



TED RANKINS A.M LOOKING BACK 1988-89

“Put Life into Rotary – Your Life” was the theme. So, we did. It was a year of involvement. People came first. Administration was streamlined, core projects enhanced, grassroots projects initiated, humour pervaded meetings – all with a strong social overlay. Boy, were we social! And, of course, *Women* were on our minds.

A Club debate, ‘Women in Rotary’, had some wonderful rhetoric, both pro and con, which is best left in the 80’s. Our direction was clear, though. A Paul Harris Fellow was awarded, not only to a *non*-Rotarian, but to a *woman!* Ground breaking, indeed. That PHF was Valerie Broad who, three years later, was in the first group of women inducted to Bendigo RC. Fast track to today and it’s hard to imagine the Club *without* female members. And, look – there’s the same youthful Valerie!

Club Service: Evan Trevorah’s editorship was recognised for ‘Excellence of Club Bulletin’. Programs had debates and guest speakers of note such as Supreme Court Justice Teague. A painstaking sifting of 64 years of Club history continued. Membership settled at 108 with an average attendance

of 71%. Sadly, we mourned the passing of stalwarts Jack McGauchie and Bob Trethewey. Bob had been a member for 49 years.

Fellowship, “... promoting acquaintance and friendship among members”, was actively promoted. Here’s how: Dinner Evenings at restaurants; Train trip to Melbourne RC (our sponsor in 1925) – a great day despite losing two Rotarians in transit; Combined Bendigo RC’s Bowls Night; Melbourne Cup function with Bendigo-Sandhurst RC; Ecumenical Service & Breakfast; Christmas Party at (then) Lansell’s; Bill & Melva Gray hosted an International Food Night of great cuisine; Courtesy Trevor Houlden (remember generous Trevor?), a busload to Echuca’s 40th celebrations; Evening at Plinge’s Music Hall; Luncheon at Mitchelton Winery (coinciding with Vienna Boys’ Choir visit) and boat trip to Tahbilk Winery; A washed-out cricket match vs. Bendigo-Sandhurst RC; and, finally, the President’s Picnic & Family Day at Keith & Judy Scarrott’s Sedgwick farm. By then, we were well acquainted!

Community Service. In those days, the Youth Camp – ‘Camp Getaway’, was Bendigo’s ‘baby’. A Ride-on-Mower was purchased, and we painted, plumbed, repaired, refurbished, installed a ‘master’ locking system, re-lined playing courts and other things we have to be cajoled into doing at home. The Svanosios, Jack & Joyce, clocked up 20 years of camp bookings and fee collection. How good is that?

A special project, ‘Skin Cancer Awareness’, was conducted with Ant-Cancer Council support. The weeklong program - guest speakers, street displays, a Hargreaves Mall fashion parade, media publicity, and ACC van roaming Bendigo, was acclaimed. Awareness has come a long way, but it was early days then and the project was timely.

Then, as now, our ‘anchor’ project was the Easter Art Show with sales of \$66,000. Doubling entry to \$2 had no effect on attendance (4700). A Memorial Hall Pottery Exhibition and sale had 21 exhibitors and \$9,400 in sales.

Carols - a massive cloudburst saw a hasty relocation to the Town Hall. Tricky logistics, but smooth teamwork, had a capacity crowd enjoying a

memorable program. Imagine, a suited 'drowned rat' president welcoming an equally sodden audience - all jovial, all in the same 'boat', almost literally.

Community Friendship events reflected the 'feet on the ground' approach. These were 'firsts' for our Club: A Christmas treat for 50 Sternberg Lodge clients, 18 in wheelchairs, waited on by Rotarians. An outing to Echuca for 16 Mirridong & Bethlehem Home residents and three Club widows hosted by 20 members and wives providing morning tea with Echuca Rotarians, a cruise, and luncheon at Rich River.

'**Fusion**' was a not-for-profit organisation run by volunteers for Youth in Need which received, in the Club's name, members' donations of a typewriter, cassette player (no iPods then!), filing cabinet and a reliable car. Indeed, Rotarians are generous people.

We held a three day Camp Breakaway for 71 needy children, a Christmas party for 63 intellectually disabled Golden City Unit residents, and weekly rostered visits to the blind at Mirridong to read and provide social contact.

International Service. Student Exchanges to South Africa and from Norway worked well and a sponsored student attended a RYLA camp in Los Altos, California (Bendigo's then Sister City).

FAIM became RAWCS this year. A locally designed hand pump went to Thailand where we also backed a fish farm project and the Holt Sahathai Foundation (Orphanage).

Each week, two members fasted. The equivalent cost of their meals went to Polio Plus. Fasting gave an inkling of empathy with the 'have-nots' our Rotary projects supported. Besides, it made for trim waistlines!

Vocational & Youth Service Directorate was equally active. Two busloads of overseas students enjoyed an Orientation of Bendigo Day; A student attend National Summer Science School, Canberra; A Girl Guides' Camp & Craft Competition; A junior tennis tournament sponsored; The Ern Grainger

Apprenticeship Award; and expansion of Peer Support in schools. Our Ray Clegg & Joe O'Sullivan had brought the scheme to Victoria. Joe was another PHF in 88-89. 'Bullying' has a profile nowadays but was not a problem in Peer Support schools.

With Bendigo South RC, we aided Bendigo Rotaract's projects such as Meals on Wheels and Dial a Santa. In turn, they assisted our endeavours, especially with Camp Breakaway and Carols.

In 1988-89 meetings were held at the now demolished ANA Motel in View Street. Meal costs increased to \$8 and subscriptions to \$125. It was a year of action. Contributions and co-operation were leveraged to the nth degree. Humour and goodwill prevailed. This Club really did "Put Life into Rotary".