

Meet Jim Conway:

Here's the up-to-date story of Rotary's new international President, his dynamism, his devotion, his promise for the year ahead.

By CHARLES M. SCHMIDT

JANUARY 7, 1903, was a typical Winter day in New York City, and the front page of the three-cent New York *Tribune* carried typical stories of the era: One, for example, reported legislation to establish an anti-trust law for the United States of America. Another was about a bill introduced in the New York State Legislature requiring compulsory arbitration to prevent strikes.

While these stories were claiming important space in New York, another event, of utmost importance in the lives of James F. and Mary Pritchard Conway, was unfolding, across the East River in Brooklyn. A son was being born to them. Later he would be christened James F., after his father. And many, many newspaper stories later, he would, on July 1, 1969, become President of Rotary International. What a pleasure for me to try to tell you a bit about our new leader—my old friend Jim Conway.

Jim's father was the son of Irish parents who made their way separately to the U.S.A. where they were married. Jim's mother, born in Brooklyn, was the daughter of an Irish mother and a Welsh father. She died in 1910 when Jim was only 7 years old. Jim was an only child. After his mother's death, his father did not remarry, and Jim spent the next three years in boarding school. After that, father and son maintained bachelor quarters in Brooklyn until 1927 when the younger Jim left to be married.

President Jim confides that he learned love and respect for the rights of others from his mother. From his father, he learned to be neat about the house, clean about his person, and to be prompt for his appointments. He will add, also, that he became a pretty good cook—as bachelors fending for themselves often do.

After hours at Public School 77 in Brooklyn and after doing his chores about home, Jim regularly headed for the Central Branch of the YMCA where his great love was the swimming pool. During his last two years at Erasmus Hall High School, he found time for membership in the Leaders Corps, a group that supervised a group of underprivileged youngsters in the neighborhood. His four years at Erasmus Hall were crammed with extracurricular activity. He was on the lacrosse team, captain of the school track team, a member of a crack New York City championship soccer team. He managed, also, to work with the dramatic society and to

serve as president of the boys' debating club.

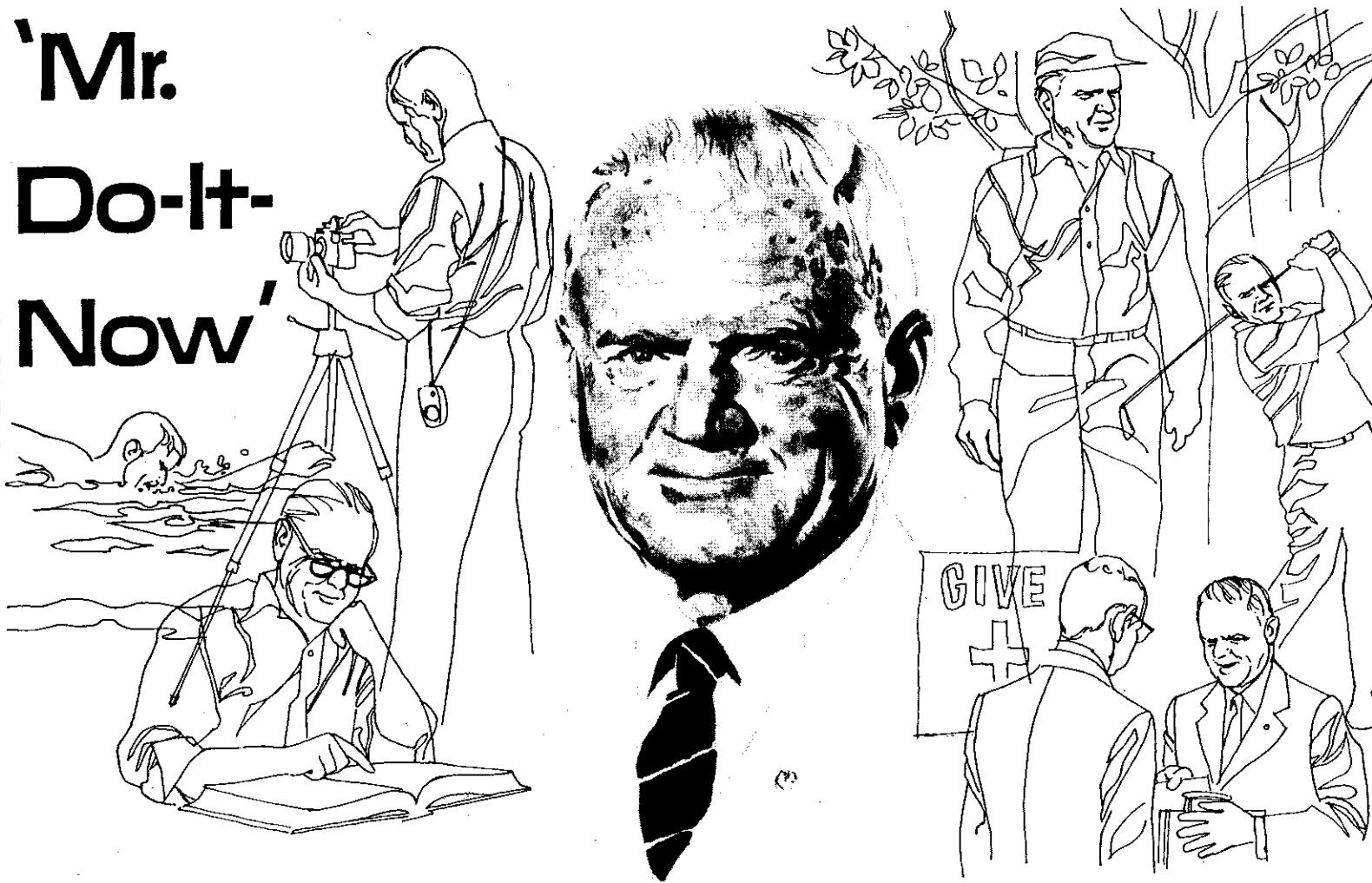
His contact with sports and an ability to write led him, through a friend, to James J. Murphy, a sports editor with the Brooklyn *Daily Eagle*. Here he reported on high school sports events, carried on in this field through law school, and after five years of reporting earned his own by-line.

When Jim graduated from Erasmus Hall in 1922, he decided to be a lawyer. He entered Fordham University Law School, taking night courses five nights a week and working during the day as an office boy-law clerk in an old firm of corporate lawyers—Watson, Harrington and Sheppard. This brought him into contact with members of the New York Bar. It also brought him his first break, financially. Having been offered \$10 per week, he was surprised to find his first check in the amount of \$12.50. What he thought to be a mistake, turned out to be a reward by the law partners for his early diligence. He decided that his belief that "the fellow who watches the clock is liable to become one of the hands" and his

Even presidents, advocates, and corporation executives (Jim Conway is all three!) cherish a quiet evening. He and his wife Evelyn smile amid the warmth and framed mementos of their haven in Rockville Centre, Long Island—hattrack to the Conways since their modest start in 1928.



'Mr. Do-It- Now'



philosophy of "do it now" were indeed worthwhile. These self-imposed disciplines are still part of the Conway creed and Jim often recommends them to others.

For the next three years young Jim Conway worked long hours—in the law offices by day, and attending law school at night, and on weekends writing sports for the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*. Fortunately, it was not *all* work. Jim had met Evelyn Jughardt in high school, and this friendship was becoming serious. One could find Jim and Evelyn together at parties, dances, and the theater. And, as Evelyn will tell you, she spent many a Saturday night in the press box at a track meet, nodding between events, often to be awakened by the crack of the starter's pistol, just so they could be together.

In 1926 Jim was admitted to the bar in the State of New York. Shortly thereafter, he joined the firm of Strong, Mellen and Fuller which soon became Fuller, Brown and Brenton.

Jim and Evelyn were married on September 1, 1927, in Saint Paul's Episcopal Church in Brooklyn and established their home in Rockville Centre, New York.

Then in 1928, Jim decided he would become a country lawyer, and he turned his eyes toward Nassau

County on Long Island. With a scarcity of money and clients, he opened his own office in Rockville Centre, with Evelyn as volunteer secretary. The practice of law proved an exciting experience for them both, and over the years, Jim says, they enjoyed "reasonable success."

The next big event in the lives of the Conways was the birth of William Stewart Conway in 1931. Bill is a graduate of Union College, and is married to Carol Corrigan, a graduate of nearby Skidmore. Bill is vice president of Roper Research Associates, public opinion researchers, and is a member of the Rotary Club of New York City. Bill and Carol have four children, and make their home at Fayson Lakes, New Jersey.

In 1935, Evelyn presented Jim with Sheila Joan Conway. Sheila is a graduate of Penn Hall and is married to John T. Mackowiak, a graduate of Hofstra College. Sheila and Jack also have four children, also live at Fayson Lakes. Jack is also a Rotarian—originally in Elyria, Ohio and presently in Hillside, New Jersey, where he is a plant manager for Edgcombe Steel, Inc.

Fayson Lakes, incidentally, has always had a special significance to the Conway family ever since they bought their first log cabin type Summer house there in 1940. Then, later they found a year-round cottage, which has

Snaps from the Conway Album

Born and raised in Brooklyn, across New York's East River, Jim carved and smoothed each step of his rise from office boy, law student, and sportswriter to Rotary's world leader, first in the swarming city and later in suburban Nassau County. Along the way, happy things happened. Here, in family photos . . .



The 20's. Young Jim Conway, Esq., fresh out of night school. A lawyer at last!



The 40's. Dressed for Winter sports, Mrs. Conway and the couple's growing children, Bill and Sheila, pose near the weekend retreat at Fayson Lakes.

proved the center of family holiday activity ever since. Fayson Lakes has also been the weekend hide-a-way for Jim and Evelyn, and hiking the woodland trails in the area has always proved good medicine whenever the work load gets too heavy. They find the quiet of the lake ideal for pleasant entertaining; for a Summer cook-out; for a quiet New Year's Eve with friends, complete with dinner and a pleasant, friendly welcome to the New Year. And Fayson Lakes was always the spot to discuss serious Rotary with Rotary friends.

Our President found time for county politics soon after establishing his home and office on Long Island. This activity was recognized, in 1930, by the Honorable Lewis J. Smith, Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of New York. Jim was chosen Judge Smith's confidential secretary, continuing until the Judge's death.

An important year, 1930: Jim became attorney for the South Shore Trust Company, and also was engaged to defend Bee Line, Inc. He became a member of the board of directors of the trust company and continued as general counsel until the bank merged with a larger organization. His employment with Bee Line, Inc., however, still continues. He is executive vice president, a director, and general counsel of this transportation company, the largest on Long Island, and president of the Rockville Centre Bus Corporation, an affiliate. He acts as counsel for other transportation companies on Long Island and is known as a specialist in the problems peculiar to this industry, representing these companies in labor relations, personal injury litigation, and matters before the government regulatory authorities. Jim has been a director and president of the New York State Motorbus Association and is active on committees for the American Transit Association.

His great interest in his profession is typified by his activity with the Nassau County Bar Association, of which he was president in 1956-57. He holds membership, also, in the New York State and American Bar Associations.

Jim has been active, as well, in the affairs of his home community. He has served as director and treasurer of the YMCA for Nassau and Suffolk Counties, as director of the South Nassau Communities Hospital, as chair-

man of the fund raising drive for the American Red Cross during World War II, and as team worker in the local Community Chest drive.

Our President has two hobbies of note—golf and color photography. His growing activity in Rotary does not allow too much time for these pursuits. However, he is known to steal an afternoon, now and then, at the Rockville Country Club, and weekends at the lake often find him on a nearby golf course. Being an avid cameraman, he has his equipment with him on even the busiest of trips, and he manages to bring home beautiful color slides of work and play along the way.

Jim is a religious man, an Episcopalian, but is hardly an ardent churchman; yet, one finds him at ease among his friends in their many houses of worship.

In 1943, Jim was invited to join the Rotary Club of Hempstead, New York, with an old friend, Ralph Dauch, as his sponsor. He agreed to join although he was a very busy young lawyer and admits that he had not really been bitten by the bug of Rotary service. His attendance lagged, and friend Ralph had to warn him that he could not continue to hold Rotary membership under these conditions. He was offered the alternatives of resigning to save face or of becoming a real Rotarian. He took up the challenge and promised his sponsor that he would improve his record.

Jim will insist that a Conway promise is always kept. He maintained his attendance and, in time, Rotary service began to make sense. Instead of becoming a "drop-out" of the Hempstead Club, he became a charter member of the Rotary Club of Rockville Centre, and the following year served as its second President.

Jim's smile and his vast knowledge of the legislative affairs of the District soon led him more and more into the main stream of Rotary action. The Nominating Committee procedure used in District 725 for selecting the District Governor and Declaration of Trust and By-laws controlling the Rotary District 725 Foundation, are bits of his handiwork.

In 1953, Jim was visited by two friends from the Hempstead Club who discussed the possibility of the Rotary Club of Rockville Centre putting his name into nomination for District Governor. After much serious



Ahhh! Fayson Lakes again, with a warm, rambling cabin, old clothes, a book (below). The Conways also have hosted scores of convivial cook-outs (right) for family, friends, and Jim's colleagues in Rotary.



Outings—nautical, nature-bound, or otherwise—invariably include the omnipresent camera. Next to golf, color photography is Jim's pet diversion. Here a boating companion has candidly "beat him to the draw."



discussion with Evelyn, he agreed, and in due time became District Governor of old District 257, which is now Districts 723 and 725.

At the Seattle Convention of Rotary International in 1954, Jim was appointed Chairman of the Balloting Arrangements Committee. This proved an exciting experience, since it was the first time that the single transferrable ballot was ever used in a worldwide Rotary election. He later served on the Constitution and By-Laws Committee of Rotary International and was its chairman in 1959-1960. He and the late Charles F. Pennock, a Past Governor of District 745, were prime movers in the development of the Nominating Committee Procedure to select the members of the Board of Directors of Rotary International. He also served as chairman of a committee to establish standard Rules of Procedure for the conduct of the Council on Legislation and the Convention.

Our President was elected to the RI Board of Directors in 1962, served as a Director under President Nitish Laharry and as Director and Second Vice-President under President Carl Miller.

Soon after the Convention in Denver, Colorado, in 1966, he was again called to committee by President "Sput" Teenstra, this time with a group that would prepare the framework of legislation that, with little modification, was to become the basis of settlement of long standing differences between RI and RIBI. Jim is particularly proud of his connection with this settlement because, as he says, "From the time when I first became aware of this problem, as a member of the Constitution and By-Laws Committee, I was certain that once it was approached by all concerned with a view toward an amelioration of differences rather than a magnification of them, the solution would be there for the seeking and Rotary would be a better and stronger organization by reason of the settlement." He is very happy that this has come to pass.

On January 19, 1968, our President-to-be was preparing a brief in his law office in Rockville Centre, when a telephone call from Evanston was announced. Now, a telephone call from Evanston was not unusual in his office, but a call from the Nominating Committee for

the President of RI, was an entirely different matter. Would Jim accept the nomination of the Committee for RI President for the year 1969-70? Once Jim was able to catch his breath, the answer was "yes". Then he left the office in search of Evelyn who was out having her hair done. Evelyn, more excited than Jim, was in agreement. On March 15, after the necessary waiting period, the decision remained unchallenged, and James F. Conway was declared the Nominee for 1969-1970. This action was ratified unanimously by the Convention in Mexico City and Jim became President-Elect, officially.

Since becoming President-Elect, Jim has been serving on an ad hoc committee known as the Legislative Procedures Committee of RI, which relates to improved procedures for the Council on Legislation and the Convention proper, to facilitate the enactment of legislation brought before the Convention in legislative years. The findings of this committee come before the 1970 Convention in Atlanta, at which President Jim will preside.

Jim is busy, also, reviewing the activities of the Rotary organization during the past 64 years, and the impact of these activities on the world in general. He is searching his own actions, in Clubs and District, to find where they could be improved; and he is studying present-day Rotary reaction to present-day world conditions—all with an eye toward his year, 1969-1970, wherein lies his opportunity to help renew the promise to leave the world a better place to live and work.

This, then, is the story to date, of a man with devotion to his family, and community, and his profession, and with an everlasting belief in the ideal of service and the principles of Rotary. He offers great promise in the year ahead for an effective administration that will leave as its legacy a stronger organization within, and a better understanding among the peoples of the world.



Longtime friend of President Conway, and his aide at the '69 Assembly and Convention of RI, "Charlie" Schmidt is president of Schmidt Hardware in Farmingdale, L.I., New York. A member of the Rotary Club there since 1937, he has been a District Governor and Counsellor.