

ANACORTES ROTARY HISTORY

Chapter 8 – The Fabulous Four



BY DUANE CLARK

Anacortes Rotary History

Chapter 8 – The Fabulous Four

Since 2018, the Anacortes Rotary Club has been focused on an unusual club phenomenon. Prior to that time, there had been only two Anacortes Rotarians who had been members for more than 50 years (a remarkable span of time) – **Lyle Packard** and **Paul Luvera**.

As planning began in 2017 for the club's Centennial, it became obvious that the possibility existed that not one, not two, not three, but four Anacortes Rotarians were on track to become 50-year members by the time the club celebrated 100 years. Those four members became known as the "Fabulous Four."

John Chambers joined in October of 1968

Bob Murray joined on May 14, 1969

Von Kuehn and **Jim Anderson** joined on the same day in September, 1972

Sadly, Bob passed away on December 28, 2021, having, however, eclipsed the 50-year benchmark. And sadly, Von passed away on March 2, 2022. Although that was six months short of 50 years, there is no compelling reason to alter the makeup of our "Fabulous Four." All were Past Presidents, and fully committed to Rotary's mission and goals. Anacortes Rotary is honored to be the home of such remarkable members.

All four, two posthumously, will be recognized and honored at the club's February 12, 2023 grand Centennial celebration event.

In 2017, Anacortes Rotarian, Tom Decker, oversaw the production of "95th News & Times of Anacortes Rotary Club." The primary focus of this delightful news letter was clearly the Fabulous Four, and rightly so.

Posted below is the newsletter in its entirety.

95TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2017

95th News & Times Of Anacortes Rotary Club

PERSONALITIES & PHOTOS

Cheers to 95 Great Years

by Tom Decker

One of the first things readers saw on page 1 of the November 24, 1922 Anacortes American was the story about an Anacortes Rotary Club making application to Rotary International for a club charter. After several months of organizing, the club received its charter on December 22, 1922 and held its founding dinner on February 23, 1923.

More than 250 Rotarians and guests from around the Pacific Northwest enjoyed the dinner event with the 17 charter Anacortes members as special honorees. Bellingham Rotary, the sponsoring club, presented the new group with a Rotary bell, forged in Bellingham.

At the time, Skagit County was the first Washington county to have three Rotary clubs. Around the world, Rotary counted just under 100,000 members in 26 countries. Attendance was "compulsory," said *Rotarian* Magazine.

Today, attendance remains important. Just how serious it was to the first club

members is evident from Anacortes club records. In 1924, the Anacortes Rotary Club went 32 consecutive meetings with 100 percent of members present. Not quite good enough, so the club set out to improve the next year. To boost their performance, the club members divided into three teams in 1925 for an attendance competition. The results: nearly perfect as the three teams registered records of 98.13%, 97.43 % and 97.31%.

Since the earliest days, the club has supported students in the Anacortes community through recognition and scholarships. Early records show no direct evidence of scholarships, although Anacortes Rotary did underwrite a track athlete who won the state discus championship and wanted to attend the nationals in Chicago.

Since the 1970s, the club has offered Anacortes High School students scholarships.

(Please turn to page 8)



Anni Brogan, John McIntyre and Bob Stickrod at work on community service project



Lunch includes pine cone decorating for Brandon Carter, Christine Cleland-McGrath, Cory Ertel and Troy Kunz

New 5-year Commitment

As our Anacortes Rotary Club celebrates its 95th anniversary December 22, 2017, I am excited at how we will mark the next 5 years leading up to our centennial in 2022. Club members are making plans for a fund drive to generate a \$100,000 community development grant. Anacortes Rotarians are committed to a new assessment of community values and needs. During this review, we expect to consider several local programs and projects; then we will decide on the most significant project and determine how to raise the needed funds.

What's more, an anonymous donor has pledged to match our club contributions up to \$100,000. This opportunity puts us in a position to make a real legacy contribution for Anacortes as part of our 100th anniversary celebration in 2022.

As we know, thousands of local Anacortes Rotarians have invested their talents, commitment and financial resources over the last 95 years to help make Anacortes and the world a better place. Building a strong sense of community and international friendship were key concepts in 1905, when Paul Harris, a young Chicago attorney, founded Rotary International, a charitable organization now numbering 1.2 million members in 35,000 clubs worldwide.

In my own orientation to club service through Anacortes Rotary, I was given a simple, but powerful, insightful piece of advice. Club member Dave Cortelyou told me: "When a Rotary member asks you to do something, the answer is 'Yes'". Saying "Yes" when asked to help out in your community or serve humanity on a larger stage is what Rotary is all about.

Our club organizes its service efforts through five avenues – community, international, vocational, youth and club service. We have worked hard in Anacortes Rotary to generate \$1 million over the past 10 years for local and

international charitable causes and community projects.

Anacortes Rotarians will be placing special emphasis on this Centennial project, as it honors the estimated 4,000 past members who served Rotary and Anacortes over the last 95 years. The club's Centennial gift will also set the stage for ongoing community service far into the future. By working together, we will make a big difference in our community through this club commitment.

--Krista Oicles

PS: Below are our special honorees for our anniversary dinner with their years of service in the Anacortes Rotary Club.

Fabulous Four

John Chambers: 49 Years

Bob Murray: 48 years

Jim Anderson: 45 Years

Von Kuehn: 45 years

Sensational Six

Mike Matheson: 37 years

Dick Chapman: 35 years

Marc Estvold: 35 Years

John Prosser: 33 Years

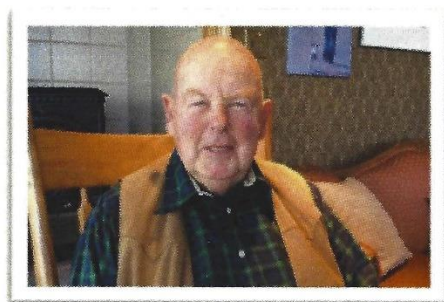
Boyd Veer: 33 years

Ken Brown: 31 Years

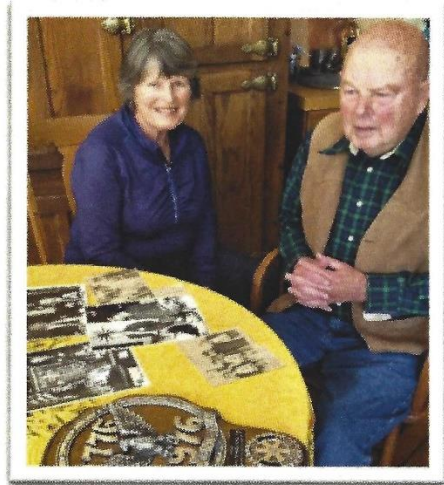


Krista Oicles, at work on club Centennial plans

BOB: SATISFACTION AND FUN



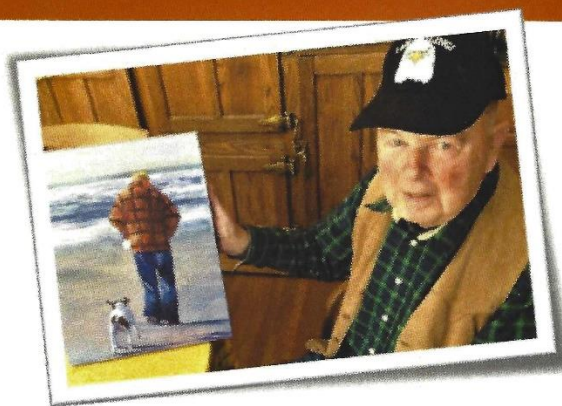
Bob Murray enjoying the view from his home



Deanna and Bob review Rotary mementos

BOB MURRAY: QUOTABLE

"I welcomed women in the club. They have been so active and effective. They have been a big advantage to the success of our club."



Bob displays a portrait of himself, walking his dog along the Washington coast

Bob Murray: Aiming at 50 Years of Rotary Service

Bob Murray, a retired dentist and University of Washington graduate, moved to Anacortes in 1968 and joined Anacortes Rotary in 1969. He is a past president of Anacortes Rotary and a Paul Harris Fellow. In 2017, he celebrated his 48th year with Anacortes Rotary.

Bob and his wife Deanna have two daughters, Heather and Anna.

Why did you join Rotary?

Mainly because I was recruited; I was asked to join. I accepted because I had known a long-standing Rotarian in Seattle. Observing him made me interested in Rotary. When asked to become a member, I gleefully accepted.

Rotary accomplishments?

The Rotary club was kind of an "old man's club" when I first joined. I welcomed having women in the club. They have been so active and effective. They have been a big advantage to the success of our club.

A personal Rotary success: in 1975, I worked to get the Rotary name on Cap Sante Park at the east edge of the marina. Today, Rotary Park is also home to a disc golf course sponsored by Rotarians along with the city.

Other Rotary highlights?

We've had four exchange students. It started with a Japanese boy, he was our first. Then we had a girl from Finland, then a girl from Brazil and later a very, very outstanding fellow from France. The two boys have been back here repeatedly and they are just part of

the family. We have been very active in this part of Rotary.

Often, we enjoyed getting together with friends for crab feeds, so I thought why don't we do it for Rotary. For members, it turned out to be really popular. I would go down to Westport, get 80 some crabs, bring them back up, clean and cook them. Then I'd have three or four other fellows help, Tom Kuhn, Hal Clure, Dale Fowler and a couple of others. It wasn't intended to be a money maker-- just a fun, fun evening for fellowship. We'd have 50-60 people.

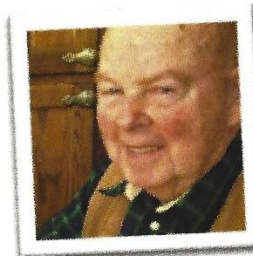
Best compliments you've received?

Just recently, I went to a 50-year dental school class reunion and I had several people come up with nice comments. And one oral surgeon he wanted me to know the impact I had had on his life.

New Rotary goals?

Well, I have kind of tapered off in the club because I have this problem with neuropathy. But one thing I bring up now and then: I would love to see the Rotary Club-- with all the money we generate--build a facility for our own use and make it available to other organizations for rent. This way we would have our own site.

And in two years I'll have 50 years in Rotary so I'm working on that feat.



John Chambers, 49 Rotary Years

John Chambers, a retired ophthalmologist, graduated from the University of Iowa Medical School. While he planned to go into general medical practice, he heard through an Army acquaintance that Skagit county needed another ophthalmologist. That opening changed his career entirely.

He and his wife Kirsti enjoy travel and keeping an eye on 8 grandchildren.

Leadership lessons from Rotary?

Listen to others. They may change your mind because you are not always right. Stick to the agenda and when the discussion has strayed, redirect it. Spread the work out so everyone can take credit for a job well done.

Most enjoyment in Rotary?

Far and away, the fine friends I have found in the Rotary club, both here in Anacortes and worldwide. Also, the opportunity to make up Rotary meetings in Finland and Australia made possible entirely through Rotary and its exchange programs.

The "guess who's coming to dinner" is one of the finer methods we have to get to know each other a bit better.

Long-term goals of the club?

Always be on the lookout for new members; we want the best like we have now.

Be alert to additional mechanisms for lining our charitable pot as the community changes over time. Watch out so that the community does not get "auctioned out" because every group (now uses an auction) as a way to raise money. Finally, we have to tell people what we do with their money, so they will continue to respond.

Most significant Rotary projects?

In 1971, several people inside and outside the club and outside felt we

needed a community swimming pool. First step, a public vote to form the Fidalgo Recreation District and be able to raise funds, then acquire land and build the pool. Before the vote occurred, the land on which the pool sits went up for sale. So, the Rotary club bought it to hold until the vote, then it was "sold" to the new District.

Biggest Rotary changes?

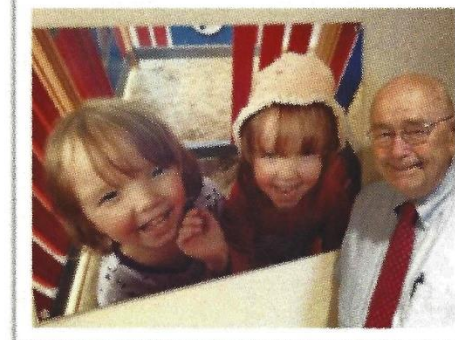
When I became a Rotarian, there were no women in the club. When the rule changed in the late '80s, I think it was a great benefit to our club.

In the early days we met at the Harbor Café. There were still three founding members of the club active. Ben Driftmier, Lyle Packard and Paul Luvera. After a couple of years, I was right behind Arnell Johnson to become president. Along came June, the Chamber of Commerce elected Arnell president. He asked if I would I serve as Rotary president beginning on July 1, so he wouldn't have to be president of two significant organizations at the same time. I agreed. (I missed the Rotary PETS program entirely). As president, my responsibility was to provide the speakers for the meetings. That left me always a bit uneasy for fear the speaker would back out at the last minute. I expected to get chewed out by Paul Luvera for not having a backup program. He never failed me.

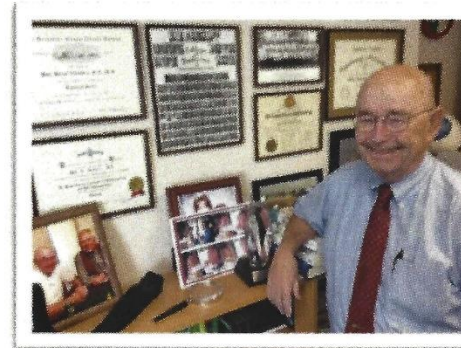
What keeps you active in Rotary?

The fun of such an active and interesting club each week with the promise of learning something new from our speakers.

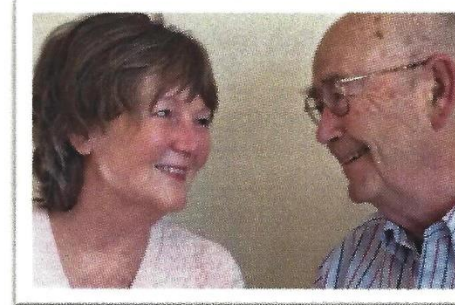
JOHN: ROTARY BRINGS FRIENDSHIPS



John Chambers enjoying a photograph of two grandchildren



The retired ophthalmologist in his home office



Kirsti and John enjoy a light moment reliving Rotary moments

Von Kuehn, 45 Rotary Years

Von Kuehn, who joined Anacortes Rotary in September, 1972, is a past president and Paul Harris Fellow. He and Betty, moved to Anacortes in 1972 where Von established his dentistry practice. Now retired, Von enjoys home brewing, where he specializes in pale ales, India pale ales and porters.

Betty and Von have a son Aaron and a daughter Evonne. Von also has a daughter and grandchildren from a previous marriage.

Leadership lessons from Rotary?

In recent years, I have seen examples of better and better leadership skills, primarily I think because of some recent good models in our club who have made really effective leaders. The people following them could really stand on the "shoulders of giants" as they say. Consequently, we saw the hallmarks of leadership: being well-organized, keeping a timely schedule, using humor and relying on members to pull things together. That skill at delegation is ever important.

Most enjoyment in Rotary?

The friendships I have acquired. Many of my friends are current or former Rotarians. For me, of course, the most satisfying project was the Guatemala dental project that Betty and I administered and the club sponsored for several years.

How did you get involved in Rotary?

Through Bob Murray's sponsorship. He was more than a good friend; he was energetic, he was funny. We really enjoy being around him and Deanna. He sets high standards in whatever he takes on. In dentistry that was certainly true. He just said you have to join Rotary, the best service club in Anacortes, he told me.

Biggest Rotary changes?

The inclusion of women members--that was the first really stressful conflict-centered argument within our club. And we lost a few members over the issue. Looking back, that was, hands down, the best thing that Rotary did internationally and that we did within this club.

The other big thing: how much money we raise. We had really low (fundraising) budgets in my first years, not much more than \$2,500. Still a pretty big deal then. Now we're talking a 2000 percent or more increase, well over the rate of inflation. But I think we carry off this increase in generating funds very well.

Other Rotary highlights?

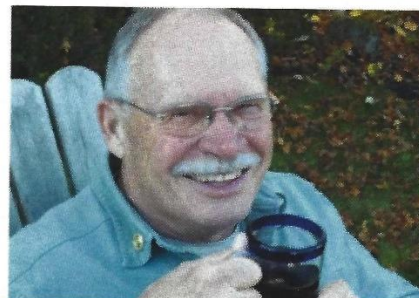
I appreciate projects like Dave Margeson's community service with parks, getting out and pulling ivy and things like that. Age is starting to catch up with me. I like to go out but after a few hours I am ready to come home.

I think so highly of our membership; we have just a wonderful mix of people right now. We have more younger people than we are used to; they seem to want to support each other in their enterprises, whether it is Rotary or in their ventures. Everybody seems to want to help each other.

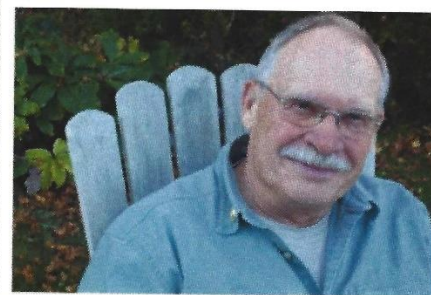
Your philosophy of service?

A lot of projects come to our attention but they don't touch us personally. So, when a member of our club comes to the board and says: "Hey, I have this project; this is what it looks like." If they are involved, if they are putting themselves into it; then it is up to the club to be supportive of that effort. Everybody in the club should be ready to support each other in such an instance. That's my philosophy.

VON: BEER AND SMALL BOATS



Von Kuehn tests one of his latest porter recipes



Taking a break from beer-making



Admiring the results of his kayak-building efforts

Key Dates In Anacortes Rotary History

1905: Rotary founded with Silvester Schiele as first Rotary Club president. Paul Harris was Rotary's founder and organizer, but not president, of that first Rotary Club in Chicago.

1922, Dec. 22: Rotary International granted charter for Anacortes Rotary club. Sponsor Club Bellingham. First officers included: Ben Driftmier, President; Charles Stapp, Secretary.

1923, Feb. 22: Anacortes Rotary charter dinner with more than 250 Rotarians and guests in attendance.

1925: February meeting minutes show expenditure of \$250 for park property, listed as "Guemes property."

1925: Washington Gov. Roland Hartley addressed Anacortes Rotarians at their weekly meeting. Hartley, an Everett resident, was well-known in the Anacortes community.

By 1930: membership had grown to 39 members.

1932: membership dropped to 29, as the Depression took hold in Anacortes.

1933: membership dropped to 16. Club at risk of losing charter.

1940: member numbers again topped 30.

1941: Rotarians perform spoof play, *Just Married*, as fundraiser to provide eyeglasses to needy kids.

1960: As part of the Arts and Crafts Festival, Anacortes Rotarians started their Rotary hamburger stand as a fundraiser.

1960s: Rotary White Elephant Auction events to raise funds for the Fidalgo Pool.

1962: June editorial in Anacortes newspaper commends Anacortes Rotary members for service on 2 community projects: laying 1500 feet of cable to electrify Timber Trails Girls Scout Camp at Little Cranberry Lake and helping install the Anacortes All-American City sign on Highway 20.

Early 1970s: Anacortes Rotary paid for an option to hold the property for the

Fidalgo Pool. Public vote to fund the project came later.

1993: membership numbers climbed into the 80s.

1987: The United States Supreme Court ruled to allow women membership in Rotary. A 7-0 decision in Case No. 86-421, Board of Directors of Rotary International v. Rotary Club of Duarte, Calif.

1992: Rotary auction fundraiser set a new record by generating more than \$20,000 in proceeds.

1996/97: Anacortes Rotarian Mel Farnsworth served as District Governor.

1997, January 3: Fidalgo Island Rotary Club chartered, sponsored by Anacortes Rotary.

1997: District Conference held in Anacortes May 8-11, 1997. Bob Murray and Mary Mansfield co-chaired the conference committee.

1997/98: Mary Mansfield, elected first woman president of Anacortes Rotary

1998, January 24: Anacortes Rotary celebrated its 75th anniversary with a reception at the Majestic Hotel.

HISTORY SOURCES

Rotarian Magazine, Anacortes Rotary Club Archives, Club History by Dick Johnson and Anacortes Museum Archives

At right, Jack Darnton, Dave Margeson, Vicki Stasch and Richard Riddell tackle a community service project



Jim Anderson, 45 Rotary Years

Jim and Joyce Anderson moved to Anacortes from Seattle in April, 1972 when Jim opened his law practice here.

He joined Anacortes Rotary in September 1972, on the same day Von Kuehn joined the club. Jim served as club president in 1978/79. He and Joyce have a son Matthew and a daughter Polly.

Enjoy most about Rotary?

My best friends basically are people I met in Rotary or through Rotary. Those are my closest personal friendships. Next in enjoyment is trying to do some good for some good for the community with people you like and enjoy.

Expectations for Rotary?

I (knew) it was good for business; I was the new guy in town and didn't know anybody. Plus, (Rotary) was a way to get involved with the community and give back. I had always heard good things about Rotary in other places.

Over the years we have done our little bit of good for Anacortes and the world. My preference is the local impact, spending most of our money right here.

Changes in Rotary?

Biggest change was the advent of women in the club. When the issue first came before the club, the majority voted "no" to admitting women. We had about 5 members quit over that vote. Then about a year later, we had another vote. The vote was "yes" and we had another 5 members quit.

Lots of fun today to see the involvement of women in the club and the community. Their presence has added decorum. One examples: some years ago, several members would warm up for the meeting with a visit to the Elks Club first, where they enjoyed martinis. On one occasion, one of our members, not seeing that we had student guests in the audience, stood to tell one of his

standard jokes. Quickly, his friend and partner in crime, seeing the students and realizing the potential peril, tugged at the joke-teller's sleeve to get him to stop the joke. To no avail.

What keeps you active in Rotary?

I look forward to our meetings, enjoy seeing everybody. For the most part, the programs are interesting.

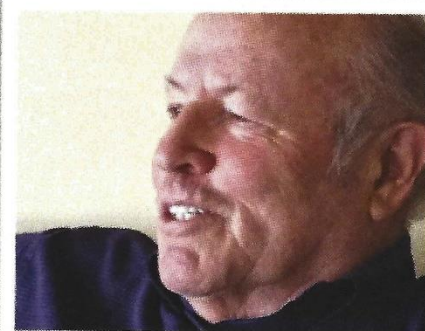
It is fun, like the Chamber of Commerce, to learn who is who in the community and who is doing what. When I see a name in the paper, I can say I know that person.

Best Rotary Story?

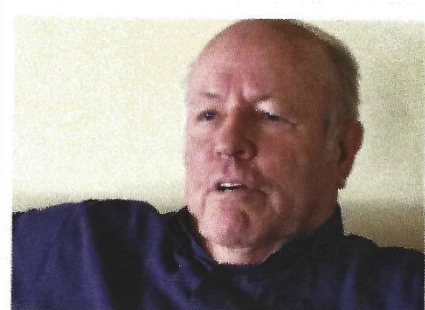
Von Kuehn may tell the same story. Early in our first year in the club, we were at a cocktail party. In a discussion with Dick Johnson (Club President 1976-77), we said we had been in Rotary for 6 months and never had been asked to do anything. At the very next meeting, we were appointed to be the co-chairs of the hamburger stand, which at that time was the biggest (club) fundraiser. I should have known better. I had been in the Army; I knew you were not supposed to volunteer for anything.

Compliments you have savored?

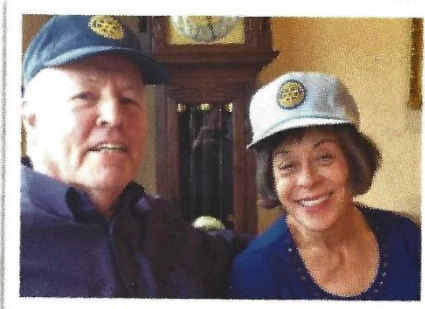
One recurring remark that I took some pride in came near the end of my practice when I did a lot of estate planning. I don't know how many times clients, particularly elderly widows, would say to me that I couldn't retire until after they died. And I took that as a compliment and statement of their trust in me.



Jim Anderson recounting Rotary stories



More tales of club misadventures



Jim and Joyce in Rotary best

95 Years & Growing

Continued from page 1

In the mid-1990s, scholarship awards increased to \$1,000 each. Beginning in 1972, the club regularly welcomed exchange students sponsored by Rotary clubs around the world. As the program took hold, the club hosted students from Japan, Brazil, Argentina, Australia, Finland and Germany.

In keeping with Rotary's international focus, the Rotary Foundation set aside scholarship money for Rotary graduate students beginning in 1946. As the program grew, four Anacortes students received assistance for overseas studies. Included in the list of locals were Joyce Strandberg, University of Goteborg, Sweden, 1969-70; Nancy Genung, University of St. Andrews, 1972-73; Constance Hansen, SW Australia; and Karen Smalders, University of Amsterdam, 1983-84.

A number of social events promoted fellowship with Rotarians from nearby clubs for many years. Even World War II restrictions failed to slow down the camaraderie. The club enjoyed dinner

dances with the Mount Vernon and Sedro Woolley clubs, "blackout rules permitting."

In almost every era, raising money has been an important Rotary action. Little is known about early club money generating projects, but the club got creative in 1941. A widely advertised performance of the play "Just Married" featured Rotarians playing the theatrical leads to furnish glasses for needy kids.

By the early 1960s, the club started its annual hamburger stand as part of the Anacortes Arts and Crafts Festival. For a number of years, cooking and selling burgers became the club's most consistent fundraiser. Also in the 1960s, the White Elephant Sale added a new element of club funding. Newspaper photos from that time show Rotarians and others addressing thousands of letters to locals to promote the sale event. One newspaper ad promoting the sale listed a Seattle auctioneer handling the sale from 1 until 6 pm. at the old Ford Garage on Third and Commercial, with proceeds going to the proposed indoor pool for the city.

Selling citrus fruit added a new twist to the funding blend in the early 1960s, becoming a semi-regular fixture through the 1980s and '90s. By 1992, the club auction set a record in generating \$20,000 for the community.

Rotary's more recent history has been played out on a large international stage, working on the drive to eradicate polio. Here are the words of Bill Gates several years ago. Explaining to Rotarians why he was increasing the contribution from the Gates Foundation for the PolioPlus campaign to \$355 million to help eradicate polio, he said:

"One thing is for certain. The world would not be where it is without Rotary, and it won't get where it needs to go without Rotary. You have so much to offer.

You are volunteers. There are more than 1 million Rotarians around the world, and many of you have actually traveled to help out with immunization days. I've had the great privilege of administering a dose of the vaccine to a child. Many of you have, too. Everybody should get to have that feeling—the human connection to the great work Rotary is doing.

When people work hard and see success, they get more energy, not less. They want to work even harder, so they can see even more success.

You are also advocates. When Rotarians talk, people listen."



CENTENNIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

If you want to contribute to the Anacortes Rotary Centennial Celebration fund, please contact Duane Clark or Krista Oicles:

Duane Clark

Email : capsantecourt@gmail.com

Krista Oicles

Email :

krista.oicles@heritagebanknw.com