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Rotarians celebrate 25th

By EDO VAN BELKOM

Anyone who knows Markham Rotary Club President Mike Vukobrat never asks him "What have you done for me lately?"

As the club celebrates its 25th anniversary, he points to a long list of accomplishments — and several new challenges.

Locally the club sponsors things like sports teams for boys and girls, scholarships for Markham District High School as well as "adventures" for students in citizenship to Ottawa and the Chemical Valley in Sarnia.

Community projects have included donations to Markham's Family Life Center, the Unionville Heritage Center, Participation House and York Region's Yellow Brick House for battered wives in Newmarket.

Markham Rotary has also made a longstanding commitment to the Markham Stouffville Hospital, donating \$10,000 a year to the fund the last three years with two more years of support to go.

"We try to do our work on a rounded basis, including young and old," President Vukobrat said.

Outside the Markham area the Rotarians are equally as active.

Before Christmas the Markham club helped collect 2,500 toys for "Operation Santa Claus," a project spearheaded by the Vaughan Rotary Club to distribute toys to the children in Sao Paulo, Brazil. They are also involved with a home for handicapped orphans in Barbados.

With so many ongoing projects, one might wonder how President Vukobrat can keep of them all.

"Every President has a goal of things he'd like to accomplish. Some are ongoing, some are new. We tend to forget yearly things as new things come front and centre. That can sometimes become a problem."

The list continues to include Markham Little Theater, Kidney foundation, Canadian Opera Company visits to Markham primary and secondary school students.

In the upcoming year one of Markham Rotary Club's most ambitious projects will be Polio Plus, an international program contributed to by all Rotary clubs to inoculate third world children against the disease.

There are Rotary clubs in every free country in the world and over a million Rotarians globally.

Rotary is like 'family' to him

By EDO VAN BELKOM

Fred Cook considers the Markham Rotary Club to be his second family.

The 74-year-old semi-retired real estate broker is the only remaining character member of the club. He was on hand when the club was formed in 1962 and says he's enjoyed every minute of his 25-year membership.

"We meet every Monday all year long

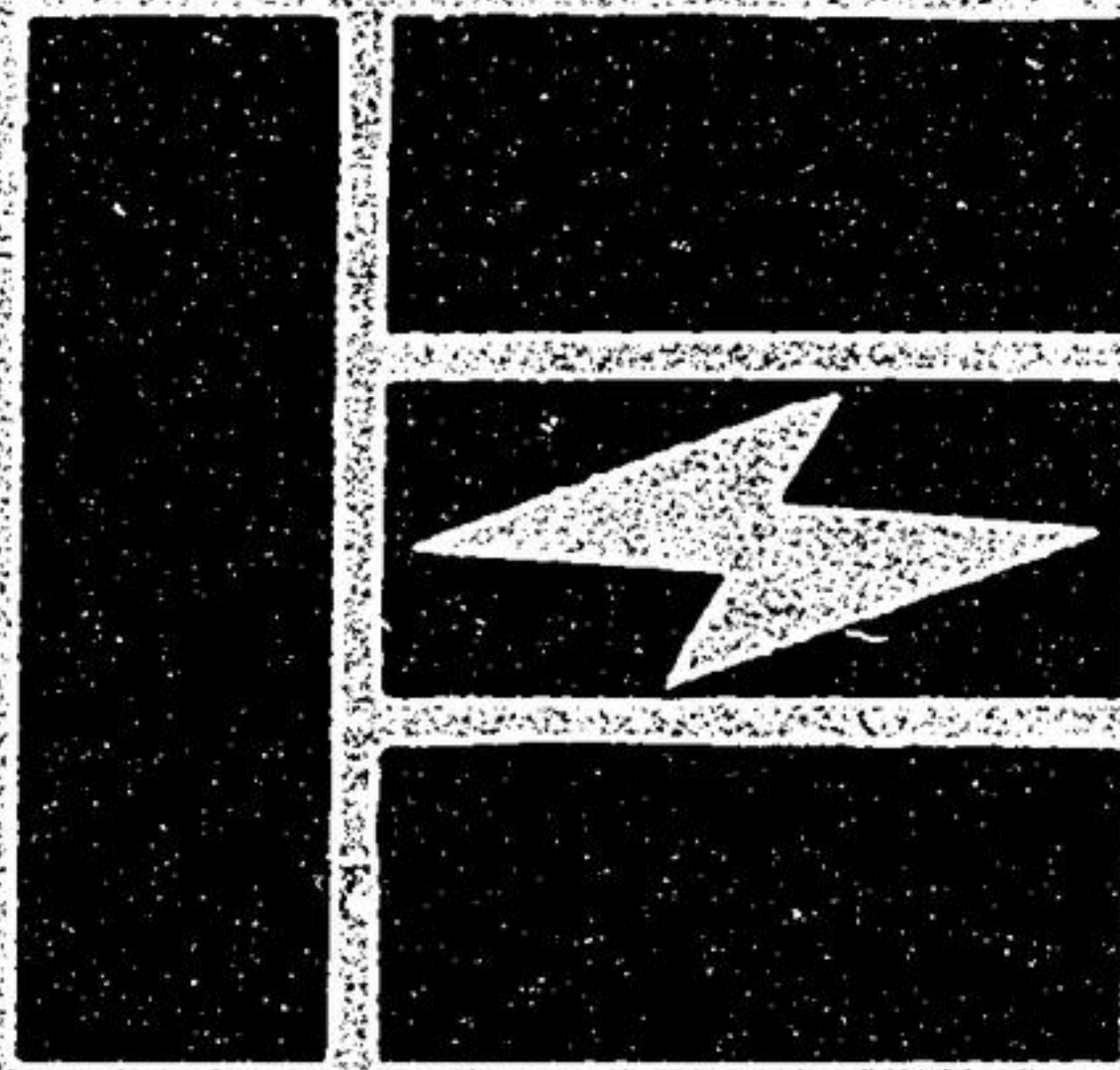
and I always look forward to it. If I miss a meeting, it's like not eating at home with the family," he said.

"Where else can you meet 20 or 40 people with all the same ambitions as yourself. Everyone whose there must have a desire to serve the community."

Many Markham Rotarians agree that bonds of fellowship and camaraderie between members has made the club and

its work a labour of love. But they are also quick to point out that although friendship is important to the club's operation it is not the reason they chose to join.

The Rotarian motto of "Service Above Self" ensures that the efforts of all Rotary clubs around the world place community service ahead of any individual pursuits of its members.



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