

In lieu of a Self-Introduction/Vocational Talk

I titled this My Rotary Journey (and Why I Like Rotary!)

Some 35 year ago I was asked to join the Oakland #3 Rotary Club, the 3rd oldest club in Rotary. My boss at the time insisted I join. I was honored and quite nervous at my first meeting. The Oakland Club at the time had over 350 members, people like the Kaisers, Bechtels, and several members of Ronald Reagan's Cabinet. I got to meet Cliff Dochterman, who had moved up from being the President of the Berkeley Club to our District Governor. He was destined to become President of R.I. Little did I know before moving to Colorado in 1995, that this same Cliff Dochterman, who was denied membership in the Denver Rotary 31 Club, flew back to Evanston and convinced R.I into letting Cliff and a small band of businessmen start the Rotary Club of University Hills in 1971. While a member of the Oakland Club, I became the Director of the Foundation Committee, and have never lost my passion for the R.I. Foundation.

Now, let's swerve this down "Memory Lane" at U-Hills. I am using the word "we" here in referencing our membership, collectively.

U-Hills has taken on so many Community Service activities that time will not allow me to mention them all. But here are some that really rang my bell. We've

had some really good Community Service Directors, including the late John French, Sam Hill, and Bud Laber.

Some of the constants of Service include our annual Zoo Day, where in our Club hosts handicapped and challenged students from Cherry Creek and other schools. All are treated to a comfort food lunch and a special Zoo Day shirt. U-Hills financially supports Sacred Heart House, clothing drives, Southwest Improvement Council, Warren Village, Colorado Young Leaders, and Purple Heart homes. Some of these have afforded us the opportunity for hands-on involvement, as recently with Purple Heart Homes & Sacred Heart House. We have also picked up flowers at the Home & Garden Show, and delivered them to Senior Living Centers all over the Metro area. In the past, we've enjoyed hands on projects with the Adoption Exchange, and judging Science Fairs at the old Excelsior School. We've stocked and staffed the Indian Senior Citizen Food Center. We've supported our veterans in many ways, including the Veterans Treatment Court. We've volunteered at the 9 Health Fair.

We've enjoyed for many years our involvement with West Middle School, with Tom Murphy guiding our interviews with Student of The Month Candidates. Lowell, Sam, and Rich have led us in countless hours spent at West Middle School counseling the students about the 4-Way Test.

Recently U-Hills, along with matching funds contributed \$20,000 to help launch Bayaud Industries 2nd Mobile Laundry Truck Project. This was a tremendously successful flagship project!

Led by Mel Grusing and Helen Hemple, our Club each summer sponsors high school and junior high school students in attending the Ryla Youth Camps, inspiring for all attendees.

Over the years, we've made numerous vocational field trips to places like various museums, Children's Hospital, Wings Over the Rockies, and the Forney Transportation Museum.

Now let's talk about International Service. We've participated in water projects in Nicaragua, and also in The Republic of Georgia. We have been a major contributor in the fight to cure polio. We've sponsored numerous Shelter Boxes, to provide emergency housing after disasters around the world. We sponsor Medical School Scholarships for Internships In foreign countries. We funded a computer lab at an all-girls school in Costa Rica, sending 25 lap tops.

Speaking of Costa Rica, a Casino Night social event fundraiser spear headed by Carl and Linda Gardner, with lots of assistance from Bill Curnow, resulted in the fundraising of approximately \$25,000 which was used (in conjunction with the Wheel Chair Foundation) to purchase 1 and ½ containers of wheel chairs. Some 20+ of us took off on a trip (coordinated by Rich Satizahn) to deliver the wheel chairs all over Costa Rica. The trip was emotionally rewarding to us, as well as a conduit to develop life long friendships as we traveled the country. From watching the Arenal Volcano erupt one evening, to floating the River Negro that separates Nicaragua and Costa Rica, it was a rewarding experience of a lifetime for the 20+ Rotarians that went on the trip. One of the many high lights included a joint meeting with our host Rotary Club at the District Governors home in Allehuela, where we also meet several members of a Panamanian Rotary Club that came for the event.

Led by Ricardo, Mike Haviland and Mike Hitchcock, currently in conjunction with Project C.U.R.E., we are working on the final steps to ^{hopefully} ship a 40 foot container of approximately \$400,000 worth of much needed medical equipment and supplies to a hospital in El Salvador. Some \$25,000 has been raised, including grant money, to finance this wonderful project. This is actually our 2nd major project we've done with Project C.U.R.E. over the years, as the estate of one of our beloved Rotarians,

John Lawton, previously funded a container of medical supplies & equipment to Central America, also.

Speaking of John Lawton, he was the catalyst for our involvement in 3 very successful micro-credit programs, 2 in the Philippines, and 1 in Central America. These micro-credit programs were all funded by U-Hills Rotary, using matching grants.

We've had other combo Social/Fundraising events, none more fun (or successful) than the Octoberfest parties held by our late beloved Helga Hall. Helga annually hosted an Octoberfest, and antique car show at her home, which doubled as a fundraiser.

A Super Bowl part held by Bill and Kathy Curnow at his event center was another fun-fundraiser. We had Kris Kuper (Offensive Lineman for the Broncos) along with several Bronco Cheerleaders to add zest to the event. We were able to get the cheerleaders, as Mickey Williams' daughter, Kat) was a Bronco Cheerleader at the time! We turned the party into a mini fundraiser and 100+ of us not only had a great time, but thanks to Bill, we netted \$6,500 for U-Hills Rotary Club!

And for several years, a few of us helped the Colorado Springs Club raise money by attending their annual Poker Tournament held at the Rodeo Hall of Fame. Our group, led by Cliff Litvak, won Team honors a couple of times. Another fundraiser with lots of “fun” in it.

Over the years, we’ve consistently provided many wonderful weekly programs. Having been a previous Program Director, I can attest that this is an enormous challenge. Current Program Director, Jay Carpenter, has continued to do an amazing job.

Personally, one of U-Hills crowning achievements is the funding of approximately \$400,000 in college scholarships to deserving high school graduates attending 4 year Colorado Colleges. If this was the only thing we ever accomplished, that some of these students we put through college make a difference, well that would be a fine legacy for all of us at U-Hills Rotary. Bill Rector, David Wood, Dan Astle, and Paul Bauer deserve kudos for the guidance and nurturing they’ve provided to the U-Hills Rotary/Hobson Fund.

There is, of course the pure comradery and fun aspects of Rotary. Our golf tournament/fundraiser is a prime example.

And then, there are just times we just have fun. Headed up by Tom Murphy, we've provided crowd control and guest relations at DU Hockey games. David Wood has organized Sporting Clay shooting events at Kiowa Creek.

We've had wonderful holiday parties and picnics, and memorable Charter Night celebrations, such as a Past Presidents' Party at Cherokee Mansion. For years, Jay Carpenter commandeered a rail car for a U-Hills Rotary Ski Trip for a wonderful day of skiing, wrapping up with "DeRailers" before embarking on the train ride home. And we've had casual group days at Rockies Games.

Ending on two personal notes, Carol and I (along with Mike & Ann Hitchcock) greatly enjoyed an inspiring trip to Montreal in 2010 for the R.I. Convention, attended by some 22,000 Rotarians from all over the world.

Then 6 years ago, 4 Past Presidents (David Wood, Mike Hitchcock, Fred Jorgensen and I) and our wives rented a 6 bedroom 8 bath Villa on 10 acres in Tuscany. We covered by rental cars, most of Tuscany, Florence, Sienna, Poppi, Cortona, Arezzo and Rome. The Whisenhunts and Hitchcocks then headed down to Pompeii and the Amalfi Coast to extend the trip. All helped Carol and I celebrate our 40th Anniversary!

Now you newer members know why we call the U-Hills Rotary, the best Rotary Club in the world, and why I'm stoked to be a Rotarian.

Give yourselves a big hand!!!