

**HISTORY**  
**ROTARY CLUB OF NORFOLK**

**In Celebration of  
The 90th Anniversary  
Of Its Charter as  
Club No. 114**

**Norfolk, VA: 2005**

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PAIN YOUR HEART OUT, 1996, upper  
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## **GROWTH OF ROTARY IN THE REGION**

A small group of Norfolk businessmen, after learning about Rotary through business contacts elsewhere, met on Thursday evening, December 11, 1913, with Samuel Rosendorf, a representative of the Richmond Rotary Club, to learn how to start a club in Norfolk. They immediately began to identify prospects to become charter members. The identification of prospective members continued for the first year with the distribution of lists of various classifications and professions open to membership.

The small group – Eugene L. Graves, Robert Johnston, Moe Levy, Ernest Meeks, and C. J. Mains – assembled additional charter members on Saturday, January 17, 1914, and voted to form a permanent organization to be known as the Norfolk Rotary Club. They appointed a committee to prepare a constitution and by-laws modeled on those of the existing Richmond club and elected the following officers:

T. Gray Coburn, President  
Robert Johnston, Sr., Vice President  
I.H. Bosman, Treasurer  
C.J. Mains, Secretary  
Edward R. Sutherland, Registrar and Statistician  
Ernest H. Meeks, Sergeant-at-Arms

In addition to those elected officers and original organizers, other charter members included J. Frank Bell, P. Morgan Fussell, E.R. Gale, T.W. Kingsbury, Jacob H. Kraemer, George B. McGrath, O.B. McLean, H.O. Nichols, and J.E. Pearson.

Organizational steps progressed in the next few months. The club's Certificate of Incorporation was dated March 3, 1914, and the club was chartered on May 1, 1914 as Club No. 114 by the International Association of Rotary Clubs (the historical antecedent of Rotary International). The club began in 1914 meeting monthly for a dinner meeting at the Fairfax Hotel. The Board of Directors typically met briefly before or after these meetings. Luncheon meet-

ings were introduced in 1915, and meetings became weekly by the end of that year. The typical pattern was one evening meeting per month, three luncheon meetings, and the Board of Directors' meeting held on a different day.

Although early minutes portrayed club meetings as consisting mainly of membership business, including handling delinquencies because of absences, there also were presentations. The following is a sampling of topics of early meetings: "Law As It Affects the Businessman," "Salesmanship," "Corporations and Municipalities and Their Reciprocal Relations," "The Psychology of Rotary," a demonstration of the Underwood typewriter (!), and "Preparedness." An occasional outing enlivened the proceedings. Once the membership walked to the nearby telephone company building, where they were guided through the facility. Another time the club went together by train to the power station in Brambleton to see what was said to be the largest and most modern electrical plant south of Baltimore. And yet another excursion was by boat to the Texas Oil Company plant on the southern branch of the Elizabeth River.

Membership in the Rotary Club of Norfolk grew quickly. As early as 1922, membership had reached 160 men and has typically fluctuated between 150 and 200 members throughout the club's long history. For much of its existence, the Norfolk Rotary has been among the largest in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

In the early and mid-30s, the club's membership was adversely impacted by Depression-era economic conditions, however. Beginning in 1931 minutes of board meetings contained discussion of uncollected dues, delinquent members, the feasibility of reducing club dues and of reducing the cost of luncheon from 75 to 60 cents, and the availability of special lunch tickets for those present but not eating. Even so, members were lost due to delinquency during this period. In addition to the impact on membership and weekly club activities, the 1933 Ladies' Night celebration was cancelled in recognition of the grim living situations of Norfolk's less fortunate residents, and

funds allocated for it were appropriated instead to the Relief Fund.

A new membership category, Mobilized Rotarians, was used during World War II. A number of Norfolk members enlisted in the armed forces and served in many theaters of war. The club did not accept their resignations, but those members were placed on the list of Mobilized Rotarians. Despite the dislocations of the war, membership shortly after was reported to be 173 members in 1949.

As an individual club, the Norfolk Rotary made significant contributions to the expanding Rotary movement through its sponsorship of new Rotary clubs organized in the area. The first sponsorship occurred in 1916 with the establishment of a Rotary Club in Newport News. By 1930, the club had sponsored clubs in Portsmouth (1918), Elizabeth City, North Carolina (1921), and Virginia Beach (1927). Each of these clubs, in turn, sponsored other clubs, and the total number of “descendents” of the Rotary Club of Norfolk now numbers more than 40. The table in the appendix titled Rotary Club Sponsorships summarizes the reach of the Norfolk Rotary Club through sponsorship of new clubs.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF CLUB LIFE

Building and sustaining membership, assuring a strong club for the future, and making Rotary fun – all of these activities have engaged Norfolk Rotarians year after year, and the long, robust life of the Rotary Club of Norfolk confirms the success of the hundreds of its members since 1914. In the long life of the club, a selection of events, described here, stand out as highlights in maintaining and growing the organization now celebrating its 90th anniversary.

***Ladies Nights.*** The long history of Ladies Night parties began immediately after the organization of the Rotary Club of Norfolk. On June 15, 1914, members and wives met at the Fairfax Hotel and carpooled to Redgate Cottage in Ocean View in “machines” sporting banners reading FIRST ANNUAL ROTARY CLUB OUTING. There, members enjoyed music, dancing, and refreshments. The annual ladies’ nights quickly became more elaborate, with speeches, entertainment, party favors, gifts for the ladies, and included a number of non-member guests. Within the first 10 to 15 years, attendance at the Ladies Night parties often exceeded 400 people!

***Inter-City Meets.*** In the early period, neighboring Rotary clubs were encouraged to have what were called “inter-city meets,” and the Norfolk Rotary Club participated in a number of them. Characteristic was a meeting in November 1922, in which the clubs of Portsmouth, Newport News, Hampton, Suffolk, Elizabeth City, and Norfolk traveled together by train to Cape Henry for a day-time outing. In addition to recreation, there was a meal, followed by a program consisting of talks about Rotary, and entertainment by a singer.

***Azalea Festival Floats.*** For a number of years, Norfolk’s International Azalea Festival, with its grand parade, provided an ideal opportunity for members of the Norfolk Rotary to make a civic contribution, to raise the club’s visibility, and to enhance fellowship among members. The festival, initiated in 1954, honors NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) and features the culture of one of its



member nations throughout the celebration. As many as 250,000 participants and spectators attend the festival annually.

The Parade of Nations, a major element in the festival, is a parade with bands, floats, and marching units. Participants represent an array of organizations, including a significant representation from civic groups. The Rotary Club of Norfolk entered floats in the Azalea Festival parade every year from 1963 to 1980, and several dozen members participated in building and finishing the float each year. Most years the club's float won an award and trophy, often taking first place

Finally, after the parade in 1981, the newsletter reported that the club built "a beautiful float, but due to mechanical failure, the float did not make it to the parade." The failure of the mechanical foundation on which the floats were built spelled the end of Norfolk Rotary Club's participation in the Azalea Festival Parade.

***RI Presidential Visit.*** Rotary International celebrated its 75th anniversary during the year 1979, and the Norfolk Rotary led the region's clubs in planning and presenting an appropriate celebration. A black tie evening held on September 4, 1979, with a dinner and program, was organized by a committee which included a representative of each participating Rotary club: Chesapeake, Norfolk, Northside, North Suffolk, Portsmouth, Princess Anne, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach. The committee was chaired by a member of the Norfolk Rotary Club, which spearheaded the effort.

The honored guest and speaker for the 75th anniversary celebration was James L. Bomar, Jr., President of Rotary International, 1979-80. Bomar, an attorney practicing law in Shelbyville, Tennessee, had a long record of service to Rotary International, having served as district governor, committee member, director, and vice president before becoming RI president in 1979.

The evening concluded with the performance of "Let Service Light the Way," a song written by two Norfolk

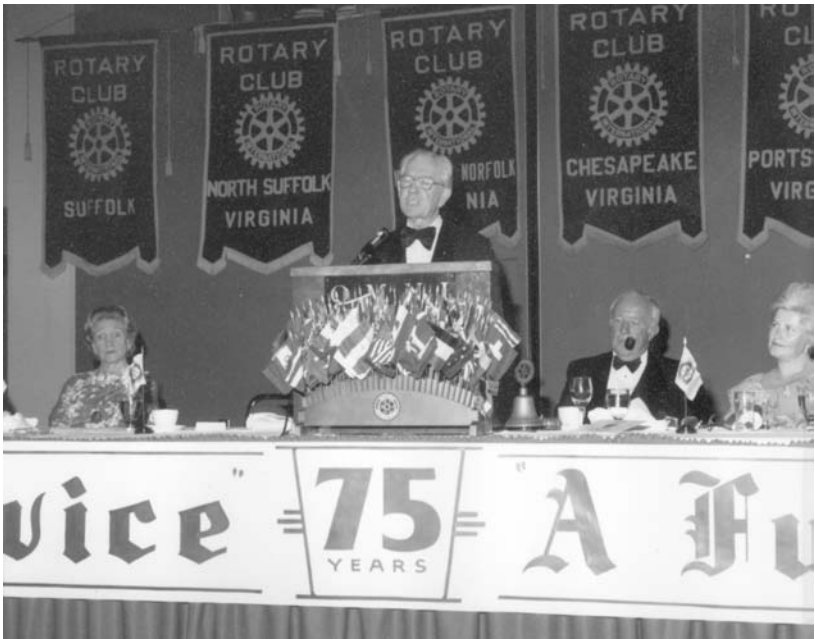
Rotarians to commemorate the anniversary celebration and President James Bomar's participation in it.

***Rotations.*** The weekly newsletter of the Rotary Club of Norfolk, ROTATIONS, began publication on October 4, 1983 with its first issue. Its slogan at that time was "The turn of events in the Norfolk Rotary Club."

Norfolk Rotary Endowment. A local endowment fund, called the Norfolk Rotary Endowment Fund, was established in 1992 by the Norfolk Rotary Club to augment annual fundraising for the club's charitable giving. Start-up funds for the endowment were contributed by 15 club members who became charter donors (of \$1,000 each) and guided the first steps to start the fund. The endowment, managed by the Norfolk Foundation, has continued to grow in two major ways. A percentage of each annual fundraiser has been earmarked for the endowment, and gifts and bequests from individual members and others are deposited in the fund.



Rotary's greatest leadership contribution is widely recognized to come through the community service of its members, and the Norfolk Rotary Club's history is the history of the development of individuals to work in and through other organizations for the improvement of the community. Over time the club's members have made prodigious contributions to community service – through service on boards, campaigns, public offices, and other leadership situations. Throughout its 90 years of existence, the Rotary Club of Norfolk has developed and sustained major projects as well, projects that have served its community in extraordinary ways. The remainder of this history of the Norfolk Rotary Club celebrates the club's contributions through its major service projects.



75<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY, ROTARY INTERNATIONAL, 1979, upper  
AZALEA FESTIVAL FLOAT, 1980 (?), lower



REVOLUTIONARY WAR CANNONS, 1986, upper  
NORFOLK SENIOR CENTER VAN, 1983, lower

## MAJOR PROJECTS

### CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS

#### Boys' Club

Late in 1916, C.J. Atkinson, executive secretary of the Boys' Club Federation, presented a program to the Norfolk Rotary Club about the Boys' Club movement. He described a nonsectarian organization specializing in service to underprivileged boys from neglected and deteriorated neighborhoods. To give opportunities to boys who would otherwise lack them, a Boys' Club typically operated programs in facilities containing gymnasiums and swimming pools, game rooms, craft shops, a library/reading room, and a meeting room. Medical and dental clinics often were available, too. Immediately upon hearing Atkinson's presentation, the Norfolk Rotary Club appointed a committee to investigate the possibility of introducing the Boys' Club movement in Norfolk.

Throughout 1918 members of the club developed the plan to inaugurate a Boys' Club program and built support among the Rotary membership, as well as in the larger community. A superintendent was recruited, and the Boys' Club project began on February 8, 1919. The Boys' Club in Norfolk was first situated in the Parish House of St. Paul's Episcopal Church with locker rooms and showers located in the basement of the Parish House and the top floor used for basketball and games.

The start-up of the Norfolk Boys' Club was financed by a fund-raising campaign by and among the members of the Norfolk Rotary Club. For each of the first five years of Boys' Club operation, the Norfolk Rotarians conducted a subscription campaign and raised funds in the range of \$10,000 - \$15,000 annually to support the club. In 1923 the Community Fund, the historical antecedent of the United Way of South Hampton Roads, was formed. The Boys' Club became a charter member agency of the

Community Fund and began to receive support from the Fund on an ongoing basis.

The Norfolk Rotary Club continued to underwrite various programming costs of the Boys' Club for many years – musical instruments for the orchestra and later the band, outings to the beach each summer, and an annual Christmas party are representative. The Christmas party was a tradition started the first year of Boys' Club operation and continued for many years. Entertainment was presented, and each boy received a “bag of Christmas goodies.”

The Boys' Club was moved a number of times in a continuing effort to secure more adequate facilities. These moves received financial support from the Rotary Club. The first headquarters facility on the corner of Bank and Freemason Streets had to be closed in 1931. Because of the Depression, Community Fund support was reduced by 19%, and the Boys' Club experienced an operating deficit that resulted in the closure of its Norfolk headquarters. A long-term search for a permanent facility continued, and in the early 1930s the Rotary Club purchased a new site for a Boys' Club building, later referred to as the lots on Harrington Avenue. The lots were deeded to the Boys' Club, but a facility was never built on them. Instead they were sold in 1945, and the proceeds were used to purchase a site on Colonial Avenue and 26th Street. A spacious facility was built there and was used for many years. The new facility was financed with funding from the Norfolk United Fund (an intermediate name for the agency first known as the Community Fund) and finished in early 1949. In the years immediately following the opening of the new building, the Norfolk Rotary Club underwrote the purchase of additional land to expand the site, as well as the installation of lights and equipment to achieve other improvements on the playground. The facility underwent a \$1.8 million renovation and upgrading in 1987. It became a first class facility again, serving both boys and girls of the Park Place community with educa-

tional and recreational opportunities.

A branch of the Boys' Club operated in Berkley starting in 1922, first at 1209 Liberty Street and then after 1928 at 315 Chestnut Street. The second facility was a two-story building with a large gymnasium, a library with more than 3,000 volumes, a game room, a woodworking shop, and a printing department. A realignment of territory in the city among agencies working with boys resulted in Norfolk Rotary's attention directed mostly to boys in Berkley.

A Norfolk Rotary program, presented by the executive director of the Boys' Club in 1960, gave a remarkably complete report of the activities that had been developed for Boys' Club members. Athletic activities included touch football, basketball, volleyball, soccer, softball, and instruction in wrestling, boxing, and tumbling. Game Room offerings included pool, ping-pong, bowling, and movies. Arts and crafts instruction was given in woodwork, handicraft, plastics, metal craft, and the use of tools. The Library and Reading Room sponsored discussion groups, interest groups, and quiet games, in addition to reading. There were interest clubs including a glee club, civil defense, nature, history, and Indian lore. The swimming pool offered swimming lessons, as well as life saving instruction. More recent programming additions include employment training, parenthood education, drug prevention, and citizenship.

From the founding in 1919 up till the present day, members of the Rotary Club of Norfolk have given generously of their time to provide leadership to the Boys Club of Norfolk. The Board of the Boys Club has always included members from the Norfolk Rotary Club, some of whom have served as long as 20 years in positions of significant responsibility.

#### Lewis W. Webb Jr. Student Loan Fund

In the early 1940s, the Rotary Club began to investigate the establishment of a student loan fund and actually cre-

ated such a fund in 1947 with \$1,000 from the club's treasury. In early days the fund's balance grew mainly through the payment of \$1 birthday fines; a regular appropriation from the operating budget and an annual member assessment of \$5 per person was instituted later to increase the resources available in the fund. The Norfolk Rotary Club Student Loan Fund, Inc. was incorporated in April of 1960, continued to grow, and has continued making loans to qualified students through the years. In 1973 the fund was turned over to Old Dominion University to manage, and it was renamed the Lewis W. Webb Jr. Student Loan Fund in 1984, at the death of Webb, a long-time Rotarian and the first president of Old Dominion University.

#### Interact/Rotaract

Prior to the early 1960s, the Norfolk Rotary Club, like many other Rotary Clubs, sponsored a youth service organization called Wheel Club. Wheel Clubs were not official programs of Rotary International, but they were widely employed as a structure for local clubs to serve children and young adults in their communities. In 1962, when Rotary International established a service club program for secondary school boys, the Norfolk club converted its Wheel Club to the Interact program.

Interact chapters were sponsored by Norfolk Rotary Club at Norview and Granby High Schools throughout the 1960s, and a club was organized at Maury High School late in 1966. Membership was selective and aimed at students whose performance in both academic and extracurricular activities ranked high. Rotary International broadened membership criteria in 1967, permitting both boys and girls to become members and extending Interact membership to all students in the last four years of secondary school.

In the Sixties, local Interact members served their schools and communities with activities like preparing baskets for the needy, securing books for the school library, assisting



the driver-training program, and maintaining contact with schools internationally.

A long inactive period followed. It was not until the 1993-94 school year that the club was able to establish an Interact Club at Norfolk Academy. Initiated at the beginning of the school year, the Interact Club grew to 25 members by early March. Members participated in activities such as the International Coastal Cleanup Day, raising money for Operation Smile (whose medical volunteers repair childhood facial deformities), packing food boxes for the needy at the Food Bank of Southeastern Virginia, fundraising for Angel Tree, and conducting a coat, sweater, and blanket drive for Dwelling Place, an emergency shelter for homeless families. The Norfolk Academy Interact Club continues to operate.

A Rotaract Club at Old Dominion University has been active intermittently in recent years. In 1995 and 1996 a group of students transferring from Tidewater Community College brought their Rotaract Club with them to Old Dominion. The club was active only during their residency, and it became dormant when they graduated. Currently, however, there is an active Rotaract Club at Old Dominion, sponsored by another Hampton Roads Rotary Club.

#### Career Visitation

The club initiated a vocational visitation program with the Norfolk Public Schools' gifted and talented program in 1980, continuing the program in cooperation with each high school's English honors teachers to the present day. Members were recruited to spend an afternoon with a student interested in the Rotarian's professional area. The Rotary members answered questions, offered advice, and showed the student their business facilities. Following the visit, the students were asked to write essays about their experiences, and the essays that were judged best were awarded Savings Bonds as prizes. In recent years, the Norfolk Sunrise Club has joined the

Rotary Club of Norfolk in carrying out this project, and in 2003 students from the Norfolk Technical Vocational Center were included in this program.

As an offshoot of the original career visitation project, for three years the Norfolk Rotary offered a project for marginal students who were judged by school officials as likely to drop out of school. Using the resources of volunteer Rotarians, a project called Career Views was created to expose these students to career opportunities that were attainable. For example, a group of students was taken to Norfolk Shipyard where they were given information about apprenticeship opportunities open to them if they graduated from high school. Ten different trips were arranged for groups of thirty students each. The final trip was to City Hall where the City Manager had department heads present information about opportunities in government service.

### ROTOYS

During calendar year 1991, the Rotary Club of Norfolk enjoyed an unusual opportunity for a service project. A national wholesale distribution firm, K & K Toys, wished to make available its truckloads of returned, damaged merchandise to be repaired and distributed to needy children. An unused retail space near the Janaf shopping center was loaned as a workspace, and in January 1991, Rotary members fitted the space with the workbenches and shelves necessary to start the actual toy repair work. On February 6, the repair of toys began. Throughout 1991, 50 of the club's 188 members donated 1,876 volunteer hours at the repair shop. Toys valued at \$53,771 – 1,646 toys in all – were prepared for distribution to needy children. Seventeen local charitable organizations, representing a broad cross-section of the community, were used to distribute the toys to their eventual recipients, needy children in the community. In December 1991, the club had learned that their workshop space would not be available on a continuing basis, and the project ended.

## RO-Books

To encourage children to read and know the enjoyment and excitement of reading, the club initiated the RO-Books (Read On with Rotary) project in 2001-02 in cooperation with selected inner city elementary schools in Norfolk. RO-Books is an ongoing project of the Norfolk Rotary Club. Each year the club collects new and used children's books donated by Rotary members and friends, as well as by a Virginia Beach school that conducts annual book drives. Cash donations from club members have permitted book purchases that supplemented the book donations. Over the three years of this project, more than 12,000 books have been collected for the RO-Books project and distributed in Norfolk elementary schools.

Members of the Norfolk Rotary Club present a book fair at each selected school, one or two schools per year. On the day of the book fair, every child in the school is invited to select several books to take home and keep. Many of the children benefiting from the Ro-Books program live in homes devoid of books, newspapers, and magazines. In addition to the books given to individual students, RO-Books donates books to the school library and to classroom libraries in the designated school.

## **HEALTH CARE**

### Norfolk Medical Research Foundation

Prior to the establishment of the Eastern Virginia Medical School, members of the Hampton Roads medical community expressed a need for local laboratory facilities in which to carry out research investigations. In May 1958 the Norfolk Rotary Club considered a proposal for the establishment of a medical research foundation and made an initial gift of \$2,500 in seed money. At the same time, the staff of Norfolk General Hospital offered its support, and the hospital made an operating room and some equipment available for use. The club established the Medical Research Foundation in March 1959, and teams

of investigators began to apply for and win research grants. Despite a lack of good library facilities and space for research activities, externally funded research took place throughout the mid-1960s with the initial and continuing financial support of the Rotary Club of Norfolk. At the same time, progress was being made on the establishment of a medical school in Norfolk. By late 1966, the Norfolk Area Medical Center Authority was in operation, and the Rotary Club transferred the assets of the Medical Research Foundation to it.

### Haiti Medical Project

At the instigation of several of its physician members, the Rotary Club of Norfolk initiated a major project in 1960 to aid and support a hospital in Haiti. St. Antoine's Hospital at Jeremie, Haiti, was being operated by Dr. E. Archer Dillard, Jr., and a group of technicians under the auspices of MEDICO, the private, non-governmental, non-sectarian medical service branch of CARE. Its primary purpose was to extend aid on a people-to-people basis. In this town located 150 miles from Port-Au-Prince, the hospital was characterized as a run-down old barn-type building built in 1923 by the U.S. Marines. The hospital had no facilities for operations. Its laboratory was small, and sanitary conditions were poor. One of the primary needs of the hospital was for adequate and reliable electric power for the operation of X-ray equipment, refrigerators, operating room lights, and certain laboratory equipment. Power was available only intermittently from the town generating plant; therefore, it was apparent that an independent source was necessary.

Throughout 1961 and early 1962, the Norfolk Rotarians acquired and collected equipment needed to operate St. Antoine's Hospital in Jeremie. At this time, significant remodeling and new construction of hospital facilities was taking place in Norfolk, and quantities of good, used – but superseded -- hospital equipment were thus available for the club's purchase at a fraction of its original cost. Needed equipment included beds and bedding, baby

incubators, nursing station equipment, scrub sinks, slides, test tubes, and other laboratory glassware, operating room lights, plumbing fixtures, and a refrigerator, stove, and sink unit. Perhaps most significantly, an X-ray machine and a generator to operate it were purchased and sent to Haiti during the first year. Rotarians in Norfolk worked to repair, pack, and transport the equipment to the port, where at least four separate shipments of hospital equipment were made on Navy vessels during this initial period of the Haiti medical project. With the assistance of other Tidewater Rotary clubs, a reported total of 40,000 pounds of equipment was shipped to St. Antoine's Hospital over time. By 1963 the hospital in Jeremie was able to serve 4,000 outpatients per month and had 200 hospital admissions and 45-55 major surgeries each month, with the help of Norfolk Rotarians.

Tuberculosis was rampant in Haiti at this time, and doctors from the Norfolk Rotary set up a pathology laboratory for studying lung disease in late 1961. Culture equipment for bacteriological studies permitted the first sputum cultures from TB sufferers ever done at St. Antoine's Hospital. In addition, Haitian doctors and medical technicians were trained in culture techniques. Dr. Dillard reported a great need for a hospital department for the treatment of tuberculosis in Jeremie. At the same time, a research project being carried out by the National Tuberculosis Association (the historical antecedent of the American Lung Association) in St. Antoine would require a 50-bed TB pavilion. So Norfolk Rotarians – an architect, a mechanical engineer, and a building contractor – assisted in the preparation of plans and specifications for the addition of a tuberculosis treatment facility to the Jeremie hospital.

The initial investigation of possibilities for a medical assistance project in Haiti included a visit to Haiti's medical school in Port-Au-Prince. The situation was bleak. Professors' salaries were so low that they could not teach full time, but had to depend on the income generated from

their outside medical practices. Equipment was characterized as worse than that in the poorest hospital in the United States. Students could not afford textbooks, so they were given information on mimeographed sheets instead. And the library had very few books and journals. Rotary's Haiti project attempted to collect books, journals, and equipment to send to the medical school. Several Rotarian physicians traveled to Haiti, too, to train local medical personnel and to conduct procedures in their various specialties – surgery, pathology, and plastic surgery most prominently.

By the mid-1960s, dictatorship had come to Haiti, and conditions for the Norfolk Rotary Club's medical project declined significantly. Members in Norfolk heard that the hospital in Jeremie was operating under adverse conditions with inadequate staff in 1965. By 1969, the deteriorated political situation precluded travel to Haiti by Norfolk Rotarians to offer any medical assistance.

Rotarians did not give up on Haiti, however. In 1980 Districts 757 and 760 mounted an international person-to-person service project for Rotarians and family members called Reach Out to Haiti. The project was located at a vocational school and small clinic in St. Marc, on the coast about 1\_ hours from Port-au-Prince. The Rotarians first planned and constructed a single-story building of about 5,000 square feet, with facilities for emergency and outpatient medical care, as well as dormitory space to house subsequent visiting teams of Rotary volunteers. A number of District 760 Rotarians, including those from Norfolk, traveled to Haiti in the 1980-1985 period to work on this construction project. The club in Norfolk also sent several shipments of medical supplies to St. Marc. At the same time, physicians, nurses, and dentists were recruited for trips to provide patient service. It was reported that, when such a medical team was scheduled, local residents began coming from great distances, camping outside the compound and waiting for medical attention. The Reach Out to Haiti project served thousands and made a

marked improvement on the health and vitality of the citizens of the area.

### Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters

The Norfolk Rotary Club has supported the Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters with two projects in the club's recent history. Perhaps most substantial, the Club conducted a major fundraising project between 1968 and 1975 which enabled it to donate a total of \$50,000 to the hospital. During these eight years, the Norfolk Rotary presented a horse show at the Norview High School athletic field with proceeds going to Rotary Charities.

The Rotary Charity Horse Show was a very large project for the club, involving hundreds of horses, thousands of tourists, and seven shows presented over the duration of the event. It was conceived as a project that would get broad membership participation and enhance fellowship and good will, as well as generating a good profit. Plans called for Rotary members to sell tickets, program advertising, sponsorships, and to operate concessions. Members of the King's Daughters helped significantly to sell tickets as time went on. The horse show was discontinued after 1975, though, because it was regarded as almost year-round work that earned too little profit.

Beginning in the early 1980s, the Norfolk Rotary again worked with the King's Daughters on their project called Run for the Children. The event consisted of 5K and 10K races as well as other "fun" running events for children and various special interest groups. The actual fund-raising was handled by the King's Daughters while Rotary's part was to underwrite the cost of trophies and awards for all events, provide marshals at the corners of the run through downtown Norfolk, put up tents, traffic cones and barriers, staff concession stands, and guide runners at the finish line. In 1995, Walk for the Children, the altered name, was held at the Virginia Beach Boardwalk, instead of in downtown Norfolk. After 1995, the Norfolk Rotary discontinued working on the event in order to allocate

more time to other projects.

### Project To Combat Malaria

Members of the Rotary Club of Norfolk began work in 1999 to develop a long-term Rotary International health project to distribute a vaccine for eradication of malaria. Malaria is a devastating disease that kills 8,000 people every day worldwide, especially children, and torments surviving adults for years with its recurrent symptoms.

Because the Norfolk club wished to establish an international service project to support malaria vaccine development, members made a number of presentations, both locally and in larger Rotary forums, and established contacts with research scientists in the U.S. Naval Medical Research Center, Malaria Vaccine Initiative. These scientists and their international collaborators had made significant strides in establishing the premier malaria vaccine test site in the world at the Navrongo Medical Research Centre in Northern Ghana.

In January 2004, representatives of the Norfolk Rotary traveled to Tema, Ghana to strengthen and expand contacts with university and government officials in Ghana, World Health Organization representatives, and Rotarians in four Rotary clubs in the Greater Accra area. Tema and Norfolk Rotary Clubs signed a memorandum of agreement in March 2004 initially to collaborate in supporting malaria vaccine development through development of telecommunications infrastructure at Navrongo and in the outlying rural areas of Kessena-Nankana District. These areas have no telephones, and medical care is substandard for vaccine trials due to poor lines of communications.

## **SENIOR CITIZENS**

### Norfolk Senior Center

In October 1982, the Rotary Club of Norfolk began a long-



standing support relationship with the Norfolk Senior Center. The center, currently located on W. 21st Street, was established in 1967 as a project jointly funded through the federal Older Americans Act and the United Community Fund (the historical antecedent of the United Way of South Hampton Roads). Over the years, its support expanded to include other federal, local, and state aid, contributions, fees for service, and its own fund-raising projects. The Center offers a program of education, recreation, socialization, and health education, through classes on a range of topics, health and fitness programs, and participation in activities such as music and games, all designed for senior citizens.

The Senior Center wished to expand its program of field trips in 1982 and sought support for the purchase of a van for upgraded transportation capabilities. The Rotary Club's board decided in October 1982 to purchase a van for Norfolk Senior Center by using the money raised through its upcoming citrus sale. A 15-passenger van was purchased for \$12,200 and presented to the Center on May 10, 1983. This transportation allowed the Center to provide curb-to-curb transportation for elders who could not drive or use public transportation, as well as to expand its program of field trips. In 1990, the original van was ready to be traded in, and the Rotary Club initiated fund-raising for a second vehicle. The executive director of Norfolk Senior Center was presented with keys for a new van on November 8, 1990.

A more ambitious project for the partnership of the Rotary Club of Norfolk and Norfolk Senior Center followed the initial van purchase. Senior day care was needed to serve those requiring daily health services and who are dependent on others, and a waiting list existed for the limited facilities at the center. The club voted in November 1984 to adopt this as a five-year project, committing to provide \$5,000 - \$10,000 annually to underwrite the expansion of this worthwhile service to a second location. All of 1985 was spent in planning, and Rotary members assisted the

center to locate suitable quarters for the licensed facility. The new program opened in the Jewish Community Center in February 1986, more than doubling the licensed capacity for adult day-health care from Norfolk Senior Center. In total, the Rotary Club of Norfolk provided the Senior Center with \$50,000 in the 1985-1990 period.

In addition to periodic small grants, the Rotary Club of Norfolk has contributed many volunteer hours to the enhancement of Norfolk Senior Center, and individual members often have served on the Center's board. The chair of the club's Senior Citizens/Help for the Handicapped Committee has traditionally served on the board of the Center, also. In a new approach in May 2003, the club supported Norfolk Senior Center with a Community Service Day. On that day, members/volunteers painted two large activity rooms and hallways, as well as installing new lighting in both rooms.

#### Paint Your Heart Out

April 1995 saw the successful start of a new project for the Rotary Club of Norfolk. Paint Your Heart Out was a program that selected homes belonging to low-income elderly people to receive fire/insect inspection and minor external repairs and then be painted in a single day by Rotarian volunteers. Houses were chosen through a screening process – they had to be occupied by owners with a maximum income of \$12,000, and the owners had to be at least 62 years old or disabled. Working in teams of Rotarians and a small number of volunteers from the Navy, the exteriors of three houses were painted that first year in a one-day painting blitz.

With the first year's experience under its belt, the club took on about 25 houses each year for six more years. The organization was refined, and local groups such as church and temple congregations, local government departments, businesses, and naval ship crews were recruited to take responsibility for individual houses. The Navy provided hundreds of skilled volunteers whose serv-

ices were invaluable. Most of the community partners contributed financial support (generally \$500 per house), and they supplied about 25 volunteers for the actual painting of each house. Members of the Norfolk Rotary continued to act as team captains, as well as to do the organizational and support work for the project.

Paint Your Heart Out was a major community service project of the Rotary Club of Norfolk for seven years, and about 135 homes were repaired and painted for their grateful elderly owners over that time. In the 2001-02 year, the club determined that Paint Your Heart Out had fulfilled the need and should then be replaced by another kind of community service day.

## **OTHER PROJECTS**

### Support for the Military Stationed in the Area

Members of the Norfolk Rotary Club have always shown a lively interest in military personnel stationed in the area, as well as in the experiences of the American military worldwide. This interest was demonstrated especially through programs presented during both world wars. The club provided entertainment, too, perhaps as a partial remedy to Norfolk's recognized lack of appropriate recreational facilities and programs for service personnel. What was described as a "spectacular" event, a dance at the Armory for over 2,000, was given in 1918. The Club had a War Service Committee during World War II, and the committee put on many entertainment events in cooperation with the USO. Also during World War II, the Club hosted convalescents from local government hospitals at its weekly meetings and used fines collected to send cigarettes to units overseas. All of these direct services are in addition to the numbers of Rotary members who served during the war and the important local war organizations, committees, and drives which were headed and staffed by Rotarians.

In 1966 club leaders saw a need to promote Rotary among future leaders of the world's armed forces, as well as to contribute to the integration of Norfolk's large military presence into the community. To respond to this need, the club initiated an annual lunch program to entertain members of the Armed Forces Staff College. The Staff College has three or four classes per year made up of elite young military officers from all services, and the Norfolk Rotary invited a representative group from each class to attend a regular Rotary meeting. Often, as many as 300 students and faculty were guests in a single year. In addition to students from each branch of the U.S. military, Armed Forces Staff College classes include representatives from many of the allies of the United States, and they were included in the program, too. Curiously, this was an unbudgeted program until 1971. For the first five years, each member in attendance was asked to host one of the 150 guests for the lunch (cost in 1966 was \$1.53 each!). In 1971 it became an established program of the Norfolk Rotary and continued until 1997, when the organizational format of the Armed Forces Staff College changed and precluded the continuation of this program..

### Revolutionary War Cannons

While dredging the Norfolk harbor near Town Point Park in 1982, workmen recovered several cannons of Revolutionary War vintage. In 1984 the club voted to have the cannons restored and mounted on new, historically accurate wooden carriages. Three would be placed near the flagpoles in Town Point Park, and one would be displayed inside Waterside. In a cost-sharing arrangement with the City of Norfolk, the club underwrote the cost of restoration, construction of the white oak carriages, and provision of a large bronze plaque noting the role of the Norfolk Rotary Club in restoring the cannons. The city prepared the park site with foundations, walks, and railings. The cannons were presented to the City of Norfolk in a ceremony held on July 4, 1986.

### Oyster Restoration Project

A program on water quality was presented to the club by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation during the 1997-98 year, and it led the Rotary Club of Norfolk to take on a major environmental service initiative. The club learned of a project of the Virginia Institute of Marine Science to improve water quality in the Chesapeake Bay and, at the same time, restore oyster populations to their native habitats. Over the preceding 25 years, the oyster stock in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributary rivers had been depleted from over-harvesting, pollution, and disease. Because oysters filter algae and help keep coastal waters clean, oyster reefs had begun to be built in the bay to provide a safe haven for oyster breeding and thus to achieve a large oyster population again. Such a population would benefit Virginia's fisheries and promote long-term improvements in water quality at the same time. Each reef was created with two barge loads of oyster shells placed on an historic oyster reef site. After a reef was constructed, hatchery-produced seed oysters were planted on the new reef.

The Rotary Club of Norfolk held a series of major fundraisers from 1998 to 2002 to underwrite this initiative, and an impressive \$145,000 was raised over that period.

The club collaborated with an array of partners – the Portsmouth Rotary in 2000 and 2001, the Chesapeake Rotary in 2001, government agencies that awarded matching grants, and a generous two-year contribution from the Ford Motor Company, whose plant is located in Norfolk.

Recognition for the club's work came early from the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, which honored the Rotary Club of Norfolk as the Conservationist of the Year in 1999, and a Joint Resolution of Approval was passed by the Virginia Legislature in 2000 to commend the club for this impressive project. The funds raised by the Norfolk Rotary, together with matching grants, permitted the construction of five large oyster reefs in the waters around Hampton Roads. At the time of the oyster reef project,

these five reefs represented 10% of the total number of oyster reefs in the Commonwealth of Virginia!

### Rotary Barnyard Renovation

#### At the Virginia Zoo

As the club's Centennial Project, the Norfolk Rotary selected a project to underwrite renovation of the Virginia Zoo's Barnyard Exhibit – that is, its Petting Zoo. The Virginia Zoo at the time had a large collection of barnyard animals, but the exhibit's graphics needed to be improved in educational quality, and many of the buildings needed work. With the Rotary renovation, zoo managers planned to exhibit more and better animals, including minor breeds, those that have fallen out of favor with the agricultural industry. Because the zoo's urban visitors have little familiarity with common barnyard animals, a barnyard exhibit was seen as offering the opportunity to teach important lessons about food sources and, at the same time, to create fond memories for zoo visitors.



HAITI MEDICAL PROJECT, 1961  
SUPPLY SHIPMENT, upper  
HOSPITAL, lower



50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY, ROTARY INTERNATIONAL, 1955



## ROTARY CLUB OF NORFOLK Past Presidents

1914-1915	* T. Gray Coburn
1915-1916	* Robert Johnson
1916-1917	* P. Morgan Fussell
1917-1918	* A. Von Nyvenheim
1918-1919	* Moe Levy
1919-1920	* William S. Bensten
1920-1921	* Alexander P. Grice
1921-1922	* James A. Blainey
1922-1923	* Frank S. Sager
1923-1924	* Robert S. Johnston
1924-1925	* Frank W. Evans
1925-1926	* S. H. Bright
1926-1927	* Jacob Kraemer
1927-1928	* Frank R. Ford
1928-1929	* J. Watts Martin
1929-1930	* Winder R. Harris
1930-1931	* Eugene L. Graves
1931-1932	* Millard P. Doyle
1932-1933	* Robert M. Davis
1933-1934	* W. McC. Paxton
1934-1935	* D. Hill Hollomon, Jr.
1935-1936	* Elton D. Peterson
1936-1937	* Alfred Anderson
1937-1938	* James R. Peake, Sr.
1938-1939	* Joseph H. Baker
1939-1940	* William T. Monroe
1940-1941	* W. Garland Jones
1941-1942	* Edgar T. Henderson
1942-1943	* Campbell Arnoux
1943-1944	* George H. Bowers
1944-1945	* L. Brooks Woody
1945-1946	* Leslie E. Jones
1946-1947	* E. T. Gresham, Sr.
1947-1948	* Thomas J. Donovan
1948-1949	* C. Elmer Rudolphi
1949-1950	* Gordon E. Campbell

## PAST PRESIDENTS (continued)

1950-1951	* J. Rives Worsham, Sr.
1951-1952	* James R. Peake, Jr.
1952-1953	* Robert A. Barnes
1953-1954	* Charles B. Kello, Jr.
1954-1955	* M. Kilgo Dixon
1955-1956	* William R. Maul
1956-1957	* Beverly A. Armistead
1957-1958	* Lewis W. Webb, Jr.
1958-1959	* George H. Burton, Jr.
1959-1960	William G. Ashman
1960-1961	Henry B. Hunter
1961-1962	R. Braxton Hill, Jr.
1962-1963	* Ray P. Edwards
1963-1964	* Jack H. Mason
1964-1965	Webster M. Chandler, Jr.
1965-1966	Charles E. Horton
1966-1967	Wells Gresham
1967-1968	D. Hill Hollomon, III
1968-1969	Clyde F. Hill, Jr.
1969-1970	Rex A. Bradley
1970-1971	R. Kenneth Weeks
1971-1972	Louis W. Cross
1972-1973	Jerome E. Adamson
1973-1974	Charles W. Anderson
1974-1975	J. Walton Grandy, III
1975-1976	George B. Haycox
1976-1977	Lewis Shulman
1977-1978	Joseph M. Norton
1978-1979	* James W. Batcheler
1979-1980	Kenneth F. Palmer
1980-1981	Albert L. Ayars
1981-1982	Thom W. Henderson, Jr.
1982-1983	Terry A. Ritter
1983-1984	Charles E. Vogan, Jr.
1984-1985	Robert A. Heely
1985-1986	Joseph P. New, Jr.
1986-1987	John C. Brangan

## **PAST PRESIDENTS (continued)**

1987-1988	James P. Baker
1988-1989	Paul A. C. Sykes
1989-1990	George H. Curtis, III
1990-1991	Oscar W. Smith, Jr.
1991-1992	Mark B. Shaw
1992-1993	John A. Lynn
1993-1994	Robert L. Ash
1994-1995	Robert H. Powell, III
1995-1996	William P. Edmondson, Jr.
1996-1997	Linwood D. Beckner
1997-1998	Robert M. Latimer
1998-1999	Theodore Baker, Jr.
1999-2000	Richard M. Coradi
2000-2001	Morgan N. Trimyer, Jr.
2001-2002	Kay A. Kemper
2002-2003	John C. McLemore
2003-2004	Jeremy R. Starkey
2004-2005	James P. O'Brien

\* Deceased

## **PAST DISTRICT GOVERNORS Representing Rotary Club of Norfolk**

Frank W. Evans, District 37 Governor, 1926-1927.

William McC. Paxton, District 56 Governor, 1935-1936.

William R. (Terry) Maul, District 760 Governor, 1957-1958.

George H. Burton, Jr., District 760 Governor, 1966-1967.

Ray P. Edwards, District 760 Governor, 1974-1975

Paul A. C. Sykes, District 7600 Governor, 1992-1993

**ROTARY CLUB SPONSORSHIPS**  
***Rotary Club of Norfolk***

Newport News, 1916

Descendents include –

- Hampton, 1921
- Cape Charles, 1924
- Exmore, 1927
- Onancock, 1927
- Williamsburg, 1924
- Warwick, 1945
- Yorktown, 1969
- Virginia Peninsula (Hampton-Newport News), 1976
- Oyster Point, 1984
- Coliseum Hampton, 1987, charter relinquished
- James City County, 1987
- Denbigh, 1993, charter relinquished

Portsmouth, 1918

Descendents include –

- Suffolk, 1922
- Franklin, 1924
- Waverly-Wakefield, 1925, charter relinquished
- Smithfield, 1928
- North Suffolk, 1976
- Churchland, 1985

Elizabeth City, NC, 1921

Descendents include –

- Hertford, NC, 1925
- Edenton, NC, 1925
- Manteo, NC, 1936
- Windsor, NC, 1936
- Murfreesboro, NC, 1937
- Ahoskie, NC, 1940
- Columbia, NC, 1943
- Plymouth, NC, 1945
- Northampton County, NC (Rich Square) 1951
- Williamston, NC, 1951

**ROTARY CLUB SPONSORSHIPS**  
*Rotary Club of Norfolk*

Elizabeth City, NC, 1921

Descendents continued

North Banks, NC (Kill Devil Hills), 1983

Elizabeth City Morning, NC, 1985

Kitty Hawk, NC, 1986

First Flight, NC, 1993

Virginia Beach, 1927

Descendents include –

Cape Henry, 1984

Lynhaven, 1986, charter relinquished

Northside Norfolk, 1959

Descendent – Hampton Roads (Tidewater), 1980

Port-au-Prince, Haiti, 1961

Chesapeake, 1967

Descendent – Great Bridge, 1994

Princess Anne, 1967

Norfolk Sunrise, 1991

## **ROTARY CLUB OF NORFOLK**

### ***Chronology***

1914

The club was chartered on May 1 as Club No. 114 by the International Association of Rotary Clubs.

The first Ladies Night party was held on June 15 in Ocean View.

1916

The Newport News club was established, sponsored by the Norfolk Rotary Club.

The membership decided to organize a committee to investigate starting a Boys' Club in Norfolk.

1918

The Portsmouth club was formed with sponsorship by the Norfolk club.

A dance was given for 2,000 men in uniform at the Armory.

1919

The Boys' Club project began with the recruitment of a superintendent.

1921

A Norfolk-sponsored club was started in Elizabeth City, North Carolina.

1927

The Virginia Beach club was sponsored.

1934

The Twentieth Anniversary Celebration was held on May 1, with 227 Rotarians, wives, and guests in attendance. Entertainment consisted of an address by the Past District Governor.

### 1936

On January 14, the luncheon speaker was Sally Rand, “of fan dance fame,” according to the report of the meeting. Her talk, titled “Never a Dull Moment,” provided captivating entertainment for those in attendance.

### 1947

The student loan fund was created with \$1,000 from the club’s treasury.

### 1949

A facility to house the Boys’ Club was built at Colonial and 26th Street, with significant leadership from individual Norfolk Rotarians and financial support from the club.

### 1955

The 50th anniversary of Rotary International was celebrated with a Ladies Night soiree in which some members sported 1905-era costumes.

### 1959

The Norfolk Medical Research Foundation was established by the Rotary Club with seed money and intangible support.

The Northside Norfolk club was organized.

*Norva News*, the first newsletter of the Norfolk Rotary Club, began publication with volume 1, number 1 on April 2.

### 1960

The Haiti medical project in Jeremie, Haiti, was started, developing into a major focus of the club until the mid-60s, when political change in Haiti made further work impossible.

### 1961

Norfolk sponsored a club in Port-au-Prince in conjunction with its first Haiti service project.

### 1963

The club was invited to enter a float in the Parade of Nations, a major element in the International Azalea Festival. This was a major club activity until 1981.

### 1966

Members of each class of the Armed Forces Staff College were invited to lunch with the club, beginning in 1966 and continuing until 1997.

### 1967

The Chesapeake and Princess Anne clubs were started with Norfolk sponsorship.

### 1968

The Rotary Charity Horse Show, a very large project for the club, was presented annually from 1968 through 1975. It raised \$50,000 for the Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters over the life of the project to support the purchase of medical equipment.

### 1978

The club's sale of citrus for its fundraiser was first reported in the November 30 newsletter.

The first African American member was recruited.

### 1979

The President of Rotary International, James L. Bomar, Jr., visited Norfolk to participate in the region's 75th anniversary celebration of RI. The event was a cooperative project among eight area clubs, spearheaded by Norfolk.

### 1980

A vocational visitation program for high school students, now called Career Visitation, was initiated with the Norfolk Public Schools.

Reach Out to Haiti, a project of Districts 757 and 760, resulted in the construction of facilities and the provision



of medical services and supplies to a facility in St. Marc in Haiti. This project, initiated in 1980, became self-sufficient in 1986.

### 1983

A van for upgraded transportation of clients was purchased and presented to the Norfolk Senior Center.

Rotations, a new club newsletter, began publication with its first issue on October 4.

### 1984

The club committed to support the Norfolk Senior Center's expansion of senior day care during the 1985-1990 period with annual contributions which totaled \$50,000.

### 1986

Revolutionary War-era cannons were restored and mounted on new carriages by the Rotary Club. They were placed in Town Point Park and presented to the city on July 4, 1986.

### 1987

The first three women members were taken in.

### 1989

The 75th anniversary of the Rotary Club of Norfolk was celebrated on April 13 with a party attended by more than 150 Rotarians, spouses and friends.

### 1991

A project to repair damaged merchandise contributed by a local toy company resulted in the distribution of more than 1,600 repaired toys to needy children during this single year.

### 1992

The Norfolk Rotary Endowment Fund was established to support local club charities.

### 1995

Paint Your Heart Out, a program to paint homes of low-income elderly citizens, was launched. During the seven years of the project's operation, about 135 homes were repaired and painted.

### 1999

In this first year of a multi-year project, members began the development work to start an international service project supporting malaria vaccine development.

The club was named Conservationist of the Year by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation for its work raising funds to support oyster reef restoration. This fundraising project continued from 1998 through 2002 and raised \$145,000 in total!

### 2001

RO-Books, a project to distribute books to children in selected Norfolk elementary schools, was started and continues to the present time.

### 2004

The Rotary Club presented a \$50,000 check to the leadership of the Virginia Zoo to underwrite renovation of the Zoo's Barnyard Exhibit. This was the club's Centennial Project.



