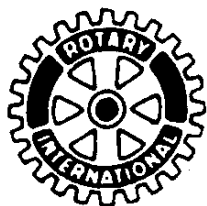


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Waunakee Rotary Club

Jan. 18, 2007
Vol. 40 No. 27

Brian Knox, the new publisher of The Waunakee Tribune, provided an historical sketch of Hometown News group's parent company, W.D. Hoard and Sons Company.

In the beginning, William Dempster Hoard moved to Wisconsin from upstate New York and enlisted in the Civil War. Heavily influenced by Abraham Lincoln, Hoard became a "radical republican."

After the war, he married a woman from Lake Mills and traveled throughout the region as a vocal instructor. He also worked for various agricultural publications, as pump salesman and census taker. He tried his hand at growing hops, but the price collapsed, forcing him and his wife to move in with his wife's parents.

In 1870, Hoard founded the radical republican newspaper, The Jefferson County Union in Lake Mills and was persuaded by merchants in Fort Atkinson to move it there.

Hoard used his experience from his father's dairy farm in New York and advocated in a front page column that the state convert to animal farming. He also included practical tips on farming. He was soon giving speeches all over the upper midwest on the advantages of a dairy economy. By 1885, the Union's circulation was bigger outside of the county than in. Hoard split the dairy columns off into a separate publication called Hoard's Dairyman. That grew to be an international publication in 100 countries. Circulation peaked in 1974 at 365,000 twice monthly. Today's circulation is just short of 100,000 with Japanese and Mexican Spanish versions.

In 1888, Hoard was nominated and elected governor and founded what is now the progressive movement. He later became known as head of the "soft progressives." After he was edged in a bid for re-election in 1890, Hoard returned to campaigning for dairy farming. He was a longtime head of the Board of Regents.

The Union came out firmly against bras and prohibition in the '20s, both as threats to public health. Opened FBI files have revealed the agency contemplated raiding the Union's office looking for the Hoard still at the time. It was never located.

Brian's father, William Knox, was the Dairyman's third editor. He was on the president's advisory panel for agriculture under Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon and Ford, and the advisory council for trade under Ford, Carter and Reagan. When Hoard's grandson died in 1972, Brian's father took over the company, and the Knox family eventually bought out the Hoard family.

Brian succeeded his father as CEO when his father died two years ago. He took over as publisher of the Daily Union "and proceeded to carry on its tradition of losing money for a good 10 years," he said.

The Knox family got involved with weeklies when the publisher of Milton Courier had brain cancer and needed to settle affairs. The Hometown News group is a limited partner of Hoard publications, and its growth to 11 newspapers was "not by design," Brian said. Many of the papers acquired by Hometown News shared the same printing press.

Brian likes to think those newspaper owners "were comfortable with our rather old fashioned idea of emphasizing local, hard news, independence, and a willingness to invest in technology," he said.

Each of the papers has its own managing editor. Their readers won't see Brian's opinions on national affairs in them. People buy the Tribune to find out what's happening in Waunakee, he said.

"That's something only the Tribune can do," Brian said.

Other items:

•Rod Cupp reminded the club that tickets to the Superbowl event are available for members to sell. They are also available for sale at Rex's

OFFICERS

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Calendar of Events:

Jan. 26, Christmas party
Feb. 4, Superbowl event
April 12-29, Russian visitors
May 4-6, District Conference
June 17-20, RI, Salt Lake City

Innkeeper and Neil's Liquor. Anyone with questions for Rod can call him at 220-3201.

•Tom Reis reported that all of the lights from the Rotary display at the Village Park had been taken down. He thanked the many volunteers.

Guests: Tracy Mann, guest of Peggy Acker-Farber; Harriet Statz, guest of Ray Statz; Sarah DeKraay, guest of Tom Reis.

Visiting Rotarians: Lew Harned, Madison downtown; Bill Skalitzky, Sun Prairie.

Birthdays: Jan. 18, Rich Harris; Jan. 19, Gene Smith; Jan. 22, Daniel Muxfeld; Jan. 24, Art Drake.

Anniversaries: None.

Prayers: Jan. 18, Susan Vergeront; Jan. 25, Leonard Allen; Feb. 1, Kim Wilde; Feb. 8, Pat Durden.

Programs: Jan. 18, DNR on Health and Environment; Jan. 25, Lisa Ellinger, Wisconsin Health Plan; Feb. 1, Club Assembly; Feb. 8, classification speeches; Feb. 15, Bill Erickson and Phil Willems on their trip to Haiti; Feb. 22, Little People; March 1, Club Assembly; March 8, Lynne Spielman on her trip to Nigeria.

Greeters: Jan. 18, Greg Garton, Amy Gile Enge; Jan. 25, Kevin Even, Jeremiah Gollon; Feb. 1, Wendy Grunewald-Fahlgren; Feb. 8, Rich Harris, Bob Hoskins.