ROTARY CLUB OF SOUTH AUSTIN

A History

1. **Start Date**
   1. Provisional meeting date: January 29, 1958
   2. Charter Presentation: February 8, 1958 (65 years ago!); Event held at the Driscoll Hotel
2. **Charter Members**
   1. 23 Members … almost the # we have now
   2. The Sept. 1958 picture of members shows 20 charter members and 6 new members!
   3. 10 Members had businesses on South Congress Ave.
   4. All but 4 Member businesses were within a two square mile area (S. Lamar, Alpine, Brackenridge, Annie St, Alpine, Barton Springs Rd)
   5. **Member Classification Industries**: Electric, Butane, Lumber, St. Edward’s Pres., Printing, Pastor, Veterinarian, School Principal, Medical Doctor, Insurance, Investments, Gas Station, Funeral Home, Newspaper, Motel, Animal Husbandry, Farming, Petroleum Industry
   6. ***An Aside***---Our member, Erica Garza’s grandfather-in-law was one of the Club’s Charter Members---G E Spillman—Landon Spillman’s grandfather
3. **Club Details**
   1. **Club** #1962 …. In 1958, there was about 20,000 clubs worldwide; now, there is ~46,000 clubs
   2. **District** #587……changed to 5870 in 1991
   3. **Lunch locations:** Terrace Motor Hotel (SCongress/Academy Dr) • Green Pastures (W. Live Oak, 20+years), Cannoli Joe’s • Opal Divine’s • The Park • Marriott Hotel • Red Robin • DK Maria’s TexMex
      1. The Best (IMO) was Green Pastures…..
         1. Mary Faulk Koock, Ken Koock (son—Austin Club Rotarian)
         2. Bob Buslett then owned/operated…..and was South Austin Rotarian
         3. Heartbreak Hotel movie—in the late ‘80s
   4. **Music** – South Austin was (almost) the only club that had music after the prayer & pledge thanks to Bro. Muller who played the piano for us at every meeting
   5. **Members** – had almost 100 at one time in the ‘80s – then supported new clubs in Oakhill, Lake Travis, East Austin, and Westlake. Membership was about 65 in early ‘90s
   6. **Members over the Years** …. Likely, into the thousands over the years…. No way to know now.
   7. **Merged** with Onion Creek Club in 2014….that’s how Jim McComb---although, he was a member of RCSA in the mid-‘80s (prior to moving away, then back again to Austin)
   8. **Created** The South Austin Rotary Foundation in 2004
   9. **Members Lost** … way too many to list, but my four notables:

Margaret Harrison • Lynne Lightsey • Awad Abdelgadir • Virgil Waggoner

1. **Service/Projects:** Mentoring & Literacy at Dawson & Galindo Elem • New Lunchroom Furniture provided for preschool-Mainspring Schools • Provided supplies to Austin Children’s Shelter • Wheelchair ramp builds • Shots for Tots • Landscaping; tree planting at Community First! Village • Storage facility builds for Mainspring Schools • RYLA Breakfast Servers • Clothes Closet sort/cleanup for soup kitchen • Playscape and Bridge Build for pre-school, Todos Juntos • Food sorting – Capital Area Food Bank • Water Project in Sudan School • School Furniture to Chiapas, Mex • Meal packing – Rise Against Hunger • Adoption Fest • Medical Equipment to Fiji and S. Africa • Mosquito nets to Sudan • Big Bros/Sisters • Meals on Wheels – since 1996!! • High School Scholarships (3 schools) ……and the list is almost endless!
2. **Fundraisers:** Pancake Breakfasts • Chili Suppers/Sales • Advertising Sales on Newsletter • Golf Tournament • Casino Night • Tamale Sales
3. **Socials:** Bowling • Valentine Dinner • Christmas Party • RR Express Baseball game • Dinner in Walberg • Friday the 13th Party • Marble Falls fish fry • Rotary Fun Facts • Bat Cruises • Musical Murder Mystery Esther’s Follies night • Dinner/Dancing at Copeland Dance Hall • Gospel Brunch (Stubbs BBQ) • Progressive dinners
4. **Programs:** All kinds, but notable**:** Wine Tasting • Helicopter Around the World • Monty Python Meets Dr. Seuss @ PeeWee Herrmann’s House in Mr. Roger’s Neighborhood • Are You Ready for the 21st Century • New Airport updates • Life of MLK • Barsana Dahm • Sports with Kirk Bohls • Terrorist Activity by Fred Burton (world’s foremost expert on terrorism) • Singers & Dancers of all kinds • Restaurant Critic—when Luby’s was rated best in Austin (~’90s) • Mayors • Experts in Steak preparation • Coaches of all kinds • Many area no-profits • Numerous City of Austin and Texas speakers telling us---how to keep water clean, conserve electricity, go green and keep highways beautiful

And, some programs became members…most notable, Awad Abdelgadir and Allison Batlin!

1. **District Events:** 
   1. South Austin hosted the District Conference for the first time in 1967; then again in 1972
   2. In 1985, Virgil Waggoner was DG and hosted the Conference at the Wyndham SouthPark; Vic Niemeyer was RCSA President
   3. In 1990, when Jose Guerra was DG (& Steve Lynch was Pres), South Austin hosted the Conference in San Antonio at the Holiday Inn on the Riverwalk
   4. In 1996, South Austin again hosted the Conference (Gonzalo Garza was DG); Lorna Belk was RCSA President; It was held at the Wyndham Hotel (nka Omni Hotel)
   5. South Austin has produced four (4) District Governors, which ranks tied for 4th in the District (behind Austin 12, NW Austin 6, Killeen Hgts 5)
      1. Dick Merrill 1973-1974
      2. Virgil Waggoner 1984-1985
      3. Jose Guerra 1989-1990
      4. Ruth Allison 2010-2011 (3rd female DG in District)
2. **Awards:**
   1. South Austin has had many completions of the Presidential Citations • EREYs • 100% Paul Harris Fellows --- and occasionally all three in one year!
   2. In the District--Service Above Self Award (only 150 awarded per year worldwide) – Vic Niemeyer, 2011
   3. Citation for Meritorious Service (for service to RI Foundation) – Dick Merrill, 1975 (first year awarded)