Memories of a Rotarian by Johanna Hansen

I was invited to join Rotary twenty-seven years ago and became a Rotarian in February 1994. I have had perfect attendance for those years.

I was the fourth woman to be included, and at first it was difficult being a woman in a Men’s Club.

My first mission from our club, coming from Carrol Wiley, was to go to the District Conference, learn as much about Rotary as possible, and come back and report to the club. I came back with much to say including, “after this I don’t know what I am, a Rotary Ann or an Andy.”

For many years I worked on our major fund raiser, an elegant evening at Onion Creek Country Club in Austin, I decorated all the tables with place/name cards at each seat. In front I had an easel with a chart showing where each person sat. I also put together the silent auction tables along with many other Rotarians.

I put together a historical display in the glass case at the San Marcos Public Library for many years during the month of February. This was to honor the works of Rotary in our club and around the world.

Some of our members went to Monclova, Mexico where we participated in bringing fresh water to one of the city’s schools. We also participated along with other clubs in the district, by gathering school supplies for seven “Ejidos” or impoverished villages in northern Mexico. I was asked to write a curriculum for those schools in Spanish. Our district also bought a commercial tractor to help farm the land in those villages. I was on that district committee for some time.

I filled the position of Literacy Chair for our district for some years. That entailed going to different clubs, when asked, and talk about Literacy, past and present in this country.

One of the joys of being a Rotarian was participating in the Youth Exchange program. Many students from other countries stayed in my home, and two of my children were selected to go, one to Belgium and one to Germany. I still have thoughts of driving down the middle of the river to arrive at the H.E.B. Camp at Leaky to deposit students. The experiences were many and varied.

One of the most joyful times in Rotary was going to the International Conference in Salt Lake City with my daughter and four-year-old grandson. We made him a Rotary vest out of my Rotary windbreaker and filled it full of pins to trade. Every time someone greeted him, he said, “Hi, I’m Nathan Ed Kinsey. I’m from San Marcos, Texas.” To say he charmed many people would be an understatement. He held hands and walked with two International Presidents. He sat on the floor with one Rotarian, she is speaking the language of South Korea and he is speaking English and had a wonderful conversation, along with trading pins. He shook hands with everyone who greeted him.

My memories are many and varied and the Four Way Test guides my life along with the Ten Commandments. Rotarians are my friends.