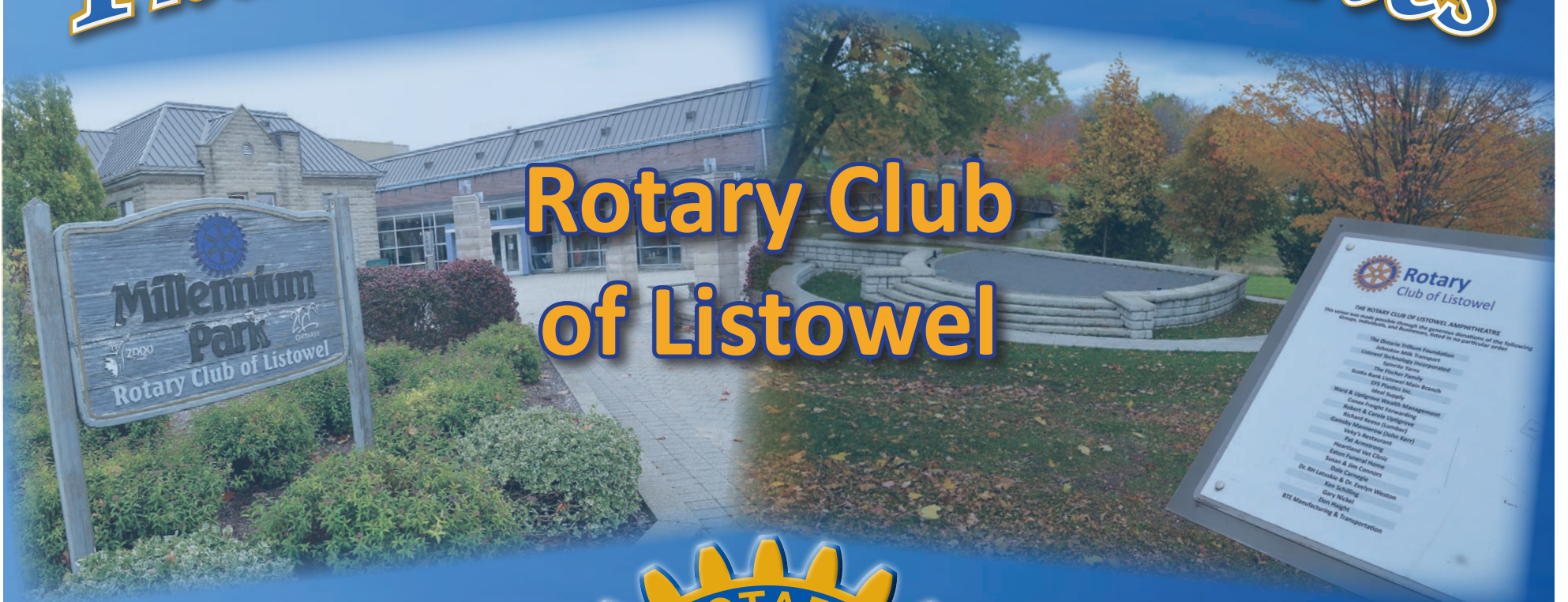


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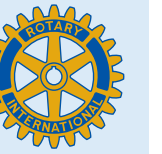
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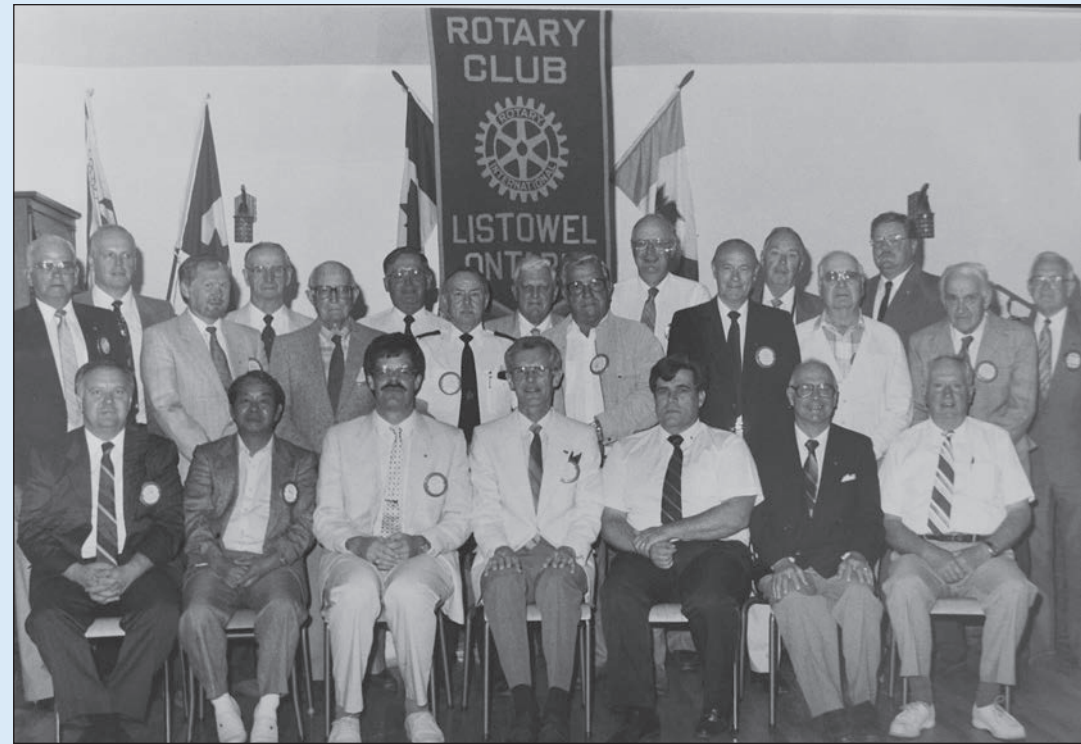




'Once you're committed to the idea of Rotary, it's hard to give it up'

End of an era: Rotary Club of Listowel disbands after 73 years of loyal service to the community

DAN MCNEE
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PROUD MEMBERSHIP - An institution in North Perth and the surrounding area for three-quarters of a century, the Rotary Club of Listowel was forced to dissolve operations as a service organization earlier this year - a declining membership the reasoning behind the decision. It is estimated that the club allocated approximately \$1 million into countless projects throughout the municipality and beyond over its many years of loyal service to the community. Pictured above is the Rotary Club of Listowel's membership from 1991.

Looking down the long list of the Rotary Club of Listowel's accomplishments and supportive endeavours through tireless fundraising over its 73 years, one might think they were viewing the collective resume of 10 service organizations and not just one. The list is that distinguished and just that impressive.

The establishment of Millennium Park at the Listowel branch of the North Perth Public Library. The Rotary Youth Exchange. Easter Seals. High school scholarships and bursaries. Support of 4-H and Junior Farmers, It Takes a Village, Big Brothers Big Sisters and the annual Salvation Army Kettle Drive. Providing school dictionaries and raising money and stock for food programs. Beef barbecues and roadside cleanups. Food booths and duck races. Even support of other local service groups. Rotarians do not hesitate or discriminate with their generosity.

Undertakings as complex as its tireless efforts on both a local and international scale to eradicate polio worldwide. Or things as simple as funding a bus that for years transported students and seniors over 200,000 miles to various sports events and social functions throughout the province. The Rotary Club of Listowel took them all on, and took

them all on with gusto. "It was just this ability the club had to respond to the community's needs, whatever those needs were," says Listowel Rotary president Mike Hodgkinson. "There were a lot of random acts of kindness over the years." Unfortunately, all good things must come to an end. It was with heavy hearts that the club voted unanimously in June to dissolve the organization that had been such an integral cog

in Listowel's charitable wheel of goodwill since 1946. In the end, it was dwindling membership numbers that sealed Listowel Rotary's fate. "I think when I first joined there was close to 50 members," said Rotarian Clare Hood, a 35-year member who served in the role of president "more than once." "This year, there were six. Times have changed, and people can't or won't donate their time anymore. Maybe they just don't

have the time they used to. "I've been seeing other service clubs closing down too, or numbers diminishing. Things change." Mark TarBush is a third generation Rotarian, first officially becoming involved with the Listowel club after he served as its annual attendee selection to Rotary's Adventure in Citizenship to Ottawa in 1970. He would go on to become a full-time member in the early 1980s, and serve as club president on four separate occasions.

"Once you're committed to the idea of Rotary, it's hard to give it up," says TarBush. "In my case, if I have one thing I'm going to miss terribly is working with kids. We have had a hard time moving on from this. "You almost have to say it was inevitable, really. There was a lot of soul searching in there."

Laying the foundation: Listowel Community Club
At the encouragement of a local bank manager, a group of area businessmen formed the Listowel Community Club in 1934.

Pharmacist Ted Creighton served as the club's first president; a Rotary Club high school scholarship was later named in honour of him and still awarded annually today. The Community Club supported a number of local initiatives early on, with an emphasis on supporting sports and playground projects, community service, and assisting underprivileged children, especially those with medical ailments. Polio had become a worldwide epidemic, and a vaccine would not be developed for another two decades. "I think we can safely say it has been contained," said TarBush, adding that the goal of eradicating polio globally became Rotary International's best-known legacy. "In the '50s when I was kid, it was still a huge issue. For the most part it has been eradicated, but you still have these little pockets of people where it exists."

During the Second World War, the Listowel Community Club organized food drives for citizens and Canadian soldiers in Britain. The organization also conducted activities to welcome and make comfortable the military units stationed in Listowel. After working in conjunction with the Stratford Rotary Club for many years on projects to help underprivileged children, Stratford Rotary would ultimately sponsor the Listowel Community Club to join Rotary International in March of 1946.

Service club heavyweight
Glen Blackmore had the distinction of serving as the Listowel Community Club's final president and the Rotary Club of Listowel's inaugural president. Meetings were first held at Cross's Hall at the intersection of Wallace Avenue and Inkerman Street; later moved to the Royal Hotel in 1953 and then Hayward's Blue Barn Restaurant north of Listowel in 1961. Later venues included the Kin Station and the Listowel Legion.

Potential new members had to be invited by an existing Rotarian and be 'of good character', according to long-time member, secretary and designated club historian, Walt Berry. Berry's photographic history of the club is extensive, to say the least. "I was new to town," said Berry of first joining the club over three decades ago. Upon Listowel's disbandment, Berry immediately joined up with the Clifford Rotary Club. "I moved to Brussels in 1988 and the local banker asked me to come out to a meeting." The Four-Way Test is a non-partisan and nonsectarian ethical guide for Rotarians to use for their personal and professional relationships. The test has been translated into more than 100 languages, and Rotarians recite it at club meetings:

1. Is it the TRUTH?
2. Is it FAIR to all concerned?
3. Will it build GOODWILL and BETTER FRIENDSHIPS?
4. Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned?

Of the things we think, say or do...

1. Is it the TRUTH?
2. Is it FAIR to all concerned?
3. Will it build GOODWILL and BETTER FRIENDSHIPS?
4. Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned?

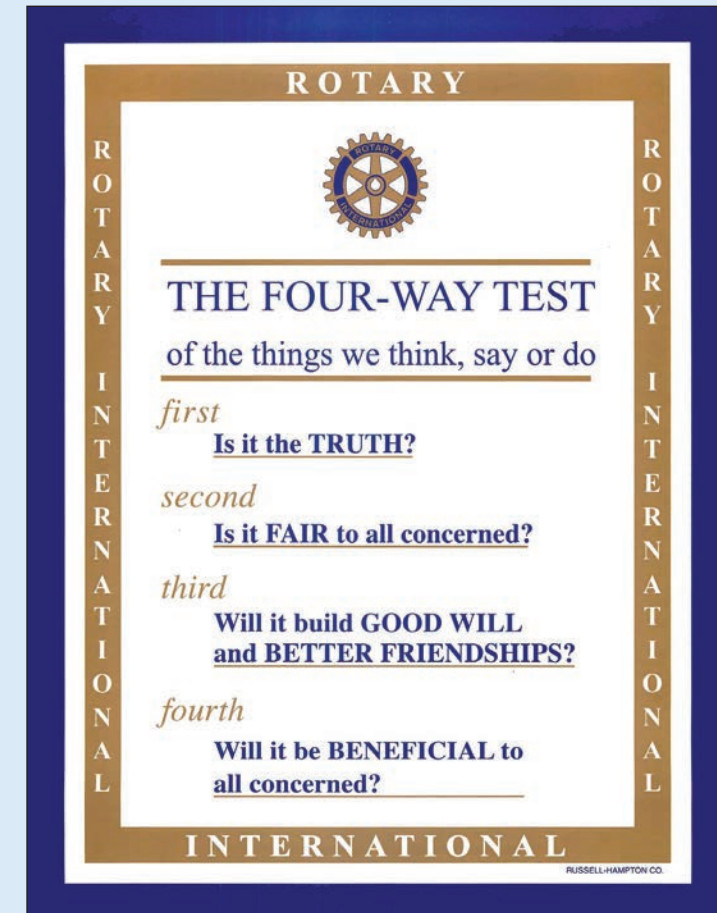
Service and fellowship are the two main foundation aspects of Rotary, and the Listowel club would fulfill this mandate enthusiastically over the coming decades. Financially speaking, recreation groups, venues and spaces would quickly become the Rotary Club of Listowel's greatest benefactors.

Dedication to recreation
In the early 1960s, Listowel Rotary donated money and fundraised for the construction of a new Memorial Arena following the tragic roof collapse of the original that killed seven young hockey players and the local recreation director. Decades later, the club would oversee the construction of Millennium Park fronting the Listowel library, which included a memorial stone dedicated to the eight who lost their lives in the arena collapse. Over the years, Wallace Arena would also benefit from the club's generosity, as did local baseball diamonds and countless other sports-associated causes. However, no other space re-

ceived more of a collective makeover courtesy of the club than Listowel Memorial Park. The beautification process got underway with the Rotary walkway and lighting project in 1988, which connects the west side of the park from Davidson Avenue North to its eastern borders near Elm Avenue. The bridge spanning the Maitland River in the park's north end was dedicated in memory of Harvey Krotz, a prominent local business owner and faithful Rotarian for many years. Twenty years later, Rotarians tackled upgrades to the Memorial Park pavilion in 2008-09, and would oversee fundraising and building of the Memorial Park amphitheatre. Tree-planting campaigns in the park were also conducted. "Most of our focus has been on the Memorial Park over 60 years," said TarBush. "If we sort of have a unique place in Listowel, it would be the parks."

Legacy
You'd be hard pressed to find

a former Listowel Rotarian that could identify one particular project as being the club's defining act - one gesture that could be considered the club's legacy. Every Rotary Club of Listowel member would likely agree that the organization's collective efforts over 73 years will in fact be its legacy. Nearly three-quarters of a century and an estimated \$1 million allocated to its seemingly endless list of community improvement projects. All in the selfless interest of making Listowel and the surrounding area a better place to live, while perhaps making its members and the countless people the club touched over its impressive tenure better people in the process. "Worldwide, Rotary has got a lot of legs," said TarBush, referring to Rotary International's over 35,000 clubs. "We're not the rule, we're the exception at this point. Numbers are down in service clubs everywhere, but I'm still confident that Rotary is going to be an institution long after we're gone."



CODE TO LIVE BY - The Four-Way Test is used by Rotarians all over the globe as a moral code to be applied to all of their personal and business relationships. The Test is often recited at Rotary Club meetings.

Rotary Youth Exchange: Building peace, one young person at a time

Former exchange student Alanna Coneybear reflects on life-altering experience in India

DAN MCNEE
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Alanna Coneybear is the first to admit that she was a bit naïve heading into her Rotary International Youth Exchange to India. "I went there as a very young, naïve 16-year-old who had no comprehension of the privilege that I had," recalls the now 26-year-old North Perth farmer. "My lack of worry, really, about most things. When I first realized I was going, I had this very naïve notion that I was going to help people in India, that I was going to go there and have this amazing year because I was going to help so many people."

"I think the only person that was helped by my year there was me. India helped me, I didn't help India." Coneybear was accepted as a Rotary Youth Exchange (RYE) student by the local Listowel club in 2009. In July of that year, she flew to India to begin a 10-month immersion into a country, language and culture that was a stark contrast of her life growing up in rural Ontario. Inspired by her sister, who participated in a RYE nearly 10 years prior to Mexico, Coneybear selected India as one of her preferred destinations to essentially give her a new perspective on the world.

She also had the opportunity for different cultures to come to her, as following her sister's exchange, four different international students from Colombia, Japan, Germany and Brazil would stay with her family as well. "I knew that the (Indian) culture was going to be so incredibly different to what I would experience if I was in Europe or Central/South America," she said. "If you travel a country, yes you can experience a lot of aspects of it, but it's different than being completely immersed - going to school there and living with a family there. I wanted to do something that was really challenging, and one that I could have an experience where I could get to understand a country a lot better. I thought that India would give me both those opportunities."

After landing in Mumbai in stifling heat, Coneybear would then make an eight-hour trip north to Surat, the eighth largest city in the country with a population of approximately 4.5 million people. She would attend a strict all-girls' school operated in a convent by nuns for six months, participate in Rotary events with other international students, travel the country, and volunteer at school with students with different abilities. "You could connect with kids in a totally different way," said Coneybear of her volunteer experience in India. "My experience was definitely enriched by

having that opportunity. The kids probably taught me more than I taught them." Coneybear's RYE left a lasting impression on her life, even 10 years after the experience. Now a successful dairy and poultry farmer living outside of Britton, she still cherishes the bonds she created in India and still maintains, as well as the countless lessons her time abroad taught her. "It was one of the most formative years I've had," she said. "The experience and the life lessons and the friendships that I formulated during that year, they still have an impact on me almost every day."



EXPERIENCE OF A LIFETIME - North Perth's Alanna Coneybear participated in a Rotary International Youth Exchange to India in 2009-10, in conjunction with the Rotary Club of Listowel. She would attend a strict all-girls' school operated in a convent by nuns for six months, participate in Rotary events with other international students, travel the country, and volunteer at school with students with different abilities. Coneybear is pictured dancing at an Indian wedding (top) and visiting the Taj Mahal (above) as part of her exchange.



HAVE BUS, WILL TRAVEL - Pictured above is the third bus the Rotary Club of Listowel operated over the years, transporting athletes, students and seniors to a sporting events and other functions all over the province. Driver Fred Herbst (Rotary president in 1976-77) is said to have logged over 200,000 miles on the bus.

Proudly celebrating 65 years!

A HUGE THANK YOU TO THE LISTOWEL ROTARY CLUB FOR THEIR SERVICES THROUGHOUT THE YEARS!

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LASTING LEGACY – Pictured, clockwise from top left: The Rotary Club of Listowel's inaugural president, Glen Blackmore; 1963-64 executive members; Ted Creighton served as the Listowel Community Club's first president, and was later president of the Listowel Rotary Club in 1956; 1995-96 Listowel Rotary president Jim Stephens with Finnish exchange student Marja Vihela, alongside Professor Alvin Evans at a Rotary event; Rotarians Don Bowen, Henry Elms and Carson Loughran working a beef barbecue in 1977; Doris Dunnell, John McIntosh and Lynn Trudeau deliver dictionaries to Elma Township Public School in 2012; the Memorial Park pavilion was restored in 2009 by the Rotary Club of Listowel, one of its countless contributions to North Perth's parks over the last several decades; the Rotary Club of Listowel presented 'Brigadoon' in 1982, as part of its annual Music Alive series that ran for 15 years; the annual Rotary Duck Race, in conjunction with North Perth Friends of the Library, gets underway in May 2019; long-time Rotarian Mark TarBush is pictured during his 'Adventure in Citizenship' in Ottawa in 1970. All photos in this section contributed by Rotarian Walt Berry or courtesy of Dan McNee



*Elegant
Simplicity*

I have been a proud member of the Listowel Rotary Club for many years, having served as President, Chairman of the 4-H Club Awards night and a recipient of a Paul Harris Fellow Award.

Bob & Myra Trench

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