

**Rotary Club of Lake Hickory**  
(Chartered February 21, 1973)

The Rotary Club of Hickory-East (later renamed the Rotary Club of Lake Hickory) was formed in 1973. An informational meeting was held January 10, 1973, with an organizational meeting just two weeks later. The charter was granted on February 21, 1973, and presented at a festive banquet on June 5, 1973. The original membership included 32 men (women being then ineligible).

Members of the Rotary Club of Hickory who were active in organizing our Club were Charles M. Snipes, President; Oliver W. McClintock, Vice-President; George Warlick, Secretary/Treasurer; and Club Directors Kenneth H. Bishop, Raymond Bost, Charles E. Jeffers, Carl L. Matheson, Jr., Earl Roberts, Gordon H. Sperry and W. Clyde Taylor. The preceding administration of President Pope Shuford had also been very active in the formation of Hickory-East, with assistance from Cass Ballenger, Past District Governor Walter Nau, Charles A. Hunter and District Governor Joseph W. Wells. The Rotary Club of Hickory-East was sponsored by the Hickory Club, itself sponsored by the Asheville Club in 1921.

The first officers of the Rotary Club of Hickory-East were William R. Ballew, President; Jerry L. Cole, Vice-President; Kenneth L. Ferguson, Secretary/Treasurer; and the Directors were Fred C. Abernethy, Jr., E. Edwin Bradford, G. Maurice Capps, Hume S. Collins, and Wilfred A. Wells. Our Club later sponsored the Rotary Club of Hickory-Sunrise.

The Rotary Club of Lake Hickory currently has 107 members (99 men and 8 women). The club originally met at Mom 'N Pops' Ham House in Hickory, a location that no longer exists. Programs are now held at Lake Hickory Country Club in Hickory at Noon every Tuesday

Club member Bill Loehr is a connection between our Club and the four original Rotarians. Bill's ancestor Gustavus Loehr was one of the four original Rotarians, along with Founder Paul P. Harris, Sylvester Scheile and Hiram E. Shorey (*see picture on page 6*). The first Rotary meeting took place in 1905 in the office of Gustavus Loehr who was a coal broker from Ohio.

Working with youth is Rotary's long-term investment in the future of the community, the nation, and the world. The Rotary Club of Lake Hickory sponsors the Interact Club of St. Stephens High School. Students of the Month attend the Club program each month.

Our Club's chief philanthropic focus is youth scholarships. In December 1983, President Chuck Helms moved to establish a scholarship for area high school students. Donations totaling \$170,000 from Ken Ferguson, Dave Ludwig, Flip Vineyard and Classic Leather established the initial funding. In the spring of 1984 the Club held the first Rotary

Basketball Classic Tournament to raise money for the scholarship fund. The event raised \$9,725 the first year and was repeated in 1985 to raise \$11,286. The next year Dick Garlitz chaired a newly established Committee charged with setting scholarship guidelines. Initial guidelines earmarked \$2,500 raised from the Basketball Classic (held at Lenoir-Rhyne College in Hickory) to be awarded to a rising Lenoir-Rhyne student. The Club also earmarks scholarship funds for students who attend Catawba Valley Community College. After the basketball tournament ran its course, the Club sponsored an annual road race to raise scholarship funds.



Road Race sponsored by Lake Hickory Club in 1978

Dick Thompson chaired the Scholarship Committee in 1986 and was followed by Ken Ferguson, who has had the longest tenure. In 2003, Julie Packer became the chair of the Scholarship Committee. Initial scholarship awards ranged from \$750 to \$6,000 between 1985 and 1991. After 1991, awards ranged from \$2,500 to \$7,500 per scholarship. Since the first four scholarships were granted in 1986, the Rotary Club of Lake Hickory has awarded \$217,900 to 69 students.

Currently our Club's major event is the Galaxy Shootout Soccer Tournament. This youth soccer event raises funds to award scholarships and charitable gifts to local nonprofit agencies. The Galaxy Shootout is one of North Carolina's largest soccer tournaments with 1,800 participants. In 2003 the soccer tournament earned \$44,302. The club awarded eight scholarships amounting to a total of \$20,000. Award winners were chosen from high school graduates in Catawba County, based on academic excellence, financial need, and each student's personal demonstration of the Rotary motto "Service Above Self." The Club also

donated \$2,500 to "Project Potential," a program within the Hickory Public School System to foster the academic success of at-risk middle-school age children.

In addition to scholarship funding, our Club donated \$8,686.50 to nonprofit organizations in the community in 2003. The Club has contributed so much to the community that it is impossible to document it all in the limited space provided in this historical narrative. We have listed just a few examples here. In 1973 two years after the Club was chartered, members made the news by planting ten red maple trees in front of Hickory High School. In 1978 the City of Hickory in conjunction with the Rotary Clubs of Hickory and Hickory-East (Lake Hickory) developed the Rotary Park located on Lake Hickory. The park contains 19 acres of land, a wooded walking trail, dock, boat ramp, clubhouse and two picnic shelters. The Club also donated a large shelter to the City of Hickory's new Henry Fork River Regional Recreational Park, where our annual soccer tournament is held.

As well as supporting children and agencies in Catawba County, the Club reaches out to the international community. We made a major contribution to the Rotary International Health, Hunger and Humanity Program in 1978-1979. In 2000 we sent a ton of medical supplies to LaOroya, Peru, and a planeload of disaster relief supplies to Nicaragua. In 2003 our Club exceeded its goal for donations to Polio Plus, the campaign to eradicate polio worldwide. Other international service projects have been: sponsorship of the American Field Service Program, hosting Australian and Korean exchange teams, sponsorship of District 7670 Chan Gordon Scholarships, and sponsorship of a male Filipino exchange student, who attended the University of North Carolina at Charlotte in 1977. Rotary International recently approved our application for an exchange program, in which three Club members will travel to Nicaragua in 2004.

Lake Hickory is a generous and active Club. Out of the 107 members, 78 (72%) are Paul Harris Fellows, and 22 (20%) are Benefactors. Ninety-five percent of our members are Foundation Donors, with cumulative donations to date of \$155,242.

The Rotary Club of Lake Hickory is committed to the RI motto "Service Above Self," and strives to enrich our community by giving our time, talents and charitable gifts in the name of Rotary.