

In Memoriam

George Minter Seaborn

June 22, 1911 - March 16, 2004



Introduction

A member for over forty years, George served as Secretary, 1967-68, and Director, 1969-71; George Seaborn had 21 years of perfect attendance at end of the Rotary year, 1980-81 - more than 1,000. In 1971 he led a GSE team to New Zealand and came back with a superlative slide-show. Extremely versatile, almost hyperactive, many in the Club came to think of George as among the best members this Club ever had. Archie Campbell thought so in the '60s, also Joe Schmitz. Ed Whelan came to think so; and when Scotty Grant brought together his many contributions in a tribute in 1991, he as a charter member remembered that George was "appliance repairman, electric repairman, and bicycle repairman in the days of our garage sales. He was the top salesman when selling fertilizer was our prime money-raiser. George has done it all. He was actively supported in these endeavours by his wife Jane. She died on April 19, 1990. The board made a wise decision in recognizing the contributions made by this fine man to our club." For these reasons he was honoured for his many significant contributions since joining on January 6, 1960. He was given a Roy Alsip Drawing and \$1,000 was given in his name to Calgary Rotary Foundation.

Background

Born in Moose Jaw, as Joe Schmitz noted, not without a bit of derision, he did an Engineering Degree at the University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon. George came to Calgary as plant engineer for the Willard Storage Battery Company and soon became manager. Willard employed up to 120 people at that time, making it one of the leading manufacturers of any kind in Calgary.

Money Raiser

In those early days when raising money meant putting one's hand to many projects, George Seaborn in 1962 proposed a hands-on spring project of peddling fertilizer in bags weighing 50 pounds. He thought the Club might raise \$2,000 if each member (100) sold 12 bags @ \$4 each. The project was approved and tried. As enacted, George Seaborn led the sales with 60 while the next highest was 28. All told 1,043 bags were sold and distributed between December and June, 1962-63.3 This involved physical work and required approaching neighbours, friends, and associates. Enthusiasm had dropped in 1963-64 when Ernie Peckover agreed to take charge. That year Gardie Shaw was the leading salesman as 715 bags were sold, 85 returned, earning only \$1,201. As a result the Board decided to wind up the program in June.

Nothing daunted, George also helped with the Aquarium Concession in the 1960s, with the Garage Sale in the 1970s, and did his share for the Dream Home sales.

hotographer

George will always be remembered for his photography because he was in fact the chief photographer, according to the records, from 1962 to 1992 - that is, for 30 years. As our archives show, he left behind many negatives, slides, a large album dating from the mid-'sixties.

While he was probably not the only one who liked to take a poke at Howard Miller and his banjo playing, George once did a photographic satire on Howard Miller in film and music, and managed to stay on Howard's good side! Some members will remember his 'farewell to Howard' routine.

"Rotarian of the Week"

When Joe Schmitz singled George out as "Rotarian of the Week" in 1969, he played on his **versatility**, especially with the camera: "Our photographer is one man who can take your money and make you enjoy it. I got a lot of dope on George from a Stampede Week houseguest but I am going to hold the story of his student days in reserve as trading material if an occasion should arise. George Seaborn is a nine-year member of the Club and although he was born at Moose Jaw we don't hold this against him. When he is not sneaking those candid photos he is manufacturing storage batteries under the name of Electric Storage Battery Co. If you ever want your battery charged call George."

At the end of 1969- 70 George was thanked for his "Club Service" in that he was responsible for "Social, Songs, Attendance, Records, Historian, and Photographer". For a mixed golf tournament at Shaw-nee combined with a dinner and a dance in early June, his daughter Sue was present,

shot a 91, and won a prize, though she apparently could not beat Jim Watson who was usually the best golfer.

Seaborn's Concern for Others

In 1991 Scotty Grant remembered that George had been active in every facet of Rotary. "He was on the Community Service Committee when I was president and he came to the board with a proposal to buy a van for the Salvation Army. He was turned down because of lack of money. But he never quit. He badgered dealers until he found a good used van at the right price from Calgary Motor Products. The purchase was approved and I had the pleasant duty of giving the keys to the Salvation Army."

In September 1969 George came to see that while much good was being done for the youth of Calgary, "much less was being done for the elderly. He was asked to prepare a paper on the subject. In this he suggested that since the Club had finished with the Aquarium roster demands, perhaps some could help at Sarcee Auxiliary Hospital by taking people on outings, to concerts." According to Scotty, "a high light of his Rotary life was his five-year commitment to show movies to the patients at Sarcee Hospital. He borrowed films from oil companies, governments, the National Film Board and anyone else he could think of. He did this once a month without a miss."

GSE Team Leader, 1971

George was chosen by the District to be the leader of the first Group Exchange ever to leave District 536. Twenty years later he was honoured when two of his group came to visit and speak. George introduced Gerald Perry, sugar beet and potato farmer from Chin, and Wilton Thorsteinson, a lawyer from Medicine Hat. Each man gave a brief report stressing his enthusiasm for such an educational undertaking and how the exposure had affected his life and positive-planning for his future. George followed through with colour slides of many of the interesting place they visited along with some history of the beautiful New Zealand Islands. A highlight mentioned by all three men was the fellowship and friendliness provided by the local people. They had fun, gained untold knowledge and obviously liked George Seaborn.

A Much Honoured Member

On the occasion of George's 90th birthday, Ed Whelan stated that George was one of his favourite Rotarians. He wanted him to know how 'deeply all of us appreciate his work. On that occasion in June 2001 his daughter Susan was present from Sackville, NB. A year later his son Clark was there and so were about a dozen of those who remember him best. At Christmas, 2001 he was made an honorary member for life.