

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Rotary Beginnings

As we searched the old files of the Cypress American and The Monterey Peninsula Herald for items which have made history in Monterey and on the Peninsula, we came across the following story in The Herald on Monday, January 21, 1924, which we feel sure will be of interest to our readers:

"Rotary came to the Monterey Peninsula in force, numbers, and enthusiasm last Saturday evening, when 61 Rotarians from Salinas and Santa Cruz joined together at Del Monte Hotel for the first meeting of charter membership of the new Monterey Peninsula Rotary Club. There were 25 members of the 29 members of the Salinas Club present, and 36 of Santa Cruz membership of 42." Salinas was the sponsoring club.

The reporter's story goes on to tell that Charles Melander of Salinas presided at the initial meeting and Homer Hayward told his fellow Rotarians why he had recommended Monterey for a club. The Rev. Jim Tancock, rector of St. Paul's Episcopal church, Salinas, presented an American flag to the new club, J.H. Graves, principal of the Monterey schools, accepted the gift with a patriotic speech of appreciation. Another necessary piece for the weekly ritual of all Rotary Clubs was given by the Rotary Club of Santa Cruz, when their president, Ray Judah, publisher of the Santa Cruz paper presented a large Rotary Wheel. Carmel Martin, charter member of the Monterey club, made the speech of acceptance.

"It was then that the Salinas Club brought in the surprise of the evening, proving James Pollard of the Salinas Club, at least a rival to Perry Newberry by presenting the playlet, 'Reel Sharpe' in which the tale was allegorically portrayed of the effects of Rotary principles and practices upon individual business," according to the news story of the day after the meeting.

"With the close of speeches, which terminated at 10 o'clock, there was fifteen minutes of social mixing following which the Star Spangled Banner was sung by the Rotarians present", so closed the initial meeting of the Monterey Peninsula Rotary Club, as reported 29 years ago.

The first regular meeting of the club was held the following Thursday noon in the Copper Cup room in Del Monte Hotel, then called the "Dungeon", which was to be the Rotary headquarters henceforth for luncheon every week, until the sale of the hotel to the Navy sent the membership hunting for a new home.

The small charter list at the beginning was to be added to from time to time on the principle that "Rotary Goes to the Man!" Charter members were: Jack Beaumont, H.M. Buck, E.J. Burns, J.H. Graves, Allen Griffin, Mark G. Keller, Carmel Martin, Peter Clarke McFarlane, Carlos S. Stanley, M.W. McMEnamin, Emmet McMEnamin, Roy Nash, N. George Nielson, Dr. John Peter Sandholdt and Charles S. Olmsted.

Of those prominent citizens of the Peninsula there are alive today and still living on the Peninsula: Allen Griffin, Mark G. Keller, Carmel Martin, and the McMEnamin brothers; Dr. Sandholdt resides at Moss Landing and N. George Nielson in San Francisco. Allen Griffin, Mark Keller, Carmel Martin and Emmet McMEnamin sold his interest in the Palace Drug Store and retired: Roy Nash, the first president, passed away a number of years ago; Dr. Sandholdt practiced medicine for many years here before his retirement; Emmet McMEnamin is the present Monterey County Clerk; Nielson, a former Monterey banker was transferred to Fillmore and then to the head office in San Francisco.

H.M. Buck was with the P.G.&E.; Eddie Burns had a clothing store on Alvarado street; J.H. Graves was the superintendent of schools in Monterey; Jack Beaumont was with the Del Monte Properties Company for many years and secretary of the club; Peter Clarke McFarlane, a resident of the county near Asilomar was a great author of his day; Carlos S. Stanley was the popular manager of the Hotel Del Monte, Charles Olmsted was also a Del Monte associate, all now deceased.

Carmel Martin recalls that when Nielson was a young man and Carmel was a school teacher, Nielson was his eight grade pupil in the Soledad school. Many of our readers perhaps do not know that one of Monterey's most prominent attorneys, as well as a great baseball player, was once a country school teacher.

Among the charter members who became presidents of Rotary were: Nash, Allen Griffin, Dr. Sandholdt, Emmet McMEnamin, Mark Keller and Carmel Martin. There are about 100 members in the Monterey Club at the

present time with three honorary members, Allen Griffin, Norman Hansen and William J. Crabbe.

Serving as presidents since the organization meeting at Del Monte Hotel in 1924 have been in addition to Roy Nash, the first president; W.J. Gould, Ray C. DeYoe, Allen Griffin, Jack Beaumont, E.H. Tickle, Dr. Harry Brownell, Peter Hay, E.J. Burns, Ed Simpson, Carmel Martin, E.G. McMenemy, Charles Olmsted, Ray Rudolph, Howard Severance, Hugh Dormody, Douglas Bradburn, Perry Reel, W.J. Crabbe, Mark Keller, O.L. Davis, N. Hansen, W.M. O'Donnell, Harold C. Geyer, Paul Zaches, Vernon Hurd, William R. Beattie and Dr. Charles Galligan.