



**Future Editors**

**March 10**

Kevin Harmon

**March 17**

Stephen Herron

**March 24**

Tom Hinzpeter

**Greeters**

**March 7**

O.H. Mittelberg  
Jim Montgomery

**March 14**

Cara Olson  
Darrell Olson

**March 21**

David Olson  
Jim Olson

**Upcoming Programs**

**March 7**

Gail Slinde  
NDSU Extension Agent  
FFA and 4H  
Competitions Sponsored  
by Rotary

**March 14**

John Harris  
Prairie Public  
Broadcasting

**1969: The Mouse That Roared** *By Wally Hankla*

Newspapers, TV and radio are again beginning to warn of the possibility of spring flooding in the Souris Valley.

My guess is that a majority of our Rotary membership is only vaguely familiar with the tremendous public and private effort, cost in dollars and human emotion and the residue of personal loss that was involved in the spring flood of 1969.

Chester Reiten was mayor of Minot in the years following the flood, when permanent protection was being considered, and stated something to the effect of "In the memory of those people who were here during the flood it was so vivid they will remember it. New people coming in will forget it, but those who were here will never forget it." So, let's retell the story.

In 1969, the city had not experience a flood since 1929, and virtually no one in a leadership position had been around in order to know what to expect.

At the time, there were no flood warning readings being transmitted from Canada. People were generally aware of a large snowpack to the north and west, but had no real specific information.

On Easter weekend reports came from Donnybrook that there was large flooding on the Des Lacs River. I had noticed water running across Highway 52 east of Velva on Easter, a result of snow melt in the coulees in the valley.

At about the same time, the Des Lacs had joined with the Mouse River at Burlington, and there was flooding in some low spots in west Minot. The following day, April 7, flood waters began to inundate sections of southwest Minot. Sandbagging of homes began, and some homes were evacuated.

On April 8 and April 9 more homes and some businesses were evacuated, sandbagging continued and some dirt dikes were

built, usually around individual homes. In some cases this was to no avail, since sewers began backing up and flooding basements, some of which began to collapse.



My wife and I were building a house in west Minot at that time which was framed in but not completed. We turned on the water and flooded the basement to keep the floor from coming up, or the walls from collapsing. Others did likewise.

Schools began to close. Perkett School was diked, but completely surrounded by water. On April 9, City officials ordered one hundred more homes evacuated, as foundations and basement walls were collapsing.

By this time the city was awash with trucks hauling dirt and sandbags and others hauling goods and furnishings from homes being evacuated. Schoolchildren chipped in to help and rural people as well. The city was by this time nearly exhausted.

On April 11, the Des Lacs reached its crest and began to drop. It was announced the crisis was over. The relief was apparent on everyone's face.

But the next day the Corps of Engineers warned that 3 to 4 times more water was coming in the Mouse than had come in the Des Lacs.

The City officials determined that this amount of additional water could not be contained. The news media was brought in to City Hall, and it was announced that much of the City would have to be evacuated.

# Secretary's Corner Om Madhok

2/28/2011

**PRESENT MEMBERSHIP: 99**

**ATTENDANCE: 55.7%**

**JUNIOR ROTARIANS:** Ryan Brown, Drew Saari, Matt Magnuson, Ian Kenney—BRHS.

**MAKEUPS:** 9 for Milt Rolle, Maui and Kihei, HI – 1/5, 1/6, 1/12, 1/19, 1/26, 1/31, 2/10, 2/11, and 2/16, 2011.

## WE MISSED YOU!

|                   |               |                 |               |
|-------------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|
| D. Albertson      | J. Feist      | S. Kokuwski     | T. Rafferty   |
| R. Anderson       | M. Gaddie     | L. Langmaack    | P. Smith      |
| R. Buchholz       | J. Haaland    | F. Lien Jr.     | D. Somerville |
| R. Burckhard      | P. Hankla     | D. Looyesen     | R. Streyle    |
| L. Clute          | K. Harmon     | J. & J. Lundeen | B. Syria      |
| P. Cochell        | D. Hodnefield | B. Mattson      | B. Thomas     |
| A. Cichon         | T. Hoff       | R. Merritt      | B. Walker     |
| D. Davison        | R. Horne      | J. Montgomery   | M. Watne      |
| S. Dufner         | J. Jensen     | T. Myre         | T. Will       |
| M. Effertz-Hanson | M. Keller     | D. & D. Olson   | R. Winkle     |
| A. Estvold        | B. Kramer     | J. Olson        |               |
| B. Fedorchak      | A. Krause     | S. Oothoudt     |               |
| D. Feist          | A. Kurth      | L. Pinkerton    |               |

## 2011 Rotary District 5580 Conference

**April 28—May 1**

**Grand Forks at the Canad Inn/Alerus Center**

**Each member will be responsible to pay \$150  
with the club picking up the rest.**

**Transportation will be coordinated through the club.**

**Contact Dusty Zimmerman for more information or a registration form.**

**857-7205 or [dzimmerman@odney.com](mailto:dzimmerman@odney.com)**



**The Prairie Flower** is the official publication of Rotary Club of Minot, Minot, North Dakota. It is published every Thursday. Annual membership dues for the year 2010-2011 in the Rotary Club of Minot, ND are \$588. 6/28/09 Om Madhok, Secretary.

**Kalyan Banerjee** of Gujarat, India— President, Rotary Int'l

**Roly Turner** of Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada—Governor District 5580

The Rotary Club of Minot meets 12:00 to 1:10 p.m. every Monday at the Grand International of Minot.

**Board of Directors:** Teal Myre, President; Ron Merritt, President-Elect; Dusty Zimmerman, Vice-President; Om Madhok, Secretary; Dave Lehner, Treasurer; Reed Argent, Past President.

**Directors:** 2011—Mike Berg and Tom Will; 2012—Jen Guidinger and Peter Hankla; 2013—Jo Khalifa and Roscoe Streyle

**Standing Members:** Peter Hankla, Exchange Students, Ken Kitzman, Scholarship Fund; John MacMartin, Rotary Foundation.

## Birthdays

**March 8, 1965**

Cara Olson

**March 11, 1952**

John MacMartin



## Anniversaries

**NONE**

## NEW MEMBER

**Michael Christianson**  
*Owner, Pizza Ranch*

## PROPOSED FOR MEMBERSHIP

**Grant Wentz**  
UP

Sr. Business Relationships Mgr.  
*Proposed by Daryl Hodnefield*

**Rae Schobinger**  
Burdick Job Corps  
Center Director

*Proposed by John MacMartin*

## Fines

**\$3.00 each**

Super fines and those who missed 3 of the last 4 meetings

**\$2.00 each**

Mac Magaster, CJ Craven, Jeff Balentine, NASCAR fans, BRHS-MSU-UND alumni, and those who missed 2 of the last 4 meetings

**\$1.00 each**

Mike Berg's table and those who missed 1 of the last 4 meetings

**TOTAL FINES:**  
**\$123.00**

## 1969 *Cont'd from page 1*

A control center was established in City Hall, and on April 13 an evacuation of the entire flood plain in the City was ordered. Power was shut off in these areas, and people were required to disconnect the fuse boxes in homes.

By this time Broadway had been closed from the north end of the Broadway viaduct to about University Avenue. It was decided to build a causeway on Broadway to accommodate emergency vehicles in driving between the north and south sides of the soon to be divided city.

Ice dams on the Mouse northwest of Minot slowed the rising waters in the city, and dikes were quickly thrown up along the river bank, around homes and buildings, and in some cases around entire neighborhoods.

In the area where my house was being built a corporation was formed, money raised among it's inhabitants and a contractor obtained to raise a dike around three sides of the neighborhood.

A railroad track protected the fourth side. These dikes were covered with heavy plastic held in place by telephone poles that had started to float in a nearby NSP depot, since it had began to rain nearly every day. The area had been evacuated, and power disconnected.

So the men teamed up in pairs which sneaked into the area each night to patrol the dike and catch some sleep in the top floor of one of the homes.

My wife's parents' home was built on somewhat higher ground than neighboring homes, and as a result the basement took water, but not the first floor. As the water was rising, however, my wife and I went into the house to move doors and contents up to the second floor.

When we finished our work, the water has risen, and we were taken out of the area in the bucket of a front end loader by a contractor. Some homes were left with furniture tied down and covered up on the garage roof. Such was life in the valley in the spring of '69.

By April 15, 12,000 people had been taken out of the valley. Over 15,000 people helped in the evacuation. It was a huge task, but it was successful with private contractors, national guardsmen, airmen from the Base and farmers and friends providing trucks and manpower.

Where did all the people go? They stayed with family or friends or hotels, were taken in by farmers in the area, and such. Boeing was or had been doing work in the area and made available trailer homes.

The crest came on April 19, at 6 ½ feet over flood stage. Because of the fact that the Mouse at that time dropped only 6 inches per mile in elevation, by April 21 the river had only dropped 1/10 of a foot.

It was estimated, accurately as it turned out, that the high water would remain for forty days. By April 26, the drop had been only 2 inches.

On the north side of the city, the water had risen to the south side of what is now University Avenue. Ramstad School suffered \$300,000 damage (1969 dollars). Many other schools were diked and suffered lesser damage. To the east, Eastwood Park, Roosevelt Park, the Souris Drive area, etc. were flooded unless successfully protected by dikes of some kind.

Arrowhead Mall, for example was diked, but not accessible. The only way to travel in the valley was by boat. To get to work in downtown Minot (no large shopping center yet) a person living on north hill had to travel twenty miles to get to work.

Over 60% of the homes in the flood plain suffered first floor damage, and many of these had hardwood floors, virtually all of which had to be replaced, since most hardwood floors expanded and developed "ripples."

By May 4, the flow over the spillway at Lake Darling stopped, and the gradual receding of the water began.

Then came the cleanup, which was perhaps even more painful to the people than the 40 day wait for the water to recede. Mold had invaded basement walls and floors and had to be scrubbed clean.

Flooring and woodwork had to be repaired or replaced. Washers, dryers, furnaces and the like were damaged, some beyond repair. It took the entire summer for most of the flooded homes to dry out.

Some people did not repair or rebuild, they just left. Small businesses suffered huge losses. Damage to the city was estimated to be \$30,000,000 (1969 dollars).

There was no FEMA at the time, and about the only financial help for small businesses at any reasonable cost of repair was the SBA lower than average interest rate. The homeowners bore most of their cost of repair and replacement.

Huge dollars were in effect "sucked out" of Minot, perhaps to impede real growth in Minot for the next twenty years or so.

In 1960, Minot had a larger population than Bismarck. By 1980, the rolls were reversed. Other factors, of course, were an issue, but the flood must have had a bearing.

The spring of 1969 was not at a pleasant time for those of us living here. However, the result could have been worse.

As was stated at the end of a film produced on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the flood, *"The 1969 flood will be remembered for one thing. In the face of common adversity people joined as one to deal with the struggle. Even nature and the power of the river was not strong enough to break that."*

## Rotary Challenge Blood Drive

March 7, 2011 from 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
in the Viking Room,  
Grand International Inn

Call Deb @ 852-2161 to arrange an  
appointment or walk-ins welcome.

Challenge has been given to other  
Service Clubs; prize will be given to  
the club with the most donors  
(family and friends welcome!)