

CHAPTER THREE

ROTARY CLUB OF HONOLULU THE FIRST 75 YEARS

by Linda Coble, 1994-95 President
2000-01 District 5000 Governor

THE FOUNDING YEARS

The Rotary Club of Honolulu may have been chartered officially in July of 1915, but actually it was in February of that year that some men gathered at the Commercial Club in the city of Honolulu, Territory of Hawaii, at 12 noon to organize the club.

S. S. Paxson, a Schuman Carriage dealer, was named temporary chairman, and became the first president...but the idea to form a Rotary Club in Honolulu was conceived on a passenger ship from San Francisco. Mr. Lawrence of Oakland and Mr. Coke (the former Chief Justice of Hawaii) got to talking about Rotary...Lawrence was a California member.

It was decided during subsequent meetings to give considerable attention to quality rather than quantity. The club was extremely active in political, civic and social affairs of the day.

The 28 members decided as early as March, 1915, to sanction Governor Pinkham's position in regard to the one dollar per capita tax for the tuberculosis fund. And, the still unofficial club lobbied against a wharfage tax, proposed in the territorial legislature. In a June treasurer's report, the expense for 600 envelopes and stationery was \$7.50.

A scan of the board minutes gives a revealing insight into the time of the territory...politically and socially. Business was booming, and at the December 16th meeting, members decided to hold off meeting again until the following year...the first Thursday in January...because, it was written, "Local merchants are enjoying the busiest season at this time of the year and want to be on the job as much as possible."

It's interesting to note that at that meeting they elected a Marconi Wireless Telegraph man, Mr. Hawk, to membership. And a speed artist on the typewriter gave an illustration on how to work an Underwood.

Throughout the first full year, the club endorsed a number of things...the straightening of Nuuanu Avenue and the extension of Bishop Street to Beretania. They had committees investigating bond issues...one of which was heavily lobbied by the Mayor so he could build a city hall.

Rotary provided a comfort station at Ala Park in 1916, and among the inspiring speakers that year was Dr. Trotter on "Rats and Their Relation to Shipping from a Quarantine Standpoint." (In the Territory of Hawaii, population then 250,000 and getting urbanized, this was a burning question.)

In April of 1918, Rotarian E. R. Cameron stood, faced his peers at a Commercial Building meeting, and was fined 50 cents for getting married.

America was at war, and Rotary was preoccupied with the effort. Rotarians sold war savings stamps and collected money to buy cigarettes for our soldiers. A May, 1918, circular from the War Department addressed to President Norm Watkins urged the club as a whole, "to assist the government in combating the venereal disease wave that is spreading among the soldiers of the Army." Members were asked, "...to give every assistance possible along those lines."

Meetings hosted speakers from the Front, and members put money in the Red Cross collection box...\$26.16 one meeting alone! Rotary sold Liberty bonds...6,800 of them in October of 1918.

And to boost the morale of the troops, the program committee arranged a boxing match between two servicemen. (The servicemen said later they would have preferred a boxing match between two Rotary Anns.)

And when the Armistice was signed, the club remained active, signing a resolution asking that regular, adequate passenger steamship communication with the mainland be resumed...the Honolulu to San Francisco route had been dearly missed.

And Rotarians sent a resolution to our representative in Congress, Prince Jonah Kuhio Kalaniana'ole, asking to change the name of the Panama Canal to the Roosevelt Canal. (That never would have worked...we could never say on the news, Rooseveltian strongman, Manuel Noriega.) Another resolution that year, 1919, passed with but one dissenting vote...putting Honolulu Rotarians on record endorsing the movement in support of women's suffrage. (And it only took them 68 years to let women into the club.) By the way, sending a floral arrangement to a woman in 1919 cost \$1.50.

Rotarians were also civic activists...passing a resolution to safeguard the Territorial Fair of 1919 from the evils of gambling.

The 1920s

There was frequent lobbying on issues by community leaders addressing Rotary meetings. One speaker talked of the need to build a new, first class theater (as soon as Bethel Street could be cut through to Pa'ahi, of course).

At a 1920 meeting, territorial school problems were discussed and supervising principals asked those present having children attending public schools to stand. Not one rose. And that made the papers.

I don't know what it cost to send a kid to private school in the early '20's, but a three bedroom bungalow at Young, near Keeaumoku—modern bath and plumbing, with street improvements completed was \$4,750.

And the Rotary fines were going up...to \$2.00.

Ladies Day, June of 1922, was historic. Territorial Governor Wallace Farrington spoke about the value of radio in civic development. He placed a long distance call on the radio phone to Mother Rice on Kauai. What made this even more exciting...Governor Farrington wasn't at the meeting...He was at the Star Bulletin office at the time, and our members received the call through a loud speaking horn installed at our meeting site—the Commercial Club. That's when Honolulu Rotary was in the red \$233, and the board pledged to negotiate a \$500 loan to cover expenses before it went under.

Our meetings changed from Thursdays to Tuesdays in 1922. Why? Because the Entertainment Committee found it difficult to secure talent for Thursdays.

The Thanksgiving meeting that year was memorable. Someone had brought a live turkey to the meeting. No one would admit ownership, so the chair deemed it advisable to hold a progressive auction for the bird. Wrote the secretary, "Ed Towse was auctioneer, and the bird was finally sold to tables one, two, three and four. The total amount received being \$93. All the tables decided to present the turkey to the Home for the Feeble-minded."

By 1923 our membership had swelled to 117 members, and the dues were increased to \$25.

In the '20s, the club initiated birthday groups. The purpose was to give members the opportunity to take part in the work of the club at least one month out of the year—during their birthday month. The groups met before their birthdays, arranged the programs for their month, and would spend time getting acquainted with the various aspects of the club. The birthday groups would strive to out-do each other in attendance.

The members were allowed a brief slogan by their names on the membership roster. They were commercial wonders. "Don't over-tax yourself." "You furnish the girl...we'll furnish the house." That sort of thing.

In researching the early years, I was struck by the political activism of the club, an effective and persuasive lobbying force of the day. Much of the time was spent monitoring the events of the mainland and the world via new members, who brought new ideas from the mainland. The focus was not so much on business-related issues then. By the mid '20s only 14 of the members were born in Hawaii. We were over 125 members then. And we spent our Rotary funds on children's hospital beds, liberty loans, United Welfare campaigns, the Boy Scouts.

The 1930s

The tradition continued into the '30s. Composer Andy Anderson was the club president for 1935-36. The median price of a home was \$2,450. Ten years later the median price was \$12,000.

As membership grew, so did Rotary's community involvement. In the '30s the club devoted the fund specifically for caring for congenital deformities of the face. We were recognized for being the only organization in the territory engaging in the rehabilitation of hare-lip and cleft palate cases.

The club was meeting at the Alexander Young Hotel Roof Garden in the '30s. Lunches cost 75 cents.

The 1940s

For Honolulu Rotary's Silver Anniversary year—1940—a black tie gala was held at the Oahu Country Club for \$1.50 a seat. Members performed skits. One of them went like this: "One thing let us try to do: Make our attendance record better. Why is it that Wahiawa-Waiialua does so well? Maybe because their lunches cost only 50 cents. Do they get enough to eat for that?"

Nearly every public school classroom had in it—thanks to the Rotary Club of Honolulu—a framed copy of the Bill of Rights.

Harry Field was our president when the war broke out. Meetings had disaster preparedness themes. There were plans to convert milk wagons and industrial vehicles to ambulances, in case of trouble. Member Duke Kahamamoku was given the job of being in charge of mortuary work, under the Major Disaster Council.

Rotarians collected aluminum scrap and piled it in front of the federal building. We had a committee formed to study the problem of preserving the peaceful and friendly relations which existed in Hawaii among American citizens of various racial ancestries.

At the November 25th meeting, 1941, an FBI speaker told Americans of Japanese ancestry to sit tight in case of trouble. "Behave like Americans," he warned.

The first full war year president was Liberty House Manager Melbourn Berlinger. He relayed the instructions from Rotary International President: "Hold the club together!" Actually, attendance at the war-time meetings increased. Businessmen cooperated with strict military restrictions, in part because of the Rotary president's plea for cooperation. At each

meeting we hosted a group of servicemen. The club invested surplus funds in war bonds and was active in war bond sales.

An amazing thing happened Navy Day, during the 1944-45 Rotary year. Admiral Towers told Rotarians that he believed that a major naval engagement was underway at the time. The American fleet had found the Japanese, and they were "being annihilated." Rumor was (and this was broadcast nationwide) that Tokyo Rose, over Japanese short wave, gave recognition to the Rotary Club of Honolulu, in stating we had been informed by the admiral that the Japanese had annihilated America's fleet. Many local residents actually heard that broadcast. Of course, the Admiral's account to Rotary was more accurate.

Rotarians were not entirely preoccupied with the war effort. We began the practice of having a hula dancer giving leis to our visitors.

Rotary continued to be a rostrum for community activism. Frederick Earl Lunt was the Honolulu Rotary president when I was born in 1947. Dutch Cleanser was selling for nine cents a can, margarine for 35 cents a pound, and Rotarians were shopping for blazer, vest and matching pants sets for \$37.50 on sale at J. C. Penney

Before he was known as Aku, the broadcaster, Hal Lewis (at the time an advertising man) told an April, 1947, meeting that "Labor and communism here in the territory of Hawaii are inexorably intertwined." He urged Rotarians to defeat radical unionism. That was a big theme during several meetings in the '40s and early '50s.

But not all was doom and gloom. The Rotary marbles tournament was held at the McKinley Athletic Field one Saturday in 1947, and board members were conducting their meetings at board members' homes, each one trying to out-do the other in hospitality and innovative cuisine.

The 1950s

Statehood was on the minds of Rotarians throughout the '50s. No doubt a number of Rotarians put their names on the 1954 statehood roll of honor—a three mile roll of newspaper that lined Bishop Street for all to sign petitioning for statehood. Statehood finally came in March of 1959.

Our population then was 622,000. The median age was 24 years. Only one percent of the population was over the age of 75. The Chinese were the ones making the most money—\$5,000 per head, hundreds of dollars more than the runners up, the Japanese. Henry J. Kaiser, inked a \$350 million agreement with Bishop Estate to develop 6,000 acres that became Hawaii Kai.

In December of 1946, the Hawaii Visitors Bureau had blasted the Waikiki merchants, in part for the condition of Waikiki Beach. The letter writers, to Holiday Magazine, had characterized the fabled beauty of Waikiki Beach as “20 yards of dirty sand and a postage stamp beach. A disappointment.” Rotarian Mark Egan agreed, but the minutes reflect that he noted the letters were written when the beach was at its worst—either during the peak of the war occupation the fall before, or during the re-conversion to civilian use.

Andy Anderson wrote a post-war song...

It's time to play again in Honolulu.

We are dancing 'neath the stars once more.

The moon smiles down again on Honolulu

Lovers stroll the beaches as before.

Old friends are back again.

Good times are here again.

At the Royal, life is gay once more.

Rotarians started a fund drive to raise money for the HVB to spruce up Waikiki's image. Andy Anderson headed the drive.

United Airlines' inaugural flight arrived in Honolulu. There was a warning from Lorrin Thurston that tourism would grow. He predicted 12,000 visitors would arrive in 1947.

There were 217,000 registered cars on Oahu back in 1959. Twenty years later, there were 580,000 of them. And in '59 an aloha shirt cost \$1.95, denim jeans \$1.59. The club was meeting at the Queen's Surf during much of the '50s and Duke Kahanamoku was our club's greeter.

The 1960s

In May of 1961, the members voted to move their Tuesday meetings to a new location. After convincing the ladies to move their weekly Monarch Room fashion show to Wednesday, the Rotarians began meeting at the The Royal Hawaiian Hotel.

Governor John Burns told Rotarians at a 1963 meeting that the major programs for economic development of the state were: a foreign trade center, an inter-island ferry system, a more favorable climate for business, and enlarging Hawaii's tourist trade. Tap Pryor told another 1963 meeting that the Sea Life Park project was underway and on schedule.

An apartment at the Colony Surf was going for \$23,000 in the mid '60s. An architect-designed house on Wai'alea Iki Ridge—three bedroom, two baths—cost \$43,500. And Chrysler's new Simca economy car sold for \$1,600.

When the Rotary Anns met for the annual Ladies Day luncheon at the Royal in the '60s, the tab was \$4.00, including tax, tip and parking.

Once again, a community service organization found itself involved in world events. The club's Republic of South Vietnam project involved the mailing of 50,000 brochures asking for used paper, books, pencils, paints, brushes and farm hand tools. The plight of the Montagnards—the tribal mountain people of Vietnam—was desperate. The clubs in the district collected 120 tons of material, and Randy Pratt went to Saigon to participate in the distribution.

The morale of our troops in Vietnam was high in 1969, if you believed our March speaker, General Ralph Haines, Jr., Commander in Chief, U. S. Army Pacific.

But there were civic concerns too: City Council Chairman Walter Heen told the Rotarians that the government was putting unrealistic demands on builders, creating a housing shortage. And Mayor Fasi said we are short 30,000 units with the gap between luxury and poverty growing wider. He told a '69 meeting bus service would soon be coming to Windward Oahu.

The International Rotary Convention took much of the club's energy. 124,453 adults converged on Waikiki's 5,948 hotel rooms in 1969. A double room at the Royal was going for \$24 a night. Suites ranged from \$40 to \$50 a night. At the Reef a double room cost \$10 to \$18, depending upon the view. There were 3,200 Waikiki apartment hotel rooms to draw upon. Rotary found that necessary. The late Tucker Gratz was the Convention's sergeant at arms.

The 1970s

By 1970 it cost \$85 to fly to the west coast and \$1.50 to have lunch on board. There was a three bedroom home for rent in Kaimuki for \$350 a month. A three-year-old home in Hawaii Kai sold for \$56,000, and Leeds was selling women's shoes for \$4.99. B-J's was having a sale of a four piece bedroom group for \$189.

George Villegas, of the City Transportation Department, told our club in 1971 that a mass rapid transit system would extend from Pearl City to Hawaii Kai, and the type of systems were being analyzed. He said the probable operation date was 1976.

In the mid seventies, Rotarian John Cavanaugh addressed the group, giving us the same speech he delivered to the District Assembly. He said he had surveyed the news media for the impressions of Honolulu Rotarians. The response? "A bunch of business guys who get together for lunch and hear speakers." "Rotary's a form of incest." "Rotary is irrelevant." "Not an effective force in the community." The P-R began at once. Rotarians made it a policy to pay for every reporter's lunch at the meetings.

The Vietnam War was still painfully fresh on everyone's mind when an overflow crowd at the Monarch Room heard General William Westmoreland detail the "disaster of the war." He pointed out that the political attachments in the war were so strong that it was impossible to gracefully withdraw when we should have. President Kennedy set the tone. President Johnson continued it by retaining most of the same advisors, he said, and he added that the war could have been won, without compromise. Westmoreland said that while soldiers were fighting, there was total anarchy at home that encouraged the enemy and prolonged the war. (The Rotarians in attendance left the Monarch Room that day in 1977 believing they had heard the truth.)

Two years later former California Governor Ronald Reagan spoke to the club and 550 people attended. Asked if he would run for President, Reagan said his ability to answer that question was governed by pioneering rules. However, he suggested that anyone interested in his candidacy not make other commitments before November. (A member asked what would happen in November. Mr. Reagan replied, "Well, we'll know much more when Nancy talks to our astrologer.")

The 1980s

In the '80s Mother Nature kicked up her heels...Hurricane Iwa devastated parts of Kauai in 1982...Kilauea Volcano began the eruptive phase in 1983 that continued for years. And the New Year's storm of 1987 washed away much of Hahaione. We lived through the Challenger disaster. Pesticides were found in Mililani wells, heptachlor in our milk.

A 1987 decision by the Rotary Club of Honolulu board of directors sent aftershocks through the less enlightened clubs around. Membership was opened to women August 21, 1987. In October, President Bill Paul pinned a badge on the first woman to be given regular membership—Carolyn Worth.

On behalf of the women members of the Rotary Club of Honolulu, I thank you for overcoming whatever resistance there was...and for giving us a chance to experience what the best and brightest shared for 75 years.

CHAPTER FOUR

ROTARY CLUB OF HONOLULU

THE NINETIES

by Bill Sage, Club Scribe and Humorist,
Member since 1995

Dionysius Exiguus (known to his buddies as “Dennis the Short”) has an interesting tie-in with the Rotary Club of Honolulu (known to its buddies as “Honolulu Rotary”). When Dennis created the calendar we now use, he neglected to include a year zero, going instead from One B.C. to One A.D. This gave Ed Carter the presidency of Honolulu Rotary in the last year including the eighties, as well as the first year including the nineties, i.e., 1989—90. This makes him technically the last president of the eighties, although he still gets included in this chapter since so many Rotarians adhere to the same concepts as the many revelers and pyromaniacs who ushered in the erstwhile Millennium year 2000, thereby giving Dennis the Short short shrift.

As Ed handed the gavel over to Ron Schmid in 1990, who can forget the immortal words, “Hey, what gives? It’s 1990, and we’re *still* in the eighties!”

Ron Schmid makes his first act as president to fine Dionysius Exiguus for the year zero gaffe. To show that he’s a good sport, even though he joined the choir invisible in 560 A.D., the merry monk’s ghost hands over a check for one thousand Denarii to complete his Paulus Hattius.

Earlier in the eighties, Ronald Reagan said, “Mister Gorbachev, tear down this wall!” A few beers after that, the East Germans thought it was a good idea. The Soviet Union imploded, the Berlin Wall came down, the Warsaw pact dissolved, Nicolae Ceausescu was out of a job in Romania, and several AK-47 rounds later out of a body. Heady stuff.

All things considered, Ed recalls the fall of communism to be the most memorable event of his tenure. In a fitting act of irony, a piece of the Berlin Wall was auctioned off in the Honolulu Rotary Club. A chunk of crumbled communism went to the highest capitalist bidder,

and the proceeds helped spread Rotary’s benevolent world domination! Ed recalls another memorable event of his presidency was the agreement to use the Monarch Room at lunch time for a year by the Japan Travel Bureau. There was much debate at the time about whether Rotary should move. Thanks to President Carter though, (Ed, not Jimmy) we’re still here. The agreement which allowed us to stay lets hotel management use the Monarch Room on Tuesdays at noon if they need to, which is why we occasionally scoot over to the Regency Room.

What was life like in Honolulu in those days gone by of 1989–1990? Let’s see...a half gallon of milk for two fifty nine...an oceanfront villa on Kahala Avenue only twenty seven million...four billion in real estate invested from outside Hawaii each year...the Japanese real estate bubble still expanding...property taxes too...President Ron wondered how long this investment bubble could endure, but guided the Rotary Club with a solid fiscal hand.

The Summer of 1991—the gavel is passed to Mitch D’Olier, the first club president completely in the nineties. Mitch recalls it as a time for healing and rebuilding the relationship between the Honolulu membership and District 5000. It seems there was sense that Honolulu members were not as active in Rotary as they could be, and Mitch lit a fire under the membership. Friends of Foster Kids, wider community involvement, increasing financial contributions—Mitch helped boost Honolulu’s membership back into the kind of activity that defines a flagship club.

Mitch also recalls cementing a good relationship with the district governor, but can’t remember his name now. (I know the feeling—it’s called C.R.S. syndrome—let me put it more politely with an example: Jim Nabors was in the middle of telling a story during his 1999

Christmas concert when he forgot what he was going to say. He smiled and said, “Sorry folks, I think I’m having a Senior Moment!” Well, even though the governor’s name has slipped into President D’Olier’s Senior Moment Zone, he does remember that the governor “raised llamas in Kona!” Oh, that Phil Bickel! “Mister Gorbachev, tear down this alpacal! Er, vicuna! Um, whatever!”

Meanwhile, as the nineties *really* become the nineties, George Bush continues diplomacy by other means with a recalcitrant chap named Saddam in a little operation called Desert Storm...the Japanese invest-ment bubble pops...Hawaii's economy begins sliding towards the cellar...President Bush's popularity wanes when he approved the Democrat-controlled Congress' tax hike bill...time for remedial lip reading...an obscure Arkansas governor promises, if elected President, to give America the most moral administration in history...the gavel is passed to Jack Dwyer, and District 5000 gets into the political zeitgeist with a convention at the Hilton Hawaiian Village...it's called "Raucous Caucus"...FDR looks natty in a white linen suit, greeting Rotarians from his wicker wheelchair at the top of the escalator in the Tapa Ballroom, pince-nez glasses on the bridge of his nose, cigarette holder clutched in his teeth at a jaunty angle...Ross Perot schmoozes the crowd passing out "funny money" to buy votes...Ben Franklin spouts aphorisms, Ron and George show up, JFK and Jackie are there...oops! Marilyn Monroe shows up too! What? Celebrities *impersonated*? Oh well. At least President Dwyer was real! Heck, he beat Bush, Clinton, *and* Perot! Not *one* of those men was even *nominated* to be president of Honolulu Rotary! And when President Dwyer handed the gavel over to Dan Bent, his pledge of no new taxes on Honolulu Rotarians was fulfilled! Okay, so he *fined* a few members during recognition, but hey, you gotta make a coupla bucks *somehow*, right?

President Bent's tenure is best recalled as the one in which the members experienced expanded fellowship. Dan instituted the "Ride Along to Rotary" program, in which Rotarians and guests doubled up in their cars. He also had members stand up at their tables and introduce themselves to a member they didn't know well and get to know them better. If Honolulu ever had the equivalent of Paul Harvey's "The Rest of the Story," it would be Dan's "Rotary Whozit?" game. Remember questions like, "Which Honolulu Rotarian was born in a Russian barn?" "Which Rotarian was a crew member on a German Submarine during World War II?" Dan opened our eyes to the remarkable depth and richness of experience that is the membership of Honolulu Rotary—and when he handed off the gavel in the summer of '94, he opened *lots* of eyes—it went to Honolulu's first female president, Linda Cobble!

After they made Linda, they broke the mold! (Contrary to what some smart-alecks would say, they did not break the mold *while* they

were making her.) Linda's razor sharp wit, hearty laugh, sparkling personality and high intelligence were and are matched by her devotion to hard work and community responsibility. She feels the most memorable event of her tenure was going to Japan for the signing of the sister club agreement with Tokyo Shimbashi Rotary. Even when her year as president ended, Linda kept expanding Rotarian participation in the community, e.g., in 1996 she was instrumental in the first Kid's Voting Hawaii project, and by 1998 it was an established district Rotary project—and in 2000, as she becomes the first lady to assume command of District 5000, the question is simple: Do we call Linda President Governor, Governor President, or First Lady President Governor? Oh well, whatever we call her, we love Linda!

Our 1995-96 gavel pass went to Ron Tsukamaki. The membership took a decided turn towards youth—Ron was only 46, proving that not all Rotarians are over the hill—indeed, membership recruitment increased our share of baby boomers—lots of new members under (gasp) fifty!

President Ron's youthful vigor enabled us to carry out many strenuous physical projects. Ron remembers fondly that two-weekend construction project in Enchanted Lake that stretched into fourteen week-ends, as plenty of Rotarians under fifty and over fifty changed their names to Manuel Layba. [Don't get it? Sound it out. Move your lips. Ohhh, that Manuel Layba!] They pitched in to reconstruct the home of Kei'i and Esti Gross to accommodate their paraplegic son Randy, and make it totally wheelchair accessible. We all felt younger helping that youngster and his family. Under President Ron, our own youthful membership continued to grow as well.

The gavel passed for 1996-97 into Tom Matthews' capable hands, and what would have been inconceivable at the time of Ed Carter's presidency was now reality: Rotary International was established in the former Soviet Union!

President Tom took the international lead by sending himself to Siberia—No, not for the Gulag, but for Rotary in Vladivostok! Tom was instrumental in the establishment of the new Russian Club in the Far East, and we fervently hope the Four Way Test will continue to build true democracy in our former Cold War rival.

Here in Hawaii, the Visitor Aloha Society of Hawaii (VASH) came into being during Tom's administration. Those visitors who otherwise would have been left with the bitter experience of being crime or accident victims here find that Aloha lives and thrives in VASH.

Another memorable event during Tom's tenure was that guest speaker, oh...what was his name? That bright young kid from Punahou...computer nerd...something about the internet...A.O.I. or something like that...just merged with Time-Warner...son of a former club president...Steve somebody or other...gee, it's on the tip of my tongue...Pace, Race, Mace, Case...? Anyway, a nice young guy—he might be a real success someday.

1997-98: Is there a Doctor in the house? Most certainly, and his prescription: Laughter is the best medicine! Under President Blake Waterhouse, the membership was treated to his off-the-wall sense of humor as every meeting closed with his Bumper Sticker of the Week: for example, "There are three kinds of people—Those who can count, and those who can 't"... "Visualize whirled peas" ...

President Blake feels one of the most memorable effects of his tenure was the establishment of the *Rota-Reminder*—at a glance, members can see who's in first, what's on second...who's on next week—no, next week's on third...

And the quality of the speakers went up as President Blake instituted membership surveys. He found out what we wanted, and we benefited with interesting speakers, more fellowship, meetings that ended on time, and a very enjoyable year. As Blake put it, "civility through levity." 1997-98's levity fairly levitated with civility and the joy of fellowship, thanks to the warmth and wit of the good Doctor.

Every year, it seems, it's just been getting better—how many other Rotary clubs have had the honor of being presided over by the former Chief of Staff of the U. S. Army? The gavel pass for 1998-99 was into the hands of our own General President, or President General; but no matter how you address him, he's a great guy—our own Fred C. Weyand.

Those members who've had the privilege of being in Honolulu Rotary with President Fred at the helm understand intuitively the meaning of

command presence. Born leaders *are* nice guys (nice gals too, President First Lady Governor Linda), and they've got a great sense of humor. I've always thought that President Fred's natural speaking voice is similar in tone and timbre to Bob Hope's, so I'm immensely pleased to remember that not only did Fred continue President Blake's Bumper Sticker of the Week tradition, he also added "This Week's Thought" in that wonderful voice of his: "Never follow a leader who has his ear to the ground"... "If you find yourself in a hole, stop digging."

I remember one instance when President Fred seemed to set us up for a disappointment. He said he was sorry that he didn't have a bumper sticker of the week. He paused for a second and then added, "But I was driving behind a guy on a motorcycle wearing a t-shirt that said, 'If you can read this, my old lady fell off' ". I don't remember *ever* being at a meeting where everyone laughed harder than that.

President Fred thinks the most memorable aspect of his tenure is the way we've continued to build the membership, commenting at one point that we should start a separate Mike Nauyokas club for all the new members that Mike's brought in.

Fred is honored to have been chosen to lead us, and is very pleased that Honolulu Rotary is alive with spirit and service to the community, and deeply appreciates how the members contribute their valuable time in the club to humanitarian service

As the Change of Command ceremony for 1999-2000 passed the gavel to Claude Thompson, we were just as honored for the year of service Fred gave us as he was to lead us. And as a fitting tribute to Fred for his service not only to Rotary but to the Nation, Fred was honored on board the U.S.S. Missouri as Patriot of the Year. Well deserved, and well done.

So now, Dionysious Exiguus may inform President Claude Thompson that here in the year 2000, he is truly the last Honolulu Rotary president of the Second Millennium, the Twentieth Century, and the Nineteen Nineties.

President Claude continues the good work of his predecessors: building the membership, bringing in excellent speakers, extending fellowship, *Rota-Reminder* and *Rota-Service* cards, Friends of Foster Kids,

and the whole gamut of service to the community in real dollars and sweat equity.

Many Honolulu Rotarians may look with pride at the International Peace Garden at Fort Ruger they pitched in on with youths from all around the world. President Claude was instrumental in getting us into our work gloves to plant a living reminder of people from all over the planet working together.

In the spirit of Presidents Waterhouse and Weyand, the off-the-wall humor continues with President Claude "Tanky Tanky Tank" Thompson as well. As Honolulu Rotarians look forward to the *real* Third Millennium and Twenty First Century's First President, Kitty Lagareta, we can say with confidence that not only will Rotarians continue the tradition of service above self, but they will also nod in agreement with Presidents Thompson and Lagareta when they say, "Hey, now that we're leaving the Nineties, what the heck *do* we call this decade? The Oughts? The Ought-Oughts? The Noughts? The Nought-Noughts? The Ought Noughts? The Zeros? The Oh-ohs? The Uh-ohs? The Oohs?..."

This may go on for another thousand years, so stick around—whatever happens, Rotary will be there to help. I say we fine Dionysious Exiguus again. Or, in the words of Walter Cronkite, "And that's the way it is, Wednesday the forty third of December, Nineteen Ninety Ten..."

A Hui Hou,
For the Rotary,
Bill Sage

CHAPTER FIVE

ROTARY CLUB OF HONOLULU SERVICE

by Frank Hames, *Past President 1980-81*

Paul Harris, the founder of Rotary, told new members that they were "beginning a new adventure in service," and 95 years later our own Honolulu Rotary follows this significant guideline. The first service project the fledgling Chicago Rotary Club undertook was the installation of public "comfort stations" in Chicago's City Hall. Curiously enough, the first recorded community service effort of the Rotary Club of Honolulu was in 1916, one year after its founding, when rest rooms were installed for the first time in Alaala Park.

Some of our early service projects wouldn't be endorsed today. During World War I, our club collected funds to buy cigarettes for our military forces overseas. But our patriotism came through in both World War I and II when we sold war savings stamps and bonds. In the 1940s we collected aluminum scrap for the war effort.

Honolulu Rotary has always been particularly concerned with the welfare of the children in our community. In the 1920s, for instance, there was apparently a shortage of hospital beds for children and our club spearheaded efforts to raise funds to fulfill that need. A very significant humanitarian project about that time pioneered funding for surgical operations to cure congenital deformities of the face (hare-lip, cleft palate, etc.).

An interesting sign of the times past was Honolulu Rotary's sponsorship of a marble shooting tournament at McKinley High School in 1947. What are we doing about Pokemon today?

A Rotary reserve at the Blood Bank of Hawaii, manning Salvation Army kettles at Christmas time and sponsoring Police Activity League baseball teams were some of our service activities in the 1950s and 1960s. Starting in 1961, and continuing for many years, we put on Christmas parties at Linekona School and later at Pohukaina School, targeting handicapped children. The board minutes of September, 1961, indicate that all club members were assessed \$2 to fund the effort.

During the Vietnam War, our Rotary district collected 120 tons of paper, books, pencils, art supplies and even farm tools. Our own member Randy Pratt went to Saigon to participate in the distribution.

We established our own club foundation in 1978, which was the vision of, and named in honor of, John Warren, our beloved 1977-78 president. "Fines" became tax deductible contributions. Generous support by the membership over the years has allowed us to undertake significant community service projects. Many of us have become John Warren Fellows by donating a total of \$1,000.

The founding of the Children's Advocacy Center here in Honolulu is an example of what we're able to accomplish now, utilizing the approximately \$60,000 we all contribute annually to our Foundation of Rotary Club of Honolulu. Research, starting in 1986, uncovered the tragic circumstances of sexually abused children, who were being shunted back and forth between the police and judiciary procedures, further traumatizing the young boys and girls who had endured the abuse. It's hard to imagine a child having to go to court to face the abuser(s) and their attorneys. The Advocacy Center provides an independent support system—insulating, counseling and advocating for the child. Videotapes, made under the supervision of a social worker, substitute for court appearance. The Center also helps with any other suitable assistance (clothing, bus fares, etc.).

The initial board of directors of the Children's Advocacy Center consisted of Honolulu Rotary members, who strategized and implemented the establishment of this new community service agency. With our several years of initial funding as seed money and donations in kind by individual members, a fund raising campaign we implemented put the Center on a firm financial status, and control was gradually transitioned to a volunteer board, which still includes some Honolulu Rotary members.

The significance of this entire effort is evidenced by the fact that a video developed by our member Rick Frazier has been distributed to many other Rotary Clubs which, as a result, have become interested in establishing similar Centers.

Our current sponsorship of the Friends of Foster Kids evolved out of Advocacy Center, when it was determined very early on that there was an insufficient number of safe, quality foster homes for the

abused children who needed to be taken away from the abusive situations in their own home. Starting in 1990, we published brochures to facilitate recruiting and training, and initiated our annual picnic and Christmas party for the foster parents and their charges.

These are just two examples of what we have accomplished and are continuing to implement. We're currently working on an Adoption Connection program to facilitate this important process for appropriate children.

In addition to digging in our pockets and writing checks, we have put ourselves to manual labor, too. One of the first of these this writer remembers is the several Saturdays we spent excavating for, pouring foundation and installing extensive playground equipment at the Variety Club School for the handicapped at Diamond Head. Our member, Don Grimm, had obtained the slides, swings, etc., at a very low cost.

Nowadays hardly a week goes by that another work project isn't announced and volunteered for. We completely remodeled a Kailua house to make it suitable for a severely disabled boy, landscaped and built pathways for the Alzheimer's Respite Care Center, rebuilt lunch tables for Kaimuki Intermediate School, and performed a lot of hard, physical labor preparing the ground for the Peace Garden in 1999.

We have not neglected to undertake international service opportunities. In 1977, for instance, in partnership with the Rotary Club of Taipei and Rotary International, we instituted a dental health program for remote mountain tribes in Taiwan. Recently we motivated, strategized and helped fund the establishment of the Rotary Club of Esso in Kamchatka on the eastern coast of Russia.

In 1990 we were recognized by the American Red Cross with its Humanitarian Award for our outstanding community and public service.