

# THE 5580 CHRONICLE

## The Governor's Newsletter of District 5580

Larry Riley, Governor, 2004-2005

February 2005

# Our Centennial Year 100 Years Ago!

## A Message from the Governor

Dear Fellow Rotarians,

We have just experienced one of the most devastating natural disasters in our lifetimes. It is truly heart warming to see the outpouring of aid offered by the world community.

Rotarians from around the world have participated both financially and hands on. Our District has shown great generosity helping families from the other side of the world first by helping with basic needs and also with the daunting task of rebuilding torn families and their homes.



February is **World Understanding Month**. Through our Rotary Foundation we achieve world understanding with our Peace Scholars, Ambassadorial Scholars, Group Study Exchange program, Rotary Fellowships, and one of the greatest programs creating understanding, Youth Exchange. These great programs enable participants to experience how others from around the world live. I encourage all Clubs in our District to participate in these wonderful opportunities provided by Rotary that create life long and life changing experiences.

February is also when we should look at our club goals and evaluate where we are in

relation to accomplishing those objectives set so many months ago. We need to take a few minutes to check off successes we have had and to examine where we need to concentrate to achieve our goals.

This year, February 23 marks the 100th year of Rotary's existence, the time when Paul Harris and three of his law clients – Silvester Schiele, Gustavus Loehr, and Hiram Shorey formed the first Rotary Club. Paul was lonesome and wanted to find friendship in the large city of Chicago. From this small effort came the Rotary we know today. We have over 1.2 million members in over 3100 clubs in 166 nations.

Many clubs in our District and around the world will be celebrating Rotary's Centennial during February 2005. It is a time to recognize our accomplishments as well as look to the future and what we can accomplish in the second 100 years. It is a time to show the world what Rotary does and what rotary stands for. It is also a chance to enjoy the great fellowship and friendship we have through Rotary.

Valentines Day also falls in February so don't forget spend some time with your valentine. I know I will.

Yours in Rotary,

Larry

*Rotary's beginnings may be a familiar one, but one worth repeating as we begin our celebration of one hundred years of service.*

Today, Rotary is well known throughout the world for its dedication to service and international goodwill. Changing the world through service, however, was hardly uppermost in the mind of **Paul P. Harris** when he founded the organization in 1905. Harris, a lawyer in Chicago, Illinois, had been raised in a rural village in Vermont. He envisioned a new kind of club for professionals that would kindle the fellowship and friendly spirit he had known in his youth.

On the evening of **February 23, 1905**, Harris invited three friends to a meeting. **Silvester Schiele**, a coal dealer, **Hiram Shorey**, a merchant tailor, and **Gustavus Loehr**, a mining engineer, gathered with Harris in Loehr's business office in Room 711 of the Unity Building in downtown Chicago. They discussed Harris' idea that business leaders should meet periodically to enjoy camaraderie and to enlarge their circle of business and professional acquaintances. The club met weekly;

membership was limited to one representative from each business and profession. Though the men didn't use the term Rotary that night, that gathering is commonly regarded as the first Rotary club meeting.

As they continued to convene, members began rotating their meetings among their places of business, hence the name Rotary. After enlisting a fifth member, printer **Harry Ruggles**, the group was formally organized as the Rotary Club of Chicago. The original club emblem, a wagon wheel design, was the precursor of the familiar cogwheel emblem now used by Rotarians worldwide.

By the end of 1905, the club's roster showed a membership of 30 with Schiele as president and Ruggles as treasurer. Paul Harris declined office in the new club and didn't become its president until two years later. Club membership grew, making it difficult to gather in offices, so the members shifted their meetings to hotels and restaurants, where many Rotary club meetings are held today.

These early "Rotarians" realized that fellowship and mutual self-interest were not

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