



Hurricane Hugo pounded the Charleston area in 1989. Rotarians from around the world came to Charleston's aid. *(Photo courtesy of The Post and Courier.)*

The 1980s: A new era begins for Club

David Abel, contributing editor

Overview

The Eighties brought exciting change to the Rotary Club of Charleston. The Club, like the city of Charleston, was growing, and during these times members had to make important decisions about how far and in which direction Charleston Rotary should grow. The Club realized that to grow sometimes meant to tear down walls.

And when walls came down in Charleston, new opportunities arose for Rotarians to do what they do best – serve. One of the most notable events to occur during the decade was the acceptance of women to the Club. Breaking down walls allowed the Charleston Club to sponsor the creation another club in the area, the Charleston Breakfast Club, and for the original Club to move to a new meeting location.

As the decade was coming to a close, on September 21, 1989, the members of the Rotary Club of Charleston experienced Hurricane Hugo literally tearing down walls no one ever dreamed of taking down. Hugo was arguably the greatest natural devastation to Charleston since the great earthquake of 1886. The people of Charleston pulled together during this time, and members of the Rotary Club once again responded like they always did, serving the community with their time and resources.

Membership

The Club began 1980 with more than 215 members. By the end of the decade as women were able to join for the first time, the Club grew almost 30 percent to 278 members.

Projects and community service

Club members dedicated countless hours to community service project during the Eighties. Among the most noteworthy were the Gift of Life program, which the Club started to help pay medical expenses for life-saving operations for children from Third World countries, and the Wood for Warmth program, which provided free firewood to local needy families.

Club members also collected used stamps, which were used to get credits for vaccines in Third World countries, and hundreds of pounds of clothes and shoes for the needy in Honduras.

Members agreed to raise money to fund international efforts to eradicate polio and a local effort to finish a campaign to erect a statue in Wraggsborough Square.

During the decade, members helped to start a Charleston Breakfast Rotary Club and an Interact Club.

Notable speakers

The Club continued to attract high-quality speakers to educate and entertain members weekly. Among the more notable:

- Club member Reuben Greenberg, the local police chief who attracted the attention of the TV program *60 Minutes*;
- Lou Roddis, a member who described an investigation into the Chernobyl nuclear disaster based on his experience as a member of a study commission appointed by President Reagan;
- Gene Figg, a Charleston native with an international reputation as a major builder of bridges;
- College of Charleston President Harry Lightsey, who described how the school was gaining a great national reputation; and
- State Ports Authority Chairman Bob Royall, who described how the port was growing.

1980–81: Committed to wiping out polio

The Rotary Club of Charleston stepped into a new decade with Joseph L. Emery as president and 215 members. Emery was regarded as an exceptional public speaker. He began his term addressing members on the admirable life of Rotary founder Paul Harris. The speech captured the attention of the Club, something Emery was able to hold on to the entire year with his superb speaking ability complemented by a subtle sense of humor that enlivened each meeting.

Beginning in 1979, Rotary International dedicated itself to the eradication of polio from the face of the Earth. After years of working to help crippled children, the Charleston Club immediately shared the international commitment to wiping out polio. To help raise money to deliver the polio vaccine, the Club hosted a black-tie dinner in honor of Dr. Albert Sabin, the world-renowned immunologist who developed the polio vaccine. It was an enjoyable evening with great results. The dinner raised almost \$8,000, which was divided among three recipients: the Charleston Orphanage, Hospice of Charleston and the 3-H program of the Rotary Foundation.

Another big event during the year was the District Conference held at the new Sheraton Hotel in Charleston. It was an honor for Charleston because the district governor was from Columbia, and decided to use Charleston as the conference place over his home city. Many of the Club's members participated and witnessed the nomination of Jerry Nuss from the Charleston Club as district governor for 1982-83.

Start: 215 members. End: 217 members.

1981–82: Seeding a new club in Charleston

The pace picked up in 1981 under President Russell F. Harney. Contributions continued to the Rotary Foundation as the Club inducted nine new Paul Harris Fellows. The Club also contributed to the Charles Webb Center and the American Red Cross Building fund.

In the interest of giving, the Club also changed its college scholarship awards from loans to grants. The scholarship fund was set up for designated scholars at the College of Charleston, the Citadel, MUSC and the Baptist College.

However, the big news of the year was the Club's decision to sponsor a new Rotary club within its territorial limits. The downtown Club reached an agreement with the North Charleston Rotary Club clarifying the mutual boundary line and the priority of soliciting members from the military bases in Charleston. The project of chartering the new club continued into the late part of the year, and on Nov. 24, 1982, the Charleston Breakfast Club had its first meeting with 35 members. By the end of the Rotary year, it had 49 members.

Buddy Hinnant, Sam Rasor and Ted Weiant, members from the original Charleston Club, formed the nucleus of the new Club, and Hinnant was named President. The Breakfast Club became the sixth club that the original Charleston Club sponsored through the years. The others were Beaufort, St. Andrews, North Charleston, Mount Pleasant and Summerville.

The Club also studied the possibility of moving its luncheon site from the Colony House to the Francis Marion Hotel. It ultimately decided against the move, but continued searching for a new site mainly because parking at the Colony House had become severely limited from new development in the area. A little over a year later in 1983, the club moved its meeting place from the Colony House to the Shrine Temple with the unanimous support of members.

In 1981, a Resolutions Committee was established to honor deserving fellow members. The first recipient was Rear Admiral Bob McClinton, honored on March 26, a day proclaimed for him by the city.

A few months later, the Club sought to honor another great Rotarian, General Mark Clark. On Feb. 8, 1982, 20 members traveled to Columbia to attend a luncheon celebrating the 77th anniversary of Rotary. Clark was to have been given a Paul Harris Fellowship by the governor of the State, Richard Riley. Unfortunately, Clark was hospitalized shortly before this event and this presentation was postponed to a later date.

SPOTLIGHT:

Wood for Warmth program helps needy

President Clarence Calcote in 1982 appointed a committee under Jan Wroblewski to initiate a new Wood for Warmth Program. This program, based on an idea from

Rotarians also celebrated the fruits of their labor in 1982 when the Trident Community Foundation announced it was able to provide seed money for various community projects as determined by its directors. The Trident Community Foundation started as the Club's project in 1974 when it donated \$9,000 to get it started. Foundation leaders told to the Club it now had reached a point where it was a valuable asset to the community with assets over \$75,000.

Start: 217 members. End: 216 members.

1982–83: Community warms to Rotary

In the fall of 1982, Club President Clarence E. Calcote led members to develop an idea generated earlier into a new community service project called, Rotary Wood for Warmth. Jan Wroblewski and his committee used the program to distribute more than 50 truckloads of firewood during Saturday mornings of the winter season. The wood went to needy families. The Club's members hauled it, cut it and helped to load it into the vehicles of recipients. It was judged to be a great success – during its initial year and in years to come.

Also during this year, former president Jerry J. Nuss became the eighth member of the Charleston Club to serve as district governor. He set ambitious goals, one of which was for each of the 3,125 Rotarians in the district to make an average contribution of \$25 to the Rotary Foundation – a feat that would generate more than \$75,000.

Also during the year, Jack Bevan and the Foundation committee conducted successful auctions and raffles that led the club to raise \$10,688, an average of almost \$50 per member. The district surpassed all previous records by amassing \$103,075 for an average of \$33 per district member.

In the spring of 1983, Past President Russ Harney led the District Conference committee, and many members assisted. The Rotary Club of Charleston was the host club; the District Conference was May 7-9 at the Sheraton Hotel. Former

Congressman Walter Judd was the featured speaker and more than half of the Club's members attended various portions of the conference.

Start: 216 members. End: 222 members.

1983–84: Club mourns loss of Gen. Mark Clark

President James "Alex" Grimsley Jr. emphasized Rotary's theme for the 1983–84 year: "Share Rotary, Serve People." He gave specific goals, including increasing membership and Rotary Foundation Support. Under Grimsley's leadership, the Club built great international relationships but suffered a huge loss at home.

General Mark Clark died shortly before his 88th birthday in April, much to the heartbreak of the community. The general was a longtime honorary member of the Rotary Club of Charleston and one of the city's most distinguished and beloved citizens.

In International Service, Russ Harney organized the collection of used stamps, which were sent via a district in Japan and exchanged for vaccines to use in third-world countries. Two members also had a little international fun that year at the Rotary World Golf Fellowship held in Myrtle Beach. Doug McFarland and Jerry Nuss entered the competition and McFarland won his division title and planned to defend it the following year in Scotland.

Throughout the year, the Club's Community Service Committee, led by Ben Smith, invited outstanding high school students as guests. His committee also gave generous support and assistance to Hospice of Charleston, enabling the Club to achieve its Community Service goal.

Grimsley used his term as president to encourage the Club to enjoy Rotary in the fullest sense of the word – enjoy the fellowship, enjoy the program and enjoy taking part in Club activities. For his leadership, he was awarded a Rotary International Presidential Citation.

Start: 222 members. End: 228 members.

1984–85: Club focuses on education

Rotary has always been committed to the community, and in 1984 the Charleston Club placed a special emphasis on education in the community.

When new President Bachman S. Smith III returned from the International Convention in Birmingham, England, he challenged the Club with Rotary International's theme for the year, "Discover a New World of Service." Smith declared education as one of the new worlds of service the Charleston Club would discover and appointed a new committee, Excellence in Education.

Throughout the year, the Club honored five outstanding schoolteachers and many distinguished high school students. A career day was held at Burke High School in April where 50 members spoke to the students about their professions and businesses.

That year, the club also participated in President Ronald Reagan's National Care and Share Day by donating food and money to the Grace Church Food Kitchen. The Club also served the Salvation Army during the Christmas season. The Salvation Army Bell Ringers were happy to report they collected \$639, the highest total in recent years.

Sometimes service took on a little fun and games for the Club. In a somewhat ostentatious staging, Rotarian Ken Johnson one day decorated his table with silver candelabra and champagne. Those privileged to sit at his table were cajoled by the president into making a \$50 total contribution to the Webb Center. More than \$1,250 was raised for the Charles Webb Crippled Children's Center that year.

Start: 228 members. End: 234 members.

1985–86: Working to make a difference

President Y.W. "Bill" Scarborough III, one of the Club's youngest presidents, started the year by asking Rotarians "to make a difference in the coming years." He also outlined an ambitious program to continue the good projects of the past, and to increase

new activities. One of the pastimes Bill tried to continue was to get the Club singing again, but had to yield under tremendous pressure, and it was ended. On one occasion, however, Fran Dougherty did get the Club to sing "Happy Birthday" – and in Italian!

Scarborough was open to all sorts of humor, which led to unusual sessions during the weekly Health and Happiness part of the program. For example, at one meeting Rotarian Phil Cotten came up with a new and amazing formula. He asked for questions from the floor and received several planted responses. Scarborough also allowed a visiting auctioneer to auction off his own necktie. Jerry Nuss paid \$50 for it and the proceeds went to the Rotary Foundation.

During another meeting, Club member and city police chief Reuben Greenberg spoke. He also became nationally known by appearing on the CBS television program *60 Minutes*. Greenberg, known as a remarkably effective chief, also happened to wear roller skates while on patrol – a habit no doubt picked up from his police days in California.

The Club also suffered four big losses during the year with the deaths of Jack Krawcheck, a member for more than 50 years; Barney Snowden; Russ Harney, a past president; and Dave McAlister, a past president. In addition, the Club lost Cora Lee Hamlin, its executive secretary for more than 18 years.

The Club held another outstanding Career Day at Burke High School and more than 50 Rotarians participated. There were also several programs that recognized the top high school students in the Charleston public schools. Various Teachers of the Year in the school system were also honored.

Rotary changed its bylaws in 1985, making the immediate past president a member of the board of directors. The rule enabled the Club utilize his experience in the many matters of Board business. Members Andy Anderson, Leon Banov, Lee Shapleigh and Jim Stelling were elected to the Board. Shapleigh was elected to serve as President-elect for 1986–87.

Start: 234 members. End: 241 members.

1986–87: Club starts Gift of Life program

Under the leadership of President Alfred G. Pinckney, Club members started a new program that showed the real difference the organization makes in the lives of individuals.

During this year, the Charleston Club started its Gift of Life program which successfully brought children with huge medical needs to Charleston to get the medical attention they needed.

In October 1986, two Korean sisters, Soo Jin Sul and Soo Kyung Sul, aged 8 and 3, respectively, underwent open-heart surgery for heart defects at the Medical University. Doctors Paul Gillette and Fred Crawford of MUSC performed the heart operations on the children, which were successful and allowed the children to grow up to be healthy individuals instead of invalids.

The Gift of Life program captured the hearts and minds of the Club and even became a project for District 777. Pinckney spearheaded a drive to obtain the money to pay for costs and gave it the personal touch needed for its success. The district raised more than \$14,000 to cover hospital costs. The doctors contributed the costs of their services and Korean Rotary clubs paid to transport the girls to and from Charleston.

Following the success of the initial pair of operations, the district applied for a matching grant from the Rotary Foundation, which enabled it to bring two more children from Korea to Charleston, Jong Jun, age 7, and Ko Un Chae, age 3. They came in May 1987, and returned in June.

In 1988, Rotarian Jimmy Cobbs and his wife, Mary, were given a special presentation by the district for their great support in hosting two children from Trinidad as they received their life-saving heart operation under the Gift of Life Program. By the end of the decade, Pinckney announced that 10 children had been successfully operated on as part of the Gift of Life Program.

Also during the year, the Club hosted the District Conference at the new Omni Hotel. Bill Scarborough, chairman of the event, was assisted by many members, including Lee Shapleigh, Jimmy Hagood, Jim Stelling, John Jordan and Andy Anderson. At the conference, the Club's *Keyway* newsletter was awarded the "best bulletin" prize for large clubs. Steve Bowen was the editor for the

year. The Club was also awarded a presidential citation by the district governor.

The club had some "wild" programs during the year, two of which were animal-related. One was called "Deer Driving" and another "Fox Hunting." At one meeting Robert Dickson, owner and chef of the fabulous Robert's restaurant, sang to members and talked about food. Lou Roddis, one of the Club's members and a former colleague of Admiral Hyman Rickover, was appointed by President Ronald Reagan to serve on the committee studying the Russian nuclear plant accident at Chernobyl. He gave the Club a very interesting presentation of the committee's findings. During several of the programs, the Club's history was read.

Also during the year, Club members collected and packed more than 1,800 pounds of shoes and clothes to send to Honduras. Bill and Wallace Scarborough, Bob Barton, Al Hancock, John Maybank, Richard Rieger, Jim Deaton, John Jordan, Joe Twinam, Wallace Anderson, Jack Hassell and leader Gary Nichols were heavily involved in this humanitarian project.

During the year, members were saddened by the loss of members Arthur Clement, Conrad Zimmerman, Gus Blalock and Fred Bailey.

Start: 241 members. End: 241 members.

1987–88: Women welcomed into the Club

One of the major highlights of the 1987–88 year was the Club's decision to accept women members. The decision was spurred by a U.S. Supreme Court decision in May 1987 that essentially said Rotary International's male-only member policy was discriminatory. Following the decision, Rotary International allowed clubs to invite women members. In Charleston, the decision was not reached lightly. Past presidents thought the Club should continue to be a leader in the district and strive to bring in the best possible female candidates. By the end of the year, six women were inducted.

The Club would soon open up exciting changes with women now in it. The much-enjoyed Ladies' Night evening events became known as Spouse Night. Two years after the first women became

members, the Club hosted an all-female Group Study Exchange Team from Norway. It was the first of its kind to visit the district.

President Lee Shapleigh III started his year by attending the International Convention in Munich, Germany.

On July 21, there was a special program to surprise past President and past District Governor Hudson Edwards on his 80th birthday. Edwards' Rotary service total was more than 50 years, and the highlights of his illustrious career were given by several of his friends and members, led by Jerry Nuss and Ken Johnson.

Another instance of celebrating the past and the present took place when Ruth Heffron, one of the Club's newest members and the executive director of the Trident Foundation, announced that the Foundation's assets were now \$2.5 million – a magnificent total considering the Club started the Foundation with just \$9,000!

The Club made an official pledge to Rotary International in 1987 that it would meet a four-year Polio Plus Goal of approximately \$50,000. Members exceeded the goal by raising \$51,000.

Member Saul Krawcheck, chair of the community service committee, announced a Club project to enhance the revitalization of Wragsborough Square by purchasing a Rotary Fountain to be its focal point. The committee started a drive to raise \$15,000 for the project.

In programs, Ted Stern, a past president and past district governor, spoke in September on the United States Constitution, which became 200 years old. Margaret Rush, the region's representative on the Highway Commission, told members of a decision to shut down the old Ashley River bridge to truck traffic when it was discovered that the foundations had large cracks. This decision was criticized by some, but she made it in the interest of safety to all concerned. Another interesting speaker on bridges was Gene Figg, a native of Charleston who designed some of the world's largest bridges. Charleston Mayor Joe Riley spoke on the proposed Visitor Reception Center, which depended on a public vote of bond approval. He was successful in his appeal.

A new Vocational Service project was started that introduced a "Handicapped Employee of the Month" to the Club. This person was a guest of the Club and his/her resumé was distributed to all members.

The club hired Dot Humphries as the Club's new secretary. It was an interesting time, to say the least, for Humphries, who took charge of shifting the accounts and documentation from typed and hand written files to a computer database. The Classification committee, led by Al Steinberg, took advantage of the new technology and made a careful review of all classifications and then had the results computerized.

Chairman Mike Jones was also successful in getting an Interact Club, the Ashley Hall Interact Club, started. Jennifer Mallory, daughter of member Baird Mallory, was the first president of the club and she gave an excellent speech on the Club's activities.

Start: 241 members. End: 254 members.

1988–89: Club focuses on quality

When Barry Van Deventer became the club president in 1988, he realized the Club was heavily involved in a number of programs. Instead of instituting new projects, he thought it would be best to stay committed to and develop the many programs in which the Charleston Club was already involved.

But there was one continuing project Van Deventer especially wanted completed. He said if the Club could raise enough money for the new fountain in Wraggsborough Square, he might have to be bronzed! By the end of his year, the goal was reached and the (unbronzed) fountain was ordered.

The Club, however, did get involved in one new project – to join with other local Rotary clubs to form the Rotary Bowl. The first Rotary Bowl football game was the Citadel–Navy game on September 24. Rotarians in the area sold more than 3,000 tickets for The Citadel, which generated a \$6,000 gift that was used for Rotary charities including the Gift of Life program. The event was a sell-out and brought some highly favorable publicity to Rotary.

There were some excellent speeches during the year. Past President Joe Emery returned and gave a stirring, inspirational speech. The president of the American Medical Association spoke about the latest in health care. The chairman of the board of Phillips Petroleum gave an interesting presentation on the raising of the company's North Sea oil well platforms.

Ben Moise, a state wildlife officer, spoke on many illegal methods used to take game, such as by baiting fields. A couple of members objected to some of the agency's methods at the end of the speech. The Club's president then announced it was evident that some of our members had run "a-fowl" of the law!

Sonny Hanckel provided insights into a "modern" farm that used new scientific techniques to increase production significantly. The attorney general of South Carolina spoke and urged our support in creating a State Grand Jury, particularly to handle drug cases. Charleston Mayor Joe Riley also spoke in favor of a bond issue to build an aquarium. Both passed on election day.

The Club experienced the loss of its president-elect, Sam Jones, when he suffered a heart attack in January 1989 and passed away in May. The board elected Jim Deaton to become the new president-elect. Other Rotarians who passed were Tran Mawicke, Gene Jones and Dick McGillivray, who had 45 years of perfect attendance.

Despite dealing with the tragic loss of four Rotarians, the Club rolled along smoothly during the year. It was a year of remarkable growth, ending with 271 members, a net gain of 17 members. In an attempt to crack down on the S.O.B.s (Slip Out Boys), who were leaving too early without paying respects to speakers, the president and board initiated a \$2 cash or \$5 charge fine for each occurrence. This cut down on the abuse considerably.

Start: 254 members. End: 271 members.

1989–90: Hugo generates worldwide help

In his first meeting of his 1989–90 term, President James M. "Jim" Deaton emphasized the theme of the current year, "Enjoy Rotary." He envisioned continued growth and said the Club was approaching 300 members. He expressed sorrow that Sam Jones could not be alive to carry out his plans. Deaton thanked the Club for the opportunity to attend the International Rotary Conference in Seoul, Korea.

The big event of the year, which the Club could have done without, was the sweeping destruction caused by Hurricane Hugo. It devastated the Charleston area on September 21, 1989.

Many of the Club's members were vital in the "digging out" period after the storm. Jim Worthy, the head of the Salvation Army, was seen all over setting up shelters, soup kitchens, and clothing and food distribution points. John Jordan, chairman of the United Way campaign, was busy raising money for United Way Agencies. Ruth Heffron, executive director of the Trident Community Foundation, helped set up plans for distributing relief money and supplies. Many other Rotarians were volunteers in many areas.

The Charleston Club received contributions and expressions of regret from Rotary Clubs throughout the Rotary world. Contributions were channeled through the Trident Foundation, and more than \$30,000 was given to needy causes. Fortunately, the Club only missed one meeting of Rotary due to the storm. Many people, however, were homeless and many businesses were destroyed for months. Thankfully, losses were essentially limited to material items that could be replaced.

But the Club didn't let Hugo ruin the year and continued as usual having many good speakers at the weekly meetings. College of Charleston President Harry Lightsey talked about why the College was one of the "up and coming" schools in the country.

State Sen. Sherry Martschink tried to explain why Charleston would have to wait a few more years to fix all the bridges in the county. Col. Dave Marcrander, commander of the Air Wing at Charleston Air Force Base, told about its vital participation and support in the invasion of Panama during operation "Just Cause."

Also during the year, Bob Royall, chairman of the State Ports Authority, gave an insight into the tremendous growth of the Charleston port. In colonial days, he said, Charleston was the second largest port in America. It declined after the Civil War, but now was again the number two port.

Also, Chal Port, veteran baseball coach of The Citadel, spoke about the Citadel Baseball team's fantastic season. The Bulldogs were hailed in the press as being America's team for winning the Eastern Regional playoffs and earning a playoff position at the College World Series in Omaha.

The Club also was recognized at the District Conference. Frank Hanckel and his Keyway committee received the award for best

newsletter of the Large Club category and the Club won the District Governor's Citation.

On March 6, 1990, the Club had a 70th Anniversary Gala in Hibernian Hall. The black-tie dinner was attended by 200 Rotarians and guests.

Start: 271 members. End: 278 members.