

Indio Rotary Club

Projects

Oral History

Member- Roger Harris, DDS -1963 to March 2013

- ❖ The Club first met at the Indio Hotel on Miles and Smurr Streets until 1962 then moved to the banquet room at the bowling alley on north Jackson Street (its now Tops & Barricades Building). It then moved to the El Morocco Hotel on Miles Ave prior to moving to the Elks Lodge. After the Elks it met at the Guest House at the Indian Palms Country Club on Monroe and then it moved to Shadow Hills Sun City and is now at Fantasy Springs Casino Special Events Center.
- ❖ The Club provided college scholarships for Indio High School Students. Olaf Nordland was the Club's scholarship chair during the early years.
- ❖ Donated funds to the Indio Boys and Girls Club
- ❖ Sponsored Indio Little League Baseball and Softball Teams.
- ❖ Donated to the District International Project- in 1968 build cinderblock house for refugees in Korea (post Korean War).
- ❖ Build the Press/Announcers Box at Indio High School Football Stadium 1968.
- ❖ Hosted a golf tournament for all Coachella Valley Rotary Clubs at the night lighted Indio Municipal Golf Course.
- ❖ Planted the pine tree, used as a Christmas tree, in the small island in the street at the intersection of Miles Ave and Indio Boulevard (no longer there).
- ❖ Provided the City of Indio Christmas tree in old Town Indio for many years.
- ❖ Installed the Flag Pole at Indio City Hall- It has a commemorate brass plaque at its base for City Manager Tom Selman who was a member of the Club.
- ❖ Planted oleander bushes along Indio Blvd.
- ❖ Sponsored annual *Four-Way Test* Speech Contest at IHS. Winners then competed at District level competition. Syd Handy was the competition chair.
- ❖ Sponsored **Interact Club** at Indio High School. 1970- 1980
- ❖ Built original softball fields at North Jackson Park (prior to 1961).
- ❖ Sponsored installation of field lights at Davis Field at South Jackson Park. 1960
- ❖ Provided Sabin Oral Polio Vaccine in 1961- one Sunday 2000 local children were vaccinated at the "drive up" event at fairgrounds parking lot.
- ❖ Held annual exchange with Mexicali Rotary Club. Saturday night party with golf on Sunday. Desi Arnez Hotel in Indian Wells and Hotel La Cerna in Mexicali.
- ❖ Sponsored local Junior Golf Team that was part of the national association.
- ❖ Sponsor IHS students to attend annual *RYLA* – Rotary Youth Leadership Awards.

- ❖ Since 1995 produce annual middle school **Rotary Math Field Day** for all middle school students in the CV because one doesn't exist in CV and Riverside's is too far and expensive to attend.
- ❖ **Rotary Math Field Day** featured in **Rotarian Magazine** (international monthly circulation of 500,000) in *Clubs in Action* section December 2000 page 41.
- ❖ Held softball game and picnic with Palm Desert Rotary. 1960s to 1970s
- ❖ Donated Blood Donor Chair to CV Community Blood Bank. 1967
- ❖ For years donated funds to support both the annual Miss Indio and the Date Festival's Queen Scharazade pageants.
- ❖ Had a booth in the mid 1990s two different years at the annual *East Valley Business Expo* to promote the Club and recruit new members.
- ❖ Participated in annual Coachella Valley Rotary Clubs' Blood Drive Competition.
- ❖ Various years held annual **Christmas Party** for Foster Kids and some years for Crime Victims. Sponsored *Mikey the Clown* to entertain. Santa attended and provided a gift for every child (Club owns a Santa suite). One year a Club member adopted a young girl that was at the Foster Children's Christmas Party.
- ❖ Sponsored a Loan Fund for Students at College of the Desert- 90% payback rate.
- ❖ Sponsored Ambassador Scholar for IHS grad to attend University of Sussex in England to study. Student's USA citizenship was questioned upon her attempted return and Congresswoman Mary Bono's office had to assist with student's return to USA.
- ❖ Sponsored second Ambassador Scholarship.
- ❖ Hosted in 1967 the 75th Anniversary Party for Coachella Valley Water District.
- ❖ Hosted Group Study Exchange Group from France and Japan.
- ❖ Sponsored local CHP officer to India as part of *Group Study Exchange*.
- ❖ Paid for 3 sex education films for Dr. Parkinson, Indio Rotary member, for Indio High School. It was a little controversial.
- ❖ Two different years bought fire trucks at Riverside County auction and after some fixes and repairs Club members drove them to, and donated to, the poor village of Caborca, Mexico.
- ❖ Donated funds to District project for water well in Honduras.
- ❖ Donate funds to the annual RI Rose Parade float.
- ❖ Provided medical equipment from Valley Memorial Hospital that closed, for a hospital in Mexicali, Mexico. Dr. Fred Sparling was Indio Rotary Club member and administrator of Valley Memorial Hospital.
- ❖ Member of the Indio Chamber of Commerce.
- ❖ Provided swimsuits for Girls Swim Team at Indio High School. 1967
- ❖ Club was originally in RI District #534 – “Desert to Shore is 534” 1949-1966.
- ❖ Desert Council 1963-1966.

- ❖ Donated funds to buy bus bench alongside Indio Senior Center when it was on Towne Street across the parking lot from City Hall.
- ❖ Paid for the coffee at Indio Senior Center for years.
- ❖ Pay the cost of school bus transportation for Indio 3rd grade students to visit the CV Museum.
- ❖ Provide Indio 3rd grade students with their own dictionary each school year.
- ❖ Donate to local charities: Martha's Village, CV Rescue Mission, FISH, FIND, Eye to Eye.
- ❖ District Governor – Club Member Sid Handy 1979.
- ❖ Assistant Governor – Club Member Roger Harris 1969.
- ❖ Desert Council Presidents – Lloyd Watson and Roger Harris 1967 and 1970.
- ❖ In late 1990s had concession to sell parking at Gay Rodeo held at Empire Polo grounds.
- ❖ For several years, had concession to sell parking at City of Indio 4th of July event at fairgrounds.
- ❖ Had concession for 2 years for inflatable bounce for kids at City of Indio 4th of July event held at Indio Municipal Golf Course.
- ❖ Support Indio Police Department **K-9** program. Two different years donated funds to buy a police dog for IPD. Also donated to the maintenance and care fund.
- ❖ Created and sponsored *Rotary Emergency Dental Assistance Program (REDAP)* for elementary students in Indio (won award best new Community Service project at annual District Conference). After first year held appreciation lunch for participating dentists and their staff. Presented them with wall plaque for their offices and a \$50 gift certificate to Outback Restaurant.
- ❖ For several years had Margarita Booth concession at annual Indio Tamale Festival.
- ❖ Several different years awarded a **fireworks booth** by Indio's City Clerk's office after it held annual raffle drawing of names of Indio Service Clubs. Locations included: twice at Shield Date Garden parking lot, Indio Mall parking lot, IHS parking lot.
- ❖ Club owned fancy sombrero hat as part of Mexicalli Rotary Club exchange.