

Gathering Speed 1970-1980

With the taste of steak still in their mouths, the new officers began planning a meeting with District Governor Dr. Almo Gates. They wanted him to share their sense of accomplishment. They were no longer the new kid on the block.

Community and World Events 1970-1980

Population of Florence goes from 2246 to 4411 making it the fastest growing city in Lane County during the 1970s.

Constitutional Amendment lowering voting age to 18. 1971

Greentrees opens. 1973

President Nixon resigns. 1974

Old Town makes a comeback. 1975

Post Office, High School buildings dedicated this decade.

Florence campus of LCC dedicated. 1976.

Safeway opens new facility. 1977

1978 Vikings basketball team state champions.

Oregon Pacific Bank Organized. 1979

Hostages seized in Teheran. 1979

McCorkle elected Mayor for first time installed January 1979.

41 whales beach themselves near south jetty. 1979.

In the fall of 1970, the club directed the United Way Appeal with a goal of \$2,000. In 1963, the Jaycees and Lions Club had joined with Rotary to conduct this campaign, which successfully raised over \$2,000. This time Rotary carried the full responsibility. President Hank Johnson directed the drive. The campaign generated almost \$2,700. As a consequence, the club received a check in the amount of \$1,400, which went to the town's summer recreation program.

Aware of Rotarians moving to town or visiting in the area, the club put up signs telling of the time and place of meetings. Within three months they had welcomed three new members. One of their meetings honored, Stu Johnson who was not yet a member of the club, for his outstanding service as mayor for eight

years. Prior to that time he had served nine years on the city council.

It was also during this time that the process of incorporating began. Don Monte, club member and Rotarian, did all of the legal work gratis.



There was lots of fun connected with being a Rotarian. Some times the collector of fines, the Sergeant-at-arms, would put on an act while collecting fines. No one knows when the "Fine Pot" made its first appearance, but at least as early as 1972. Picnics and barbecues were almost annual affairs. The club newsletter carried the following story:

After last Tuesday's meeting, Christ Strahm left to return to work, only to find that "in broad daylight"; his Datsun had been stolen right out of

the parking lot. Being a rather sharp person, when his car could not be found, Christ immediately knew something was wrong. A little investigating revealed who the culprits were. Old "Dirty Don" (Stewart) had set the "heist" up. He was the "plant" on the scene. He made the contact with the "wheel Man" on the phone, and then like a real pro, made himself scarce during the actual "lift". Using Hill Texaco as a front, the " wheel man" (probably brought in from Chicago) moved right in and Christ Strahm's Datsun was over the hill, headed south.

When apprehended, Stewart attempted to alibi by saying, "He called to have his Datsun towed away. I was identical to Strahm's. Stewart and Strahm have both learned

Dr. Jim Dreher
Collecting fines.
Notice the "pot" still in use.

could not be found, Christ immediately knew something was

Rotary Happenings
1970-1980

Membership grows from 33 to 52.

Dick Whitmore first Florence GSE team member goes to Norway. 1972

Johan Mehlum first club member to serve as chairman of a district committee. 1972

Club hosts District 510 conference in grand style. 1973

Rotary organizes Western Lane Community (County) Foundation. 1974

September 1976 is the first and only perfect attendance month for club.

First Paul Harris Fellow awarded to Christ Strahm. 1977

Club is incorporated and takes out liability insurance. 1978

that if you drive a Datsun the chances of walking are still good.¹

During Alan Dunbar's presidency, each member of the club was given \$10 and told to invest it in some manner that it would grow. Several members were quite creative. Cliff Emory made and sold neckties. Alan Bell had the largest increase at \$70. He was accused of playing the numbers. Johan, referred to as "Money-bags Mehlum" and "Norway's best money changer", was chided for blowing the whole \$10. The following week Johan "shelled out \$80 plus steak dinners for Alan Bell and his wife."

The sponsorship of exchange students provided the club with contact with Rotarians in other countries. In 1973, while Linda Thompson, out-bound student was in New South Wales, Australia; a Rotarian from there, visited Florence bringing her greetings to the Florence club.

As part of Rotary's emphasis on using one's vocation as an avenue of service, the club members hosted their secretaries as a highlight of National Secretaries



Rotrian entertain secretaries.

Week. Al Owens, president at the time, said, "It is our way to honor the women who make things happen in business."

Bud Miles, Eddie Strange, Virgil Rose and Hank Johnson travel to a district assembly in Eugene where the location of the 1973 conference was being considered. The district at that time consisted

¹ From Club Bulletin November 16, 1971

Rotarians To Gather For Annual Conclave

The annual conference of Rotary District 733, to open in Florence today (Thursday) and continue through Saturday, will bring more than 400 Rotarians and their wives, according to Al Owens, vice president of the host Florence Rotary Club and conference organizer.

The conference, to be held in the Shadow Junior High School, will include plenary sessions, group discussions of Rotary concerns and entertainment features.

"The purpose of the meeting is to further the program of Rotary by exploring new opportunities for bettering communities, raising standards of living, and working with youth and furthering friendship between nations," Allan Dunbar, District 733 Club, explained.

One of the main goals of the program will be to bring together William S. Hays and Helen Galt, members of Rotary International, and Rev. D. Jackson, pastor of the First Baptist Church.

Other speakers will include Tommie P. Mendenhall, former SCFTA president, who is attending Oregon State College; Bert-tara WTC; Paul H. Hinkle, Regional Council president of Jewett and Paul H. Hinkle, Regional Council president of Jewett, representing the governor, William D. DeWitt, who will be speaking at a special luncheon at 11:30 a.m.

Registration will begin at 11 a.m. Thursday at the Junior High School, 600 S. Main, with the men's golf tournament scheduled to start at 1:30 p.m. at the Shadow Junior High School. The governor's hospitality dinner will be held at 7:30 p.m. at the Shadow Junior High School. The dinner will be served at the Shadow Junior High School and will be a special feature of the conference.

Rotary delegates will come from 27 clubs in Oregon and Northern California.

The conference staff includes Hall as conference director, Dunbar and Owens, co-chairmen; Ed Fink, accommodations; Carl Lorenz, entertainment; Paul Simon, finance; Jerry Knudsen, hospitality; Phil Herring, registration; Bob Reed, transportation; Dunbar, programs; Owens, publicity and printing; Walt Lacey, photographer; Doris Miles and Evelyn Strang, ladies' events. Carolyn Harty is conference secretary.

While the men are occupied with day-long meetings Friday and Saturday, the women will also be busy with a packed schedule planned for them.

of 33 clubs. After Corvallis and Roseburg made their pitch, Henry urged Bud invite to the conference to Florence. Bud gave his best "Chamber of Commerce" sales presentation and, to everyone's surprise, his off the cuff appeal won over the elaborate promotions of the other two clubs. Those four did not realize the tremendous task ahead. As a promotion for bringing delegates here, Al Owens designed and made "Florence 73" neckties. He was latter drafted as chairman for the event because the club president, Allan Dunbar, moved out of the city. Housing, meals, transportation, sightseeing, golf match, and meeting

arrangements required the efforts of the whole club. The sessions were held in the Junior High School gym. Meals prepared and serviced by Rotarians and their wives were in the Rhododendron Elementary School. Visiting Rotarians remembered the succulent salmon barbecued over an open pit dug in front of the school. In

addition to over 400 Rotarians and guests, exchange students represented eight countries with a GSE team from Japan.

The club gained not only a great sense of satisfaction, but also a great deal of prestige for the manner in which such a new and relatively small club performed. The district governor's representative, Lawrence Hall, said, "It was the smoothest running conference he had ever attended". An editorial in *The Siuslaw News* said " Our local Rotarians are to be congratulated for bringing this convention to our area and for putting together an interesting and substantial convention."²

No doubt through the efforts of Johan Mehlum, the club arranged for the 48 voice Norwegian Boy's Choir to sing in Florence. The group had won a special BBC award in 1972. This was quite a coup for Florence. It meant lots of work because housing in homes had to be arranged for the entire choir.



In 1974 under the leadership
of Al

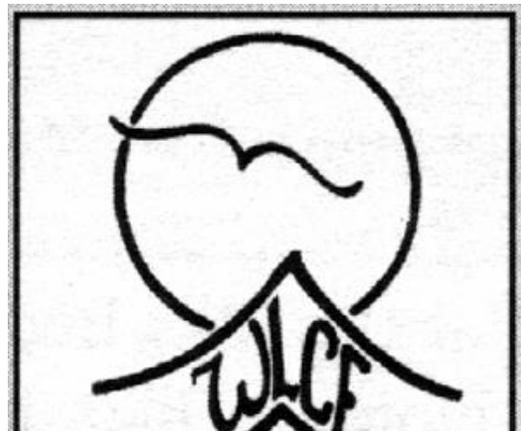
Inga-Lisa Berglund

Owens, the club launched what

² *The Siuslaw News*, May 31, 1973.

During this decade the club established the tradition of a regular exchange student. Inga Lisa Berglund, also from Norway was the first in this new emphasis which had continued almost uninterrupted.

Norway seemed popular. The club's first out bound GSE team member, Dick Whitmore, joined others from the district to spend a month in Norway.



Original WLCF logo.

would become one of its most far-reaching accomplishments, Western Lane County Foundation. The original name was changed in 1997 to Western Lane Community Foundation to better reflect its purpose. The club defined the Foundation's mission as to "Improve the quality of life in Western Lane County and to promote effective philanthropy". The club pledged their continuing by approving an increase of \$.25 per month in dues with the amount generated to go to the Foundation. When the Foundation celebrated its 25th anniversary in 1999, it had assets of over two million dollars and had distributed more than \$376,000 in grants. Their motto was "Charity that begins at home, stays at home and works at home".

The Foundation published a book in 1999 telling of its history and accomplishments all the result of the dream and continued support of the Florence Rotary Club. (See Western Lane Community Foundation in Community Service section).

In the fall of 1975, the club set its all-time attendance record. Six straight meetings with 100% of its members present! The District Governor acknowledged this in his monthly newsletter with the following comment. "Florence did the yeoman's job during the month of September with five (5) 100% meetings. Congratulations to all the members of the Florence Club! Maybe it will get to be a habit."³ No such luck! The next report shows that the club was 23rd out of 34 clubs with 83%.

The club honored Christ Strahm in 1977 by presenting him with a Paul Harris Fellowship. The club awarded several more PHFs before individual members started contributing to the Rotary Foundation in order to receive this recognition.



³ Governor's Monthly Letter, October 1975

Rotary made an appearance for several years in the Rhody parade. Inga-Lisa Berglund, exchange student from Norway was featured on the 1973 float. In-bound exchange student from the Philippines, Kelley Gnau, and the outbound student, Janielle VanCleave headed for Sweden highlighted the 1979 entry.

The club closed out its
second decade with 52
members, their first Paul Harris Fellow, and with a bank balance of
\$8,336.47. They had momentum.

Chris Strahm