

Getting in Gear

Fifteen curious men gathered for lunch on Monday, February 15, 1960 at the Shake Roof Inn¹ to discuss the possibility of organizing a Rotary Club in Florence. None of them had ever been Rotarians so there was a mixture of skepticism, fascination and light joking. District Governor, Dr. E. B. Lemon of Corvallis, explained that "Rotary is an organization of business and professional leaders united worldwide, who provide humanitarian services, encourage high ethical standards in all vocations, and help build goodwill and peace in the world." He outlined the steps necessary to form a new club including among other requirements the need to



have a minimum of twenty members from as many different vocations. Members of the Newport Rotary Club volunteered to sponsor the fledgling club and guide them through the process. After receiving answers to a number of questions, the local men agreed to meet the following week to further explore the possibilities.

By meeting regularly enthusiasm grew rapidly. Rotary was explained to others who were approached about becoming members. By April 11 the twenty-member quota was reached with one to

spare. It was announced that the charter membership roll would close on April 18 when it would be presented to Dr. Lemon for referral to Rotary International's headquarters.

Dale Harp agreed to be president of the provisional club. Other officers selected were Art Moyer, vice president, Bob Twidwell, secretary-treasurer and Tony Cicerello, Jerry Seed and Val Davidson as members of the board. Plans started forming that day for a banquet to be held in June to inaugurate the new club. Word came from Dr. Lemon that the application was in order and approval had been given on May 16 making it that the official birth date of the Florence Rotary Club. The group gathered again on June 20 at the The Holiday Lodge to develop final plans for the formal chartering. Representatives from Newport and Reedsport clubs were present to provide encouragement and to help celebrate the accomplishment. Feelings of relief and optimism focused attention on the banquet scheduled for the coming Saturday. An election replaced the provisional officers with Dale Harp, president, Jerry Seed, vice-president, and Boyd Twidwell, secretary-treasurer. Tony Cicerello, Carl Morrison and Frank Suniga completed the board of directors.



Dale Harp

Saturday, June 25, 1960 came with excitement. One hundred and twenty-five members, friends, and guests gathered in what *The Siuslaw Oar* claimed to be the "largest group ever served by the VFW auxiliary".² Members of Rotary Clubs in other towns brought gifts to help the new club get started. A total of \$325 in cash was reported from clubs in Coos Bay-North Bend, Eugene, Lakeview, Reedsport, Bend, Klamath Falls, Ashland, Corvallis, Springfield, Grants Pass, Medford, Redmond, Port



² Siuslaw Oar, Friday, July 1, 1960, p.1

Orford, Myrtle Point and Toledo. The Newport club presented the Rotary bell and gavel, Myrtle Point provided some essential Rotary equipment, and Sweet Home gave a Rotary pin to each member of the new club.

PROGRAM	
MASTER OF CEREMONIES	Don Butch, President Newport Rotary Club
INVOCATION	Henry Johnson, Florence
WELCOME ADDRESS	E. A. Davidson, Mayor Florence, Oregon
PIANO SOLO	Gary Frame, Salem
INTRODUCTION Charter Members and Rotary Anns	Dale Harp, President Florence Rotary Club
THE YEAR AHEAD	Bill Lush, Governor-elect District 510
ADDRESS A Ticket to Tarsus	W.W. McCready, Governor District 510
SONG	Newport Rotary Club
PRESENTATION OF CHARTER	E.B. Lemon, Governor District 510
PRESENTATION OF GIFTS	Rotary Clubs

A copy of the original program for the banquet provided from the archives of Rotary International lists the evening events.

The Siuslaw Oar described the speech by W.W. McCready as

“combining some good humor with a serious message.”³

From that day forward, small gear shaped pins began to appear on lapels, shirts, and sweaters around Florence.



Charter members with their classifications⁴ as introduced that night were as follows:

Sam Bridges--Motel Owner
Tony Cicerello--Floral Supplies
Arthur Coit--Banking
Henry Coxwell--Trailer House Distributing
Val Davidson--Barber
Clyde Gillies--Tire Retailing
Dale Harp--Education
Dave Holman – Publisher
Henry Johnson – Furniture-Retail
Ralph Middleton – P.U.D. Manager
Carl Morrison--Garden Store
Arthur Moyer – News Writing
John Murphey – Insurance
Martin Peterson – Construction Contractor
Del Mar Saxon – Hair Styling
Jerry Seed--Department Store
Christ Strahm – Hardware
Frank Sungia – Skin Diver
Wilbur Ternyik – Conservation
Boyd Twidwell – Consumer Finance
Arthur Warfield – Lumber Retailing

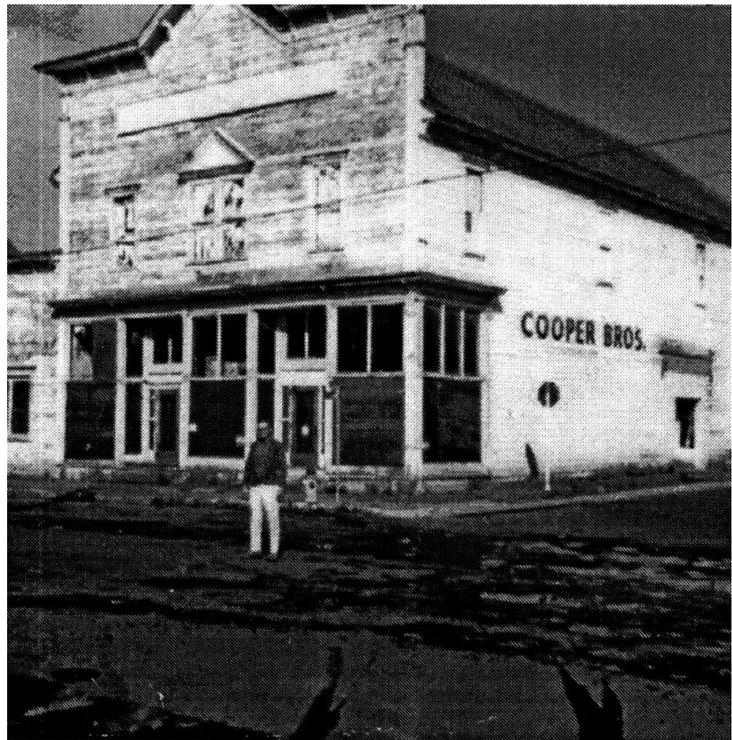
Who were these twenty-one men who shaped the character of the Florence Rotary Club? They constituted a cross-section of business and professional men in small coastal community. They were exclusively men for

³ Siuslaw Oar, op cit.

⁴ Each Rotarian has a classification which represents his or her vocation.

it would be almost three decades before Rotary welcomed women. Mostly young and energetic they had a zeal for Florence. It is estimated that the average age was approximately 37. As in all organizations, some proved more aggressive than others. Some understood or quickly caught the meaning and spirit of a service club. One would become mayor and port commissioner; three would be singled out for outstanding citizen awards. Several were active in the Chamber of Commerce and local churches. Four held offices in state organizations. Together they knew the pulse of the community and shared a vision for its future.

Picture this town on the banks of the Siuslaw forty years ago. It was different. There were only two paved streets, Highway 101 and Bay Street. Venturing through mud-puddled side streets in winter tested driver skills and cars endurance. The population was about 1614 significantly up from the previous census, but school enrollment had dropped in the last few years. Commercial fishing kept two canneries active. Sause Brother's tugs towing barges of lumber from local mills headed for markets in California frequently stopped traffic on 101 with the opening of the bridge.



Telephone calls went through an operator and Eugene was almost two hours away via Route F. Siuslaw Valley Bank and Oregon Pacific Banking Company were still someone's dreams. *The Siuslaw Oar* and *Florence News* were just being merged into *The Siuslaw News* and TV provided four channels in black and white. Personal computers were an oddity. Four doctors tried to serve the medical needs of the area.

Golf was just available on the newly opened Rhodo Dunes Golf Course and every issue of the paper during fishing season featured pictures of fish held by grinning anglers. It was not unusual for more than 300 boats to cross

the Siuslaw bar on a Sunday during the salmon run.

Storms could black-out the town or isolate it from neighboring communities with road slides or wash-outs. On good days, the landscape glistened with 32 shades of green. The winters washed to same scenes with 23 tones of gray.

Dunes City had not been created, and the paper was filled with stories about the creation of a national park. Off-road vehicles were homemade contraptions and a rarity on the dunes.

It wasn't that the town was dead or that another organization was needed. There were at least 30 clubs and organizations and a dozen churches, **but there was a place for a group that put "service above self".**

26

Florence, Oregon

CHARTER ROTARIANS AND ROTARY ANNS



Charter members of the Florence Rotary Club and their wives were hosts at the Rotary Club installation banquet Saturday night. Eleven visiting Rotary clubs were represented at the dinner which was attended by 133 Rotarians and Rotary Anns. The Florence charter members and their wives are, left to right, first row, Mrs. Frank Suniga, Mrs. Tony Cicerello, Mrs. Henry Coxwell, Mrs. Carl Morrison, Mrs. Boyd Twidwell, Mrs. Del Mar Saxon, Mrs. Henry Johnson, Mrs. Dave Holman; Second row, Frank Suniga, Henry Coxwell, Carl Morrison, Boyd Twidwell, Del Mar Saxon, Henry Johnson, Dave Holman; third row, Mrs. Christ Strahm, Mrs. Ralph Middleton, Mrs. Dale Harp, Tony Cicerello, Ralph Middleton, Mrs. Sam Bridges, Mrs. Jerry Seed, Jerry Seed, Arthur Coit, Wilbur TERNYIK, John Murphey; back row, Christ Strahm, Mrs. Arthur Coit, Dale Harp, and Sam Bridges.