed to 101
- 1949 District renumbered 151 reduced in size
- 1956 151 split into two parts
- 1957 151 renamed 504, no boundary change
- 1973 Alaska and Yukon became District 503 leaving 504
- 1987 District 504 split into 2 Districts of about 30 clubs each, with Anacortes being part of new District 504
- 1991 District 505 changed to 5050

The Rotary District containing Anacortes has always been an International District.

In seventy years of Anacortes Rotary, much has changed, particularly in the area of International Service. Yet much has stayed the same. If a Rotarian of 1922 were to visit the Club in 1993 or if a 1993 Rotarian were to visit the 1922 Club, I am sure that each would feel right at home.

June 1993

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With respect to fundraising the club through several auctions supported Fidalgo Center (senior center) and the Salvation Army. The most recent project the club has taken on is the Skatepark for the youth in our community. We have committed \$10,000.00 towards the effort and will take a role in the balance of the fundraising. Our club and the community have come to a consensus that the skatepark be called the "Ben Root Memorial Skatepark". Ben Root passed away in 1997 and was very much an advocate of the skatepark.

The club continues to honor students at the high school level. We honor a boy and a girl each month as "Students of the Month". At the end of the year two are chosen as "Students of the Year".

Through efforts by President Phil Madden approval was given by the State to create "Donovan Park" (in memory of late Rotarian Bob Donovan) at the entrance of town.

On January 3, 1997 a charter was granted to the Anacortes-Fidalgo Island Rotary Club. Sponsored by our club.

There are always in any organization members who seem to give and give. Our club has many members like that, but one who just cannot seem to quit. Mel Farnsworth took on the responsibility of District Governor for the Rotary year of 1996-97. Mel was the first District Governor from our club to serve in this role. He did his job as District Governor with such perfection and enthusiasm it is hard to believe he is still giving and giving to Rotary.

The following are some of his thoughts and memories from his year:

It was my distinct pleasure to have the opportunity to be District Governor in 1996-97. Having joined the Rotary Club of Anacortes in 1984 and heretofore having no knowledge of Rotary, my education by our club was not only thorough but



fruitful. As a result I also feel honored to be the first District Governor elected from our club to serve in this capacity. The District Governor's home club takes on an added burden during his year because the brunt of many of the activities and functions is organized and carried out by the home club's members. One of the consequences of this responsibility during our year was that we chose not to do a major fund raiser and instead concentrate our energies towards making my year a success. From my vantage point, the year definitely was a success because of those efforts.

Undoubtedly the major activity that our club took on was the District Conference held in Anacortes. May 8-11, 1997. There were those that thought a quality District Conference in such a small town without the typical convention center venue could not be done well. I am here to tell you that those fears were totally put to rest by the many favorable and flattering responses we received from the Rotarians around the district who attended the event. As with any outstanding success, there were many that made it so. And they are:

Mary Mansfield and Bob Murray who co-chaired the Conference Committee. Bob's leadership and vision along with Mary's creative methods of making those events work and her tenacious follow through were the driving force behind the organization.

John Spaulding not only kept everyone moving through his transportation genius, he took care of a mass of details many of us overlooked.

Since the meetings took place in numerous places around town, the attendees needed to find the venues quickly and easily. Bill Bethards made that happen with excellent quality signage strategically placed around town.

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Entertainment added the spice during and in between events. Von Kuehn brought local talent together to add the proper ambiance that made the events memorable.

Handling over thirty rambunctious youth exchange students takes wisdom and endurance. Thank goodness Ron and Anne Smith were up to the task. The students were where they were suppose to be on time; they had a wonderful time and their performance during the conference was a highlight.

Dick Rice put together a conference binder and accoutrements that were not automatically thrown into the dumpster once received. The binders and pens were first rate and will provide a lasting memory for the attendees.

I asked Terry Dorn to do the difficult task of organizing and coordinating the Home Hosting event. As always his accomplishments were perfection. The conference had the highest attendance for Home Hosting in our district's history and ne'er a discouraging word was heard, only rave reviews.

Every well run event needs a "gopher". Well we had one par excellence, Steve Mansfield. He was suppose to be in charge of door prizes. He was that and more. Every time I turned around I bumped into Steve making sure something was going smoothly. Perhaps being married to the "gopher director" has its advantages.

Every well run organization has an individual working behind the scenes taking care of the obvious things that others have overlooked. Much appreciation must go to Kevin Kelly for quietly going about making sure the facilities were lined up, that they were set up properly, and generally made everything run smoothly. He was always thinking ahead to make sure nothing was overlooked.

Once the events began, Joe Sexton took over center stage, literally. He made sure the stage equipment was where it needed to be and he never missed a beat.

The audio-visual task is difficult enough when there is only one venue. We had upwards of eight. Making sure each had microphone systems, projects, VCR's and TV's was a horrendous undertaking, Wayne Kluth took it in stride in his usual quiet professional manner.

There are numerous other contributors that need to be listed and recognized; John Chambers for helping coordinate the meal sessions and speakers. Duncan Frazier for providing media attention through articles before and after the event in the newspapers. John Prosser for organizing and running a very successful golf tournament. Rick Sadler for being Mr. Everything, doing what needed to be done whenever it needed to be done.

There are three other key people who need special recognition.

Bob Bjerck and his wife Cheryl hosted our Russian entertainer guests; Anna Backsheeva, Andrei Belyaev, Artem Slepshchev, and Irina Nevodora. I am sure neither will ever forget the other. Our Russian guests arrived somewhat grim and apprehensive. When they left they were laughing and out going, but tearful since they were not sure if they would ever see their special hosts, Bob and Cheryl again. The special bond developed over the week that they stayed with the Bjercks was priceless because Bob and Cheryl took them in and treated them like family and as a result we were all blessed.

District Treasurer and Conference Treasurer John Gray was incredible. He took in all the registration packet information, made sure the information was dispensed to various committees that needed head counts, deposited the money and in short was

the back bone of our success. Perhaps the best non-compliment I did not hear was any complaint from any attending Rotarian about his or her account. I cannot thank John enough.

And lastly, my wife Sue. Besides keeping our home a haven of serenity she provided numerous creative caveats. Her "Barely Up for Tea" breakfast for the Rotarian spouses was a wonderful experience, complimented by many. She made me proud.

There were many other participants that could be listed, especially those from the newly formed Rotary Club of Anacortes-Fidalgo Island. However this is a memory book of the Rotary Club of Anacortes so I have chosen to highlight those members of our club.

To summarize this wonderful event that the Rotary Club of Anacortes made happen I offer these mini-phrase word descriptive memories, "spine thrilling Russian musical entertainment", "first class speakers - District Governor Lloyd Morris and wife Joan, - Dr. Joe Serra and wife Dorothy, keynote speaker TRF Trustee Rick King and wife Cherie, and the RI Presidents' Representative Bob Cerwin and wife Elaine", "our GSE Team and the visiting invigorating GSE Team from District 4830 Argentina", "being bagpiped by Sky Rickendrfer, Mayor of Mt. Vernon", "Champagne By the Sea", "glittering Governor's Ball", "Mother's Day Pancake Flip on our driveway", "STUPENDOUS weather - not a cloud in the sky for all four days", and a faux pas that turned into the motto for the 1997 District Conference...walking up to the unknown Rotarians hugging them saying "Hello...my name is...Mel".

For the 1997-98 term the club elected it's first woman president.

In January of 1998 the club observed it's 75th anniversary by holding a "Gala Reception" at the Majestic Hotel.