



## Rotary 1930-1938

In 1930, the club's 18-year history report noted the club had been involved in every community project of note, especially those targeting young people. That year, the board voted to send United Way \$750 instead of holding the annual Boys Christmas Dinner as the directors felt that more Great Depression-era families would benefit.

In 1931, Rotary members attended the International Conference in Vienna, departing from New York June 1 and returning August 6. The round-trip steamship fare was \$252.50. By 1933, dues were reduced from \$35 to \$25 with \$1.50 applied to a subscription to *The Rotarian*.

Topics of luncheons 1930-1938 included:



Prof. H.L. Russell with Rotarian John LeFeber in a 1930 edition of the *Milwaukee Sentinel*.

- Rotarian and dairy owner John LeFeber hosted Professor H.L. Russell, dean of the University of Wisconsin's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and noted bacteriologist, to discuss the severe drought that was crippling Wisconsin's agriculture sector.
- Rotarians were treated to a program on the impact an unemployment insurance program could have in Wisconsin.

- The United States Treasurer explained the operations of the Treasury.
- A special luncheon considered the impact Hitler's rise to power in Germany would have on Europe.
- In 1933, Rotary founder Paul Harris addressed a special dinner meeting of Rotary.
- An economist who had taught in England, Germany, and UW-Madison gave the presentation *The Road to Prosperity: Is the Worst Behind Us* in 1933.
- In 1934, the Dean of Harvard Law School and President of Rotary International addressed the Club.

- In 1935, Rotary featured a program by the expert from the Forest Products Lab in Madison who analyzed the kidnap ladder in the Lindbergh-Hauptmann trial.

- The former President of the Rockefeller Foundations, popularly considered the most sought-after speaker in the United States, spoke to the club.

- In 1937, the President of Harvard University addressed Rotary on "Contributions Endowed Universities Can Make to the Life of the Nation."

- That same year, members enjoyed hearing from Tommy Armour, winner of the PGA and U.S. Open golf championships. (One week after winning the U.S. Open he shot 23 on a par 5 hole, a PGA record that still stands.)

- In 1938, a noted Paris correspondent spoke on the potential for war in Europe.

In 1938, a group of young Rotarians advocated for RCM to play a greater role in the community with an agenda that would move the city forward. They held a survey to identify community needs the club could endorse, which resulted in this roster of priorities:

1. Stadium for baseball and football
2. North-South highway across the County
3. Enlarged museum and library
4. Sports arena added to the Auditorium
5. Art center to replace two existing facilities
6. Theatre/music hall
7. Civic center
8. Union Station
9. Master Plan for the city
10. New zoo

The club was involved in bringing many of those community projects to fruition.

## Milwaukee and World 1930-1938

The year 1930 saw the invention of Scotch tape and the Hostess Twinkie, and the first World Cup was held. The next year, the Star Spangled Banner was adopted as the national anthem, gambling was legalized in Nevada, and the Empire State Building opened. In 1932, Wisconsin passed the first compulsory unemployment program in the county, and the Dow Jones reached 44.22, its lowest level ever.

Prohibition ended in 1933 as President Franklin D. Roosevelt took office. In that year, the Dow Jones jumped from 53.84 to 62.10 in a single day, a record that still stands as the strongest percent increase ever. That year also brought the Rotary Four-Way Test, created by Chicago Rotarian Herbert J. Taylor. That code of ethics was adopted by Rotary 11 years later and has been translated in more than 100 languages.



Herbert J. Taylor  
*Courtesy of Rotary International*

### The Four-Way Test of the things we think, say or do

1. Is it the **TRUTH**?
2. Is it **FAIR** to all concerned?
3. Will it build **GOOD WILL** and **BETTER FRIENDSHIPS**?
4. Will it be **BENEFICIAL** to all concerned?

In 1934, the National Safety Council declared Milwaukee the Safest City in the United States. The police chief credited Milwaukee's mounted police with horses maintained through annual gifts of Rotary members.

The year 1935 marked John Dillinger's escape from an ambush in northern Wisconsin after his escape from an Indiana jail. It is also the year Frank Lloyd Wright's Falling-water residence was built in Pennsylvania. Milwaukee's budget reached \$29 million.

The Great Depression had an impact throughout this era with the peak of 20% of households in Milwaukee County receiving welfare assistance in 1935. The Rotary Golf Outing at North Shore County Club cost \$2 for green fees and dinner.

The first canned beer was sold in the United States in 1935, and the board game Monopoly was released. The first Major League Baseball night game was held and the first night game at Borchert Field in Milwaukee took place. By 1936, the average weekly paycheck of a Milwaukee industrial worker was \$24.11. Two years later, the United States established a minimum wage.

In 1937, the first African American federal judge, William H. Hastie, was appointed. In 1938, Julius Heil, a Rotary Club of Milwaukee member since 1914, won election as Wisconsin governor. Adolf Hitler was recognized as Time magazine's Man of the Year in 1938.



Prohibition

*Photo courtesy of the Milwaukee County Historical Society*

#### Created by Bill Durkin, edited by Mary Bolich

**Bill Durkin**, President of Durkin & Associates, was a member of the Rotary Club of Milwaukee from 2000 through his passing in the spring of 2021. Bill, who was instrumental in the development of MKE Urban Stables, was actively engaged in the Club's Centennial Anniversary celebration in 2013. An avid student of history, Bill created this history of the Club set in the context of key events occurring in the City, the State and the World.

**Mary Bolich**, a Principal with Red Rabbit Creative, joined Rotary in 2019. Mary has an extensive background in creative writing, journalism and editing working for organizations such as Kohler, Kohl's and the U.S. Navy. She is the volunteer coordinator of the Rotary Club of Milwaukee's People of Action profile series.