

and school groups

to help build the "castle" and the Imagination Station in Veteran's Park, a facility used regularly by kids

Quarter-Century Members Rotary Luncheon Club Are Feted



Rotarians who have served Bay City's oldest service luncheon club 25 years were the toast of 330 persons at the Wenonah Hotel Tuesday evening when the organization observed its silver anniversary. The oldtimers shown above are, left to right: John P. Greenwald, James C. McCabe, Carroll Windiate, Harry J. Defoe, T.F. Marston, John A. Johnson and back W. Selwyn Ramsay. (From the Bay City Times, Jan 17, 1940.)

100 Years

Club Observes 25th Birthday: Dr. M.S. Rice Urges Broadening of Program

Glowing tribute to the Bay City Rotary Club was paid Tuesday evening when 330 Rotarians and their guests gathered at the Wenonah Hotel in observance of the organization's twenty-fifth birthday.

A banquet, the largest of the year for the city's oldest service luncheon club, honored Rotary's organizers here, its faithful members who have remained active during the first quarter-century of its existence, and was dedicated to the day when Rotary may see its ideas become "the watchwords of the world."

Dr. Rice Tells Responsibilities

Perhaps the strongest exponent of the final plank in the banquet program was Dr. M. S. Rice, pastor of Metropolitan Methodist Church, Detroit, whose address warned the Rotarians that they, as members of the organization, as citizens of Bay City, and as men are charged with responsibility for the future of the community's boyhood.

In a stirring reminder that "there is nothing in this world as important as your relationship with the children of your community," Dr. Rice told the Rotarians, their friends and wives that they are charged "for the sake of God, for the sake of your country, and for the sake of your club, to take care of the boys and girls."

Special honors were bestowed upon seven of the club's 25-year members, who were presented with souvenir paperweights by H. A. Nordheim, of Owosso, Rotary's district governor.

Seven Are Honored

He told the men — Harry J. Defoe, John P. Greenwald, James C. McCabe, of Detroit, T. F. Marston, John A. Johnson, W. Selwyn Ramsay, and Carroll Windiate — that "directly and indirectly, through your association with Rotary you have been responsible for the organization of 13 new clubs and the bringing of 492 members into Rotary."

Illness kept Chan Gregory, Bay City's oldest Rotarian and one of its quarter century members, from the affair. However, Gregory's letter of regret was read by President Benjamin Klager along with congratulatory messages from other clubs throughout the country.

Entertainment for the banquet was varied. In contrast to Dr. Rice's message was the dinner music by Jack Miner, Loren C. Mast and Miss Elaine Cady, the quips of Ramsay, the toastmaster, and the featured "Rotary magic" performed by Dr. Boris Zola, Saginaw dentist-magician. Attending the banquet were many of the past presidents — including Otto E. Sovereign, first president — and other old members who have since retired from the club. Rotary units in Cass City, Frankenmuth, Clio, Owosso, Caro, Saginaw, Midland, Sebewaing and Durand had representatives present along with other service luncheon clubs of Bay City.

(From the Bay City Times, Jan. 17, 1940)

Club President Jerry
Woodcock, left, and
District Governor Kenneth
Shaeffer display a
certificate from Rotary
International honoring Bay
City Rotary's 75th year.
The anniversary
celebration was held April
25, 1990 at the Bay City
Country Club, arranged by
a committee headed by
Jack A. Shaw and
including F. E. Charipar,



Laurence H. Cook, Dr. Harry B. Farris, James A. Griffiths, Richard M. Kullberg and Carlton J. Lockwood. Shaeffer presented the Paul Harris Fellowship Award to Donald J. Massnick.



The 50th Anniversary of the Rotary Club of Bay City

as remembered by Harry Farris, President 1964-65

Gerrie and I took
the boys to Arizona
to visit their sick
grandfather during
Easter vacation. The
Monday after I got
home Lowell
Shepard called me
and said "Congratulations, Harry, you
have been elected
president of the
Rotary Club."

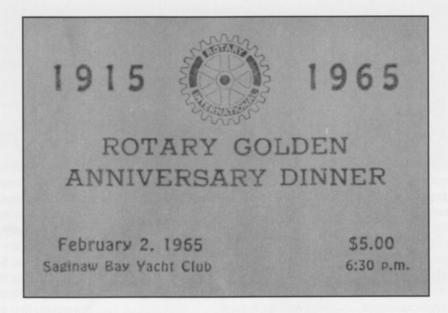
I had just been in Rotary 2 years and didn't know much about it so you can see that I might have felt overwhelmed. In those days there were

no training sessions of any kind.

Rotary International sent me a book called The Club President's Workbook with complete instructions on how to organize and run a Rotary Club. I studied that book and filled out all the forms and answered all the questions.

I went to the International Convention June 7-11 in Toronto to learn more about running a club that I had to start doing on July 1st. At the Vocational Craft Assembly for Veterinarians I met Harry Burns, the President of the Belleville, Ontario club and his Sergeant at Arms Corky McCorkadale. We spent the rest of the day and evening together and they taught me how to run a Rotary Club.

I sent letters to my Board of Directors setting up a meeting at my Veterinary Hospital as soon as soon as I got home to organize the club. Tom Tabor still talks about that meeting because, during the



meeting, Max Brown, one of the Ag teachers brought in a little pig with no anus. I didn't operate.

I needn't have worried because Secretary Art had been telling presidents how to run that club for about 38 years at that point and if I had a question all I had to do was ask him.

The two main things we accomplished that year were to elect a President-Elect and install a Sergeant at Arms and started doing some fining. Doug Morris was my sergeant at Arms and he was a real comedian.

That was the year of the great exchange. We were matched with the Durban, South Africa club and each member was matched with his corresponding member in that club. Many letters went back and forth and even some gifts. Tom Kelly, the president of the Durban club visited us as did Jack

Boswell, the District Governor.

The big event that year, however was our 50th Anniversary party. It was held at the yacht club on Feb.2 1965. Jim Graham was in charge of entertainment and he directed a skit about G. I.'s returning from World War I. It was a comedy of course featuring Ping McKay, busting out of his uniform and Jim Falvey who was about a foot taller than Ping and Doug Morris the comedian of the club. It

was a riot.

We installed two members that night, Frank Braman who started a perfect attendance record that night which lasted 25 years or more and Wm. W. "Snuffy" Smith who was a member for only a year or two.

The big event was blowing out the candles on the cake. We had a big cake with 50 candles on it. Art Milster was to have the honor of blowing out the candles. We lit the candles and I stood by thinking Art might need some help but he gave a mighty blow and blew them all out with one puff. We made Art an honorary Paul Harris Fellow that night. He was the first Paul Harris Fellow in our club.

Al DeGrow, the district Governor from Port Huron represented RI president Charles W. Pettengill.



Rotary Holds Varied Programs, Meeting Sites

"The more things change the more they stay the same....

July 1944: A discussion was held on improving the quality of program speakers. Voted to contribute \$250 to schedule speakers through Central High School Principal Adams. A program committee of 5 members was established.

March 1951: Club Forum made the following recommendations —

1] Have better publicity for club meetings; 2] Have a better procedure for welcoming guests; 3] Start a bowling team.

June 1951: After extensive discussion, the board voted to discontinue the monthly birthday table. [The club still has a birthday table the last Tuesday of every month.]

gune 1951: Speed Charipar elected club president. He decided to poll members about changing the club meeting day from Tuesday to Monday. (The club still meets on Tuesday.)

June 1954: The club contributed \$10 on behalf of every member, giving the club 100% participation in the Paul Harris Foundation for 1954.

1959: To encourage better club meeting attendance, it was recommended that a board be put up at club meetings showing the names of members with perfect attendance each quarter.

February 1969: Letters to be sent to members with less than 60% attendance at club meetings. "So where are we meeting this week?"

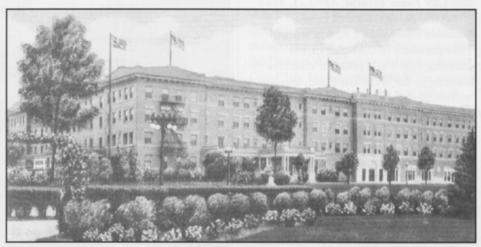
1946: The board voted to hold its meetings at the Elks Club.

January 1967: Plans were discussed to change the club's meeting place to the Elks Club and later to the new Holiday Inn.

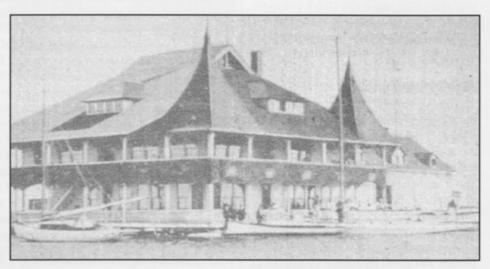
December 1977: Due to the fire at the Wenonah Hotel, the Rotary Club moved its meetings to the YMCA. A committee was to research other locations, including Wagner's Steak House, the Lion's Den, and the Community Center.

March 1978: Rotary board meetings moved from Mercy Hospital to Bay Medical Center.

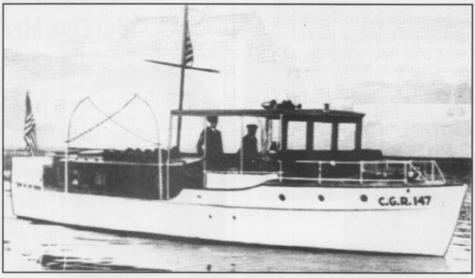
Guly 1979: The club's noon meetings to be held at Bob Hart's Washington Place.



Wenonah Hotel where Rotary met for many years.



Ladies' Night in 1962 and the Golden Anniversary in 1965 both were held at the Saginaw Bay Yacht Club.



Rotarian Otto Sovereign's yacht "Old Timer" ferried members and guests to Yacht Club Meetings upriver.

TIME

Bay City Times excerpt, April 25, 1944

Fred J. Fenske, head of Fenske Business Equipment Co., was named 1944 president of the Rotary Club effective July 1 at a board of directors meeting in the Wenonah Hotel. Fenske will succeed J. Harry Adams, Central High School principal, who becomes vice-president.

Preceding the electing, the club heard Dr. George E. Carrothers, head of the University of Michigan bureau of cooperation with high schools who spoke on social developments in the Phillippine Islands before the outbreak of war. Dr. Carrothers, who spent 10 years there as head of the department of education, described deplorable sanitary conditions and educational facilities which existed there and which were in the process of improvement before the Japanese conquest.

Bay City Times excerpt, July 12, 1944

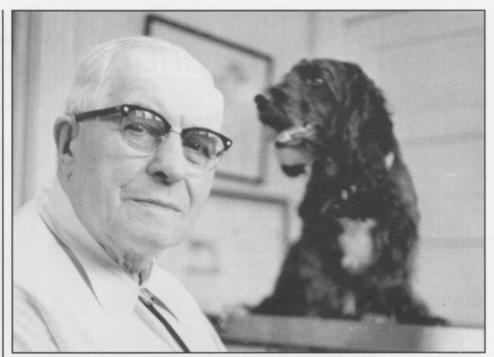
J. Harry Adams, retiring president of the Rotary Club, turned over the gavel to Fred J. Fenske in Tuesday's luncheon meeting at the Wenonah Hotel, featuring a motion picture, "Life in the Big House", depicting life of prisoners in the Ohio Penitentiary. Frank C. Learman praised Adams' administration and presented him with a diamond-studded Rotary club pin.

Accompanying talk of the motion picture was given by John J. Boggs, LLD, who served a decade in the penitentiary until his release was authorized by the governor on the basis of deathbed testimony by a sheriff involved in Boggs' conviction. The picture showed a fire which swept the prison, killing 200 inmates, procedure of the electric chair, and industrial sections of the prison, where inmates make all types of equipment.

Bay City Times excerpt, 1953:

Fred J. Fenske, Bay City Rotarian, was chosen district governor nominee at the 220th Rotary district meeting held. His one-year term will start July 1954. He had no opposition.

About 350 Rotarians attended the sessions, including a dozen or so from Bay City, some with their wives. Sessions were held at Zehnder's.



This is a picture of Dr. Ward Coomer with his last patient. As was the custom in those days veterinarians didn't retire at 65 as most do today. Many died with their boots on. Doc was 78 when he retired and probably would have hung on longer but both he and his wife were in poor health. He was the first veterinarian in the Bay City club and the only one until he retired in 1961. In those days classifications were jealously guarded and even though he was asked more than once to take the senior active classification so another veterinarian could come in to the club he refused. It was not unusual in those days for the members to resist having a second member with the same classification. This has changed considerably and today we have only two classifications, Active and Honorary. and regulation of classifications is much more lax. Dr. Coomer opened his practice in Bay City after graduating from Grand Rapids Veterinary College in 1906. He practiced here continuously until his retirement in 1961 with the exception of three years he worked in the Chicago stockyards for the federal government. He opened the first small animal hospital north of Detroit in 1923 at the corner of Midland and Euclid and practiced there until his retirement.



Rudy Boehringer: Florist Missed But One Meeting in 24 Years



Rudolph G. Boehringer, Bay City florist, would have had a perfect record of attending every meeting of the Rotary Club for 24 years but for a hungry juror.

Boehringer was chairman of a circuit jury that was deliberating a case in the morning. He took a ballot and found one dissenter. Boehringer soon found the dissenter merely was hungry and wanted the court to buy his lunch and pay him another half-day for jury duty.

The deputy who took the jury to Duchaine's Restaurant wouldn't even let Rudy stick his nose in the door of the Rotary meeting so he could be marked present. So, instead of a 24 year record, he has one of 21 years perfect attendance.

(From The Bay City Times, Feb. 1, 1940)



Carl Hendershot: Club Secretary for 26 Years

Carl Hendershot left the Ohio School System to move to Bay City and join the faculty of Delta College in late 1960. While he was at Delta, he developed a very successful teaching-aids mailing system. In later years, his system was replaced by the computer systems.

Carl was appointed Club Secretary of the Bay City Rotary Club in 1973 and served for twenty-six years. He revised the Club's by-laws and improved the attendance cards and format. Carl was always very precise, accurate and organized which created a wonderful "office of the secretary". Carl was more than the Secretary; he was the" conscience" of the Club. He was the institutional memory of the Club as well. He was an expert when it came to Rotary International rules and policies.

Whenever a change in procedure was contemplated the Club would always check with Carl before implementing to make sure it met his scrutiny as well as complied with the spirit of Rotary.



Carl Hendershot

The only time from 1973 until he died that he wasn't the Club Secretary was 1982-1983. During that time he served as District Governor of Rotary International representing District 631. District 631

(since changed to District 6310) included the surrounding Clubs in the area (32 clubs). He acted in the same capacity at the District level that he did in the Bay City Club. He was responsible for writing and implementing policies that are still utilized today. He was the chief editor of the "Manual for Rotarians" which was developed by the District as a means of acquainting Rotarians with the mission, privileges, and obligations of Rotary. There were three editions published and Carl was involved extensively in all three.

Many people in Rotary are sometimes introduced as "Mr. or Mrs. Rotary" however Carl truly was Mr. Rotary of Bay City. He and his wife Anna were dedicated Rotarians. They were both Paul Harris Fellows and supported the Rotary Foundation every year. Carl had 40 plus years of perfect attendance and Anna acted as the support staff for everything that the Club did. Anna predeceased Carl who died in 2000. We will always miss them.

100 Years

Bay City Rotary District Governors

As of today Rotary International has 529 Districts around the world. Each District is administered by a Governor. The Governor is part of the leadership structure of RI. There is a President, 12 members of the Board of Directors and then the Governors that administer the organization. Each District varies in geographic size and number of Clubs. Bay City Rotary has had eight District Governors during its history. RI started using the District form of government in 1922. Since that time the District has been known as District 18 during the years 1922-1925. It was then changed to District 23 during the years 1925-1937. It was then changed to District 152 during the years 1937- 1949. It then became District 220 during the years 1949-1957. In 1957 it was changed to District 631. And more recently it was changed to 6310, which it is known as today.

The District Governors that have served from the Bay City Rotary Club are:

W. Selwyn Ramsay 1926-1927 Samuel Ball 1949-1950 Fred J. Fenske 1954-1955 Ronald E. Fischer 1958-1960 * Elwyn J. Bodley 1959-1960 Carl H. Hendershot 1982-1983 Walter Kwiatkowski 1999-2000 Jerome Yantz 2003-2004





Walter Kwiatkowski

Jerome Yantz



Governor Kelly, Highway Chief and VanWagoner Address Rotary

Among the famous and prominent speakers at the Bay City Rotary Club were Gov. Harry Kelly and future governor, then state highway director Murray D. Van Wagoner.

VanWagoner was a speaker in March, 1938, while Gov. Kelly outlined Bay County's stake in World War II in a prophetic appearance Nov. 4, 1941, just about a month before Pearl Harbor. The war had been raging for two years and three months until the attack on Hawaii forced the U.S. to declare war on Japan, Germany and Italy within three days, Dec. 8-11, 1941.

International programs were a highlight at Bay City Rotary, especially during the war and in the rebuilding period afterward. In 1938 speakers focused on the European situation and Russia's mechanized army, at that time far advanced over our own.

In June, 1939 Japan was declared proudly by one speaker to be "on a sound basis." Little did we know how hollow the concern of Rotarians for a healthy Japan in the world economy would ring two and a half years later as the bombs fell on Pearl.

President Roosevelt's defense plan was lauded from the Bay City Rotary podium in February, 1939. Dr. No Yang Park came by in November of that year to tell of conditions in the Far East, with Japan blamed for the "new war." Dr. Park hung around to open a Rotary lecture series by criticizing the U.S. for a long delay in banning exports of scrap iron to Japan. We found out later that we were getting the scrap iron back — in the form of bullets and artillery shells fired at our troops and fortifications.

Famed FBI agent John S. Bugas spoke here in April, 1940, telling about schools for agents. Bugas was chief of the Michigan field office of the FBI who captured a Public Enemy No. 1 and later became an executive with the Ford Motor Co.

An economic crisis was forseen for the U.S. by a speaker in July, 1940, no doubt anticipating war shortages. The next month Rotary discussed conscription, a timely topic little more than a year before the war would erupt.

"Japan can't beat China," read the



Harry F. Kelly



Murray D. VanWagoner

headline in The Bay City Times the day after a speaker at Rotary, in political parlance "got it all wrong."

A British journalist, one Grimwade, came to Bay City and told Rotarians in October, 1941 "Britain must gain control of the air to defeat Hitler." He got that right, and the Brits, luckily, did gain air superiority over the Luftwaffe.

In January, 1942, a Captain Leonard of the RAF came here to describe Britain's courage under the Blitz.

Japan was assailed as "a brutal aggressor," an understatement to say the least, the following month from the Rotary platform.

An alert citizenry is needed to save America, Detroit Mayor Edward J. Jeffries Jr. told the Rotary Club here in May, 1942. A Pearl Harbor film was viewed by Rotarians in July.

Other wartime speakers predicted troubles in the U.S. after the war and a refugee from the war zone warned in September, 1942, that Germany was "set to fight it out." Right, again!

Rotarians paid tribute to the U.S. Navy and learned in November, 1942 that the railroads were ready to meet any demand. A few years earlier a speaker had told the club that the railroads were on the verge of financial collapse from lack of business.

Rotarians joined with the Lions Club to view a film on the tank arsenal in

Detroit in April, 1943, and a few months later heard premature predictions of the downfall of the Nazi regime. It would be more than two years and hordes of war dead before that prediction would be fulfilled. A free post-war India was predicted by another speaker.

"Rotarians told nationalism must be wiped out to insure a real peace," read another headline in The Times in December, 1943.

Remember how the speaker said the Chinese were going to defeat the Japanese? Another speaker came by in October, 1944 and told how the Chinese were "woefully lacking in arms" and describing the plight of that nation's military.

A speaker named L.M. Nims came here to bring greetings from Chungking, China in July, 1945.

A mysterious speaker calling himself Paul Harris, Jr., appeared here in March, 1946 to say that the little countries of Europe were the key to peace. (Our Rotary founder, Paul P. Harris, had no son, only one daughter.) There were imposters and impersonators running around the country after the war, including a purported decorated war veteran, Douglas Stringfellow, who got himself elected to Congress in Utah. Rep. Stringfellow was so dramatic a speaker that all schools in Bay City were let out in 1952 to allow students to hear him.



Members Often Made News at Rotary Podium

Through the 90 year history of the Rotary Club of Bay City some of the best programs were presented by members of the club.

These presenters included financier James E. Davidson, Dr. Esson Gale, former U.S. diplomat in China, Harry J. Defoe, founder of the Defoe Shipbuilding Company, George A. Long, vice president of the Industrial Brownhoist Corp., and others.

After an outside speaker in 1942 described the proposed St. Lawrence Seaway project as "unsound," Davidson, heir to the **Davidson Shipbuilding** Co., took the podium the next week to tell the advantages of the plan. Another speaker followed Davidson a few weeks later and asserted that the proposed seaway wouldn't provide an aid to defense. The seaway wasn't opened until 1959.

Dr. Esson Gale, native Bay Cityan who had headed the Chinese Salt Administration in four provinces of China, spoke Dec. 29, 1942 and gave Rotarians a first-hand view of conditions in that wartorn country. Dr. Gale was to return to China after defeat of the Japanese and would remain there until the Chinese Communist takeover in 1947. He then returned to Bay City and taught for a few years at Michigan State College.

George A. Long was a frequent speaker and programmer. At one meeting Mr. Long showed motion pictures of equipment built by his firm, Industrial









Brownhoist. He also spoke at a "Father and Son" program attended by 100 guests in the Wenonah Hotel and at a meeting in 1939 hosting college students during the Christmas holidays. Mr. Long also was programmer for a dinner party Oct. 14, 1941 attended by 110 Rotarians and wives at the Wenonah Hotel. The program included a talk on "personalities" by Prof Arthur Secord of the Speech Department at the University of Michigan, vocal solos by George Dent, accompanied by Leslie C. Hale, Rotary president in 1941-42, and group singing led by Arnold J. Copeland and accompanist

Charles H. White.

Benjamin Klager,
Superintendent of Schools,
a prominent Rotarian and
onetime club president,
spoke in 1946 on the need
for harmony between
business and education.
Later, the Rotary Club
endorsed a millage increase
that was adopted by school
district voters in 1949 for
the "pay as you go"
construction of most of the
school buildings still in use
today.

Paul Briggs, principal of Central High and later superintendent, was named Rotary Club president in 1947. Mr. Briggs and Fred Fenske, who had been president in 1944-45, reported to the club on the Rotary international conference in Rio de Janeiro in 1948 which both had attended.

Mr. Defoe showed that his business acumen was not limited to shipbuilding when on July 3, 1946 he spoke on a plan to develop pre-fabricated housing. Mr. Defoe was honored by the club in 1949 for his company's exceptional

services to the country in building warships during World War II.

Samuel Ball, Consumers Power Co. executive, addressed the club Nov. 29, 1949.

F. E. "Speed" Charipar addressed the club Nov. 28, 1955, the first of his many talks about the railroad business, working in the salt mines under the City of Detroit, and other experiences.



Chan Gregory, Town's Leading Citizen, Rotarian

Chauncey "Chan" Gregory was elected to honorary membership in the Bay City Rotary Club in 1935 as a tribute to his long service to the club and the community.

Chan, who owned and operated the C. & J. Gregory Co., Printers, Bookbinders, Stationers and Office Outfitters, was widely considered the town's leading citizen and was so honored by a banquet in the Wenonah Hotel in 1931 sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce and four other groups.

"One of Bay City's most colorful events of the season will be held Monday evening at the Wenonah Hotel when Chan Gregory, Bay City businessman, is honored at a testimonial dinner for his untiring civic and community work over a span of more than 50 years," The Bay City Times commented.

"Five organizations with which Mr. Gregory has been prominently identified are jointly sponsoring the affair. In charge of arrangements are Lyle M. Clift, president of the Bay City Chamber of Commerce; John Hoffman, president of Rotary; William C. Dunlop, president of the Summer Trails Council, Boy Scouts of America; Oscar M. Anderson, chairman of the Bay County Chapter, American Red Cross; and J.A. Johnson, Community League president.

"Mayor J. Harry Nelson will be toastmaster of a program that will include talks by heads of the five sponsoring groups and James E. Davidson, local capitalist."

"Public Friend No. 1" was the complementary title given to Mr. Gregory by Emmet Richards, of Alpena, a director of Rotary International.

Mr. Gregory was for many years the oldest Rotarian and many compliments poured in when he played a round of golf at age 80.

Among the projects Mr. Gregory championed was obtaining uniforms for Central High School's band, in cooperation with Charles White, supervisor of music in the city schools, and J.A. Johnson, president of the Bay City Rotary Club in 1928-29.

He introduced Admiral James J. Raby, a Bay City native who was commandant at the Pensacola Flying Field in Florida when the distinguished Naval veteran spoke to the club in the 1920s.

Adm. Raby, who Mr. Gregory dubbed "the world's only flying admiral," had made nine sailings with his merchant convoys during World War I, escorting 144 ships safely to England and France.

Mr. Gregory also sponsored a presentation to the local club by Thomas

McClure, president of the Detroit chapter of the Izaak Walton League, a group involved in game conservation.

He also promoted the support by Rotary of two Sea Scout boats for the use of local Scouts, among other projects he supported.

Mr. Gregory also was interested in ice boating and motor boating and owned the first steam launch on the river, "The Iroquois," and later a gas-powered launch, "Wah-Bun-Don."



March 13, 1936, March 13, 1936.

Chan Gregory, Bay City, Mich.

Indeed Chan:

This is a happy occasion, for in company with others Rotary desires to acknowledge your long life of active service on behalf of the worth while things of life.

If by reason of great strength men reaches four score and ten years, it must surely be even in the sphere of a Greator to look upon his work, and realize that it is good, for you surely have been a tower of strength in the community; an inspiration to those who have been associated with you, and with others I join in the hope that for years yet to come you may be spared to us all, that we may daily contact the spirit of unselfish devotion. I am happy to acknowledge such an outstanding occasion -

With A Smile

Wm. M. Gray
Governor 23rd. District R.I.

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