

Des Spence –

Joined 16.4.1963

President 1980-81

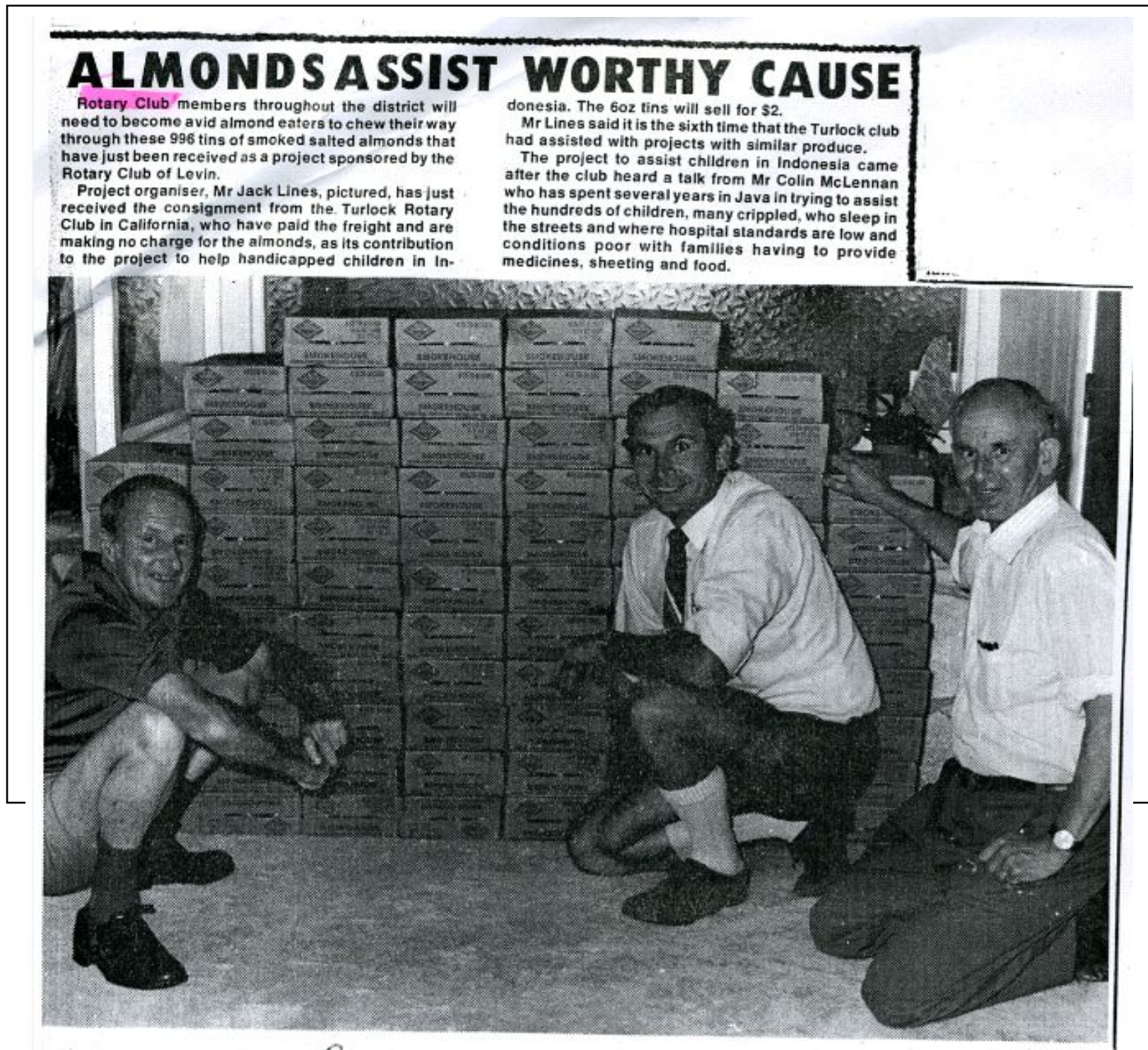
Student exchange host family – Kathleen O'Connor 1975; Elaine Brown 1981;  
counsellor for Susan Bauer 1983.

Paul Harris Fellow 1983 for achievements in World Community Service and Student Exchanges.

Joined team to Tonga for the Tupou College project in 1976, along with Collis Blake, George Sue, and Len Milne.

World Community service project he was involved in was the “almond project” initiated by Jack Lines and run over about 8-10 years.

A strong supporter of Rotaract; and of Probus (President of Levin Club 1996 – see news item below). Also founded (with Jack Feehan) the Levin Combined Probus Club in 1995.



*Chronicle 28/1/82*



Miss Karen MacLevin received a \$100 from the Rotary Club of Levin last night. The old assistant in pharmacy won the a logo design competition held by the club. The design (right) recognised as the Levin Borough Jubilee to be held next year.



"You could say that a bastion of male dominance was taken over by the opposite sex," said Rotary Club of Levin president, Mr D. Spence, this morning, after last night's club meeting at Te Kowhai was 'invaded' by members of the youth organisation, Rotaract. It was a highly unusual occasion and a surprise to many, including Mr Spence, when Rotaract president, Mrs T. Rowe, left, took charge of the meeting with secretary, Miss R. Doreen (seated). Mrs Rowe did allow Mr Spence, right, to get in a few words and he is full of praise for the way in which Rotaract members conducted the meeting. The whole exercise was planned as part of 'awareness week' for Rotaract members.

CHRONICLE 29.4.81

## Plaques presented to club members

Two members of the Probus Club of Levin, who have given exemplary service to the club, were made life members at the mid-year luncheon last week attended by wives and partners.

They were Des Spence and Evan Tombs, both of Levin, and both former presidents of the club.

The function was held at Western House with 95 present.

Des Spence has been a tireless worker for the community in many fields, including Rotary and the Baptist Church.

He was president of the Probus Club of Levin in 1996 and was secretary for five years from 1991. He joined the club a few weeks after it was founded in 1984.

Evan Tombs joined the club in

1985. He was its treasurer in 1988 and 1989 and again in 1993. He was elected president in 1994.

He has had a long association with the town and has been prominent in the Levin and Districts Brass Band, of which he is patron.

In presenting life member plaques to the two recipients, president Chum Simmons said the honour was not conferred lightly and the constitution required that there should never be more than five life members at any one time.

Both men had given generously of their time and knowledge "behind the scenes" and it was this contribution "beyond the path of duty" that the club wished to acknowledge.

## becomes Levin Rotary's fifth Fellow Paul Harris

A past president of the Rotary Club of Levin, Mr Des Spence, became the club's fifth Paul Harris Fellow last week.

The fellowship certificate, medal and lapel badge were presented to Mr Spence by the outgoing president Mr John Berry at the club's changeover night, which was attended by a large gathering of members and wives.

Mr Berry said Mr Spence was among the club's most modest, dedicated, hardworking members and the club was proud to honour him for the service given.

Mr Berry explained that the Paul Harris (founder of Rotary) Fellowships were established in 1957.

They were allocated to a club or district — in

the name of a person nominated by that club or district — which donated the equivalent of \$US1000 to the Rotary Foundation in a year.

They are regarded as a high form of recognition of a member's involvement and active contribution to Rotary by his colleagues, said Mr Berry.

He added that in the USA there were now many Paul Harris Fellows — it becoming fashionable for people there to buy their own.

Mr Spence joined the club in April 1963 and having in excess of 15 years service is on the roll of senior active

members.

Mr Berry said he had been active in the area of student exchange and remains active in the Horowhenua World Community Service Group, of which he was convenor last year. He was president during the 1980-81 year and had been a director.

In reply, Mr Spence said the bestowing of the award on him was just incredible and beyond comprehension.

"I feel humble, but very proud," he said in thanking members.

As well as his extensive involvement in Rotary, Mr Spence is also active, in the Baptist

Church and Reevedon Home.

After the presentation Mr Spence was greeted by the club's other four Paul Harris Fellows, Messrs George Kerslake, Jack Lines, Alan Hercus and Geoff Spencer.

In the changeover Mr

Berry introduced the incoming president, Mr Bob Donaldson, and invested him with his chain of office. He is the club's 40th president.

After presenting Mr Berry with his past president's pin, Mr Donaldson thanked him and his

wife, Beth, for a good Rotary year.

Mr Donaldson said the club had made many lasting contributions to the local community. It had contributed its share of district governors and now had five active Paul Harris Fellows.



Surprised and overwhelmed, Mr Des Spence was at a loss for words after being presented with the Paul Harris Fellowship certificate and lapel badge by outgoing president of the Rotary Club of Levin, Mr John Berry, at the club's changeover night last Tuesday.



Cutting the  
Rotary Centenary cake,  
2005

## ALAN SMTH'S INTERVIEW:

It is always a pleasure to catch up with Des which I did last Thursday. Des was in the radio electronics industry for years and something of what we talked about follows.

Des started work with The Jenness Music Store in the Hutt when he left school at 15. One of the first jobs he was taught was how to change the springs in the wind-up gramophones. It was a messy job because you got graphite oil all over your hands. But the standard of service was such that if you dropped it off in the morning it was ready for you that night. With the outbreak of war those with the radio skills were in short supply and Des found himself left to operate the repair section. It was not that difficult as he explained it to me. You looked in the back and if one of the valves wasn't glowing you simply replaced it. That was enough to bring a good radio back to life.

The radio changed the social fabric of life. To have one was what all families sought. A cheap Parliament (assembled in Wellington) cost £5 which was a working man's wage for a week. But listening in to the "wireless" (or crystal set for young fellows) was the thing and it gave new shape to popular music.

The war also brought Des the greater part of his formal training. He entered the air force and was assigned to E&W (electrical, radar and wireless). I climbed all over Catalina and Sunderland's up in the Pacific for eighteen months and then came back to civy street with a greater understanding of what things were about.

Des shifted to Levin in 1953 to manage Jenness Music in a shop where the mall entrance is now located. Here in addition to repairs he sold all the latest records – 78's made of graphite-, sheet music and the latest Boomerang Songbook as well as the latest radio-grams and white-wear. Des was buyer for the records which had its difficulties. Unsold stock he used to stick to the ceiling! We remembered the big La Gloria radio gram (made in Waihi) with its Gerard turntable and that fancy mechanism that used to drop the records down. "They were buggers to fix!" Des remained in the industry until his retirement. It was good to catch up with an old friend