

HISTORY OF COOKEVILLE ROTARY NOON CLUB
(1935-2005)
By W. Calvin Dickinson

The Cookeville Rotary Club organized on October 8, 1935, 30 years after the inception of the first Rotary Club in Chicago and 12 years before Rotary founder Paul Harris died in 1947. In 1935, there were 3,855 Rotary clubs in 79 countries with 162,000 members.

Fifteen members attended the first meeting in the basement of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church on Broad Street. Hugh Goodpasture was elected first president; Gid Lowe was vice president; and C. V. Bruner was secretary-treasurer. In addition to these officers, charter members of the new club were Charles Bryan, Charles Cox, George Davidson, W. C. Davis, W. J. Holladay, Lester King, Elmer Langford, Cooper Loftis, Roger Manning, Louis McDowell, Sam Pendergrass, Tillman Phillips, Thurman Shipley, David Terry, Fred Terry, Clyde Vaughn, Will Whitaker and Max Winningham.

The new club met on Tuesdays at noon in the church. Cookeville Rotary had been chartered with 21 members, but the initial membership growth was very slow. By 1981, however, membership had increased to 150, and that total has fluctuated very little in the last 25 years. In 2005, Cookeville Rotary was one of the largest clubs in District 6780 with about 160 members.

In its early years, the Cookeville club provided many service activities in the community. A youth recreational program, a Little League baseball team and a Junior Pro basketball team, and a substantial contribution to Jere Whitson Memorial Park were some of their projects.

In 1963, the club purchased three pieces of medical equipment for the hospital; then Rotarians purchased a piece of prenatal diagnostic equipment and a baby warmer; in 1965 they bought a van for the Putnam County Rescue Squad.

For several years, the Cookeville club and other clubs in District 6780 co-operated with Rotary clubs in Tennessee, Mississippi and Arkansas to support a Hospital for Crippled Adults in Memphis. This was the only institution of its kind in the world. Two Cookeville Rotarians, C. V. Bruner and Luther Harris, served as directors of the hospital.

In 1991, Rotarian Dr. Chuck Womack led in the organization of the Cookeville Health Clinic, a free service for local citizens. About 34 Rotarians and dozens of other volunteers assisted medical doctors weekly with the clinic. About 60 doctors and 150 nurses volunteered for clinic work in a two-year period.

During its operation on Saturdays, the clinic served hundreds of patients for thousands of visits. The Rotary club gave more than \$3,000 to the clinic for the purchase of medicines.

After helping secure a grant for rural medical clinics in Gainesboro and Monterey, the club contributed funds annually for operating the clinics. For several years, \$1000 of the club's budget went to the clinics. Dr. Kenna Williams of the Rotary club was the initiator and supervisor of the project.

Service to youth has been an important part of the Rotary club's activities. Soon after World War II, Mrs. J. M. Henderson, wife of Rotarian Jim Henderson, sponsored dancing and games for young people at Cookeville Armory. The city eventually assumed responsibility for the program.

The Cookeville club also sponsored a Little League baseball team and a Junior Pro basketball team, supplying them with uniforms, equipment, managers, and moral support. In combination with this, the club made a substantial contribution of money and equipment to Jere Whitson Memorial Park.

Cookeville Rotary Club budgets have long contained significant contributions to youth programs in the city. In 2004-2005 under the leadership of President Susan Elkins, the club donated a total of more than \$10,000 for community service, with much of those donations going to youth activities.

Rotaract and Interact clubs in the schools, Girls State and boys State, Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, and youth awards all received money from the Rotary club. A scholarship for a Putnam County graduate attending Tennessee tech and a scholarship for vocational training are also part of the Cookeville club's donations to community youth.

For many years after 1947, the Rotary club annually participated in a Career Day for high school seniors. This program, held on the Tennessee tech campus, was cosponsored by the club and the university. Every year, more than 2,000 seniors from approximately 50 high schools visited the Tech campus, where each student gained information concerning higher education and vocations. Rotarians acted as hosts and as presenters for this occasion. In the 1980s this program was discontinued.

After the new Putnam County Public Library was constructed in 1974-75, Rotary club members moved the library holdings from the old structure to the new, and in 1977 the lower floor of the new building was completed by Rotarians who painted, laid tile and installed carpet.

Other local programs that the Cookeville club has supported or is supporting monetarily as Genesis House, Cookeville Symphony, Rescue Mission, Adult Literacy, Clearing House and Leadership Putnam.

The Cookeville Rotary club is part of District 6780 of Rotary International. Each district of Rotary is led by a district governor, elected for a term of one year. Three Rotarians of the Cookeville club have served as district governor; C. V. Bruner in 1942-43, Lt. T. Reeves in 1970-71 and James Lacy in 1980-81. Jim Andrews of the Cookeville

Breakfast Club was district governor in 1992-93. As part of its district activities, the Cookeville club has acted as sponsor of new Rotary clubs in Jamestown and Livingston.

In 1981, the Cookeville Rotary Club sponsored a second Rotary organization in the city – the Cookeville Breakfast Rotary Club. George Benedict, former secretary of the parent club, was first president in the new club, and several Cookeville club members changed their memberships to be part of the 34 charter members of the new club.

The Breakfast club has increased in membership and has contributed significantly to Rotary service in Cookeville. An annual golf tournament raises significant amounts of money, which is used for note-worthy projects in the city.

On the highest level of Rotary's organization, Rotary International, the Cookeville club has distinguished itself. The club has consistently contributed money and goods to other countries through the Rotary clubs in those countries. Through Rotary International, the club contributed money and supplies to disaster areas on Nicaragua and Guam.

Since 1965, the club has collected books and donated them to libraries in India. In 1984, the club supported a Rotary International project to install lightning rods on school houses in Kenya. In 1993, medical supplies were sent to Argentina. In the last several decades, Cookeville club has contributed thousands of dollars to Rotary's PolioPlus program to eradicate polio in the world. Cookeville Rotarians Jim Andrews and Weldon Patterson traveled to India several times to assist in the treatment of polio victims in that country. The Cookeville club contributed funds to this project.

Participating in Rotary International's Group Study Exchange Team program, the Cookeville club has engaged in exchanges with Rotary districts in other countries, including England, Australia, India, Mexico, Argentina, Sweden, Egypt and Japan. In this program, a group of four or five young non-Rotarians from one country visit a Rotary district in another country for about a month. They live in Rotarians' homes, tour the area and deliver programs to Rotary clubs. Later in the year, the program is reversed, with the former visitors acting as hosts.

Several students from Cookeville and Tennessee Tech have received Rotary scholarships and have studied in other countries as Rotary Scholars. College student Sue Glover studied in France in 1953, Martha Brown in Australia in 1971, Kathy Crisp in France in 1977-78, Michael Weaver in England in 1980-81, Scot Clugston in New Zealand in 1981-82, Terri Cassety in Australia in 1987-88, and Meera Ballal in Scotland in 1992-93. High school students from Cookeville have also studied abroad as Rotary Scholars, including Jodie Jordan in Belgium and Emily Wood in France.

A signal honor for the Cookeville club was the selection of James Lacy as president of Rotary International for the 1998-1999 year. Leading more than 1,200,000 Rotarians around the world, Lacy adopted "Follow Your Rotary Dream" as his motto and goal. His focus was to continue the Rotary International project to wipe out polio worldwide and to improve the status of children all over the world.

During his year as Rotary International president, Lacy met with national leaders all over the world and with the pope in Rome, discussing situations and projects which would carry out Rotary service goals. In 2004, Cookeville Rotary Club was one of 30,000 Rotary clubs in 163 countries with 1,200,000 members.

In 2004-05, the Cookeville Club budget was \$110,500, up for \$70,167 in 1992-93. Much of this budget will be spent for service projects in Putnam County and around the world. The presidents of the two Cookeville clubs, Susan Elkins and Janell Clark, are enthusiastic about beneficial Rotary activities in the city and around the world.

COOKEVILLE ROTARY NOON CLUB PRESIDENTS:

Hugh Goodpasture	1935-37
Gid Lowe	1937-38
Elmer A. Langford	1938-39
Dave Terry	1939-40
Lester King	1940-41
L. T. Reeves	1941-42
W. T. Sewell	1942-43
Louis McDowell	1943-44
Willis J. Huddleston	1944-45
Roger Manning	1945-46
Everett Derryberry	1946-47
Louis Johnson, Jr.	1947-48
W. J. Holladay	1948-49
Thurman Shipley	1949-50
C. V. Bruner	1950-51
J. L. McDonald	1951-52
Luther C. Harris	1952-53
Gordon B. Pennebaker	1953-54
Claude Wilmoth	1954-55
J. M. Henderson	1955-56
Frazier Harris	1956-57
Miser R. Richmond	1957-58
Tommy Lynn	1958-59
James Seay Brown	1959-60
Raymond Case	1960-61
Malcolm P. Quillen	1961-62
Walter Lamb	1962-63
Clement Eyler	1963-64
W. R. Holland	1964-65
Clarence P. Snelgrove	1965-69
Ralph Boles	1969-70
Stacey Mott	1970-71
Francis R. Toline	1971-72
Bishop Holliman	1972-73
John W. Warren	1973-74

James Carlen	1974-75
Wallace S. Prescott	1975-76
Earl Nichols	1976-77
Reginald Mazeret	1977-78
James L. Lacy	1978-79
William G. Patterson	1979-80
Martin Peters	1980-81
Walter Derryberry	1981-82
James A. Wattenbarger	1982-83
Edward H. Jared	1982-84
Walter L. Helton	1984-85
Robert H. Poteet	1985-86
Sumner A. Griffin	1988-87
Charles Jordan	1987-88
Edmond B. Dixon	1988-89
Opless Walker	1989-90
Paul Bonner	1990-91
Charles Womack	1991-92
Calvin Dickinson	1992-93
Charles McCaskey	1993-94
Don Estes	1994-95
Bill Ray	1995-96
Jim Stafne	1996-97
Bob Brooksbank	1997-98
Tom Lawrence	1998-99
Leo McGee	1999-2000
Buddy Reynolds	2000-2001
Roy Byrd	2001-2002
Bob Luna	2002-2003
Jeff Roberts	2003-2004
Susan Elkins	2004-2005

Rotary International's constitution prohibited the admission of women as members. In 1988, however, following a court challenge and decision in California, this constitutional provision was eliminated, thus opening membership in Rotary to women.

CBRC quickly acted to induct women into its membership. The first woman member of CBRC club was Martelia Crawford, a local attorney, sponsored by Al Cannella in 1988-89.

Ann Holland, branch bank manager for Bank of Putnam County, was the second woman member, sponsored by Gleason Pebley, also in 1988-89. During the next 16 years, new member induction included 11 women.

VISON AND MISSION

The adopted vision of the CBRC is to be the example of service in our community and beyond. The official mission is to enrich each member's experience in Rotary, to serve community and international needs with emphasis on youth, and to support the Rotary Foundation and activities of Distrcit 6780.

Upon induction, every new member is informed that the object of Rotary is, "to encourage and foster the ideal of service as a basis of worthy enterprise and to adopt the precept of 'Service above Self.'" Throughout its existence, the Cookeville Breakfast Rotary Club has consistently endeavored to fulfill Rotary's commitment to "Service above Self" through four avenues of service, classified as community service, international service, vocational service and club service.

International service is best met though the broad scope of the work of Rotary International. Efforts in meeting global humanitarian needs are made possible to a major extent through the Rotary Foundation, which in turn relies heavily on the support of individual Rotary members.

In these first 23 years of CBRC, in addition to the extensive service provided by individual club members, the club has contributed in excess of \$250,000 to worthy causes and projects relating to these four avenues of service.

Essentially from the outset, the main thrust of CBRC's service has been focused on youth, youth needs, youth in crises, etc. Proceeds from projects have been distributed to numerous groups. While certainly not exhaustive, the subsequent listing of 10 projects provides illustrative examples of the type of activities that CBRC has chosen to support.

TRUCHUR, INDIA POLIO PROJECT

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