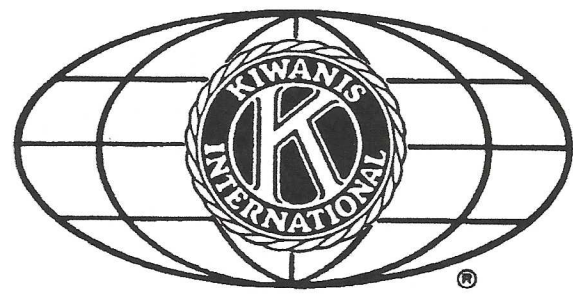


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The Kiwanis Club of
Harrisburg's
80th Anniversary



“A Club History”

April 18, 1998



Kiwanis had its beginning when a group of businessmen in Detroit, Michigan decided to organize a club composed of tradesmen. They chose an Indian word "kiwanis" for the name of their new club. On January 21, 1915 the State of Michigan recognized the club by presenting it a charter and it became the Detroit #1 Club. Memberships were limited to four members per trade or profession; which was soon changed to two, a provision which remained until the early 1970's. Rotary had a single member restriction at that time which made it easier for Kiwanis to recruit members. This was the factor which enabled C. C. Merrill to join the new group since Kiwanis allowed two per business classification.

Merrill wrote *A History of Harrisburg Kiwanis* in 1958, for the fortieth anniversary of the club in which he recounted its beginning and his role in it. Originally, the Kiwanis Club was a private organization and it grew by using paid agents to go out and build new clubs. One of these agents was a young man, William "Bill" Armstrong who was working for Allen Simpson Browne of Buffalo, New York. Browne was one of the original organizers of the Detroit Club. After Detroit, he built the Cleveland, Ohio club and then moved to upstate New York where he made his headquarters. By late 1917, Armstrong had organized clubs in several cities including Philadelphia and York and it was at this time that he came to Harrisburg to start a club. Merrill was District Manager of the Remington Typewriter Company located at 119-121 Walnut Street (Corner of Walnut and River Streets) and one fine afternoon he was visited by Armstrong. Remington's Philadelphia office manager recommended that Armstrong contact Merrill who responded favorably to the suggestion. Prior to coming to Harrisburg from Reading he had been a Rotarian, but upon applying to join the Harrisburg Rotary he was informed that his classification was filled.

C. C. Merrill was not the first member of the new club, that honor goes to J. H. "Herb" Kellberg, a prominent photographer who had been referred to

Armstrong by a friend in the newly formed York Club. Armstrong had been in Harrisburg a few days before and had attempted to meet Merrill, but he was out of town. At this point he visited Kellberg who joined the new group. Within the year, Kellberg would move to Philadelphia where he and his wife would become famous as puppet makers. Merrill was active in several organizations which gave him an extensive prospect list for his and Armstrong's club building efforts. These efforts were successful and in a few months they had succeeded in building the club, much to the happy surprise of Bill Armstrong. During the organizing days the group met in the various offices of the new members. The most important of these early meetings was the organizational meeting which was held on December 5, 1917 at the Peerless Automobile Showrooms owned by Charles H. Barner on South Cameron Street. Barner was the Acting President and he presided over this meeting which had about twenty-five members present. Meetings continued to be held in various places in the city including the Elks Lodge and the Evangelical Press.

During the organizational meeting the members elected Frank G. Fahnestock, Jr. as President with Leon Neefe as Vice President, V. Hummel Brackenridge as Secretary and the Treasurer was Henry Claster. On January 31, 1918 President Fahnestock called a Directors meeting where he appointed committee chairmen. They were: Membership, James Lutz, Jr.; Glad Hand, C. C. Merrill; Entertainment, "Baron Neefe"; Publicity, V. Hummel Berghaus; Civic Affairs, Homer Moyer; Oral Boosters, W. H. Brown and Silent Boosters, George Barnes. The oral boosters were to get a member to give a ten to fifteen minute talk about his business. As silent boosters, the committee was to distribute advertising which members were willing to furnish. Other committees were Attendance, Dr. Arnold; Constitution and Bylaws, Robert T. Fox; and Charlie Barner heading the Welfare and Sick Committee.

At the organizational meeting, Bill Armstrong informed the club that they would receive a charter as the Harrisburg Kiwanis Club which would be given to them later by the International President George H. Hixson, who would be the only person to serve two terms as president. The club building effort was completed on February 16, 1918 and the charter was presented on May 27, 1918. After International President Hixson presented the charter to President Fahnestock a short talk was given by International Vice President George Stout. Armstrong had help in organizing the club from Tom Larson who had been sent to help complete the job since Armstrong was on his way to Camp George G. Meade to begin military duty. The club passed an amendment which stated that Armstrong and Larson as club organizers would be placed on the WWI Honor List along with other club members who served in the war. On the charter night, both men were in the Army and had to send letters of regret to President Fahnestock. Several new members were added at the charter night which resulted in a charter membership of 116. The Harrisburg Club was the seventh to be chartered in Pennsylvania and the eighty-second club to be completed in Kiwanis International.

Of the charter members the first eleven were: Herb Kellberg, Claude C. Merrill, Leon Neefe, James H. Lutz, Jr., Charles Schmidt, David Rineard, Robert T. Fox, Ross Walter, Paul B. Rice, William M. Logan, and Frank Fahnestock. Merrill said that of the 116 charter members there were only six left in 1958 due to death and resignations.

Leon Neefe served as president in 1919 with Al K. Thomas as Vice President. It was Thomas, during a meeting at the Y.M.C.A. on September 30, 1919, who suggested that the club organize a business show. This was approved and Leon Neefe put the trust business show together which held in February, 1920 at the old Chestnut Street Hall. Sadly, Thomas did not live to see the event for he was a victim of the Spanish Flu epidemic and died before the event took place. Charles Schmidt, a florist, succeeded Thomas as president

and served a second year. Schmidt was very active in promoting new clubs and later worked with the national organization in new club building. During the club's beginning it met at various businesses, but soon moved to the Elk's Club on North Second Street because the lodge room, dining room and other facilities met their needs. This did not last long since the club was growing rapidly and by the end of 1918 they needed larger facilities. Arrangements were made with a new hotel, the Penn-Harris, where the club met until the hotel was demolished to make room for Strawberry Square. To give some indication of the growth; in August, at the first picnic which was held at Claster's cottage behind Summerdale, over 100 members were in attendance.

Kiwanis as a private organization, came to an end on May 21, 1919 when at the fourth annual convention held in Birmingham, Alabama the organization bought its freedom from Allen Browne for \$17,500. Each club would pay its fair share of the cost by having two dollars of its ten dollar dues allocated toward the cost. It can truly be said that this was the independence of Kiwanis for no one individual would no longer determine the future of the group.

Concern for widows and orphans was another feature of the club in 1918. There was "Big Brother" Committee set up by the club in the old eighth ward of the city which was led by Mrs. Lyman D. Gilbert and in November the club donated fifty dollars to the effort. According to Merrill there was a reception given for her so that the club could honor her with a gold life membership card in the Kiwanis Club of Harrisburg. It was his pleasure to be able to give her the card. Kiwanis International later adopted a constitutional amendment which made it a "men" only organization. At the 1987 Convention the constitution was amended to permit women to join. During the 1988-89 administrative year Bill Hench sponsored Ellen Arnold as our first woman member in the modern era. She in turn sponsored Sally Wollins who would be president in 1994-95 and would become Lt. Governor of Division 13 North in 1996-97.

One of the status symbols of a city is to have an international airport. During WWI aircraft had been widely used and in the post war era there was a lot of interest in commercial aviation. Harrisburg was no exception and in 1919 the Kiwanis Club joined the effort by voting to support the attempt being made to purchase land for a landing field. Part of the educational effort was a speech by Colonels Kirtland and Kemp of the Army. This was the beginning of the drive that would eventually create the Harrisburg International Airport.

Another gesture of good will was the entertaining of members of the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.). At the club meeting near Decoration Day, now Memorial Day, the G.A.R. members and their wives were guests of the club. Our club has a photograph of the 1922 meeting at which over 400 were present. This practice would continue until all of the men and their wives had died.

While the Kiwanis Club often had joint meetings with Rotary and the Chamber of Commerce there was also a spirit of competition present as shown by the May 8, 1919 Minutes: "and to the Rotary from doing more work than the Kiwanis Club for the betterment of the city". There was an element of this rivalry shown during the 1920 efforts to support "kipona". The club voted to assist the Greater Harrisburg Navy in their attempt to establish "a large scale Kipona". Part of the fund raising was a "War Canoe" race to boost the Harrisburg Navy and when it was all over it was determined that the Kiwanis Club had provided more money than the Kipona had ever received.

Building new clubs is an ongoing activity for Kiwanis International and the Harrisburg club has been no exception. Williamsport in 1919 was the first venture and it was at the suggestion of the District Governor that this be done. Then came Carlisle on November 4, 1920 which was a major event. The Harrisburg Club sent fifty members and they arrived on the train bringing with them the Harrisburg Municipal band. They staged a parade downtown with the support of a local

band. Steelton was next in 1927 and a joint effort by Harrisburg and Steelton resulted in the organization of the Middletown Club in 1936. Carlisle and Harrisburg co-operated in establishing the Chambersburg Club in 1944. Harrisburg and Steelton had a repeat performance when in 1949 they were able to organize the West Shore Club. Six years later West Shore and Harrisburg worked together to get the Upper Allen Club in place. Other clubs sponsored were Hanover, Lebanon, Pottsville, East Shore, Redland-Etters and N.E. York County.

New club building has not been confined to Kiwanis clubs. Central Dauphin High School was the site of our first Key Club in 1957 and lasted for several years. It would be followed in 1959 by Harrisburg High School, but after a while it ceased to exist. After numerous efforts to start another club at Harrisburg High School, one was organized in 1998. In 1985, the Key Club at Susquehanna Township High School had its successful beginning and is a large and active club today. In 1998, an AKtion Club was started for mentally and physically disabled persons.

Support of various charities has been an ongoing aspect of the Kiwanis Club of Harrisburg. One of the more interesting efforts in the late Twenties and early Thirties was the Thanksgiving parties where the admission was potatoes. The potatoes were distributed to children's homes. Other activities included contributions to the Salvation Army, Bethesda Mission, Relief agencies, etc. The majority of the club's efforts went to various camps, e.g. Camp Shickelemmy, the TB Camp Christmas Seal, Girl Scout Camp, Boy Scout Camp, Kamp Kiwanis and Hodge's Colored Orphanage.

Publicity is important to a service club because it shows the community what it is doing and demonstrates a commitment to continue doing so. As long as there were members of the media who were active in the club there was publicity about its activities as the newspapers through the Sixties show. John Grenoble has an interesting comment: "In the 1936 flood, Red Moss of the radio station

wrote a poem that lamented the flood, yet 'the Kiwanis Club of Harrisburg continues to meet.'" Publicity is an effective tool for membership development.

Kamp Kiwanis was the main focus of the club from 1945 until 1980 when it was sold. The camp was located near the Manada Inn on Manada Hill north of I-81 and Route 39. Kiwanians improved the grounds by erecting cabins, digging a swimming pool, putting up a club house and other buildings. This camp became a very busy place during the Summer when hundreds of children would be there and through the years literally thousands attended. One of the key figures in getting the camp organized was C. Frank Class, Jr. Pennsylvania National Horse Show funds were used to improve the grounds and to support the camp and the campers. Maintaining the camp became a financial drain as the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania began to pass regulations regarding camps and their operation which would prove to be very costly. Finally, it was decided to sell the camp and to put the proceeds into the Kiwanis Youth Foundation and to use the interest to send children to camp. A Hershey contractor purchased the property for \$115,000 and the club was out of the camping business.

Fund raising is an integral part of any service organization and various kinds are attempted. Some clubs have a number of small projects while others concentrate on one major project and put all of their efforts into it. Since the 1950s, this has been the approach of the Kiwanis Club of Harrisburg. The Pennsylvania National Horse Show (PNHS) and the Kiwanis Club have been a team since the beginnings of the PNHS in 1944. Only once did this relationship become uncertain. Calvin Barrett, president in the 1981-82 year, suggested that the PNHS funds be distributed to groups other than the Kiwanis Foundation. Cooler heads prevailed and this effort was quietly laid to rest. Originally, the purpose was to raise money for the First Cavalry Forage Fund and the Kiwanis Club Boys and Girls work. For the first two years the show was called the First Cavalry Pennsylvania Guard Horse Show and was held

outdoors at the Harrisburg Military Post at Fifteenth and Calder Streets. In 1946, it was incorporated as the Pennsylvania National Horse Show and then moved indoors to the Farm Show Arena. International horses were jumped in the early 1950s, but as the cost of providing for them escalated it was decided to eliminate them from the event.

One of the features of the PNHS during the early years was the appearance of radio and TV personality, Arthur Godfrey who broadcast his national programs from the Farm Show Arena. This became a big event as the men wore tuxedos, a practice which lasted for several years. The PNHS is nationally recognized event and is the first of four events in the Fall circuit for jumpers. All aspects of the actual show are handled by the PNHS while the Kiwanis Club handles publicity, ticket sales and other related activities. After all of the income and expense figures are tabulated, the Kiwanis Club receives from the PNHS a significant share of the profits. These funds go into the Kiwanis Youth Foundation which enables the Kiwanis Club to support numerous projects in the Harrisburg community.

Scholarships for high school seniors are made possible by the Edith Langford Class Scholarship Trust which was established in 1961. This trust was made possible by the generosity of C. Frank Class, Jr. and other Kiwanians. Over \$30,000 per year is given to students from the high schools and Vo-Tech schools in our area. The high school scholarships are for \$1,000 with the Vo-Tech being \$600 and are awarded at a banquet in May where the students and their parents are guests.

As we look at this the eightieth anniversary of The Kiwanis Club of Harrisburg it is clear that community service is still its *raison d'être*. In the 1996-97 year our major project was a behavior management and social skills training project which was in collaboration with the Capitol Area Intermediate Unit. Almost fifteen thousand dollars was contributed to the project. Community service projects currently underway or completed include: support for the Prevent Child Abuse Committee,

helping operate a Bingo night for the physically impaired, conducting Bingo at the Methodist Home for Children, participating in a telethon for Girl Scouts, helping in the Born to Read program in conjunction with the Library, doing face painting as part of the Read Around the World program, conducting a bell ringing effort for the Salvation Army, gift wrapping at the East Mall for Children With Special Needs, and delivering hundreds of books for Share the Magic.

N. B.

This account of the Kiwanis Club of Harrisburg was based upon the History by Merrill, *Minutes. Kiwanis Club of Harrisburg for 1918-19, The Men Who Wear the K* interviews with "Doc" Guise, John Grenoble, and Joe Goldsmith which were conducted by Past President, Fred Redslob, other club records provided by Club Secretary James Roberts and an almost complete run of Club Rosters provided by Past President, Jack Leisure. This brief history was written by Robert W. Unger, Ph. D. at the request of Immediate Past President, William Schertzer.

Past Presidents

Frank G. Fahenstock, Jr.	1918	Clarence G. Moss	1946	Joseph K. Goldsmith	1972-73
Leon F. Neefe	1919	C. Lester Mathias	1947	Paul S. Abbott	1973-74
Al K. Thomas	1920	W. Orville Kimmel	1948	James C. Klima	1974-75
Charles L. Schmidt	1921	O.B. Lank	1949	Charles J. Murphy	1975-76
Irving R. Robinson	1922	Andrew S. Beshore	1950	Charles H. Cornelius	1976-77
Claude C. Merrill	1923	William E. Miller	1951	Thomas G. Miller	1977-78
Frank J. Wallis	1924	George A. Hepford	1952	Raymond E. Messimer	1978-79
Roy H. Stetler	1925	Charles W. Smith, M.S.	1953	Thomas W. Walker	1979-80
Paul B. Rice	1926	Harold L. Beckley	1954	Dale E. Ault	1980-81
Grover C. Frantz	1927	Elmer R. Long	1955	Calvin Z. Barrett	1981-82
Joshua E. Rutherford	1928	Walter Hoopes	1956	Robert K. Staz	1982-83
Park A. Deckard, M.D.	1929	Merton J. Myers	1957	Walter F. Kuhn, Jr.	1983-84
Ernest B. Eppley	1930	Walter E. Kirker	1958	Paul D. Keefer	1984-85
Donald S. McFarland	1931	Oscar M. Billow	1959	James L. Goldsmith	1985-86
Roy W. Schreiner	1932	Carlos F. Bodwell	1960	James K. Roberts, Jr.	1986-87
Jesee D. Wells	1933	E. Corbett Rider	1961	Robert W. Smith	1987-88
Charles U. Peeling	1934	J. Robert McClure	1962	J. Frederic Redslob	1988-89
Earl T. Dewald	1935	Robert J. Trace	1963	Eugene E. Pepinsky, Jr.	1989-90
George L. Cullen	1936	S.B. Keese	1964	James E. Frey	1990-91
John McClanahan	1937	Jack R. Leisure	1965	Richard S. Morelli	1991-92
Robert T. Fox, Esq.	1938	Russell J. Charles	1966	Richard L. Placey	1991-92
Paul N. Garrett	1939	Paul J. Smith	1967	Richard L. Placey	1992-93
John W. Kirkpatrick	1940	Philip F. McCracken, Sr.	1968	Charles H. Sourbeer	1993-94
David Fair	1941	Frank D. Armstrong	1969	Sally Wollins	1994-95
C. Frank Class	1942	Richard C. Guise	1969-70	Melissa F. Stachacz	1995-96
Clifford L. Fenton	1943	George F. Hulse, Jr.	1970-71	William C. Schertzer	1996-97
Paul W. Bowman	1944	William S. Hench, Jr.	1971-72	Joseph B. Sobel	1997-98
Lawrence H. Setzer	1945				

Past District Governors

Frank J. Wallis (1932)
Carlos F. Bodwell (1966)
E. Corbett Rider (1979-80)

Past Lieutenant Governors

Frank J. Wallis (1925-26)
David Fair (1944)
Elmer R. Long (1961)
Carlos F. Bodwell (1962-63)
E. Corbett Rider (1976-77)
Dale E. Ault (1982-83)
J. Frederic Redslob (1992-93)
James E. Frey (1993-94)
Sally Wollins (1996-97)

1997-98 Officers

Joseph B. Sobel	President
James A. Phillips	President-Elect
Paul L. Brown	1 st Vice President
Colleen R. Ensinger	2 nd Vice President
William C. Schertzer	Immediate Past Pres.
James K. Roberts, Jr.	Secretary
Patricia L. Kowalczyk	Assistant Secretary
Marc S. Moonin	Treasurer

1997-98 Directors

Martha B. Hostetter	'98
Judith A. Leisure	'98
Greg S. Shughart	'98
Suzanne E. Brightbill	'99
Raymond H. Caldwell	'99
Ralph E. Dillen	'99
Dale E. Ault	'00
Maria P. Cognetti	'00
Christina Jillard	'00