

ROTARY CLUB OF WEST DES MOINES, IOWA

The 31 years from 1981 to 2012



**A few photos and selected bits & pieces
from the “Rotary Wheel” and other sources**

**By Bill M. Reese
Club President 1980-81
District Governor 1994-95**



BILL M. REESE
ROTARY INTERNATIONAL
PAST DISTRICT GOVERNOR – 1994-95
DISTRICT 6000
ROTARY CLUB OF WEST DES MOINES, IOWA



July 2012

Rev. Conley J. Biddle, as Secretary-Historian and Past President of the West Des Moines Rotary Club, wrote a history book to commemorate the Club's 50th Anniversary (April 1, 1926 to April 1, 1976). This book was distributed at the anniversary party to all members and guests. Five years later, 1981—the year I was Club President, Conley wrote, and the club published, a second edition which included a considerable amount of additional information. This second edition was also distributed to all members at the time of publication. Now, 31 years later, our membership has almost entirely changed. Only a few current members remember receiving this book, and can still find it on their bookshelves.

Conley was well-respected for his knowledge of Rotary, and he was elected District Governor for 1978-79. Our club often called him “Mr. Rotary”. His book contains a wealth of Rotary background and information about early days of our club. I may have been especially attracted to it because I knew and worked with the individuals and programs mentioned therein from 1971 on to its date of publication. This book has to be the starting point for any additional historic record of our club. A copy of the second edition has been scanned, the font enlarged, and is available for download on our club website.

Conley Biddle was a special friend and a mentor to me. I feel confident that he would be pleased that all his effort on both editions of the history book has been extended into the future. He once referred to me as the next “Unofficial” Historian for the club. I guess his prophecy has come true with the publication of the attached compilation of club information. (I need to retire from this job, and pass the title on!)

I should explain that the photos included herein are only those in my personal files or those provided by other club members in response to a request. I wish the club had a common repository for the many photos taken over the years to showcase our projects and meetings. Unfortunately, this does not exist. The “bits and pieces” pulled from the “Rotary Wheel” are strictly my choice (the Historian gets to pick the history). The idea was to focus primarily on members, and their participation in club activities. Virtually nothing has been included in regard to our many, many fine guest speakers or normal seasonal club functions. My apologies for any perceived omissions. All this could be pretty boring were it not for the efforts of our many fine bulletin editors to include bits of “wit & wisdom (?)” along the way. I’ve tried to “appropriate” as many of these as possible.

Sincerely,

Bill M. Reese

**ROSTER OF PAST PRESIDENTS AND SECRETARIES
ROTARY CLUB OF WEST DES MOINES**

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>PRESIDENTS</u>	<u>SECRETARIES</u>
1926-27	Jesse S. Compton	Walter S. Sharpe
1927-28	Albert Minnis	Walter S. Sharpe
1928-29	Herman Ittis	Walter S. Sharpe
1929-30	William R. Beck	Walter S. Sharpe
1930-31	Frank E. Thornton	Walter S. Sharpe
1931-32	Erwin H. McCoy	Sam L. Polonetzky
1932-33	Clarence Ellis	J. Reid
1933-34	Earl McLaren	Frank J. Vass
1934-35	P. L. Riley	M. L. Silcox
1935-36	Martin L. Silcox	Jack Helwig
1936-37	Howard Fearing	Bert Bennett
1937-38	Jack Helwig	Earl Josten
1938-39	Dr. Fred Sternagle	Wilbur Bridges
1939-40	Frank J. Vass	H. W. Fearing
1940-41	Rudy Bechtold	Roy Messerschmidt
1941-42	Wilbur Bridges	Ray Kirk
1942-43	Roy Messerschmidt	John Sexton
1943-44	Ray Kirk	Charles R. Way
1944-45	Charles R. Way	Max R. Berry
1945-46	Amos C. Lee	Charles C. Orebaugh
1946-47	Max R. Berry	Roy Riley
1947-48	Thomas A. Wilson	Rufus Payne
1948-49	Roy Riley	Richard W. Pittman
1949-50	John Graham	Richard W. Pittman
1950-51	J. Rufus Payne	Richard W. Pittman
1951-52	James M. Stout	Richard W. Pittman
1952-53	Dr. Eugene Penn	Vern Bailey
1953-54	Elmer E. Foster	Vern Bailey
1954-55	Glenn W. Rhodes	Vern Bailey
1955-56	William F. Bowen	Vern Bailey
1956-57	Keith E. Willcoxson	Vern Bailey
1957-58	B. Shelden Gorcham	Vern Bailey
1958-59	W. Dave Frevert	Vern Bailey
1959-60	Rev. Conley J. Biddle - PDG 1978-79	Robert Scarborough
1960-61	Vern E. Bailey	Russ Hookom
1961-62	Stanley Ver Ploeg	Charles H. Vandenburg
1962-63	Clayton Ridgeway	Charles H. Vandenburg
1963-64	Charles J. Joss	Charles H. Vandenburg
1964-65	Carl Ripper	Charles H. Vandenburg

ROSTER OF PAST PRESIDENTS AND SECRETARIES, CONTINUED

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>PRESIDENTS</u>	<u>SECRETARIES</u>
1965-66	A. A. Martin	Charles H. Vandenburg
1966-67	Joe Van Winkle	Charles H. Vandenburg
1967-68	Dr. George W. Thompson, Jr.	Charles H. Vandenburg
1968-69	Roy McKay	Charles H. Vandenburg
1969-70	Dr. Gordon L. Elliott	Charles H. Vandenburg
1970-71	S. R. Bruce	Richard W. Pittman
1971-72	James Newsome	Richard W. Pittman - Bill M. Reese
1972-73	Clair C. Weintz	Bill M. Reese - Conley J. Biddle
1973-74	Larry Lang	Conley J. Biddle
1974-75	Howard C. Amick	Conley J. Biddle
1975-76	Donald B. Groves	Conley J. Biddle
1976-77	Lyle C. Smith	Conley J. Biddle
1977-78	Eugene Jessick	Conley J. Biddle - James S. Brown
1978-79	Elmer P. True	James S. Brown
1979-80	Douglas Hillman	James S. Brown
1980-81	Bill M. Reese - PDG 1994-95	James S. Brown
1981-82	Larry D. Hoier	James S. Brown
1982-83	Michael L. Canady	James S. Brown
1983-84	Charles J. Raffay	James S. Brown
1984-85	Suku Radia	James S. Brown
1985-86	Thomas C. Fredregill	James S. Brown
1986-87	Gregory L. Kenyon	Allen E. Anderson
1987-88	John Hintze	Allen E. Anderson
1988-89	Robert D. Coleman	Allen E. Anderson
1989-90	Phillip L. Risley	Larry D. Ites
1990-91	Robert R. Tait	Larry D. Ites
1991-92	Thomas W. George	Larry D. Ites
1992-93	Allen E. Anderson	Gordon Graham
1993-94	Katie Roth	Gordon Graham
1994-95	John M. Paule	Gordon Graham
1995-96	Arlen F. Pence	Kitty Metzger
1996-97	Mark A. Lyons	Bill Lyon
1997-98	James W. Noyce	Al Cross
1998-99	Burdett (Bob) H. Start III	Al Cross
1999-00	Paul A. Wielage	Al Cross
2000-01	John Donald	Al Cross
2001-02	Kevin Burggraaf	Al Cross
2002-03	Kitte Noble	Linda Jenkins
2003-04	Johnny Boyd	Linda Jenkins
2004-05	Tom Carey	Linda Jenkins

ROSTER OF PAST PRESIDENTS AND SECRETARIES, CONTINUED

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>PRESIDENTS</u>	<u>SECRETARIES</u>
2005-06	Al Cross	Art Dinkin
2006-07	Jason Wolfe	Art Dinkin - Todd Treese
2007-08	Todd Millang	Todd Treese
2008-09	Tom Larson	Todd Treese
2009-10	Linda Hulleman	Harold Hulleman
2010-11	Todd Wishman	Harold Hulleman
2011-12	Jamie Bunn	Harold Hulleman
2012-13	Chris Nelson	Harold Hulleman

Charter for the Rotary Club of West Des Moines, Iowa, U.S.A.



The original charter dated April 1, 1926 was lost in a fire. This is the replacement charter dated January 24, 1951.

The Rotary Wheel



He profits most who serves best

West Des Moines Club

This is a copy of the masthead logo from the 1955 Rotary Wheel.



**JESSE S. COMPTON – Manager Stock Yards – Organizer – Charter Member
First President of the West Des Moines (Valley Junction Rotary Club – 1926-27**



Herman Iltis – President 1928-29



William R. Beck – President 1929-30



Frank Thornton
Pres. 1930-31



Clarence Ellis
Pres. 1932-33



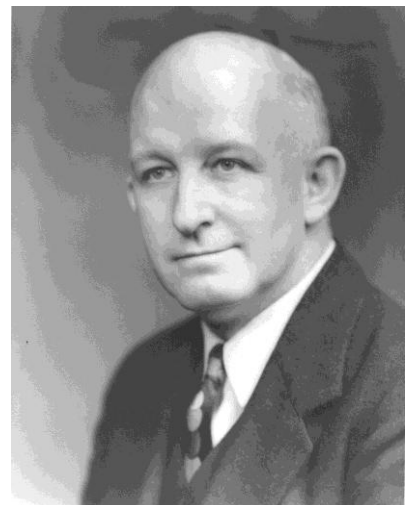
Earl McLaren
Pres. 1933-34



Martin L. Silcox
Pres. 1935-36



Howard Fearing
Pres. 1936-37



Dr. Fred Sternagle
Pres. 1938-39



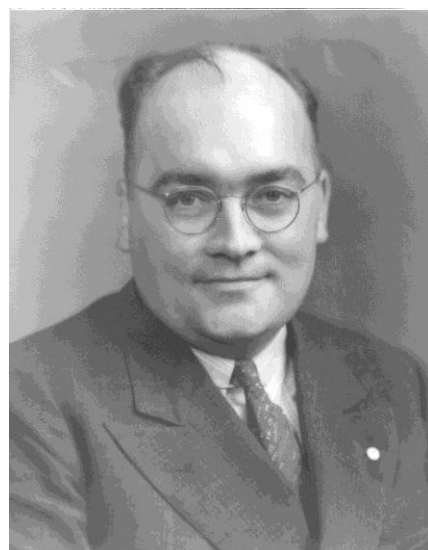
Frank J. Vass
Pres. 1939-40



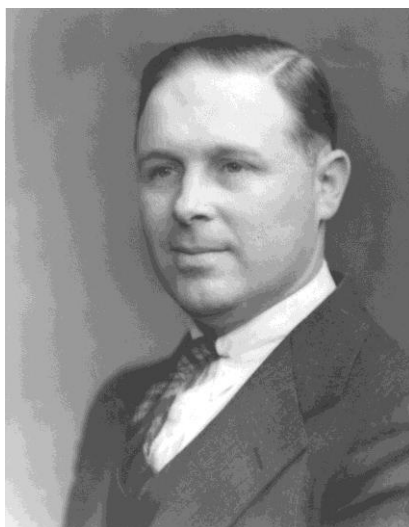
Wilbur Bridges
Pres. 1941-42



Roy Messerschmidt
Pres. 1942-43



Ray Kirk
Pres. 1943-44



Charles R. Way
Pres. 1944-45



Past Presidents – Rotary Club of West Des Moines (current members 4-1-76)



Wilbur Bridges
1941-42



Roy M. Messerschmidt
1942-43



Tom Wilson
1947-48



Keith E. Willcoxson
1956-57



B. Sheldon Goreham
1957-58



Conley J. Biddle
1959-60



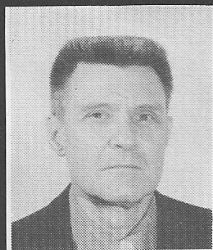
Stanley Ver Ploeg
1961-62



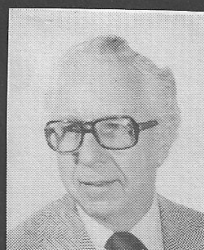
Carl P. Ripper
1964-65



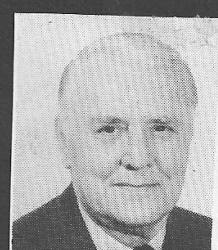
Joseph S. Van Winkle
1966-67



George W. Thompson
1967-68



Gordon L. Elliott
1969-70



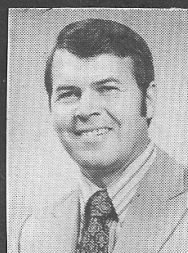
S. R. Dick Bruce
1970-71



James A. Newsome
1971-72



Clair C. Weintz
1972-73



Larry L. Lang
1973-74

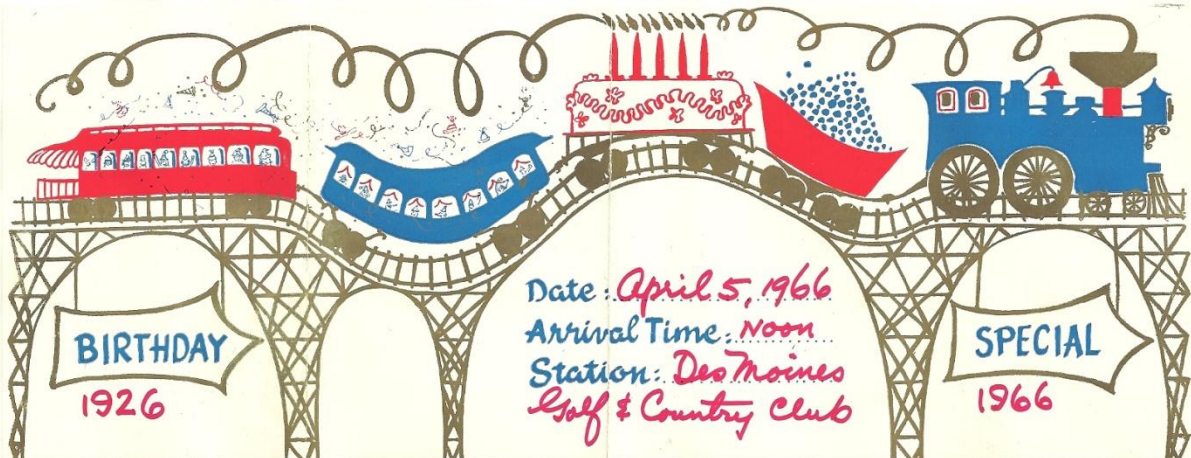


Howard C. Amick
1974-75



THE ROTARY WHEEL

WEST DES MOINES ROTARY CLUB



OUR CLUB'S FORTIETH BIRTHDAY

On April 1, 1926 the Rotary Club of Valley Junction was admitted to membership in Rotary International. Several weeks earlier, at the request of District Governor Al Falkenheimer, Clyde Hulsizer and Ellis Engelbeck made a survey of West Des Moines (then "Valley Junction") to determine whether or not a Rotary Club could be successfully established here.

The findings of these men were submitted and on March 22, 1926 the Board of Directors of Rotary International approved the survey.

Jesse S. Compton was named organization chairman of the new club on March 25, and six days later, on April 1, 1926, as the Club came into being, Mr. Compton was chosen as the Club's first President and Walter S. Sharpe as Secretary.

At its beginning, the Club had seventeen Charter Members, and of these seventeen, Earl McLaren is the only one who is still a member of our Club. In fact, it is questionable whether more than two, or possible three, of the original Charter members are still living. To-day, we salute Earl, our senior Rotary Club

Charter member who will speak to us briefly regarding the history of our Club.

The remainder of the program, today, will be slightly different than usual, in light of our birthday celebration, with a few remarks from several of the Club's older members, and some special entertainment arranged for by our Fellowship Chairman, Dick Bruce.

CHARTER MEMBERS

Askew, Edward J., Drugs retailing
Beck, Wm. R., Banking
Compton, Jesse S., Live stock buying
Falk, Edwin A., Portrait photography
Ilitis, Herman M., Lumber retailing
Jacobson, Moses L., Men's Clothing
McCoy, Erwin H., Telephone service
McCurnin, Thomas P., Oil products
McLaren, Earl D., Undertaking
Mason, Earl E., Jewelry retailing
Merrigan, James E., Feed & Grain
Minnis, Albert H., Groceries retailing
Morgan, Bert A., Automobile retailing
Pollard, Fred C., Hardware retailing
Riley, Peter, Dry Goods retailing
Sharpe, Walter S., Physician & Surgeon
Thornton, Frank E., Dentistry

HE PROFITS MOST WHO SERVES BEST



40th Anniversary photo – 1966

4/1966 Underlined = Still in Club in 1991 - 65th Anniversary 4/1991 Club closed

TOP - L to R:
Paul Grodt, Stan VerPlase, Dr. Elliott, Dr. Grothman, Joe VanWinkle, Norm Progenitor, Carl Rippe,
Clair W. Irtz, Amos Lee, + Ray (Carr) Symca

MIDDLE: Dick Bruce, Leonard + Fay, Marcell Woolley, Harold McIntire, Dave Hoffer, Dave Fesvert,
 * Sid Beattie, Ray Kirk, Clayton Risenway, Don Taylor, Olsen Henson, Jim Newcome

Bottom: Charles Vandenberg, Charles Fox, Wilbur Bridges, Earl McLaren, Gus Martin, Ray Messerschmidt,
 * Sheldon Goreham, Elmer True * 1996-7

Rejoined 1996

— MEANS STILL A MEMBER

Conley Biddle was member at this time but is not in picture
 + = NORTHWEST CLUB MEMBER NOW

* Deceased 1991

Charter Member in 1926

Paul Grodt picture

40th ANNIVERSARY
 PHOTO April 1966



WEST DES MOINES-PDG Wayne Douglass, left, chairman of the District 600 Rotary Foundation Committee, is pictured presenting a Paul Harris Fellow Award plaque to Clair Weintz, president of the West Des Moines Rotary Club. The presentation took place at the club's Nov. 21 meeting, and was in the form of a memorial tribute to the late Earl D. McLaren, a charter member and club president in 1933-34. McLaren's son, John, is currently a member of the club. The award is the fifth to be presented in the district to date, and was the third awarded in November.

Clair Weintz was President of the Club in 1972-73

**Mike Canady - 1983
"Make-over" demonstration**



**Chuck Raffay & Mayor George Mills
Raffle ticket drawing -1984**



THE ROTARY WHEEL

EDITORS: Joe Van Winkle, Chairman — Norman W. Pogemiller — Elmer True
WEST DES MOINES ROTARY CLUB

Christmas, 1974

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It doesn't seem possible --

BUT CHRISTMAS IS HERE AGAIN!

In this fast-moving world the days -- and weeks -- and years tumble on one another's heels -- and Christmas comes again.

How wonderful this is. For Christmas is the one day-of-days when we pause in the hurly-burly of living, and greet our friends, and all those we love and cherish.

Wilbur Bridges' Rotary Ann, Lillian composed a poem that tells the Christmas Story so well that I asked her permission to give it to each of you.

A CHRISTMAS WISH

*Too soon is Christmas stored away
Its wreaths marked down for bargain day.
It seems a waste that all should go—
The gay decked tree, the candle glow—
The hearts that for a season see
The needs of all humanity.
Would that such joy could last all year—
Its wealth of love and yuletide cheer.
The splendor of this transient time
Could make this sorry world sublime
If men would hear the angel's song
And heed its message all year long.
If hearts could ever be
As when we decked the Christmas tree.*

— Lillian Bridges

It is the time, too, for me to express my appreciation to you for making my term as your Rotary club president so enjoyable. It is already one-half over!

Sincerely,

Howard C. Amick

P.S. There will be no meetings on December 24th or December 31st, and there will be no bulletin next week. Will see you all on Tuesday, January 7th at Eddie Websters!

HE PROFITS MOST WHO SERVES BEST



50th Anniversary Photos -- April 6, 1976



Lyle Smith



Mr. & Mrs. Biddle – Don Groves



Don Groves



Conley Biddle – Secretary



Conley Biddle – Don Groves – Guest



Conley Biddle – Don Groves

