

History of the Hot Springs National Park Rotary Club

The Rotary idea of "Service Above Self" was born in Chicago when the first club was organized on February 23, 1905. Paul Harris, a young attorney, invited three new friends to meet with him for fellowship and self-development ideas. This developed into a regular weekly affair, rotating among the offices of those participating. Hence, from this practice the name "Rotary" came into being.

Rotary came to Arkansas in 1913 when Sidney M. Brooks, a young businessman, invited several others to meet with him on July 6, 1913, to form the Little Rock Rotary Club. They received their charter, no. 99, in January, 1914.

Two years later the idea came to Hot Springs. One of the bathers convinced William G. Maurice, owner of the Maurice Bath House, that we needed Rotary in Hot Springs. Billy Maurice contacted Sid Brooks in Little Rock and, with his help and guidance, the Hot Springs Club was organized on July 1, 1916, becoming No. 246 on the register of Rotary Clubs.



William G. Maurice

The fifteen charter members and officers were: William G. Maurice, President; Hamp Williams, Vice-President; Arthur Katz, Secretary; Dave Burgauer, Treasurer; Joseph Klyman, Sergeant-at-Arms; Harry A. Jones, Director; William Anderson, Director; Orvis E. Biggs, Director; Martin A. Eisele, Director; E. Lynn Howlett, Director; George A. Callahan, John G. Higgins, Jack Frisby and Albert Mendel.

CHARTER MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

I hereby apply for membership in the Rotary Club of
Hot Springs, Arkansas.

and agree to abide by and support the constitution and by-laws of the Club, provided same are acceptable to me when adopted by the Club; otherwise I shall be at liberty to retire from membership in the Club without any obligation attaching to me.

July 5 1916
Representing Drugs Name M A Eisele
Address 310 Central
BUSINESS OR PROFESSION
Firm Name Eisele Hunt Telephone 41

(OVER)



WM. M. ANDERSON.
Agent Rock Island Lines.
 Mr. Anderson's jovial disposition and courteous manner has won for him a world of friends among the Hot Springs people and the traveling public. You can always depend on "Billy." He is a member of the H. S. Rotary Club and many other leading organizations.

William M. Anderson



Dave Burgauer



GEO. A. CALLAHAN.
President H. S. Plumbing Co.
 Mr. Callahan, who is a member of the Hot Springs Rotary Club, is a loyal booster for this report. He is vice president of the Business Men's League and has been very active in the attempt to secure the nitrate plant for Hot Springs. His efforts have been successful.

George A. Callahan



Martin A. Eisele



JACK FRISBY.
Proprietor Frisby's Cafe.
 Mr. Frisby's success as a restaurant man is undisputed and his place justly deserves the saying, "The Finest Place in Dixie." He has always been identified with every move for the public welfare. He is a Rotarian and is prominently connected with many other organizations.

Jack Frisby



John G. Higgins



Mayor E. L. Howlett



HARRY A. JONES.
President Majestic Hotel Co.
 Mr. Jones, who built the Majestic hotel must be classed among the most loyal citizens of Hot Springs. His persistent advertising has done more to place this resort in the United States than any other line of advertising launched from this city. He is always a booster.

Harry A. Jones



ARTHUR H. KATZ.
Manager of the Katz Company.
 Mr. Katz, who is secretary of the H. S. Rotary Club, was instrumental in establishing that club here. His hobby is finishing a thing once started. He has made many friends and established a nice business in the few years he has been here.

Arthur H. Katz



JOSEPH H. KLYMAN.
Proprietor of the Craighead's Laundry and the Klyman Cleaning Co.
 Mr. Klyman has been one of Hot Springs' most active citizens for a number of years, establishing an up-to-date cleaning establishment, as well as a modern laundry. He is active in the Masons and Elks, and the Rotary Club.

Joseph Klyman

The first official meeting of the club was held July 5, 1916, at the Majestic Hotel with President Maurice presiding. Five committees were set up: Entertainment, Ways and Means, Fraternal, Public Affairs, and Grievance. The initiation fee was set at \$10.00 and the annual dues at \$11.00. Thirty-one more members were admitted in 1916.

Early Years

Upon its organization, the club immediately became very active -- anxious to serve and improve the community. Billy Maurice was elected the first delegate to Rotary International which met that year in Cincinnati on July 20. The club voted to reimburse him for his railroad fare, when "financially able". Dave Burgauer was elected to be the first club speaker on July 12, 1916, and Thos. A. Hill, a lawyer from New York City, was the first club guest.

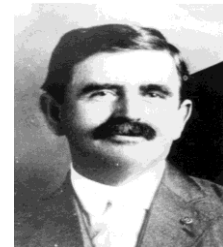
On August 23, ten Rotarians and two Rotary-Anns from Little Rock visited the club with Sid Brooks, the speaker. Sid said the club was "growing too fast"! At the August 28th meeting of the Board a motion was adopted that any member absent without a good excuse would be assessed the cost of the meal, 50 cents.

The first club project was to fix up the playgrounds at Jones School. Each member was required to raise \$5.00 towards the purchase of playground equipment. The first club bulletin was named THE EXCITER.

The following motion was adopted by the club on February 13, 1917: "That the secretary be instructed to write Judge Wood, heartily endorsing his good movement to abolish the gambling evil in Hot Springs". A few months later the club took a strong hard hand against the closing of the Oaklawn Race Track.

On February 24, 1918, this resolution was adopted: "That the club fully endorse and approve the course adopted by the city government in their effort to eliminate vice in the city, and ridding the city of all persons known to be prostitutes or other persons of known immoral tendencies".

During World War I the club was very active in the promotion of the sale of Liberty Bonds and in the organization of the Red Cross program in Hot Springs. In addition, the club headed a drive to collect underwear, soap, tobacco, and other necessities for the personnel of Ambulance Company "C" of the 3rd Arkansas Regiment stationed in Hot Springs. Hamp Williams, a member of the club, was appointed by Herbert Hoover to be the Food Administrator for Arkansas.



Hamp Williams

On July 12, 1917, the club voted to donate \$100.00 toward the organization of the Boy Scout movement in Hot Springs. The club has continued through the years to render

substantial support to this great character-building organization. A large number of Rotarians have been recognized and presented the Silver Beaver Award.

In the twenties the club played a very active part in the highway improvement program for Arkansas. Robert A. Jones headed up this effort and was one of the Directors of the "Broadway of America" Association, organized to develop a cross country highway from Washington to San Diego. Rotarian John Riggs, a member of the State Legislature, worked hard on improving the state highway system. During the early years of the club, the members were of a very sturdy stock. On one project the Rotarians themselves took picks, shovels and rakes and did actual work on the roads leading to Hot Springs. They filled holes and smoothed the road for automobile traffic.



Billy Maurice and Rotary Founder Paul Harris, Arlington Hotel, March 11, 1927

Rotary Boys' Band

The most gigantic project ever undertaken by the club was the organization and sponsorship of the first Boys' Band in Hot Springs. Under the leadership of Rotarian George H. Brenner, a 100-piece band was organized, equipped and uniformed. Several large assessments were made against the members -- one for \$100.00. With the assistance of the Chamber of Commerce, the band was taken to District Conferences in Little Rock and Memphis. Three long trips were sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce.

On the first trip in 1924 the band played several concerts through northwest Arkansas and eastern Oklahoma. In July, 1925, concerts were played through southwest Arkansas, northeast Texas, and Shreveport, Louisiana. In July, 1926, the band presented concerts in southeast Arkansas and northern Mississippi.

On all three trips speakers provided by the Chamber of Commerce told the large crowds about the wonders of our thermal hot waters and the many attractions in Hot Springs. In 1927 the club could no longer carry the burden. The operation of the band was turned over to the High School and the Rotary Boys' Band was transformed into the first Trojan Band.



Part of Rotary Boy's Band

District Conferences

During the past ninety-one years the Hot Springs National Park Rotary Club has served as host, or co-host, to over 60 District Conferences. This has been good for the club and helpful to the City of Hot Springs, and has created new boosters for our resort city. The first District Conference held in Hot Springs was in 1923. The old Eastman Hotel served as headquarters. The ground floor of the Oaklawn Park grandstand was the scene of the conference entertainment with a carnival theme prevailing. The conference was held during the prohibition era, and it has been recorded that Garland County's finest "moonshine" was served! At that time our club was a part of District 16 with clubs located in Arkansas, Mississippi, and southeast Missouri. In those days very few Rotary-Anns attended the District Conferences, and it was customary to close the conference with a big ball. Therefore, the local arrangements committee would round up all of the pretty blondes, brunettes, and redheads they could find to dance with the visitors. No doubt this accounted for the marked increase in attendance of the Rotary-Anns at later conferences. The local Rotarians were assessed \$30.00 each to cover the deficit of \$1,500.00.

The second District Conference held in Hot Springs was in May, 1924. Milton Nobles served as Conference Secretary and Rotary Boys' Bands from Memphis, Little Rock, Pine Bluff, and Arkadelphia joined with the Hot Springs Band in entertaining the delegates and their guests. Remmel Dam was under construction and a special Rock Island train carried the delegates, guests, and the five bands to the construction site. The five bands played a mass concert. Registrations reflected that there were 312 Rotarians, 87 Rotary-Anns, 8 guests, one sweetheart, and one mother-in-law in attendance.



Milton Nobles (center), 1923

Golden Anniversary of Rotary

The Golden Anniversary of Rotary International was observed in the city of Chicago in 1955. Through the driving power and fearless leadership of Milton Nobles, and with the financial assistance of the other clubs in our district, the 90-voice Trojan Chorus of Hot Springs High School, under the direction of Dora Jane Ledgerwood (later Rotary-Ann of Trice Ellis) was taken to Chicago to provide the key entertainment for this most significant convention of Rotary. The chorus provided the music for the opening session and again for one of the evening sessions. The chorus, eight chaperones, nine Rotarians,

and twelve guests were transported on two special Pullman sleepers and two chair cars over the Mo-Pac and G.M. & O. railroads.



Friendship Hall, Rotary International, Chicago, 1955

Programs

During the years our club has maintained a high class type of program for its weekly luncheons. Among the outstanding individuals who have spoken to our club have been United States Senators and Representatives, Arkansas Constitutional Officers, Directors and Past Directors of Rotary International, and Officers of Rotary International, including President Dr. C. P. H. Teenstra of The Netherlands and President Roy Hickman of Birmingham, Alabama.

Unique individuals who have appeared on our programs include Paul Harris, founder of Rotary; Helen Keller, famous woman who brought great hope to the blind; Sir Harry Lauder, famous humorist and Rotarian from Scotland; Dr. Lloyd C. Douglass, distinguished author of "The Robe"; William Jennings Bryan, noted statesman and orator; Dr. E. Stanley Jones, well-known Methodist missionary to India; Dr. John Abernathy, Baptist missionary to China and Brig. General on the staff of General Chiang Kaishek; and Walter Bellingrath, creator



Senator Hattie Caraway of Arkansas (in black), first woman elected to a full term in US Senate, speaks at HSNP Rotary June 14, 1925.

of the famous Bellingrath Gardens near Mobile.

It has been the custom of our club for many years to recognize and honor the outstanding participants in the Miss Arkansas Pageant. Each year the reigning Miss Arkansas is invited to speak to, and entertain, our club. On a few occasions the reigning Miss America has been a special guest.

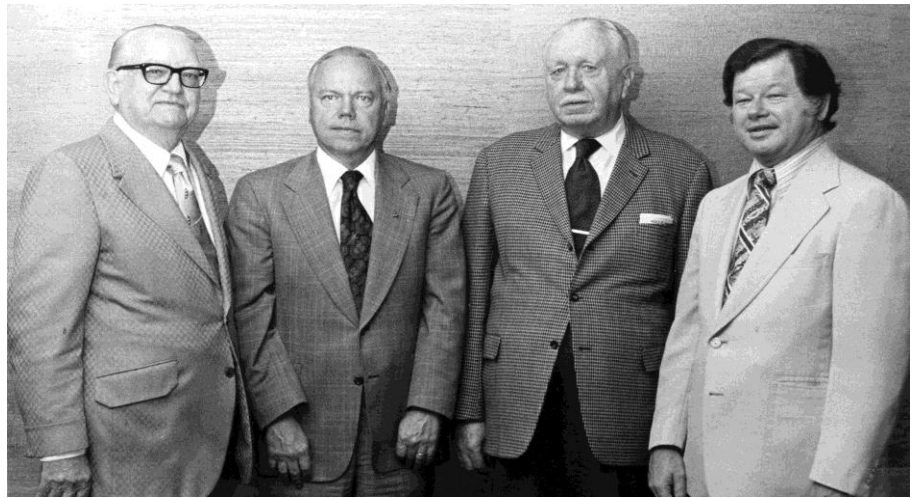
Ladies' Nights

Each year we honor our Rotary-Anns. Now that we have gone coed, I guess we will have to call them "Spouse Nights"! The first Ladies' Night was held on April 5, 1917, at the Essex Park Club House. Much of the success of our club through the years can be credited to the great assistance rendered by our Rotary-Anns in promoting many of our worthwhile projects.

Past District Governors

Since the organization of our club ten of its members have been elected to serve as District Governor:

Cecil Bayne
1949-50
Gerald Fisher
1971-72
Milton Nobles
1949-50
Vernon "Buck" Warr
1975-76
Richard L. Craigo
1957-58
Clarence W. Jordan
1981-82
Herb Allman
1960-61
Joe F. Fish
1998-99
Cecil Cupp, Jr.
1966-67
Susan G. Aldridge
2007-2008



District Governors Cecil Cupp Sr., Cecil Cupp Jr., Richard L. Craigo, and Gerald Fisher.

The first elected from our club, Cecil Bayne, died in office about five months after he was installed, and Milton Nobles was appointed by the President of Rotary International to serve out the unexpired term. Milton would often remark that he was the first "illegitimate" District Governor.

"Buck" Warr passed away in the early part of his term and Past District Governor "Si" Snow of the Conway Club was appointed to serve out the balance of his unexpired term.

We have two other members of our club who are Past District Governors, but were not members of our club when they served. Cecil Cupp, Sr. was a member of the Arkadelphia club serving in 1953-54, and Cliff Horton was a member of the Conway Club, serving in 1980-81. Six of the eleven are still living and are members of our club.

Local Scholarship Program

Recognizing the ever-existing financial needs of our local college bound high school graduates, our club embarked on a program to help deserving students. This began in the Rotary year 1950-51 as a loan fund available only to Hot Springs High School graduates on the basis of academic ability. In 1971 the loan fund was replaced by a "Student Scholarship Program" embracing all Garland County schools and selections based on academic ability, extracurricular involvement, and financial need. In 1992 an Endowment Scholarship Committee was formed to raise funds through members and various fundraising events. The goal of \$100,000 was set so that five \$1,000 scholarships could be given on an annual basis. This goal was met on December 31, 1997. The fund is called "The Joe F. Fish Scholarship Endowment Fund" in honor of Joe Fish who served as club treasurer for 25 years.

In 1988 Rotarian J. C. and Wayma Rowe established the Grace and Stuart Rowe Scholarship which awards "not less than \$1,000.00" annually. This selection is made in addition to the five scholarships mentioned above with need the primary basis. To date our club has had the pleasure of having awarded a total in excess of \$50,000.00.

In tandem with the Joe F. Fish Scholarship Endowment Fund and the Stuart and Grace Rowe Scholarship Fund, another scholarship program was started in our club during years 2001-02. The name of the new program is called "Hot Springs National Park Rotary Club Scholarship Trust". It has the same goal as the other scholarship programs -- i.e., to serve the needs of students in the Hot Springs area who desire a higher education.



Pancho Rowe with scholarship recipients

The scholarship trust is a 501-3-C organization enabling Rotarians to make gifts in a tax favored manner. Six ways you can assist in the education of students are the following:

- Gifts of Cash
- Appreciated Securities
- Real Estate

- Gifts from a Will
- Life Insurance

- Charitable Remainder Trusts

Rotary Foundation

From the inception of the Rotary Foundation our club has given it outstanding financial support. Every member has contributed at least \$10.00. The largest part of the funds contributed is derived from the PAUL HARRIS FELLOWSHIPS. Through June 30, 2007, the club has secured more than 200 Fellowships for a total of more than \$200,000. The club leads the District in total amount given, total number of Paul Harris Fellows, and the highest percentage in per capita giving.

The biggest project by the Rotary Foundation began in 1985 with a goal of eradicating polio worldwide by the year 2005. Our club raised \$50,000 for the project from 1987 to 1989. We had a bass tournament on Lake Ouachita and assessed members \$5.00 a month to reach this goal in four years.

The commitment brought excitement to all the clubs knowing this was the most ambitious undertaking by a private organization. As a result the Foundation has raised over 600 million dollars and has immunized over 2 billion children by the year 2007.

Oaklawn, Hot Springs Village and Hot Springs Sunrise Clubs

The Hot Springs National Park Rotary Club has sponsored three new Rotary Clubs in recent years, the Oaklawn Club in 1970, the Hot Springs Village Club in 1985 and Hot Springs Sunrise Club in 2004. These clubs are in healthy condition and offer excellent opportunities to make up attendance. The Oaklawn Club meets at noon on Mondays at The Velda Rose, Hot Springs Sunrise meets at 7:00 a.m. at the Embassy Suites, and the Village Club meets at 7:00 a.m. on Thursdays at Good Samaritan in the Hot Springs Village.

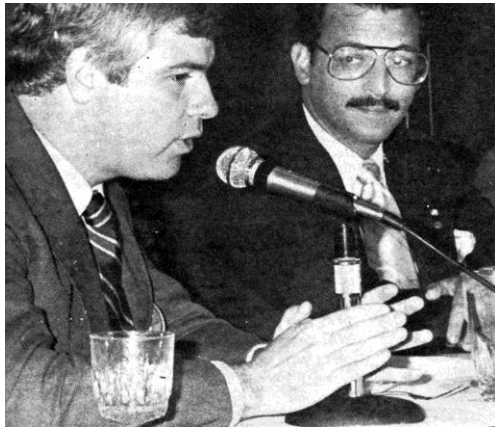
Club Leadership

Eighty-nine members have served as president of the club. Al Reynolds was the only president to serve more than one year. He served three years. Milton Nobles served as club secretary for 16 years and 2007 began Steve Turner's 29th year. Darrell Wear served 19 years as club treasurer and Joe Fish served 25 years in that capacity. Leaders of our club have been involved in the Chamber of Commerce, Y.M.C.A., United Way and its predecessors, Boy Scouts, Boys Club, Salvation Army, and the Convention Bureau. This is Community Service in action!

Rehabilitation of Downtown Hot Springs

During recent years a gigantic program of rehabilitation has taken place in downtown Hot Springs. From Prospect Avenue to Whittington Park Junction, a new facelift has occurred and the entire area is "blooming" again. Several boards and committees have been established and once again the leadership in Rotary has been heavily tapped. The

following Rotarians have served on one of these groups: Carl Crow, Jr., Cecil Cupp, Jr., Clay Farrar, Horst Fischer, Mark Fleischner, Roger Giddings, Larry Hall, Leland Hilborn, Eric Jackson, Dr. K. K. Jayaraman, Louis Kleinman, David Love, Lew Lyle, Jim Randall, Dr. Dick Springer, and Brad Wolken. Several of these have held key positions and to all who served on these various groups we owe a big "thank you".



Clay Farrar and Mark Fleischner at Rotary Symposium on the future of Hot Springs National Park, July 4, 1985

Looking to the Future

To all of our new members who have joined during the past few years and the new ones who will be joining in the future, take an active interest in the work of the committee to which you have been assigned, ever keeping in mind the Rotary Motto, "SERVICE ABOVE SELF!"

Compiled by Jacob L. King Past President,
Club Historian

Updated in 2002 by Dick Gladden Past President and Mr. "Rotary Minute"

Updated in 2007 by Gail Greenberg Executive Secretary of HSNP Rotary

Updated with photos in 2012 by Liz Robbins, History Committee