

Lone Star P.E.T.S., Inc.

In 1984, the Board of Directors of Rotary International enacted a rule requiring each District Governor to conduct a President-elect Training Seminar of at least one and one half days duration for the incoming club presidents. The Districts in Texas did that in the spring of 1985 for the club Presidents-elect of 1985-1986.

The success and advantages of multiple Rotary Districts pooling their resources to train incoming Rotary club presidents kindled interest among Rotary leaders in Texas. Two enterprising Texas District Governors in the Class of 1986-1987 began to promote the idea of a single PETS for the nine Districts in Texas. DG Bobby Albert (d. 579) and DG Allen Anderson (d. 584) felt they could enhance the program by attracting better speakers, offer a more comprehensive seminar and involve past district governors in the process. Everyone did not immediately accept their ideas but the two DG's prevailed and the Texas District Governors undertook the planning and organization that resulted in the creation of *Lone Star Rotary*.

Consultative services were of great value from Rotarian RID Ray Klinginsmith (d. 604) and the Missouri *Show Me Rotary* crew. Further assistance came from PDG Joe Jordon (d. 526) and his Southern California associates. Past RI Directors Rex Webster (d. 573), Jack Forrest (d. 587), Don Strickland (d. 591), and Dave Smith (d. 587) were readily available. Many, many others contributed their abilities toward making this endeavor the great success that it became.

Lone Star Rotary was the name of the new venture and nine Rotary districts located predominately in Texas composed its membership.

The aim of the seminar was to assist the Presidents-elect in the nine Rotary districts with their forthcoming job of Rotary club leadership. Leadership skills, not Rotary information, comprised the bulk of the sessions. Nine District Governors-nominee were involved in planning.

Once the decision was made to have a seminar for Rotary Club Presidents-elect, and to have it in San Antonio a committee was assigned the various tasks of staging *Lone Star Rotary 1987*.

Lone Star Rotary Conference Chair DG Allen Anderson convened the opening meeting on Friday evening, March 13, 1987 at the Wyndham Hotel in San Antonio, TX. The keynote speaker that evening was Dr. Mouzon Biggs, Methodist pastor and Rotarian from Tulsa, OK. That was an evening when a tradition was born. His topic was "I Want My Year to Make a Difference." Thirty years later, Mouzon was still presenting keynote addresses to Texas Presidents-elect.

Traditionally, the President or President-elect of Rotary International did not accept invitations to speak at single district events; however, RIPD's Forrest, Webster, Smith and Strickland were able to present the idea that an audience of 400+ club presidents-elect was sufficient justification for them to do so. This practice has continued for many years.

Planning for the second *Lone Star Rotary* began in earnest during the fall and winter months of 1987-1988. Past District Governor (d. 589) Walter L. Lackey was selected to perform the duties of Operating Chair. The Operating Committee selected Houston, Texas as the host city for *Lone Star Rotary 1988*. The hotel of choice was the Doubletree Lincoln.

During 1989 the incorporators, with legal counsel, met numerous times to draft the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws of the Lone Star P.E.T.S., Inc. The Articles were signed by trustees Allen Anderson, San Angelo, Bobby Albert, III, Wichita Falls, Walt Lackey, Houston, L.T. White, Sherman, and Ralph McLaughlin, Big Spring on December 4, 1989 and filed in the Office of the Secretary of State of Texas, December 7, 1989. The P.E.T.S. organization was incorporated under the name Lone Star P.E.T.S., Inc. as a 501 (c) 3 corporation.

The third seminar was held at the Sheraton Hotel of Dallas. PDG L.T. White served as Operating Chair. This was the first year that our seminar had a program for the spouses of Presidents-elect. This has continued ever since.

The 1990 PETS was chaired by RIDE Ralph McLaughlin and the host city was Midland, Texas.

The 1991 PETS was held in Dallas, Texas at the Grand Kempinski Hotel. Originally a contract was executed with the DFW Hyatt Regency, but a scheduling conflict occurred. Due to this conflict the Hyatt agreed to a number of concessions to help PETS. PDG Ron Ward, Operating Chair received the support he needed to have a first class seminar.

In 1992 the board elected to hold the seminar at the Hyatt Regency DFW Hotel. Because of the problem the previous year, the hotel staff worked overtime to ensure that PETS attendees were treated well. The Hyatt's room rate for PETS in 1992 was \$56. Lone Star P.E.T.S., Inc., responded by agreeing to long-term contracts with this hotel (currently to this date).

In 2014 District 5770 (Southern Oklahoma) was added to the Lone Star PETS, bringing the total districts to ten.