**The History of Rotary Club of Torrey Pines (La Jolla)**

**Chartered June 30, 1964**

The Rotary Club of Torrey Pines (RCTP) was officially chartered on June 30, 1964, with 26 founding members led by the Club’s first President, Larry Townsend, and with sponsorship from the Rotary Club of La Jolla. The RCTP was the 942nd Club of Rotary International, which today consists of over 35,000 Clubs worldwide.

The Club’s official newsletter, *The Pitch*, was first published shortly after, on July 13, 1964, and a copy, as well as a copy of every issue since then, rests with the RCTP’s archives. The RCTP wasted no time in establishing itself as an international organization by hosting its first international visiting Rotarian from England, as mentioned in the first issue. Nor was the Club idle, having held its first fund raising golf tournament soon after, as mentioned in the 2nd publication of *The Pitch* on September 16. There were only seven other Rotary Clubs in San Diego at the time, and each was listed as a possible ‘make-up’ location.

The Club held its first Christmas party on December 23, 1964, where it unveiled its first banner. The first demotion dinner was held on June 15, 1965, and the Club’s second fund raising golf tournament was held soon after on June 23, 1965.

During it’s first year, in addition to hosting visiting international Rotarians and holding fund raising events, the Club enjoyed programs about the zoo, Sea World, the real estate market (if only our members knew then what we all know today!), Viet Nam, the Historical Society, hypnosis and plastic surgery (makes you wonder what motivated these programs), and a serendipitous program on California wines. “Rotary-anns”\* were invited to serval socials as well. (\*This was back in the time when women were not allowed to be official members of Rotary International, although the wives of Rotary members, known as “Rotary-anns”, were allowed to participated in Club functions).

In 1967, the Club awarded an Achievement Award to a student at the University of California San Diego (UCSD), although no mention is made regarding the achievement that was commended. Also in that year, the TPRC donated the flagpole outside the Torrey Pines Visitor Center, and the recognition plaque commemorating the donation is still there. TPRC members also did some maintenance work on the trials as well.

Ms. Caryl Anne Frost joined TPRC in 1987 as our first female member, and as only the second woman to be inducted in the entire District.

From the early 1990s to 2010, the TPRC sponsored an International Café for the International Center at the University of California San Diego.

In 1991, Club members renovated a viewing platform on the Guy Fleming Trail at Torrey Pines State Reserve.

In conjunction with the Buick Invitational at Torrey Pines\*\* golf course, and under the leadership of Club President Jim Roche, TPRC held numerous fundraising events, such as the “Hole-in-One” contest, the “Birdies for Charity” and the “Chip in for Charity” programs, that raised substantial funds between 1995-2010. The TPRC Foundation was established with the proceeds of these fundraisers, along with generous contributions from some of our Club members. (\*\*Originally named the San Diego Open in 1952, the tournament was renamed the Buick Invitational in 1992, and again in 2010 to the Farmers Insurance Open).

In 1995, TPRC members attended the Rotary International Convention in Nice, France, where members savored the wines of Burgundy and Bordeaux. Two years later, the Club started celebrating wines from around the world, especially Burgundian wines, by serving them during its meetings. This gave birth to the Club’s ongoing practice of promoting knowledge and appreciation of wines from around the world by having wine as part of our weekly meetings, and forever after being known as “the Wine Club”. To our best knowledge, TPRC is the only Rotary Club in the world that celebrates fellowship in this manner.

In June 1995, Max Gurney and TPRC Past President and later District Governor of Rotary District 5340, Philippe Lamoise, under the sponsorship of the TPRC theme “*In Vino Veritas*!,” initiated a yearly visit and table to the prestigious Chateau du Clos e Vougeot in Beaune, near Dijon, France, the capital of Burgundy. The invitation to our Club’s table, at one of the 16 yearly gala chapters, is open to Rotarians and non-Rotarians worldwide. The event was held initially by Jacques Chevignard and is now managed by his son, Louis Marc Chevignard, Grand Connectable-CEO of the *Confrerie des Chevaliers du Tastevin*. The prestigious event now includes 16 chapters in the U.S., including a “*sous-commanderie*” in San Diego.

Since 1995, the TPRC has sponsored an “*In Vino Veritas*” table at the Chateau du Clos de Vougeot. TPRC’s presence at the event has grown to almost 50 persons (at the June 15, 2019 event), including the pioneers Max Gurney, Philippe and Dugan Lamoise, and Bernard Streiff, as well as Club member Bill Irwin, and his wife Carole.

In 2000, Bill Irwin led a GSE team of five teachers to Belize, Honduras and Guatemala, as part of an educational mission. Bill has also ridden his bicycle literally around the United States, from Washington state to San Diego, to Jacksonville, FL, from Maine to Florida, raising over $21,000 for our Club Foundation.

Between 2000 and 2005, under the vision and leadership of Club member Don Yeckel, TPRC provided “Portraits of Hope” as a holiday treat to many vulnerable and destitute families who reside in Father Joe Carroll’s facility in downtown San Diego.

In 2001, 12 TPRC members, along with members from *Rotario Indpendencia* of Tijuana, built a home in Tijuana for a destitute family. The Club also built and supplied a medical clinic in one of the “*colonias de Tijuana*”. The Club built another house in 2002.

Since 2001, TPRC has participated in Global Matching Grant projects in India, Africa, South and Central America, having matched a level of over $250,000 to date.

In 2006-7, TPRC achieved a new level of recognition when our members, Philippe Lamoise, became the first District Governor from our Club.

In 2009, Club member Nancy Stoke engaged the TPRC in our most significant community project – the “Care n’ Share” toy drive, where stuffed animals are collected and given to RADY Chidren’s Hospital, Hospital Infatil de Las Californias (in Tijuana), Chidren’s Lifeline, and many other worthy children’s charitable organizations through our bi-national region. Over 200,000 stuffed animals have been collected and donated to date.

Our Club, and the TPRC Foundation, continues to serve our community through various projects benefiting veterans, the military, needy families, educational programs, youth development programs, and other community, local and international programs, including disaster relief.

In our illustrious history, the TPRC has had 49 Presidents, who have collectively served 59 terms. At least nine members have served as President at least twice. Gordon Shurtleff, who, along with Bob Goodman, serve as the Club’s historians, and has created the Club’s latest banner (designed and produced in 2003), and has collected, inventoried and displayed all the make-up banners the Club members have collected and saved over the years. Gordon himself serves as a model-Rotarian, enjoying 50 years of perfect attendance, attending over 275 Rotary Clubs in 14 states and 4 countries. The Club’s longest serving Rotarians, whose histories reach back to the 1960s, include Max Gurney, Bill Irwin, Gordon Shurtleff, Don Yeckel, and Jim Likes, who, in 2021, has been a Rotarian for 35 years (and counting). As of 2021, the 18 members of TPRC have a cumulative membership in Rotary of over 330 years.

During the Club’s 57 years, the Club has averaged about 30 members/year, with a peak of 48 members in 1967. Club members have visited other Rotary Clubs in 40 states and 61 countries and geographical locations (such as Hong Kong).

Since its Charter, TPRC has supported Interact Clubs, and Rotary Youth Leadership Awards, and sponsored Little League and Youth soccer teams, and two Outbound and hosted five Inbound Rotary Ambassadorial Scholars. The Club has been awarding scholarships since the early 1980s. For “Rotarians at Work” day, TPRC members clean the plaques at the Mt. Soledad National Veterans Memorial in La Jolla, where several of our members are commemorated with their own plaques at the memorial.

One June 28, 2014, TPRC celebrated its Golden Anniversary at the Farms Country Club in Rancho Santa Fe.

On June 30 2019, TPRC commemorated its 55th anniversary at the Rock Bottom Restaurant & Brewery in La Jolla.

On June 30 2021, TPRC celebrated the 57th anniversary of its charter, as well as the 100th birthday of long-time Club member Max Gurney, at the Mt. Soledad National Veterans Memorial in La Jolla.

On June 30, 2022, TPRC celebrated the 58th anniversary of its charter at the Rotary District 5340 Governor’s Dinner. A special recognition of Torrey Pines Rotary Club’s anniversary was made by District Governor Dan Gensler during the dinner.