



An assembly room for the Rotary Club of Charleston at the Francis Marion Hotel. (Photo courtesy of the Francis Marion Hotel.)

The 1960s: Club focuses on area projects

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Overview

The 1960s were marked by benevolent activities, including extensive work on behalf of the disabled children in the community and donations to international causes. They were also marked by internal debates about controversial topics of the time during which Rotarians were able to voice differences in opinion without their differences becoming divisive.

Membership

By working together on community activities and permitting freedom of opinion and speech on controversial topics, Club members were able to grow together as people, and the Club grew by about 20 members and finished the decade with 167 members.

Projects and community service

The Club's generosity and service to the community continued during the 1960s as members helped to buy a station wagon for the Crippled Children's Society and sponsored a Cub Scout pack for crippled children.

Members also were instrumental in the Charleston community securing a traffic engineer to make area streets safer. The Club also made a contribution to help victims of a destructive flood in Florence, Italy, and held a major fund-raiser to provide \$3,000 in funding for a new ward at a hospital in Malaysia.

Notable speakers

Throughout the decade, members heard thought-provoking speakers, including Dr. F.M. Ball, who opposed Medicare; Edward K. Pritchard, who discussed relocation of Interstate 95; and Austin T. Smythe who talked about consolidated county government. Other programs were on privatization of Santee Cooper, the state's right-to-work law, blue laws, the John Birch Society, South Africa and anti-Semitism.

1960–61: 32 have perfect attendance

The Club's new president, Luther Rosebrock, held a meeting of all chairmen during June to outline the programs for the coming Rotary year. The Club asked the Health and Happiness Committee to visit the sick and shut-ins. Rosebrock also gave a splendid report of his trip to Miami, where he attended the Rotary International Convention.

There was much confusion on the part of Rotarians this year following a change in the meeting location. One meeting was cancelled so members could attend a speech by S.C. Gov. Ernest Hollings. Another meeting was cancelled so Rotarians could participate in the United Way kickoff luncheon. One lunch was held at the Navy Base, and another at The Citadel. In spite of the confusion, 32 members had perfect attendance this year.

Eight members volunteered to be in the Centennial Celebration of the Civil War. The event was held during April 1961, 100 years after the firing of shots on Fort Sumter.

Club members attempted unsuccessfully to get a combined roster with the St. Andrews and North Charleston clubs. The County Health Center was named in honor of Rotarian Leon Banov Sr., who gave so much of his time to Charleston County in health matters.

District Governor Wayne Unger of Walterboro visited the Club and said, "It's not how we live but what we live that counts."

What the new county reassessment would do for Charleston County was the subject of an address by Wilbur Ratcliffe. Dr.

Frank Kral spoke to a joint meeting of three Rotary clubs about his experiences in a Nazi prison camp. This Czechoslovakian native had been a Rotarian in Czechoslovakia and was arrested as a spy when the Nazi regime took over his country.

Henry Robertson conducted an excellent indoctrination program for new members. Mrs. Rosa Connelly left about \$2,500 of her estate to the student loan fund.

Start: 144 members. End: 144 members.

1961-62: Member elected district governor

There were interesting and varied programs during the 1961-62 Rotary year. A night harbor cruise was held in July with plenty of food and spirits available. A delegation of 17 visited Savannah for an intercity meeting. This was promoted by Hudson Edwards, who had been a past president of the Savannah Club. Rotarians from the Savannah club returned the visit at one of the Charleston Club's meetings.

One meeting was held at the YMCA, and one meeting was changed to Wednesday so Club members could support the United Way kickoff luncheon. During November, members brought gifts to be sent to the Whitten Village for retarded children in Clinton, S.C. During December, Rotarians made cash contributions, and the collection was given to the Citadel Wives' Club to purchase toys for the Crippled Children's Center.

Honorary member Charles Webb died during February. He was the person solely responsible for Rotary's starting the Crippled Children's Society in South Carolina and the hospital on Calhoun Street. Rotarian G. Simms McDowell, who joined Rotary in 1929, died in February 1962. He was a strong supporter of the Boy Scouts and raised the money to purchase Camp Ho-Non-Wah. F. Oliver Bates, who joined the Club during 1921, also died this year.

Nineteen Rotarians attended the District Conference in Florence and witnessed Jimmy Bagwell's election as the next district governor. The Club voted to send an Explorer Scout to New Mexico. The Club also voted for the Civic Welfare Committee to support an effort to secure a new road to Beaufort.

The directors voted for a resolution calling on city and county governments for a stricter enforcement of traffic laws, but the members did not support this resolution. Club members had a party for the children of Rotarians at which they witnessed a takeoff on Art Linkletter's TV program.

Start: 144 members. End: 146 members.

1962–63: Medicare, I-95 are hot topics

In his first Club assembly, President Tom Carrere asked for tolerance, understanding and cooperation in Rotary. He stated he would stress attendance and fellowship during the coming year.

The Club adopted a new design of the Club banner and adopted a new type of member medallion. The "Friend X" program was revived. Under this program, the Club sent 75 cents per member to help fund a station wagon for the Crippled Children's Society. The Club also sponsored a Cub Scout pack for crippled children. The Club voted to send \$1,055 to the Webb Rehabilitation Center in honor of the late Rotarian Charles Webb for use in furnishing a conference room.

One of the hottest subjects of the day, the alleged dangers of Medicare, was presented to the club by Dr. F.M. Ball, a strong opponent of Medicare. Relocation of expressway I-95 was another hot subject presented to the Club by Edward K. Pritchard. Officers of the Brazilian Navy were guests of the Club and were brought to the meeting by Rotarian Ashmead Pringle. Also, a dozen officers from Italian ships were guests during one meeting. An interclub meeting was held with the St. Andrews Club during the year.

Club member Jimmy Bagwell made his official visit as district governor. His sincerity and eloquence made the spoken word mightier. A Christmas party was held, and each Club member brought a gift for a mental health patient and also for the children in attendance. Tim Rabon dressed as Santa Claus for the party, and Chief Newbery was the master of ceremonies.

John Orvin, chairman of the Attendance Committee, and committee members worked hard. Thirty-six members had perfect attendance. The Baileys (Sr., III, and John) presented the Club

with a new medallion board. The Roster Committee abandoned the loose-leaf type of roster. Seven different Club members were seated at the head table each week so members would become better acquainted with one another. The Club was saddened by the deaths of Edwin J. Thornhill and past President Austin J. Smythe.

Start: 146 members. End: 151 members.

1963–64: Webb Center opens

The Charles Webb Rehabilitation Center for Crippled Children was formally opened during September 1963. A Christmas party was held for children of Rotarians, and each guest brought a gift for a patient at the State Mental Hospital.

President Heyward Lynah reported on the Rotary International Convention held in St. Louis and commented on the courtesy displayed by everyone. He asked every member to write a letter to a Japanese Rotarian who was a member of a club assigned to this Club as an International Service project. Past District Governor Buddy Thornhill traveled to Japan, and in so doing, traveled more than 20,000 miles as this Club's ambassador. He returned with many souvenirs and stories. Kaichi Muto of Gifu, Japan, returned the visit when he visited this Club in February. He was showered with gifts from Club members.

It was suggested that the Rotary Information Committee consist of past presidents. The Fellowship Committee members wore ribbons for identification purposes. Members having an attendance record of 70 percent or less had their names published in the *Keyway* each month.

Miss Eva Lauritzen of Sweden was a summer guest of the Club as part of an international youth exchange. Ladies' Night was a delightful evening, but attendance was poor.

The editor of the *Keyway*, Ed Croft, died of a heart attack, and past-President Roe Remington passed away.

The board of directors recommended a dues increase, but it was not put into effect due to careful management of the increased hotel costs. The Club turned down a request to start an Interact

Club for youths because the youth agencies in Charleston were doing a satisfactory job.

Start: 151 members. End: 155 members.

1964–65: Charleston club wins contest

The Charleston and Columbia clubs entered an attendance contest sponsored by the district governor. It was based on percentage improvement over a six-month period. Charleston won, as it had more room for improvement.

The Club was 100 percent in favor of community proposals for a new auditorium and for a Technical Education Center.

Club members heard about a controversy of electric power. The issue was whether Santee Cooper should be sold to a private or a public power company.

One program involved a quiz for members on Rotary basics. Those who did not know the answers paid a small fine for the benefit of the Crippled Children's Center. A novel program was presented by Bill Lucas using his TV facilities. Mal Haven interviewed Tom Waring during his attendance at the Republican convention in San Francisco.

Under President Conrad Zimmerman Sr., the board of directors heightened enforcement of Club policies. A budget was approved that called for expenditures to exceed income by \$702. The dues were set at \$30 per year plus the cost of meals.

The Board instructed Zimmerman to write letters to members who habitually left the meetings early. They recommended no new member be introduced until he had paid the initiation fee of \$25 and had his photo made for the roster. The roster was returned to the loose-leaf type, which made the fourth time the type of roster had been changed. The board also put all members on notice that Rotary International attendance rules would be enforced.

The officers also requested that members rotate seating each week among tables in order to enjoy new associations. They found some Rotarians were sitting at the same table and at the same seat every week. The board decided against holding a Ladies' Night due to past poor attendance.

It was discovered that on many occasions there were several guests of the Club present who had nothing to do with the program presented, so the board passed a policy that if more than two guests were to be present, the Program Committee must clear this in advance.

Start: 155 members. End: 156 members.

1965–66: Club hears about controversial issues

President Malcolm Haven's guidance produced some terrific and controversial meeting subjects this year. Much of the credit was due to the inspiration and work of the Program Committee, under the leadership of Ken Johnson. The subjects demonstrated that programs could be presented and discussed without the Club being split by differences in opinion.

Both sides of any controversial topics were presented by informed speakers. Some of the subjects presented included: the right to work law, Sunday's blue laws, private versus public power companies; anti-Semitism, the John Birch Society and South Africa.

Other important programs included discussions of the expansion of the Medical College, the expansion of the College of Charleston, water conservation and pollution, laser beams, harbor silting, and the James Island Bridge.

Three members of the YWCA International Club presented an outstanding program about the difference in living conditions in Germany, Japan and Greece as compared with Charleston. They expressed their good fortune in being able to live in their adopted country.

Chief Newbery, as the Club's historian, presented to the board his revised and condensed history of the Club covering a 47-year span. The board decided to delay in presenting the work to the Club and instead would present it as part of the 50th anniversary.

The Special Projects Committee helped secure a traffic engineer for Charleston. The Committee was led by past District Governor Jimmy Bagwell, and Committee members Austin Smythe, Hosey Hearn and Howard Burky were instrumental in this success story.

Some of the other program highlights of the year included "Fishing off Charleston" by Jack Hassell; "Four Years a Japanese Prisoner;" "The New Trident Chamber of Commerce;" "The Removal of the Comfort Station in Marion Square;" "The New Auditorium;" and "Sky Diving." The Emory University Choir sang at one of the meetings.

Haven, with his keen mind, led the Club to a very interesting and thought-provoking year.

Start: 156 members. End: 160 members.

1966–67: Members say what's on their minds

Because Club President Hudson Edwards had previously been the president of the Savannah Club, there were exchange visits between the Charleston and Savannah clubs during the year.

As a new feature of the *Keyway*, there were a series of articles entitled, "What's on My Mind," which were written by various members.

Rotarian Ken Johnson asked Charleston Rotarians to support a bridge to James Island. Tom Read spoke about the Civil Rights Act of 1966. Ted Stern discussed perfunctory patriotism. Jim Plair scolded Rotarians for staying away from voting booths on election day. Graduate education in Charleston was a void, and Rotarians discussed why and how it could be made a reality.

Mayor J. Palmer Gaillard spoke to the Club and gave an analysis of the "Illness in our City." Louis Nesmith wrote a strong article on the dangers of Medicare. Austin T. Smythe, Jr., presented "Consolidated County Government" as a project for Rotarians, even if it would take 10 years to accomplish.

Edwards acknowledged he knew only 37 members personally when he became Club president, so he undertook a project to know more of them.

The Club sent a generous contribution to Florence, Italy, after a disastrous flood there. The city and county also contributed to the cause. Constantinos Zecos, a 19-year-old from Ethiopia, was the Club's guest as an ambassador of Rotary International.

An updated Club Constitution was furnished to each member, as well as an updated classification roster. The Club dues increased because the hotel raised the price of meals during February. The

SPOTLIGHT: Club's leadership yields traffic project

In July 1964 when Rotary International sought a way to mark the 60th anniversary of the organization's founding, it decided there was no more satisfying way to do this than to urge all Rotary Clubs to determine the most urgent need of their community and to attack this need with a significant "Paul Harris Project."

A special committee was appointed in October 1964 consisting of Will Deas, Jim Plair, Jim Small, Bill Lucas, Bob McDowell, Ken Johnson and chairman Jim Bagwell. This committee had the responsibility of deciding what the greatest need of the Charleston community was. After considerable consultation and discussion, the committee decided the Club should undertake a project to convince Charleston County citizens about the urgent need for a Traffic Safety Engineering department.

The Club approved this project in April 1965. Rotarian Bill Kelly was added to the committee. The Club undertook a program of action to persuade the local governments that a Joint Traffic Engineering Department should be set up and a professional engineer hired to head it.

Armed with information of a study of Pensacola, Florida's system, the committee held many conferences with the City of Charleston's mayor, his aldermen and members of Charleston County Council. The committee met with very little encouragement. Members were told on all sides that such a project was impossible. However, persistence paid off as the logic of such a proposal became more obvious. By March 1966, the project bore fruit when the city and county set up a department and hired a professional traffic engineer.

Time has proved the wisdom of the Club's leaders as traffic has become more and more of a problem. This project is another outstanding example of Rotary in action.

-- Jerry Nuss

Educational fund was renamed the James G. Sherrer Educational Fund.

Charles Palmer recommended the Rotary Clubs in and around Charleston to support the establishment of a University of Charleston. The *Keyway* started publishing the obligations of Rotary Club Committees, which was needed guidance.

Start: 160 members. End: 170 members.

1967–68: Club raises funds for new ward

During this Rotary year, the Club committed its members to contribute \$3,000 for a new ward in a hospital in Malaysia. Ted Stern chaired a committee to raise the money; a black-tie dinner was held at the Francis Marion Hotel on May 30, 1968. Some 150 people at \$25 per person attended.

The other big news of the year came on Jan. 1, 1968, when Mrs. Cora Lee Hamlin started as the Club's first executive secretary. With the Club's continued growth, increase in correspondence, need for continuity and the long siege of illness of Club Secretary "Buddy" Smith, the board of directors decided to retain an executive secretary who was not a Rotarian or a wife of a Rotarian.

Due to increased costs associated with the minimum wage law, the hotel increased the cost of the weekly Rotary luncheons. This, coupled with the hire of the executive secretary, caused the annual fees to be increased. The Club operated at a loss of \$864 during the 1966–67 Rotary year.

The Club's bylaws were brought up to date, and the annual meeting was changed from March to January, which gave time for the president-elect to make arrangements for the Rotary International Convention.

The Charleston, North Charleston and St. Andrews clubs cohosted District Governor Charlie Palmer's District Conference under the chairmanship of Hudson Edwards. The groundwork for an awards program for "Service above Self" was generated.

President Ken Johnson brought a keen sense of humor and a dedication to the improvement of quality of its membership. In his closing remarks as he retired, he was generous in his praise of his

fellow officers and committee chairmen. His farewell address was entitled, "Ken's Reign Ends, Amen and Hallelujah!"

Start: 170. End: 170 members.

1968–69: Bylaws amended, members lead

The Club's bylaws were amended to strengthen the selection of candidates for the board. A nominating committee was to include three immediate past presidents and two members of the outgoing Board. This committee was charged to take into account each candidate's record of attendance, participation, service and knowledge of Rotary principles.

Rotarians were given a grand tour of the new City Auditorium. Ted Stern, Murray Curley, William Broome and William Deas were honored for their wonderful job in sponsoring the dinner that raised funds for the Malaysian hospital. Rotarians were very much in the forefront of civic affairs including United Fund, Chamber of Commerce, Christmas Seals, Crippled Children's Society and Salvation Army. Rotarians John Seabrook, G. K. Livingston, Bill Lucas, Bachman Smith, Jimmy Bagwell and John Bettis headed up these agencies.

The first African-American to be invited to be a speaker before the Club was the Reverend Henry L. Grant, on July 9, 1968. He spoke on the goodwill between races. The Club was shocked at the death of S. Henry Edmunds, who was a great Rotarian and had been the president during the 1938–39 Rotary year. The Club lost an unsung Rotarian when Clay Evatt Sr. died during February. He contributed many good turns to deserving people and causes.

The Rotary Outstanding Service Award was given to past District Governor Jimmy Bagwell as the last official function of outgoing President Bob McDowell. A leader and a football star at The Citadel, McDowell continued his leadership in directing the Club. It was an excellent year for Charleston Rotary: a year of good fellowship, a year of good programs (no politicians), and a year devoted to service to the community.

Start: 170 members. End: 164 members.

1969–70: Club celebrates Golden Anniversary

The Club celebrated its Golden Anniversary on Feb. 17, 1970. Hudson Edwards and Chief Newbery were in charge of the program. It was widely considered to be the best Rotary event and entertainment ever held locally. A brief history of the Club was printed as a souvenir of this historical event.

Also, under the leadership of Edwards, the Club adopted a Golden Anniversary Safety Project. Thirty-nine Rotary-affiliated companies cooperated in a local effort to reduce loss of life from traffic accidents through a billboard and television advertising campaign. The campaign brought more prestige to the Club and proved to be a very successful activity.

Meanwhile, the Club lost a beloved member when Vernon Cogswell died during July. His cheerful disposition and friendly manner made him many friends. Louis Fischer, one of the two men responsible for organizing Rotary in Charleston, died in November.

The Club sponsored a Rotary Foundation scholar, Ann Leiding Green, who was chosen by the district as the best candidate. She picked Switzerland for her year of graduate study.

The Club had 23 Merit Scholar finalists as guests during December. Dr. Leon Banov, Sr., was presented the "Man of the Year Award." The Club contributed \$250 for a Mini-Park and an 11-passenger bus to the local Crippled Children's school.

The District Conference was held in Charleston during March. At the conference, Edwards was elected as incoming district governor for the 1971–72 Rotary year.

At the end of his term, President Linwood Sikes gave a five-page summary and review of the year. In this report, he found the occasion to mention nearly every Club member for the support he was accorded.

Start: 164 members. End: 167 members.