



# West Bend Noon Rotary Club



## History of the West Bend Noon Rotary Club

Courtesy of Joe Huber

The West Bend Rotary Club began in 1925 under the sponsorship of the Hartford Rotary Club. The charter group was made up of twenty-one members. Among them were B.C. Ziegler, Arthur H. Klumb, John W. Gehl and Joseph J. Huber, all fathers or relatives of present Noon Rotarians. Frank W. Bucklin was the first president.

The Rotarians supported many charitable and community activities. In the early 1930's the club was involved with the West Bend Kiwanis and the Chamber of Commerce in a successful effort to secure a larger and more suitable city Post Office. In 1929 the club sponsored the Port Washington charter. In the 1940's the club was instrumental in sponsoring a number of International Institutes of Understanding, where speakers focused on the world outside of West Bend. The club began to sponsor students to Badger Boys State, created outreach youth programs such as Career Days at the high school, World Affairs Seminars, Business World, weekly student guests, student exchange programs and Group Study Exchange. The club sponsored Boy Scout Troop 21, Sea Scout Ship 141 and a Boy Scout troop at the Threshold.

In 1984 the club set up the Rotary Waterways Foundation to secure selected land parcels suitable for addition to the West Bend and Washington County park systems. The Foundation has been instrumental in securing additions to Ridge Run Park and underwrote the first Riverwalk Project from Regner Park to Washington Street

In 1972 club members began to honor fellow members with the Paul Harris Fellowship named in honor of the founder of Rotary. Members qualify when they have made an accumulative gift of \$1000 to the Rotary Foundation.

The annual Shrimp Boil held each August began in 1972 patterned after the famous Door County Fish Boils and was originally held at the farm of Bernie Ziegler. It was moved to Ridge Run Park to accommodate larger crowds and is now held at Regner Park. Seafood Fest now held in June at Regner Park began in 1991. In 2010 the club became a founding member of "Enchantment In The Park," The Christmas Holiday light show at Washington County Fair Park attracts thousands of families who bring a food item as admission to support the area food pantries. Enchantment in the Park is a joint venture of the Hartford, Slinger/Allenton, West Bend Noon and West Bend Sunrise Rotary Clubs.

The club in cooperation with our District 6270 helped develop water wells in Haiti, wellness clinics and a garden tractor plant in India. Recent projects include support for projects in Haiti and El Salvador. Rotary District 6270 is now comprised of 59 clubs.

The club began publishing a quarterly bulletin in 1944 called "Spokesman." In the late 60's it was named the monthly "Rotary Key" and now is a weekly publication named "The Key," which includes timely information about each meeting, upcoming events, guest speakers and more.

The club first met at the Washington House, subsequently moving to the Masonic Temple, the Moose Hall on the third floor of the former Merten Building on Main Street, the Moraine Hotel and then back to Washington House. Prior to now meeting at noon on Mondays at Top of the Ridge Restaurant at Cedar Apartments on Scenic Drive the club met at the former West Bend Inn.

The Sunrise Rotary Club was chartered in 1991 by many individuals who wished to join Rotary but could not attend a noon meeting.

Charter members of the West Bend Rotary Club include, Thomas Bruhy, Herbert Fuge, J.W. Gehl, Arthur H. Klumb, Dr. Albion H. Heidner, Matthew Regner, Henry Regner, G.B. Rusco, Harlan Clark, C.W. Walters, B.C. Ziegler, D.E. McLane, Watler Kuehlthau, Louis Kuehlthau, F.W. Bucklin, H.B. Kaempfer, J.J. Huber, Walter Gehl, O.P. Klein, Edwin Pick, R.H. Rolfs. You will note that area parks, streets and schools have been named after these community leaders.