

PROFESSIONAL CLUB

**Paper presented by Titus Van Haitzma
November, 1989**

Bill and I originally planned to give a short presentation at our September meeting to commemorate our 50th year as the Professional Club. When I called our good president, Bob Sterken, suggesting that we do this, he agreed enthusiastically.

However, before we knew it, confusion created by Pat Thompson's resignation and program dates, changed our date of presentation to this evening's meeting.

In the meantime, the profusion of confusion of dates, changed dates and 'phone calls leads me to the reading of this poem from Forbes Magazine which seems appropriate:

SENT IN BY AN 80YR
WOMAN ON FORBES 70TH BIRTHDAY
SHE WRITES

A LITTLE MIXED UP

As someone who's finished seven decades and in happy health relishes entering his eighth, I must confess that instant recall is now a sometime thing. Every once in a while I dial, and by the time the phone is answered I forget who I am calling and when that gets cleared up, I can't remember why I'm calling.

Just a line to say I'm living, that I'm not among the dead.

Though I'm getting more forgetful, and I'm mixed up in my head.

Is it my turn to write you? Or did I write before?

I think I owe the letter, I'd hate to be a bore.

I'm used to my bifocals, my new plates fit me fine.

My hearing-aid is perfect, but Lord, I miss my mind.

I stand before the fridge at times, my poor head filled with doubt.

Have I come to put some food away, or come to take some out?

There are times when it is dark out, and with my nightcap on my head

I ask, am I retiring or just getting out of bed?

Sometimes I can't remember, at the bottom of the stairs,

Must I go up for something, or did I just come down from there?

I do know that I miss you, sometimes I almost cry.

And now it's almost mail time, so I must say good-by.

I'm standing by the mailbox with a face so very red.

I didn't mail your letter, I opened it instead.

We have cause to celebrate --- the Professional Club has enjoyed fifty years of stimulating, informative meetings. We have earned the right to be proud

this achievement. I hope we will re-dedicate our efforts to continue as Club whose dual purpose is to educate and to provide comradeship to its members.

The early minutes of Professional Club Meetings are very complete. Bill and I have read thru them carefully and would like to report primarily on the formation and early years of the Club. We hope you you'll find it interesting.

In the fall of 1939, Dr. J. G. Huizenga, the local eye, ear, nose and throat specialist, invited me to attend with him a meeting of the Muskegon Torch Club. The Torch Club, which was part of a national organization, met monthly, and after dinner, presented a member-written paper and discussion.

We were excited about forming a Holland Club based on their format. Several men were invited to discuss this project and met in Dr. Huizenga's reception room on the third floor of the People's State Bank Building. Those who attended were Bernard Arendshorst, Clyde Geerlings, Harvey Kleinheksel, Larry Lamb, Bruce Raymond, Otto VanderVelde, Willard Wichers, Al Van Zoeren, Dixie Hyma, Eldon Dick, Phil Oosterhouse, Jock Riemersma, Gerritt Van Zyl, Duncan Weaver and Titus Van Haitsma. These men came from the business community and Medical and Dental Practices. They were ^{PROFESSIONALS & THEIR WIVES} Hope College professors, ^{AND} attorneys, a High School Superintendent and a pharmacist.

The idea met with an enthusiastic response and plans were made to form a club called the Holland Professional Club. It was decided to meet as a local club, ^{NOT AFFILIATE WITH THE TORCH CLUB} to avoid paying dues to a National Organization. ^{GIVE US THE FREEDOM TO DO AS WE CHOOSE} AND TO

Regular meetings began in 1940. We met at various places, including Hope Church and the Dutch Mill Restaurant. For many years we met on the top floor of the Warm Friend Tavern. Meetings started promptly at 6:00 pm and closed at 8:30 pm. For those who enjoyed a cocktail before dinner, early arrival at the Tavern Club made a convenient place to imbibe.

The proceedings were similar to those we follow today --- dinner, reports and a paper --- and discussion afterward.

A brief, preliminary constitution was drawn up during this first year. Also a copy of each paper presented was given to the Secretary at the conclusion of every meeting.

In 1941, we began our Club year with the First Annual September Picnic at Larry Lamb's home on South Shore Drive. (This is the house now owned by Dick DeWitt --- which was moved ---. The DeVos summer home is built on ^{THAT} the property). This was primarily a social meeting and no paper was read but a staff member from the Muskegon Chronicle came and gave a talk about the differences between news and propaganda.

For many years after that, the picnics were held at the Ten Cate Cottage on Lake Michigan and later at the Boersma Cottage. Two or three of the wives did the supper preparations each year. The menu always included huge, juicy hamburgers, tossed salad, sweet corn, and home-made pie a la mode. The supper committee had a good time putting it all together.

In 1942, the President, Everett Dick, first appointed an Archives Committee of Duncan Weaver and Willard Wichers. Their duties were to collect and compile minutes, financial reports, correspondence and any other pertinent information. They also held copies of the papers presented.

Unfortunately, later the decision was made to return these papers to the members and, in so doing, the Club has lost many very unique and excellent reports. These included Dr. Edward Dimment's marvelous paper on "History and Heredity", Ade Klaasen's paper titled "I Predict" and many very special presentations by Peter Boter, John Donnelly, John Hollenbach, Vernon TenCate and others.

Also in 1942, the matter of dues was discussed and a decision made that each member would pay, in advance, a semi-annual fee of \$6.00 to cover dues and dinners. Before this, each member had paid his own bill of \$1.00 per meal.

In a financial note from June, 1943, Treasurer Wichers reported that we began the six-month period with \$39.51 in the Treasury. Income was \$110.19. Expenses totalled \$89.00, so the balance in the Treasury was then \$60.70.

The September, 1943 meeting included a discussion by members which covered a wide range of subjects including the question of extending membership to Clergymen, and, if invited, how they would be selected.

NORM KANSFIELD

By unanimous decision, the first Ladies Night was held in June, 1944. The dinner was held at the Holland Country Club, followed by a lecture on "Apperception". The speaker was Dr. Kuizenga and he was introduced by Mayor Geerlings.

In September, 1944, Bruce Raymond, Vernon TenCate and John Donnelly were appointed to make recommendations to study and re-write the entire Constitution. This they did and John Donnelly reported on the new Constitution in November of 1945. It was adopted at the December Meeting. We abided by this Constitution until other revisions were made about seven years ago.

Two notable decisions were made at the September, 1945, meeting:

- #1 - To raise the dues for the first half of the Club Season to \$7.50, and
- #2 - It was voted to limit Club Membership to twenty-five.

As the cost of living rose, so did our dues. They were raised again in September, 1946, to a new high of \$8.00 per half year.

Also in March of 1946, we welcomed back to the Club, Bernard Arendshorst and Bob Cavanaugh from their tours of duty in the U. S. Navy.

A culinary note --- for a few years we enjoyed an annual game dinner with a choice of venison, rabbit, pheasant and grouse provided by Clarence Becker, Larry Lamb and Ti Van Haitisma.

Bruce Raymond, who was a history professor at Hope College, arranged for us to hold a few meetings in 1947 in the Temple Building Lounge. With the large influx of men and women released from the Military and entering Hope College on a government education program, the building was acquired by the college for housing. We were permitted to use the dining room for some meetings. ~~DINING~~

~~T-BARRIERS WERE CONSTRUCTED FOR HOUSING~~

The December meeting was held in the Dutch Mill. After dinner, we had to re-adjourn for the paper to the TenCate law offices because a very noisy meeting of women interferred with our program.

FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO DON'T REMEMBER THE DUTCH MILL: IT WAS LOCATED NEXT TO THE 1ST NATL BANK & DAN'S OFFICE WAS ON THE 2ND FLOOR OF THE BANK CORNER

Beginning in 1948 and for a few years after that, we included in our year's schedule, a panel discussion by four members debating the pros and cons of a timely topic. The first panel topic was "United Nations and World Peace", and the participants were Bruce Raymond, John Donnelly, Bill Wichers and Vernon TenCate.

At the September meeting that year, Eldon Dick proposed that we have a meeting in Grand Rapids at the Penn Club ^{WHERE HE WAS A MEMBER} and he would defray all costs above \$2.00 per member. That offer was too good to miss so we had the pleasure, in December, of dinner at the Penn Club and Larry Lamb's paper on "Concrete and its Many Uses". Dick was quite a man, for a few years he paid up any deficit in our Treasury. ^{WHY WE FOR YEARS}

HAVE SUGGESTED THE TREASURE TAKE CARE OF DEFICIT.

In December of 1948, Clyde Geerlings, as Chairman of the Archives Committee, recommended that the office of Archivist be abolished and that all papers be returned to the members. He suggested that the Secretary should be responsible for keeping complete and accurate records of the programs. These recommendations passed, unfortunately. Many very fine papers have been lost and ~~the minutes of meetings since that time are few and far between.~~ As a matter of fact, in the present Constitution, ^{IT STATES} "each presenting member is requested to submit a copy of his paper to the Secretary for inclusion in the Club's Archives". Perhaps action should be taken to either accept or reject this from the Constitution. ~

We do remember that in February of 1959, Jerry Ford (the former president not the Sentinel Editor) spoke on "Washington Up-to-date".

Also in 1959, we received another invitation to join the National Organization of the Torch Club, but as previously, the members voted to remain separate.

Starting in 1962, the club year was shortened by one month. Meetings were scheduled September through May rather than through June. Ladies Night has since been held at the May Meeting.

In February, 1965, the club celebrated its 25th anniversary with a birthday cake and brief talks and tributes by charter members Bernard

Arendshorst, Harvey Kleinheksel, Bill Wichers and Ti Van Haitsma.

We celebrated again at the Ladies Night Party at Point West. To commemorate the event our special guests each received a sterling silver teaspoon appropriately engraved with the date and Professional Club monogram. Henry Alexander made all the arrangements.

AGAIN DO SOMETHING SPECIAL FOR OUR GUEST NEXT MAY - ^{MAYBE WE CAN} ^{FOR} ~~AT~~ ^{OUR} ^{100TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION}

Two very special papers, which the members found particularly interesting were given that year. One by Marvin Lindeman titled "What's Happening to Holland" and the other by Vernon TenCate - "The Prurient Interests", which was a discussion of the rising tide of obscene and pornographic literature and films easily accessible to the young.

A new category of Membership was established in 1966. This allowed for members, upon reaching seventy years of age, to be exempt from giving papers (unless they requested otherwise) and to not be counted within the group of twenty-five active memberships.

Records show that as late as 1970, our dues were still \$25.00 per year with an assessment of \$20 - \$25 for Ladies Night.

Three things that we used to do and that we think might be given some consideration again are -

- #1 - Minutes indicate that we had a ^{SO CALLED} "critic" at each meeting whose responsibility was to be a moderator during the discussion period.
- #2 - For some time, the titles and a brief descriptive comment of the next paper were included in the meeting notice so that members could come with some preparation for discussion.
- #3 - When a new member was introduced, his sponsor would give a resume of his vocation, interests, accomplishments and other pertinent information.

This ends my ^{BRIEF} synopsis of our first fifty years, based on the records available. As charter members, Bill and I would like to make a few suggestions for the future of this club.

- #1 Keeping of the Minutes - Each month records should be kept which include the date, meeting place, resume of the paper, Treasurer's Report, Secretary's Report of the previous meeting,

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Archives and Research Library
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any action taken by the Club, attendance record, and names of any guests. The minutes should be signed by the Secretary. In the event of the Secretary's absence, he should appoint a substitute or, failing that, the President should appoint someone

#2 The Minutes should be typed on uniform sized paper and stored in a ^{new} folder. UNIFORM SIZED FOLDER

#3 The Folders, each year, should be given to the Archivist at Hope College. As you may know, ^{THIS} Van Wylen Library has established a Joint Archives for the Community. I am told that it is one of the most efficient, up-to-date computerized libraries and archives in the United States. Through Bill Wichers efforts, Mr. Wagner, the Director of Van Wylen Library, has agreed to store our past records. It is still our hope to include any minutes, correspondence, financial reports and other pertinent information of recent years. These seem to have disappeared and I would like to request again that anyone who has served as secretary, please double check thru their papers for their club minutes. We would like to add these to our records in the Joint Archives.

READ NAMES OF SECRETARIES

X #4 Excluding senior inactive members and in line with Bob Sterken's suggestion for the Ladies Night Committee, we would like to propose that officers be selected from those members of long standing as well as from ^{THOSE WHO ARE} the new members.

~~We are not advocating a return to early procedures and aims, but we are interested in how you perceive the future of the Professional Club.~~

After relating these facts and figures about the Club's formation and growth, I want to especially emphasize that really what makes our Club unique and worthwhile for us is the high quality of papers presented. Also, the importance of lively and intelligent discussions following the paper cannot be underestimated. This brings me back to my opening comments, that the purpose of the Professional Club is two-fold --- To educate and to provide comradship. May we continue that way for another fifty years - so that in the year 2040, some of you may still be enjoying good fellowship, lively discussions, good humor and constructive agreement and disagreement.

QUESTION FOR BILL OR MRS. FLE - COMMUNITY PAPER

WE ARE VERY INTERESTED IN HEARING HOW THE MEMBERS PERCEIVE THE FUTURE OF THE HOLLAND PROFESSIONAL CLUB