

# LA MESA



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## The El Paso Golf Classic May 2-4, 2008



***... less than five weeks from today!***

## HOW ROTARY SET ITS WHEEL IN MOTION

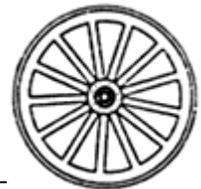
*Editor's Note: The following article was written by Joseph Derr, who was Rotary International's Web writer when this article was published in the Rotary International 6630 newsletter in 2003 – all you ever wanted to know about our emblem, and more! A great piece for new Rotarians and a good knowledge test for veterans.*

By Joseph Derr

The emblem — known as the Rotary wheel or gearwheel — has been around nearly as long as Rotary itself, yet it did most of its evolving during Rotary's first 15 years.

The initial design emerged from the desk of engraver and Rotary Club of Chicago member Montague "Monty" Bear in 1905, shortly after the formation of the first Rotary club. Inspired to create an insignia that symbolized his club, Bear sketched a wagon wheel with 13 spokes, which was met with approval by Paul P. Harris and the rest of the founding members.

Because wheels rotate, the wagon wheel insignia seemed a natural choice for a group calling itself the Rotary Club. And with the automobile still in its infancy in 1905, the buggy wheel was a sign of the times.



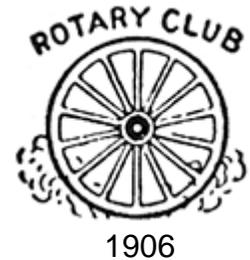
1905

Soon, fellow club members began to complain that the design was static and lifeless, so Bear went to work again. This time, he found inspiration in the heavens. He added a graphic that appeared to make the wheel ride on a bed of clouds. But some club members didn't see the addition in the same way. To them, the clouds looked like dust. Furthermore, if that were the case, the club's

emblem did not appear to abide by the basic laws of physics: there were dust clouds on *both* sides of the wheel. "Not even Rotary could raise dust before and aft of a wheel," Rotarian "Long" Tom Phillips said of the ill-fated design. "Which way are we going anyhow?"

So, Rotary's first graphic artist went back to his drawing board and inked over the dust clouds and superimposed a banner ribbon with the words "Rotary Club." Slightly altered later to clean up dark ink where the clouds had been, this design, drafted around 1910, would remain more or less the same for several years, even as automobiles were gradually replacing wagon buggies on the streets of Chicago.

By 1910, Rotary was no longer just in Chicago; there were sixteen clubs in the United States that made up the National Association of Clubs. And with the charter of each new club came a new design, based loosely on Bear's wagon wheel motif.



The creativity of the first Rotary clubs yielded great divergence in early emblem designs. Clubs would often incorporate local history or landmarks into their emblems. The Rotary Club of Lincoln, Nebraska, superimposed the wheel over a portrait of Abraham Lincoln in its emblem, while the Rotary Club of Oakland, California, used an oak tree for its design.

Before long, the Rotary wheel started to mutate. Several clubs transformed wheels into other spherical or circular shapes: ship helms, steering wheels, stars, globes, and other round objects.

### Gearing up for a new emblem

The soon-to-be International Association of Clubs realized that it needed a standardized, official emblem that would be used by all clubs. In 1911, *The National Rotarian* magazine's editor and the association's general secretary, Chesley R. Perry, invited clubs to submit designs for consideration to the emblem committee at the Duluth, Minnesota, convention of 1912.



Looking at early emblems of two Pennsylvania clubs, it is easy to trace the new Rotary wheel taking shape. The Rotary Club of Pittsburgh appears to be the first club to use the mechanical gear iconography in late 1910, highlighting its city's growing industry. But the direct forerunner of the official RI emblem came from the Rotary Club of Philadelphia, which was developing its first emblem, letterhead, and lapel pin designs around 1911. (The club also foresaw the future in its design when it shortened the name of the International Association of Rotary Clubs to "Rotary International" — a year before RI even starting using that phrase.)

Now that the emblem committee had found its design, an official description of the wheel emerged from Duluth. "The emblem consists of ...a wheel with gears cut on the outer edge and the spokes separated sufficiently to allow...space to show the enamel [and define] the spokes." In the original design, the spokes "indicate strength" while the gears or cogs "relieve the plainness of design" and "symbolize power".



Despite the official description of the association's emblem, in the years that followed, individual Rotary clubs continued to design their own versions, diverging from the standard established in Duluth, to the dismay of headquarters.

To address the problem, in December 1918, the Board of Directors resolved to adopt the gearwheel as the official corporate seal. Yet confusion still reigned, and the Rotary wheel still was taking more than one guise. Some sources count as many as 57 versions of Rotary wheels by 1920. Even *The Rotarian* couldn't seem to get it right: in three consecutive months in the spring of 1919, the magazine added to the confusion by publishing three different images of the wheel, each with an increasing number of gear cogs.

## Reality checks

For Charles Mackintosh and Oscar Bjorge of the Rotary clubs of Chicago and Duluth, the Rotary wheel was not running well. In a co-authored January 1920 article for *The Rotarian* titled "Redesigning the Rotary Wheel," they complained about the divergence of Rotary wheels with ever-changing numbers of spokes and gear cogs and pleaded for clubs to recognize the standard design. But there was also a problem with that design: it was not mechanically sound.

Mackintosh and Bjorge concluded that proportions of the wheel, including its small teeth with large spaces in between each tooth, would make it doubtful that the gear "would get very far before every tooth in the entire outfit would be stripped [sic]." The emblem seemed to them to be "the most impossible sprocket-wheel that only the brain of an artist could conceive."

The re-engineered emblem they drafted featured six spokes or arms and 24 teeth or cogs, not to mention a more sturdy appearance. (The numbers of teeth and spokes have no symbolic connection or significance to the history of Rotary; rather, they were meant to give the impression of a real, hardworking gear.)

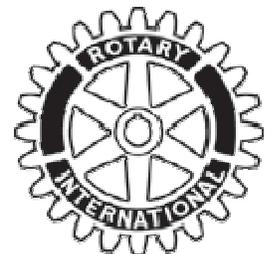
Rotary had found its official emblem. After the publication of the article, headquarters began to take steps to adopt the redesigned wheel at the next convention.

But there would be one last criticism. As soon as the January 1920 issue of *The Rotarian* was published, another Rotarian, Will R. Forker of the Rotary Club of Los Angeles, California, pointed out an additional overlooked defect of the redesigned emblem. "The hub design of the new wheel is that of an idler wheel or gear, [as] there is no provision for the reception of power to or from the shaft. My idea of Rotary is not that it is...an idler organization...but that it is a real living force."

Forker suggested inserting a "key way" into the design's hub to make the new wheel a "real worker." The official specifications of the re-engineered, mechanically correct Rotary wheel were approved by the RI Board at their January 1924 meeting, and the new emblem, whose official colors were royal blue and gold, has remained unchanged — and working — ever since.

## "Rotary is a vast machine"

To Rotarians past and present, the Rotary wheel has evoked the image of a well-oiled, efficient machine, working for the service of mankind. "The gearwheel is truly emblematic of Rotary," wrote William E. Fulton, of the Rotary Club of Waterbury, Connecticut, in the March 1920 issue of *The Rotarian*. "The wheel must be symmetrical — well proportioned throughout and so well balanced that it shall run smooth and true. It is precisely that way with the Rotarian. We do not think of a gearwheel as standing by itself. It has a companion gear...and stands for comradeship."



1924 - present

The Rev. E.K. Means of the Rotary Club of Monroe, Louisiana, used the same imagery in an editorial published later that year. "Rotary is a vast machine and every club a wheel. I firmly believe that all the great machinery of Rotary represents a providential movement," Means wrote. "Our Rotary wheel means that our best gifts of service are rolling always in the right direction."

The emblem's omnipresence in Rotary from the earliest days of the first clubs also has left an indelible mark on Rotarian culture. For example, the name of the official magazine of Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland for many years was *The Rotary Wheel* before it was renamed simply *Rotary*. The comics and jokes section of *The Rotarian* is still called "Stripped Gears."

### **Use of the Rotary wheel**

Today, Rotary's emblem not only distinguishes Rotary in the community, but also helps Rotarians identify each other and find clubs when traveling.

The Rotary emblem, like Rotary's name, is a registered trademark, protected throughout the world by Rotary International. These trademarks, among numerous others owned by RI, are commonly referred to as the "Rotary Marks."\* RI encourages Rotary clubs, Rotary districts, and other Rotary entities to use the Rotary emblem in conjunction with the name of their clubs and districts when they host or organize local projects or events.

"The Rotary emblem is recognizable as the symbol of Rotary around the world," said Jomarie Fredericks, intellectual property manager for legal services at RI. "Following the RI Board's guidelines for use of the Rotary Marks will ensure that Rotarians will be able to use them for generations to come."

## West El Paso Rotary Upcoming Programs

- ✓ **March 31st - Troy Ainsworth, Historic Preservation of Downtown El Paso**
- ✓ **April 7<sup>th</sup> – Coach Keitha Adams – UTEP Women’s Basketball Coach**
- ✓ **April 14<sup>th</sup> – Beto O’Rourke – City Representative**
- ✓ **April 21<sup>st</sup> – Tentative Date for Club Assembly for Golf Tournament Preparations**

## **SOME FAMOUS ROTARIANS**

*Editor's note: When you look around the room on Monday's, you are in good company. Herein, a partial list of famous Rotarians:*

- Three US Presidents: Woodrow Wilson, Warren G. Harding and John Kennedy
- Two Astronauts: Frank Borman and Gordon Cooper
- Two US Supreme Court Justices : Henry Blackmun and Byron R. White
- One famous Arctic explorer: Admiral Richard Byrd
- One famous motion picture director: Cecil B. De Mille
- A famous Baseball Hall of Fame Manager: Connie Mack
- One famous Baseball Hall of Fame player: Tris Speaker
- The inventor of the "wireless" in 1909: Guglielmo Marconi
- One great opera singer: Luciano Pavarotti
- People who don't need much introduction: J.C. Penney, Norman Vincent Peale, Orville Wright
- Numerous current and past presidents and prime ministers around the world.
- Thousands of the not so famous: Like you and me!

## The 4-Way Test

Members of Rotary use a simple test to guide their actions in life. Here it is:

**“The 4-Way Test of the things we think, say or do:**

**1<sup>st</sup> Is it the TRUTH?**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Is it FAIR to all concerned?**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Will it build GOODWILL and BETTER**

**FRIENDSHIPS?**

**4<sup>TH</sup> Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned?”**

ROTARY CLUB OF WEST EL PASO

## Rotary Websites

**Rotary Club of West El Paso**  
[www.rotarywestelpaso.org](http://www.rotarywestelpaso.org)

**Rotary District 5520**  
[www.rotary5520.org](http://www.rotary5520.org)

**Rotary International**  
[www.rotary.org](http://www.rotary.org)

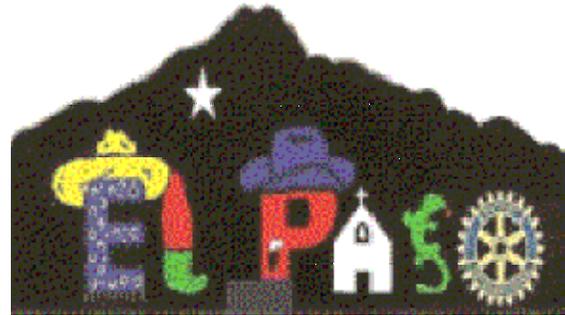
**eClubOne**  
<http://www.rotaryclubone.org>

**El Paso Golf Classic**  
[www.elpasogolfclassic.com](http://www.elpasogolfclassic.com)

## Rotary District 5520 Annual Convention 2008

It's right here in El Paso on April 24-27 at the Wyndham Airport Hotel. For all the details, click on the link below:

<http://rotary5520.org/Convention/2008/ConventionBrochure2008.pdf>



### Officers

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President Elect	Jesse Allen
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Youth Services	Carey Beamesderfer
International Services	Chava Gonzalez

### District Officers

Governor	Jackie Morgan
Assistant Governor	Jimmy Melver

**NEWSLETTER EDITOR** Wes Schotten

*La Mesa is published by the Rotary Club of West El Paso, Inc.*

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