



District 6960

A HISTORY OF LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE

Paul Sanborn

11/12/2012

The following is a compilation of District Governors of District 696 and 6960 from 1968-69 through 2010-11

The following is a compilation of activities of District Governors of District 696 and 6960 from 1968-69 through 2010-11. In some cases there will be just highlights of each Governors year while others will be in depth information. Credit should be given to PDG Chauncey McIntyre of the St. Petersburg Club for information from 1968-69 through 1975-76, PDG Richard “Dick” Dodderidge of the Venice-Nokomis Club for information 1976-77 through 1998-99 and PDG Paul Sanborn of the Cape Coral Club for information 1999-2000 through 2010-11.

1968-1969 – Leslie B. Anderson

(Winter Haven)

R.I. President Kiyoshi Togasaki adopted as his theme, “Participate”. Governor Leslie B. Anderson of Winter Haven accepted this literally by starting eight new clubs – the most by one governor in the history of the District. They were: West Orlando, sponsor Orlando, July 25th, 1968; Orange County East, sponsor Winter Park, October 17, 1968; Lakeland South, sponsor, Lakeland, October 17, 1968; Fort Myers South, sponsor Fort Myers, December 30, 1968; Seminole County South, sponsor Orange County East, March 8, 1969; Windermere, sponsor Winter Garden, March 10, 1969; Ocala-Silver Springs, sponsor Ocala, June 13, 1969; Naples North, sponsor Naples, June 13, 1969. These brought the total of clubs in the District to 70 and increased the pressure on RI to divide and bring District size down. Being Governor had become a full time job. RI agreed to act at the earliest possible opportunity.

At the start of his year, Les made up and distributed a District Directory to all club presidents and past officers of RI. This contained the names and addresses of all District officers, committee personnel, club meeting dates and locations, a schedule of club visit dates, and much other useful information. Such a Directory has since become a yearly feature and is published by each Governor at District expense.

By the end of the year, membership had increased to 4,553, a District growth of 120 Rotarians.

1969-1970 – Arthur V. Benson

(St. Petersburg)

In 1970, District 696 reached its maximum size of 4,730 members in 70 clubs under the leadership of Governor A.V. “Swede” Benson. RI agreed to a District division and the end of this Rotary year was set as time for the change.

The Group Study Exchange with District 255 in Australia was, from the 696 standpoint, a great success. The team under leadership of PDG Les Ginkel left Florida in June and returned in August to immediately start a round of club visits to tell of their Australian experience. When the costs and the results of the project were assessed, it was agreed that another G.S.E. should be undertaken.

The District Conference, sponsored by St. Petersburg, was held at Port-O-Call and drew 650 registrants from 56 clubs. RI President’s Representative was Past Director Pratt Secrest. Major speakers were Congressman William Cramer and Lt. Governor Ray Osborn. At the Conference, the District Fund Committee made plans for the Fund division to be made at the time of District division. A new Governor was elected for the new District 695 to be formed from part of District 696 and all necessary voting approval by clubs on the division was completed.

New District 696 boundaries were established as that portion of Florida south of the northern boundary of Pasco County, west of Interstate Road 1-75, south of the northern boundary of Hillsborough County, west of the eastern boundaries of the counties of Hillsborough, Manatee, Sarasota, Charlotte and Lee and that portion of Collier County west of longitude 81° - 39’. Clubs remaining in District 696 were:

Anna Maria Isles Immokalee Punta Gorda Bradenton Interbay Ruskin - Sun City Brandon Largo St. Petersburg Cape Coral Marco Island Sarasota Clearwater Naples Sarasota Bay Clearwater Beach Naples North Sarasota Keys Dunedin New Port Richey Seminole Englewood North Hillsborough South Manatee Fort Myers Palmetto Tampa Fort Myers Beach Pinellas Park Tarpon Springs Fort Myers South Plant City Venice - Nokomis Gulf Beaches Port Charlotte West St. Petersburg Ybor City

These 37 clubs had a membership of 2,508. Two clubs, Ocala and Ocala-Silver Springs, formerly in District 696 were placed in District 694. The balance of the former 696 clubs numbering 31 were placed in the newly formed District 695.

At the time of division, the balance in the 696 District Fund was \$13,865. This was divided on the basis of number of members moving to or remaining in each of the districts involved. District 694 received \$286, District 695 received \$5,582 and District 696 received \$7,997.

Accumulated Rotary Foundation contributions from 696 clubs were \$141,375 at the time of District division. The 37 clubs of the new District 696 were responsible for and received credit for \$84,201 of this total. Except for two newly formed clubs, this was a 100% District with Clearwater its highest contributor at 1,000%.

1970-1971 – Dan McLeroy (Englewood)

Governor Dan McLeroy of Englewood promptly added a club to the reduced District. East Clearwater, sponsored by Clearwater, chartered on July 27, 1970.

37 of the clubs were represented at the District Conference in Fort Myers and all 38 were present at the Assembly in Sarasota.

A major event was the tour of the Group Study Exchange team from Australia. All clubs were visited.

Governor Dan increased the District membership by 193 to a total of 2,790.

1971-1972 – Hampton Dunn (Tampa)

Governor Hampton Dunn of Tampa was responsible for the addition of three more clubs to the District roster. Club number 39, Dunedin North, was chartered November 21, 1971. Jim Fresh of the Dunedin club, RI President Earnst's special representative at the Charter Night, led the organizing efforts. PDG Charles West gave the Charter Night address. President of the new club was Woodrow V. Register, who later became a Governor of District 696. Dunedin North was the second breakfast club in the District and first in its northern end.

Club number 40 was Belleair Bluffs, sponsored by Largo and chartered on May 10, 1972. Jerry Hubbell was the moving spirit for organization of the club and was its first president. Jerry also went on to later become a District Governor. Club number 41 was Northwest Tampa, jointly sponsored by Interbay and North Hillsborough, chartered June 30, 1972, the last day of Hamp's year.

696 continued as a 100% Rotary Foundation District with 10 clubs at 100%, 13 at 200%, 9 at 300%, 3 at 400%, 1 at 500%, 2 at 600% and 1, Clearwater, at 1100%. Foundation contributions up to February 29, 1972, were \$96,574.

The June 30th financial statement showed the District to have weathered the transition from 70 clubs down to 37 clubs in good shape. After payments to 694 and 695 and a year of 696 operating expense, the District Fund had a surplus of \$8,060 going into the new year.

District Conference was at Manger Motor Inn in Tampa on October 21-23. Mich Emanuel, Tampa President, selected Ward Dougherty as chairman for the very successful event. John Nightingale, Past

President of RIBI, served as personal representative for President Earnst. Among the dignitaries present was Ken Wacker, Past RI Director from Winter Park. PDG Win Pendelton was M.C. at the banquet. A new event added to the program was the Club President's Breakfast. No speeches – a get together for exchange of ideas and fellowship.

The year which began with 38 clubs and 2,668 members ended with 41 clubs and 2,819 members.

1972-1973 – Joseph E. Selden

(Fort Myers)

Governor Joseph E. Selden, Jr., of Fort Myers featured an administration of growth. First of the ten objectives he listed in his initial monthly letter was the establishment of five new clubs. This he fulfilled: Club 42 was Naples East, jointly sponsored by Naples and Naples North, chartered on March 10, 1973; Club 43, Hudson, sponsored by New Port Richey and chartered June 14, 1973; Club 44, North Fort Myers, sponsored by Cape Coral, also chartered June 14, 1973; Club 45, Fort Myers East, sponsored by Fort Myers, chartered June 25, 1973; and Club 46, Lehigh Acres, sponsored jointly by Fort Myers and Cape Coral, chartered June 30, 1973.

Louis Nightingale of the Marco Island club was Chairman of the District Conference held at the Marco Island Hotel on October 21-23. PDG James Franklin, Jr., prepared the program, which differed from usual format in that one session was devoted to the subject of "The Fragile Ecology of South Florida," with a speaker's panel covering Wildlife Management, Marine Biology, Power, Food, Soil Conservation and Wildlife Development, each talk being followed by an audience participation period. Another entire plenary session was taken up by a panel, members of which were Steve Peronis, Tampa University, Armstead Selden, Assistant Secretary for Defense, and Past Vice President of RI Marcel Corbat. Discussion subject was "Rotary's Place In a Troubled World." In other Conference actions, the clubs agreed to undertake a Group Study Exchange in 1973 - 1975, to adopt "Project 696" under Perry Snell of Sarasota as our official World Community Service Project (see Project 696 elsewhere in this text) and to recommend certain changes in Zone nominating procedure to RI. Total registration for the conference was 603 with all clubs represented.

RI President Roy Hickman visited the St. Petersburg Club speaking to an audience of nearly 1,000 at our intercity meeting. Roy stated that, except for the RI Convention, this was the largest audience he faced in his year as RI President.

The Zone 4 Institute for RI Officers again met in District 696, this time at the Marco Island Hotel on December 3-5. Among the outstanding speakers were 1st Vice President William R. Robbins of RI and Past President of RIBI Jack Pride.

District Assembly at St. Petersburg had a registration of 220 with all clubs but one represented. Haywood Turner of Ybor City reported to the Assembly that the District had collected \$3,000 and turned it over to the Rotary Club of Managua for their Earthquake Relief Fund.

At years end there were 46 clubs and 2,965 members in 696.

1973-1974 – Moody Rinehard (Largo) / Edward St. Phillip

(Sarasota)

This was a difficult year for the District due to a sad change in its leadership. Moody F. Rinehart, who had been elected as its Governor, died on August 11, 1973. Moody had the District well organized, all committees appointed and functioning, major events scheduled, some club visits completed and there was every prospect of another banner year when his death came. There was an immediate gathering and caucus of past governors. After considerable soul searching, PDG Edward St. Phillip, who had served the District well in 1967 - 1968, agreed to step in and on August 21st was appointed by RI President Bill Carter to be Governor of the District. So far as possible, Ed continued all of Moody's appointments and endeavored to complete his objectives. All of the remaining club visits were made and all scheduled events occurred.

The District Conference was hosted by Dunedin, Dunedin North, Tarpon Springs and New Port Richey at the beautiful Innisbrook Club on October 19th. It was packed full of Rotary from its beginning with RI President-Elect Bill Robbin's banquet address to its ending with Governor Ed's closing remarks and tribute to Moody Rinehart. District Assembly was at Punta Gorda on May 17-18.

Sarasota Gulf Gate, sponsored by Sarasota, and chartered on December 11, 1973, was the addition to the District roster.

The year ended with 47 clubs and 3,133 members.

1974-1975 – Paul Sanborn

(Cape Coral)

William R. Robbins of District 699, Florida, became the second Floridian to become President of RI. Bill selected as his theme, "Renew the Spirit of Rotary" which Paul Sanborn, the 1974-75 Governor of District 696, made the focus of his year. "Renew" was a part of every letter and the core of every meeting.

First of importance was the District Conference under the joint sponsorship of the three Naples clubs. 519 registered and enjoyed the Rotary and the hospitality at the Naples Beach Club on October 25-27. One of the unique features was a display of the flags and home club banners of all District clubs. It was announced that the District had contributed an average of \$4.61 per member for a total of \$13,363 to the Rotary Foundation the previous year. Because of this amount three Foundation Fellowships were made in the District. They went to Mark Leib of Tampa to go to Bristol, England, Elizabeth McCampbell of St. Petersburg, going to Marburg, Germany, and Dan Denton of Bradenton going to Cardiff, Wales. All were for the 1976-1977 academic year.

The Group Study Exchange team made up of Messrs. Green of Fort Myers, Dixon of Tampa, Hoffman of Fort Canova of Immokalee, and McGuire of Palmetto. under the leadership of PDG Joseph Selden, Jr., left on January 12, 1975, for their visit to India District 317. Return was on February 23, 1975. Joe and all of the group reported on the trip at the District Assembly with a professional quality film show and talks. RI footed a bill of \$11,550 for the trip.

Clearwater was the fourth club of the present District 696 to celebrate its 50th Anniversary. RI President Bill Robbins was on hand as speaker at the Golden Banquet on February 1st. Of the clubs of the original District 696, Clearwater's celebration was the 12th such event. Rotary's 70th birthday was also noted in February.

Governor Paul makes some interesting comments in his final monthly letter on District 696 Rotary. One is that 418 letters were written to new members within the year yet the net membership gain for the year was less than 50. "Member retention. not member growth," he says, "should be the goal."

1975-1976 – Clyde O. Anderson

(St. Petersburg)

Dr. Clyde O. Anderson of St. Petersburg became Governor of 696 and Ernesto I. De Mello was elected President of RI. Both elections took place at Boca Raton, Florida, the new site of the International Institute. The change from Lake Placid, New York, site of the annual training school for Governors over all of Rotary's former years, was noted with regret and nostalgic memories by all past officers of RI but was recognized as an inevitable accompaniment to Rotary's growth.

At the end of the 1974-75 year, the 16,549 Rotary Clubs with approximately 775,000 members in 151 countries were divided into 357 Districts. District 696, after its many breakups and boundary changes had stabilized at 47 clubs and 3,189 members.

From the very beginning of his year, Governor Clyde directed a major effort toward upgrading club esprit and encouraging civic performance. He was a believer in inspiration through personal contact and made many follow up, social and administrative calls after his round of required visits. These were so numerous that he became known as the "callin' and visitin'" Governor.

Because of a mixup in dates, the District Institute intended for the instruction of new club officers was late. Institute and District Conference were held as one gathering with Institute on October 30th and Conference October 31 - November 2. Meetings were at the Don CeSar Hotel in Pass-a-Grille with the five lower Pinellas clubs – St. Petersburg, Gulf Beaches, Pinellas Park, Seminole and West St. Petersburg – as co-hosts. Dr. Al Geiger, Jr., Past President of St. Petersburg Rotary Club and son of former PDG Al Geiger, was general Chairman of both events.

PDG W.H. Stuart of Bartow was Institute Counselor. All clubs were represented in the total of 166 Rotarians registered, which included 40 club presidents and 33 presidents-elect. Bill's presentation and institute format made a strong impression on his listeners and gave them the necessary inspiration to work toward a well organized and productive year.

The District Conference, planned around a Bicentennial theme, was a continuation of the club upgrading objective. Past RI Director Kenneth E. Wacker, a former Governor of District 696 and serving as RI President DeMello's personal representative to the Conference, spoke at the Bicentennial Banquet. Other addresses were by PDG Mark Hollis and by Dr. Billy O. Wireman. Each of the inspirational plenary sessions stressed "how to" information for club officers. Best liked and most impressive of these was the panel presentation "Rotary and Me" given by five District Rotary Anns. Total registration for the Conference was 773 with all clubs represented. It was especially noteworthy that, out of a Conference budget of \$4,500, the Conference Committee was able to return \$2,765 in unused funds to the District.

All clubs of the District were again represented at the Assembly meeting on April 23-24 at Sarasota's Hyatt House and sponsored by the Sarasota club. Total registration was 364. The voting delegates unanimously passed regulations modifying District election procedures, a 1976 - 1977 District Budget of \$13,075 and the continuation of Project 696 to completion.

Governor Clyde placed great emphasis on club civic activity which resulted in a multitude of individual club civic projects. Sarasota's \$10,000 gift to the city, New Port Richey's development of a 20-acre Boy

Scout Camp, Tampa Rotary's \$5,000 gift to Guatemalan Earthquake Relief, and Englewood's auction are but a few typical of their scope and magnitude. Almost every club held some sort of a barbeque, picnic or rally to promote fellowship.

The Rotary Foundation came in for its share of promotion also. The number of Paul Harris Fellows was increased by doubling the total in the District. 22 new sustaining members were also added to the Foundation. Total contributions for the year were \$37,970.50 and the District accumulated total was raised to \$196,396. The District per capita contribution of \$12 was a new high. A Group Study Exchange, third for the District, was arranged with District 141 in Finland. All of these things together made this the best Foundation year in District history.

1976-77 – Woodrow V. Register **(Dunedin)**

Three new clubs were chartered. Past Governors Clyde Anderson and Paul Sanborn were awarded the citation for Meritorious Service from the Foundation. The Group Study Exchange Team was from Finland. This was the year that there was a dark moment in the history of the District when the District Treasurer embezzled all but \$17.62 of the District Funds. Clubs rallied to provide necessary operating funds and the bonding company later covered the loss.

1977-78 – Gerald Hubbell **(Belleair)**

Info – N/A

1978-79 – Bob Perkins **(Sarasota)**

District 696 has fifty-three Rotary Clubs. Dr. Robert E. Perkins, President of the Ringling School of Art in Sarasota, Florida became the 1978 – 79 District Governor. Those fifty-three Rotary Clubs, however, stretch from Clearwater to north Tampa, to Plant City and then south to Marco Island far one of the largest districts in the world by land area.

In November of 1978 he introduced national level week of "What's good About America" along with each club's willingness to get out and work in our community rather than just dig in our pockets for the money for someone else to do the work.

He also "preached" that the teaching of the American Economic System in our public schools was the greatest project each club could have. It is our Free Enterprise system that has made America great and we should all do what we can to educate the public to this fact

As a past district governor representative for District 696 he participated in project 696 building of a hospital wing in Guatemala and visited Santa Barbara for a hospital dedication.

At the Seminole Club Perkins had the honor to present 20 year-old John Jay Zaleski his Paul Harris Fellow designation. Zaleski was the youngest person in the world to make himself a Paul Harris Fellow of Rotary International. There are younger fellows, but they have been so honored by contributions made by others, particularly family members. Zaleski is the youngest to have made the contribution himself. Zaleski earned the money he contributed by working in his father's business during the summer and on weekends.

The District conference had a circus theme that attracted over 1,000 registrants. Eve Perkins, Bob's wife, was awarded a Paul Harris Fellow by the members of the District. To my knowledge the only governor's spouse ever to be so honored in this manner in the history of our District. During the conference the district elected to participate in a new Group Study Exchange for 1980.

1979-80 – Joe L. Pendleton **(Fort Myers)**

Info – N/A

1980-81 – W.O. Gillenwaters **(Seminole)**

This was one of the greatest years in the history of the District as nine new clubs were introduced into Rotary in our District. W.O. will go down in history as the Extension governor.

1981-82 – Roy C. Asbury, Jr. **(Lakeland)**

The District gave leadership to the Florida-Caribbean Conference of Goodwill; Youth Exchange hit a new high with a very successful exchange program with Austria. With Roy's encouragement eleven Rotary Clubs from Polk County banded together to support Camp Rotary.

1982-83 – William A. Hendry **(Naples)**

Bill breathed new life into foundation giving as contributions were nearly doubled. Bill started the tradition of having a Rotarian of the Year for the District, as well as presenting banners for best attendance and best bulletin. Our District held the best Florida attendance at the International Convention in Toronto.

1983-84 – Welch Whitesell **(Sarasota Bay)**

An International Service Project in Jamaica, W.L. was adopted. A blood refrigerator, hospital equipment and supplies were given to the Savanna-la-mar Hospital. Heartbeat International was established and received a \$250,000 grant from the Rotary Foundation. The House of Representatives of the State of Florida made the state a Four Way Test state by endorsing and adopting the Rotary Four-Way Test as a guide for important deliberations.

1984-85 – John F. Imperatore, Jr. **(Sarasota Keys)**

The youngest Governor in the world.

1985-1986 – Neal Patterson

(Cape Coral)

Neal became Governor of the District 696, the second from the Rotary Club of Cape Coral. He attended the first International Assembly for Incoming District Governors to be held at Nashville, Tennessee. Neal's classification was Law-Probate.

The President of Rotary International in Neal's year was Edward F. Cadman from Wenatchee, Washington, USA. His theme for the year was "You Are the Key".

The district had 120 new Rotarians in Neal's year, an outstanding feat, significant in the history of Rotary International.

The District started with 56 clubs, 3516 members, ending with 59 clubs and 3686 members. The increase included the addition of three new clubs, Cape Coral Goldcoast, San Carlos-Estero, and Lake Placid Noon. With some loss of members the net gain of 90 was significant.

Neal's District Assembly was held in Bradenton, Florida at the newly opened Manatee Civic Center on May 2-3, 1985. Registration was 347 from 54 of the 57 District Clubs. At that meeting District dues were raised \$2.00 per capita, lowest of six Florida Districts.

The District Conference was held at the Marriott Marco Island Resort October 24-26 1985. R.I. President Cadman's representative was John VanCott, a former R.I. Director and R.I. Treasurer.

Registration reached a high of 538 with 51 of 57 clubs represented. With local Rotarians that did not register, the total attendance at some point during the conference reached in EXCESS OF 725.

Appearing at the conference were eight Youth Exchange Students, three S4TL participants in addition to five GSE team members back from Thailand, with Jim Henry from the Sarasota Club as team leader.

Several projects were undertaken in Neal's year including "Heartland International", which provided Pace Maker implants at no cost to indigents in the South and Central Americas. Another major project was "Heart Village in Avon Park, established to train young men and women to go out into third world countries to assist in humanitarian and educational efforts.

During Neal's year "Pets" was only in the second year of existence with 55 of 57 incoming Presidents there.

The Rotary Foundation contributions were increased from \$57,000 in 1980 to approximately \$260,000 in 1985-86. Neal was instrumental, through a casual conversation with a fellow Rotarian attending the Toronto International Convention, in receiving a \$150,000 corporate gift from the Singer Corporation to the Rotary Foundation.

Neal's closing remarks about his year as Governor were "The year 1985-86 has had its share of highlights and a few lows. The membership growth within the individual clubs is still not what it should be. The instability of about four clubs remains each Governor's nightmare. The plus is a dynamic District, dedicated Rotarians and a District that can become better and will do so.

"Thanks for the memories..."

1986-87 – Robert C.J. Koo **(Winter Haven)**

In the opinion of the writer Gov. Bob had one of the most enjoyable and successful District Conferences in the history of our District. It was family oriented, well attended, low cost, exceptional fellowship and Rotary information and showed a profit of \$5,000.00 which was donated to Polio Plus. This might very well be the miracle conference of the century. The Rotary Foundation continued to make progress with PDG Neal Patterson as chair. Membership grew in the district by 316. A district fund raising activity was great fun but a financial disaster: we lost \$2,000.

1987-88 – E.E. Eshelman **(Sebring)**

Info – N/A

1988-89 – George Cobb, II **(Sarasota)**

Membership continued to grow by 10% with one new club and individual club growth. Even though this was immediately after the great Polio Plus push for funding Foundation giving continued to grow.

1989-90 – Dr. Abdul Rahman **(Punta Gorda)**

Governor Abdul with humor and enthusiasm brought the level of fellowship to new heights.

1990-91 – Harold N. “Hal” Morris **(Lake Placid)**

The district had 65 clubs. Gov. “Hal” placed great emphasis on community projects and helped clubs initiate many major and long lasting projects.

1991-92 – Desmond Farrell **(Marco Island)**

Another great year for the Foundation as the District went 32% over goal. The new district was now down to 44 clubs as a result of re-districting but with the Growth of three new clubs, membership continued. Bob Perkins was designated the 19th candle in the world which commemorated the 75th anniversary of the Rotary Foundation, The International Yachting Fellowship was established in Naples. This has since gone on to be a significant program in World Fellowship.

1992-93 – Bernard Soep **(Sarasota Sunrise)**

Bernie was one of the most creative governors in our history. His District Conference, although small, bristled with creativity from the moment you arrived to the moment you left. He developed an “I (eye) know Rotary” pin and gave them out as Rotarians showed evidence of knowing something special about Rotary. Each club was given a bulletin board and instruction for use. The GSE team from Columbia

South America took his quiz and all went home wearing the pin. The district raised over \$35,000 to assist in relief for victims of Hurricane Andrew.

1993-1994 – Henry (Hank) Dawson **(Punta Gorda)**

When Hank (no one ever called him Henry) took over leadership of District 6960 from Bernie Soep (no one ever called him Bernard), Hank was a member of the Punta Gorda club following Dr. Abdul Rahman also a PDG from the Punta Gorda club who held the office in 1989-1990.

Robert Barth from Aarau, Switzerland, was President of Rotary International in Hank's year. His theme was "Believe in what you do-Do what you believe in."

At the start of Hank's year there were 2899 members in the District. Holding his District Assembly in his hometown at the Charlotte High School he was pleased that all 46 clubs in the District were represented, with 211 Rotarians attending.

When the time came for his District Conference, again Hank kept activities in Punta Gorda. The Holiday Inn was selected for accommodations and plenary sessions with excellent representation of 319 Rotarians and guests. Again all 46 clubs had members there.

The R.I. President sent Roy Troutt from the University of Oklahoma as his personal representative to Hank's conference. Principal speakers were PDG's Neal Patterson 1985-1986 and Robert (Bob) Perkins 1978-1979(no one ever called him Robert).

During Hank's year the District engaged in a Group Exchange with District 3140, Bombay, India. Howard G. Crowell, PDG from Sarasota Bay was team leader from District 6960. Gary Wilson was named TRF Chairman for the District in Hank's year.

1994-1995 – District Governor Jerry Fread **(Cape Coral)**

When Jerry Fread became Governor for 1994-1995 it seemed the selection of District Governors was moving south in the District. From Bernie Soep in Sarasota, 1992-1993, Hank Dawson, 1993-94 from Punta Gorda, Jerry Fread 1994-1995 from Cape Coral and Governor Elect John Smarge 1995-1996 from Naples.

The first thing Jerry had to do was convince fellow Rotarians his name was pronounced FRED, not FREED.

Bill Hartley from Lincolnshire, England was President of Rotary International. His theme for the year was "Be a Friend". There were 48 clubs in the District at the start of Jerry's year with 2568 members. No new clubs were added during the year. His District Assembly was held at the Lehigh Resort in Lehigh Acres, with approximately 200 Rotarians and guests attending. All 48 clubs were represented.

When plans for his District Conference were being discussed, another resort, Sanibel Harbor Resort at the bridge to Sanibel Island was selected. Again all 48 clubs were represented with an attendance of 410 plus participating in plenary sessions and fellowship activities. John Jacobsen of the Cape Coral Club was Conference Chairman.

Dr. Richard Slager, Director, Rotary International was President Hartley's representative at the conference.

During Jerry's year contributions to TRF increased 20% from the previous year. A tribute to Jerry's dedication and belief in the work of the foundation.

1995-1996 – John Smarge (Naples)

In 1995-1996 as John Smarge succeeded Jerry Fread as Governor of District 6960, Herb Brown from Clearwater, Florida was President of Rotary International, with his theme for the year being "Act with Integrity, Serve with Love, Work for Peace".

John started his year as Governor with 2568 members of 48 Rotary Clubs. By years end membership had increased 140 members for a total of 2708, although one club, Naples Central had given up their charter. Members of the former club joined other Naples Clubs John held his District Assembly at the Holiday Inn in Bradenton, May 5th and 6th, 1995. 43 clubs were represented with 229 registrants.

In September, John brought a large contingent of Rotarians and guests to his hometown of Naples and the fabulous Registry Resort for three days of fun and Rotary experience. President Herb Brown was represented by Charlie Laine at the conference.

In 1995-1996 the District sent a GSE team to District 2120 in Italy, led by George Drobinski. In addition to the increase in District membership, John was responsible for a \$15,000 contribution from the District to the Ronald McDonald house.

1996-97 – Richard Cox (Fort Myers)

Two GSE teams were received in the district from England and Sweden; Gary Wilson took over as District Secretary. The District participated in a fund raising event to support Camp Rotary. The first child was brought to Florida to receive medical assistance through The Gift of Life program.

1997-1998 – Leo E. (Pete) Cypher (Englewood)

Leo E. "Pete" Cypher of Englewood became Governor in 1997-1998. Glen Kinross from Australia became President of Rotary International, his theme for the year was "Show Rotary Cares" Pete Cypher was an energetic individual, always with a hearty handshake and a smile with Rotary on his mind. Even with his many Rotary visits he kept up with his hobby of woodworking and presented the results of his art to club Presidents and PDG's.

In Pete's year two new clubs were chartered, Harbor Heights/Peace River on March 3, 1998 and three months later on June 4, 1998 the Rotary club of Placida. At the start of Pete's year the District had 47 clubs, 49 at years end, with a total of 2687 members.

The District Assembly was held on March 21, 1998 with a good representation from Clubs in the District. Pete selected the Sheraton Harbor Place in Fort Myers for his District Conference April 24-26 1998, where Jack Troughton from Ottawa, Canada was the R.I. Presidents representative. In addition, known throughout the Rotary World, Bill Ives was a featured speaker discussing Rotary/TRF/Polio Eradication.

The District sent not one but two Group Study Exchange Teams in 1997-1998, one to District 3870, the Philippines, with Al Bruggmeyer, Naples North as team leader and one to District 2810, Japan with John Steakley, Fort Myers Sunrise as leader.

Other significant achievements in Pete's year were the very popular Florida Rotary All-Star Gridiron Classic, the Adopt-A-Village in Guatemala project, the burning of the Camp Florida Mortgage in June 1998. Also the introduction of the Tri-Level program and the addition of a District Secretary and District Treasurer. We lost an outstanding Rotarian and good friend, Pete Cypher, to cancer on December 28, 2004.

1998-99 – Howard Crowell

(Sarasota Bay)

Only time will tell if Howard will be remembered as one of the best speakers that ever came from District 6960. He had a way of making every speech interesting. He will be remembered as the father of the District Reorganization plan. It was during his term that District administration was implemented. During Howard's term we exchanged GSE teams with Italy and awarded three outgoing Ambassadorial and one incoming scholarship.

1999-2000 Richard "Dick" Dodderidge

(Venice-Nokomis)

When Dick Dodderidge became Governor of District 6960 he had his plans and objectives outlined for the year. They were: Enhance services to our communities; Support The Rotary Foundation; Increase membership; all clubs to earn the Rotary International Presidents Citation.

At the start of Dick's year there were 2585 Rotarians in the District, after a loss of 107 members the previous year. By the end of his year there was recorded a net increase of 81 members.

Carlos Ravezza was President of Rotary International. Dick's Conference was held at the Naples Beach Hotel and Club in Naples May 11-13, 2000, where Barrie Davis of Zebulon, N.C., PDG of District 7710 was the R. I. Presidents representative to the conference. Other major speakers at the conference were, Lou Pirconi, R.I. Director and PDG Howard Crowell. 600 Rotarians and guests attended. At the conference Peggy Sealfon and Hal Atzinger were named Rotarians of the Year. Another highlight of the conference was the presentation of 15,432 pairs of shoes from clubs of the District to go to the Guadeloupe Center.

During the year, three candidates were selected for the Ambassadorial Scholar program. The District sent and received a GSE team to District 1720 in France.

Peggy Sealfon was team leader to France. A Youth Exchange program was completed with students visiting from Germany, Sweden and Japan.

The Rotary All-star Gridiron Classic was held in Orlando on January 29, 2000 raising over \$100,000 for the Buoniconti Fund for research and cure for spinal paralysis.

The first incoming Ambassadorial Scholar to District 696, Carlos Silva from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil arrived to attend Florida Gulf Coast University.

The Rotary Club of Punta Gorda celebrated their 75th Anniversary. The club was chartered on July 25, 1925. Sad news during the year was the death of 1992-93 PDG Bernie Soep of the Sarasota-Sunrise club on July 25, 1999.

Dick's District Assembly was held February 26, 2000 at the Royal Palm Yacht Club in Fort Myers during which District dues were raised \$2.00.

In conclusion, the results of Dick's plans and objectives were all positive, Service to our communities was abundant; \$300,000 was raised in support of TRF; Membership was increased by net 81; every club in the District earned the R.I. Presidential Citation.

Dick had quite a year. He received the admiration of all Rotarians of the District.

2000-2001 – Gary Wilson **(Clewiston)**

It was a foregone conclusion throughout District 6960 that when Gary Wilson became Governor on July 1, 2000 he was going to make a BIG impression on the District and he did. Starting with 51 clubs, by year end he had added two new clubs, Estero and Lakewood Ranch.

Gary's District Assembly was held at the Port Charlotte Cultural Art Center with 237 Rotarians in attendance. When it came time for his District Conference, he selected the Resort at South Seas Plantation on Captiva Island. Attendance at the conference was 475 Rotarians and guests. All clubs of the District were represented at both his assembly and conference. Past District Governor David Wastchak was the conference Representative of Rotary International President Frank Devlyn.

A Group Study Team was sent to Brazil and a team from Brazil was received in our District during Gary's year. There were at least ten major achievements during Gary's year, namely the following: 2000-2001 Annual Programs Fund Goal – Each club averaged a minimum giving of \$100 per member. District 6960 was ranked as 13th for membership growth throughout the world. The District was presented with the 21st Century award from President Frank Devlyn in San Antonio. Cape Coral North had the highest gain in membership of all clubs in District 6960; Received Presidential Citation from President Devlyn as part of the Presidential Citation Program during 2000-2001; District 6960 was rated as tops in Zone 34 for outstanding contribution to The Rotary Foundation per capita, Annual giving in 2000-2001; District rated as Best Newsletter in Zone 34 for 2000-2001; District 6960 was awarded for \$100+ Per capita Annual giving during 200-2001 for Zones 33 and 34; Received award from Director Michaux for Best Membership Growth in Zones 33 and 34 during 2000-2001; Inducted two new clubs into District 6960 during 2000-2001 with the addition of Lakewood Ranch and Estero. All clubs in District 6960 received the Presidential Citation award during 2000-2001.

As Gary stepped away as Governor of District 6960 he took leadership roles in Zone activities, serving as editor for the Zone 33-34 Directory for several years. He did indeed start and leave a BIG impression in the District and Big Shoes for Incoming Governor Richard Rehmeier to fill in 2001-2002.

2001-2002 – Richard C. Rehmeier **(Sarasota)**

The year 2001-2002 was a very positive year for District 6960 as Richard C. Rehmeier of the Sarasota Club took over command of the District from Gary Wilson to keep the momentum going that Gary had experienced. The very popular and magnanimous Richard King was President of Rotary International. His

theme for the year was “Mankind is Our Business”. Dick’s year started with 51 clubs. During the year he added, North Port Central, Lakewood Ranch A.M., and Longboat Key to the clubs of the District, with the number of Rotarians in the District increasing by 150 to a total of 2,727 by years end. The District Assembly for the year was held March 21, 2001 at Cardinal Mooney High School in Sarasota with 49 clubs and 150 Rotarians represented. With Charles Clemons, P.D.G. representing President King, the District Conference was held for the first time on board a cruise ship to Cozumel, Mexico, where 150 Rotarians from 54 clubs in the District enjoyed the fellowship of other Rotarians. The conference included a one day land session of Rotary knowledge. During the year the District received fourteen matching grants, the most ever for the district. In addition the year brought a GSE with Argentina, District 4800, a completely revamped modernized website, as information and communication for the district was established which contained complete District/Club membership database, writable GSE and Ambassadorial Scholar Applications, TRF monthly club recognition summeries and much more. Dick credits Cliff Hodges as Webmaster. Finally during Dick’s year the Tri- Level Leadership System was instituted. It was a good year for Dick and District 6960 as he relinquished the Governorship to Hal Atzingen of Naples.

2002-2003 Hal Atzingen

(Naples)

After being selected “Rotarian of the Year” in 2000 the District Governor Nominating Committee selected Hal as District Governor for 2002-2003.

Bhichai Rattakul from Dhonburi, Thailand was President of Rotary International that year. His theme was “Sow the Seeds of Love”. Hal’s year started and ended with 54 clubs and 2733 members. His District Assembly was held at the Charlotte Harbor Cultural Center in Punta Gorda. All 54 clubs signed in, a total attendance of in excess of 200 Rotarians and guests.

Hal brought his District Conference, held May 8-10-2003 to his home town, Naples. He selected the Naples Beach Club as the site for fun and Rotary Information. There were 400 plus registrants. All 54 clubs were recognized as having attended. Cliff Price was the Rotary International President Representative to the conference. Other major speakers at the conference were Past Rotary International President, Rick King, Olympian Brian Shiner, Luis Cosenza, Vice President of Honduras and Pam Moore from Camp Florida.

During Hal’s year there was a GSE with District 9650, New South Wales, Australia. Don Thomas was group leader.

Clubs within the District donated a minimum of \$100 per capita for Polio Eradication during the year. A tribute to the leadership of Hal Atzingen.

2003-2004 – James R. “Jim” Henry, Jr.

(Sarasota)

Jim Henry had been President of the Rotary Club of Sarasota in 1988-1989, and elected as District Governor of District 6960 for the 2003-2004 year because of his many contributions to Rotary locally and on the District level. When Jim started his year as Governor there were 54 clubs and some 2,733 members in the District. His District Assembly was held in Port Charlotte, April 17, 2004. Jim was always identifiable in a crowd of Rotarians by his white, wide brimmed hat with a Rotary blue, logo emblazoned ribbon. He wore that hat at all Rotary functions.

The President of Rotary International during Jim's year was Jonathan Majiyagbe, the first R.I. president from Africa. His theme was "Lend a Hand". In January, 2004 District 6960 held the first Rotary Leadership Institute in the southeast. That was the founding of Rotary Leadership Institute – Sunshine Division, the most successful division in the Rotary Leadership family.

Jim was instrumental in holding the first overnight Presidents Elect Training Session with the District paying expenses for PEs and spouses in Punta Gorda. All clubs were represented. DGN Jerry Heam and spouse were sent to Peach State PETS to investigate Multi District PETS. The following year, District 6960, under DG Heam, was one of the founding districts of All Florida PETS. During Jim's year and DGE Heam's Assembly, District dues were increased to allow the District to pay for all District PEs and spouses to attend the All Florida PETS. As a result, District 6960 has continually had the highest representation of clubs at the All Florida PETS.

Over the years Jim has been the recipient of many awards including: Rotarian of the Decade, District 6960 2001-2010; Regional Rotary International Membership Coordinator, Zone 34, 2008-2010; Rotary Coordinator, Zone 34, 2010-2011; 2011 Rotary International Service Above Self Award; and member Rotary International North American Regional Membership Development and Retention Committee.

2004-2005 – Jerry L. Hearn

(Lakewood Ranch)

Jerry Hearn's year as District Governor could be called the year of the Perfect Storms, that is plural not singular, for during Jerry's year he encountered not only the normal duties of a District Governor, but did it while facing not one, but four major hurricanes. Fortunately Jerry was able to schedule and visit clubs of the District prior to the hurricanes; Charley, Frances, Jean and Ivan that hit Florida in the short period of approximately six weeks during August and September 2004.

Disaster Relief was the byword during Jerry's year.

Serious property damage occurred in numerous district communities on the west coast and central Florida. Special events were held to provide assistance during the 2004 holiday season. District Rotarians distributed \$100 Wal-Mart gift cards to each of 350 trailers at the Punta Gorda FEMA Park (\$35,000). Free clothing, toys, and food were distributed to over 4000 Arcadia residents at the "Arcadia Rotary Rally Day". Later during the Rotary year, a massive tsunami struck Sri Lanka, killing hundreds of people and causing major property damage. Shelter Box USA, headquartered in District 6960 sent \$1.2 million worth of shelter boxes to the disaster area.

Seventy Five Rotarians from forty two Rotary Clubs attended the scheduled District Assembly held at the Holiday Inn in Fort Myers on April 16, 2005. It was considered a success although many Rotarians were still in a recovery mode from the hurricanes.

Jerry had planned his District Conference to be held as a "Conference Cruise" and so it was, where 336 registrants from forty four Rotary Clubs enjoyed a needed relaxing four days cruising and participating in Rotary functions. Rotary International President Glenn Estess, Sr. sent John (Bo) Porter as his representative at the conference. Other major speakers during the conference were Bill Ives, PRID, Mike Colasurdo, PDG, Howard Crowell, PDG, John Smarge, PDG, and Hal Atzingen, PDG, Conference Chairman.

Jerry's year started with 54 clubs, added one new club, Sarasota Gateway, ending his year with 2530 members in District 6960. The District had a Group Study Exchange with Japan District 2620. PDG Yasushi (Amigo) Amikura was the team leader.

Yes, Jerry had a full active year as Governor. The year of "PERFECT STORMS".

2005-2006 – Paul Kent Musler

(Fort Myers)

Info – N/A

2006-2007 – Anthony (Tony) Gallo

(West Bradenton)

Tony Gallo, member of the West Bradenton Rotary Club, District Governor for 2006-2007 made the historians writings quite easy, for he prepared a review of events month by month during his year, starting actually four months before he took office when he attended pets with 52 other presidents elect in Orlando. His district directory was developed in May of 2006 by Scott Reed of the West Bradenton club and the next month he and his spouse Suzanne attended the District Conference in Estero, as well as the Rotary International Convention in Copenhagen.

Off and running, the first of July a new web site was put in operation, the district directory was distributed.

Tony made all of his club visits, 45 of which were attended with spouse Suzanne by his side. In August TRF seminar was held at Lakewood Ranch where 14 new Paul Harris Society members were recruited and Lei Ling, Ambassadorial Scholar was greeted enthusiastically by attending Rotarians.

September through December clubs of the district were very active. Many clubs were starting grants with 6 out of 7 clubs receiving the RI public relations grants. The figure is outstanding when you consider those grants were given to only 150 clubs world wide.

Successes for the year were the dictionary project, literary programs, the start of 3 new interact clubs.

Over 40 DGE's from around the world with their spouse's attended a week long stay in the Sarasota area, before attending the RI assembly in San Diego.

Two events, "Rotary Goes to the Dogs" on February 10th (raised \$15,000 for SATL) and "Rotary at the Races" on March 17th collected over \$33,000 for Rotary's Camp Florida.

In April the GSE team from District 2110 (Sicily and Malta) visited our district and our team visited that district.

May 3-5, Tony held his District Conference at the Colony Beach and Tennis Resort on Longboat Key with 52 clubs represented and over 350 Rotarians and guests attending. During the conference the R.I. Presidential Citation was presented to 31 clubs and the governors award to 52 clubs. The years International Award went to John Capece of the Labelle Club."Service Above Self" award went to Jim Henry of the Sarasota Club. The "Rotarian of the Year" to Gary Wilson, Clewiston Club.

President of Rotary International William (Bill) Boyd sent Carlos Ravizza as the president's representative to Tony's conference. Another great addition was John T. Capps and his wife Jane. Conference chairperson was Marilyn Bezner.

At the close of Tony's year the district was on target to reach \$200 per capita for TRF. His final comments were "to my area governors, TRF committee, all district chair people, and the Rotarians of 6960, Suzanne and I thank you for your hospitality, dedication, and forever lasting memories, in making my year as District Governor fun filled and productive."

2007-2008 – Gary Israel (Estero)

A long time Rotarian stepped into the governance of District 6960 on July 1, 2007. Gary Israel member of the Estero club brought enthusiasm and determination to do good locally and internationally.

Wilfrid J. Wilkinson from Ontario, Canada was president of Rotary International. His theme of the year being "Rotary Serves". He sent Robert Brickman as his representative to Gary's district conference, which was held out of district on the cruise ship Royal Caribbean – "Enchantment of the Seas" sailing throughout the Caribbean. Other major speakers during the conference were past director Mike Colusardo, Rotary International director Barry Rassin and Dr. Deri Joy Ronis. Gary held his district assembly at the Port Charlotte Cultural Center in Port Charlotte, where 54 of 56 clubs of the district were in attendance.

It was unfortunate that five clubs turned in their charters during 2007-2008 due to the downturn of business and the economy in general. We lost Fort Myers Beach, chartered in 1955 along with Sarasota AM, Osprey, Longboat Key, and Sarasota Sunset.

A highlight of Gary's year was participating in not one, but two group study exchanges. One with France, District 1650, the other with Haiti, District 7020. Team leaders were Bruce Bridewell to France and Bob Clenden to Haiti.

Gary's year had the highest per capita giving to the Rotary Foundation in the history of District 6960 with \$238.00 per Rotarian. Also, the re-invigoration of both the wheelchair foundation and the gift of life led to a very successful year for Gary.

2008-2009 – Governor Margaret R. (Margie) Cypher (Placida)

After being named "Rotarian of the Year" in 2002, Margie became the first woman District Governor of District 6960 in 2008-2009. The President of Rotary International was Dong Kurn, "D.K." Lee from Seoul, Korea. His theme for the year was "Make Dreams Real".

At the start of Margie's year there were 2500 Rotarians in the 52 Rotary Clubs of the District. By year end membership had dropped to 2328, with the loss of one club, Sarasota Sunset. Like many other District Governors before her, she held her District Assembly at the Charlotte Cultural Center in Port Charlotte. The date was April 21, 2008. 169 Rotarians registered, with 47 clubs represented. As did PDG Hal Atzingen in 2002-2003, she selected the Naples Beach Hotel and Golf Resort for the District Conference, held May 7-9, 2009. With 43 of the clubs of the District represented, there were 254 Rotarians registered. On the last day of the conference all in attendance were invited to help assemble food packages for the "Kids against Hunger of S.W. Florida". Over 1000 packages were put together.

President Lee sent Wallace B. Brown, PDG, District 5430, from Murray, Utah as his representative to Margie's conference.

The Group Study Exchange Team in 2008-2009 to the conference came from District 3040 in India, with their District Governor Alok Billore as leader. Our GSE team leader to India was Selva Sunderavel, Past President of the Charlotte Harbor Rotary Club.

Significant achievements during Margie's year were: The Rotary Club of Englewood and Sarasota Bay were honored for 50 years of service with a Certificate of Congratulations from R.I. President D. K. Lee; Rotary Camp Florida reorganized their Board of Directors and revised camp by-laws; an Ambassadorial Scholar was sponsored to Australia; Becky Fero, AG introduced the program of 5th Graders, Rotar-Kids; Cathy Parks, developed a tri-level program for the Interact Clubs of District 6960; The PDG's of District 6960 met to assist the DG on August 4, 2008.

2009-2010 – Vincent (Vince) Cautero (Naples)

As Margie cypher laid down the gavel to end her 2008-2009 year, Vince Cautero was quick to snatch it up to start his well planned for year as governor.

John Kenny was president of Rotary International in 2009-2010, his theme for the year "The Future Of Rotary Is In Your Hands". Vince was a product out of the Naples club, where he served as president in 2003-2004. His district conference was held out of district at the Tradewinds Resort in St. Petersburg Beach, May 13-16, 2010. PDG Hal Atzingen was conference chairman and turned out over 300 Rotarians and guests. Speakers were R.I. director-elect John Smarge and John T. Capps from North Carolina, among others.

In Vince's year a matching grant of some \$33,500 was used by the Goldcoast Club of Cape Coral to provide education materials and computers to youth in Mandeville, Jamaica through a partnership with the Rotary Club in that city.

A first, the "Celebrate Rotary Dinner With The Presidents" was cohosted by District 6950 and District 6960, on Wednesday, February 3, 2010 at the Grand Hyatt-Tampa Bay. President John Kenny and past presidents Glenn E. Estess, Sr., Herbert Brown, and Frank Devlyn were participants.

Danielle Hall from the North Fort Myers Rotary Club was made "Rotarian of the Year" for 2009. Although diagnosed with cervical cancer she rode her bike 220 miles through and over the cascade mountains. She raised over \$1200 to benefit local charities. The ride was sponsored by the Redmond Washington Rotary Club.

At the 2010 International Convention in Montreal the district sponsored a booth promoting wheelchairs for polio survivors. Also in Vince's year a Group Study Exchange with District 5010 – Russia was a rewarding experience. Exchanges were in April and May of 2010. During the year District 6960 participated in 12 district simplified grants and 7 matching grants.

At the outset of Vince's year he set three personal projects as the cornerstone of his year. Kids Against Hunger, Rotary Camp Florida and the JDRF. He was successful in those projects and many others.

Haiti Relief was a major project raising \$57,000 in cash and shelter boxes. Over 2,000,000 meals were shipped to Haiti and Rotarians packaged over 7.5 million meals since August 2007.

And one final accomplishment . . . through the leadership of the Fort Myers Rotary Club a new Rotaract Club was chartered at Edison State College.

2010-2011 – Don Thomas

(Cape Coral Goldcoast)

Mr. Enthusiasm was Governor this year. Don had participated in many committees and projects of the District prior to his nomination and election as District Governor. Group Study Exchange was a favorite project of his. He was a team leader to Australia in 2002-2003

When Don took over as Governor, Ray Klinginsmith from Kirksville, Missouri was President of Rotary International, his theme for the year being “Building Communities – Bridging Continents”. The District had 51 clubs with 2312 members. During the course of Don’s year, one club, Sarasota Southside was added to the District, quite an accomplishment in the time of down-sizing because of the economy.(27)

Don held his District Assembly in Port Charlotte on April 10, 2010 with all 51 clubs represented and a registration of 153 Rotarians.

Don went all out to bring his District Conference to his home city, Cape Coral, at the luxurious Marina Village on June 9-11, 2011. At the conference all 52 clubs were represented, with 432 Rotarians and guests in attendance. P.D.G. Larry Lunsford was President Klinginsmith’s representative to the conference. Other major speakers Don had lined up included International Director John Smarge, John and June Capps, Ken Behring, Rob Raylman, Steve Popper, Kenn Vassar, Dave Clark, two Ambassadorial Scholars and the GSE team from Poland, District 2230. Our District team to Poland was led by Sandy Scoggins, member of the Bonita Springs Club.

Don made some significant changes in the administration of the District during his year. He reintroduced the practice of the District Governor meeting with the club board of directors prior to his official club visit.

Don’s wife Sue was an unofficial Assistant Governor for she was with him as he visited all 52 board and club meetings. Membership workshops were held in five locations throughout the District with a total attendance of 415 Rotarians.

During Don’s year the membership termination rate was cut by 2/3 from the previous year with a total loss of only 20 members. TRF giving totaled \$589,000 and the annual program fund was \$398,000.

One of Don’s “PET” projects “Rotary Cares Teddy Bears” distributed approximately 5000 of the cuddly bears to first responders, children’s hospitals and shelters for abused women and children. Another of Don’s projects, which drew accolades throughout the District was the packaging of 1,037,000 meals in one day with Rotarians and volunteers at three different locations, Sarasota, Naples and Fort Myers for “Kids Against Hunger/Meals of Hope”.

Awards for activities and projects by clubs and Rotarians were many. Presidential Citations were presented to 36 clubs with 16 receiving “club of distinction” awards from International President Klinginsmith. 41 clubs received the Governors Award.

District 6960 “Rotarian of the Year” went to Steve Agius. District “Service Above Self” Award to Cindy Doragh and the “Trim Tab” Award was presented to Jane Goble. Jim Henry received RI’s “Service Above Self” Award.

Mr. Enthusiasm had a “FANTASTIC” year.

2011-2012—Denise A. Hearn

(Lakewood Ranch)

When Don Thomas relinquished the Rotary District 6960 gavel to Denise, she was well prepared for her year as Governor, for she had not only served as an aid to the District Governor in 2004-2005 (who happened to be her spouse), she learned the duties of District Governor, served on a multitude of district committees, including being a facilitator for the Rotary Leadership Institute. She is a member of the Lakewood Ranch Club. In 2007 she was selected as “Club Rotarian of the Year”.

The President of Rotary International in 2011-2012 was Kalyan Banerjee from India. His theme for the year was “Reach Within to Embrace Humanity”.

The district consisted of 52 clubs at the start of 2011 and ended the year with the same number, but the district lost 16 members during the year. Denise held her District Assembly at the Port Charlotte Cultural Center in Port Charlotte with 145 registrants and 45 clubs being represented.

When it came time for her conference she elected to take Rotarians of District 6960 and guests on a working 4 day cruise to Cozumel, April 12-16, 2012. 45 of 52 clubs attended. Mike Colasurdo, a Past R.I. International Director/Treasurer was President Banerjee’s representative to the conference. Other major speakers were R.I. Director John Smarge, Joanne Bertsche, R.I. Annual Giving Officer and PDG Howard Crowell, who conducted the Installation Ceremony.

The District sent a GSE team to Korea, District 3600, with Nancy Reed from the Naples Collier club as team leader. The team from Korea spent a fantastic four weeks in our District with members of visited clubs giving high fives to the quality of their team.

During the year TRF per capita giving exceeded the goal of \$200 per member and it was noted that during the year the Polio eradication worldwide went from 4 endemic countries to 3. India has been removed from the list.

The Governors Project: Honor Flight, June 9, 2012, a group of 55 Guardians escorted 55 World War II Veterans to Washington, D.C. to visit THEIR memorial as well as other monuments including Iwo Jima, Lincoln memorial, Washington monument, Air Force tribute and witnessed the changing of the Guard at Arlington Cemetery. Upon arrival at Reagan International Airport (as well as at the Fort Myers International Airport) they were honored by water cannon salutes. They were greeted at airport gates by civilians, current military individuals, TSA employees, and many, many more (including children that wanted to touch a hero) and say “thank you for your service”.(29)

A highlight of the year was the development of the District Training Team which combined the “Governor Group” with their respective aides along with our District Trainer. A footprint was developed for consistent training programs, concrete documents to define roles, etc. Denise should be complimented for her tireless effort to bring this important project moving forward to positive impact through Rotary experiences as a District.

Denise had a final comment as she stepped down and became a Past District Governor. WOW – What a Rotary year!!!