



10th Anniversary of Rotary Verlags GmbH

ROTARY GOES INTO PUBLISHING

In December 1998 the District Governors of Rotary in Germany and Austria had hardly any time to enjoy the spirit of Christmas. Rotary required their undivided attention as a new legal structure for the magazine - then called DER ROTARIER - needed to be adopted. On 17 December 1998 the Foundation DER ROTARIER was established, followed the next day by the signing of a partnership agreement with the ROTARY Verlags GmbH, a limited company. The magazine is now no longer part of the Christians Verlag publishing house in Hamburg.

A detailed description of the founding of the publishing house can be found in an interview with Past-Governor Rudolf Hilker on page 16. In the words of a report in the January edition 1999, the aim was to publish the magazine within the framework of a "future-proof and independent legal structure as part of the Rotary organisation".

"Independent" being the operative word: this innovation put an end to an almost 50 year period of magazine editing by individual Rotarians.

One man in particular should be

mentioned in this context: for a span of 564 editions Kurt Christians (1909-1998) with his editors-in-chief Horst Meinecke (until 1959), Christian Jenssen (until 1987), Helmut Pless (until 1996) and Gerald Deckart (until 2000) was the respected publisher of a magazine which was highly esteemed in the circles of Rotary International. He himself participated in devising a new basis for his life's work.

Ownership of the magazine passed to the Foundation DER ROTARIER with all the districts contributing equally to its endowment fund. Elements of the package which became part of the Verlags GmbH was the membership German directory and other Rotarian papers, as well as the responsibility for the internet and data base. (Information on the foundation and the publisher, on structures, committees and endowments can be found on page 8 of the Membership Directory 2008/09).

Today it may seem a matter of course that a members' magazine actually belongs to the members, but in 1950 this was far from anyone's thoughts.

"Our magazine should reflect the economic and intellectual trends of the time in that humanistic, informed and intelligible fashion which lies at the heart of Rotary."

On 1 October 1951 a **directory of Rotary Clubs** was first published in District 74. This directory was put together "for travelling purposes" by the president of the RC Hanover, Dr Günther Beindorff. As of 1952, the directory was published by Kurt Christians, RC Hamburg.



The 66th edition of the **Club and Membership Directory** of June 2008.



“24 pages, one photo, 500 copies – these figures characterised the zero issue at the end of 1950, followed in January by issue number one, already containing 28 pages”

In 1949 the acceptance by Rotary International of the first clubs in Frankfurt/Main, Hamburg, Hanover and Stuttgart was rapidly followed by the foundation of 23 further clubs. Robert Hausmann (Stuttgart) was elected the first Governor of District 74 by their representatives in the spring of 1950 and agreed to re-establish a members' magazine. Seasoned "pre-war" Rotarians were in no doubt as to how it should look: like the first "Rotarier" founded in Munich in 1929 and closed down in 1937 even before the self-dissolution of the German clubs. However, publishing was relocated from Munich to Hamburg where two young Rotarians had been won over for the task. Horst Meinecke - originally forester and entrepreneur - doubled as publisher and editor, whereas Kurt Christians, owner of the Hans Christians printing and publishing house looked after the economic side of things.

24 pages, one photo, 500 copies – these figures represent the zero issue at the end of 1950, followed in January by issue number one, already containing 28 pages. Understandably, no one thought to create a publishing house for such a tiny magazine. It was not until 1959 that the company could afford to hire one full-time editorial staff member. However, by then things were picking up speed. The magazine had gained in size, features and circulation, partly because of the Austrian fellow Rotarians who had rejoined us in 1960. By 1957 circulation had increased to

5000 copies; in 1967 the figure reached 10,000 rising to 15,000 in the autumn of 1971. The 500th edition in 1992 numbered 32,000. Today 55,000 copies are printed every month.

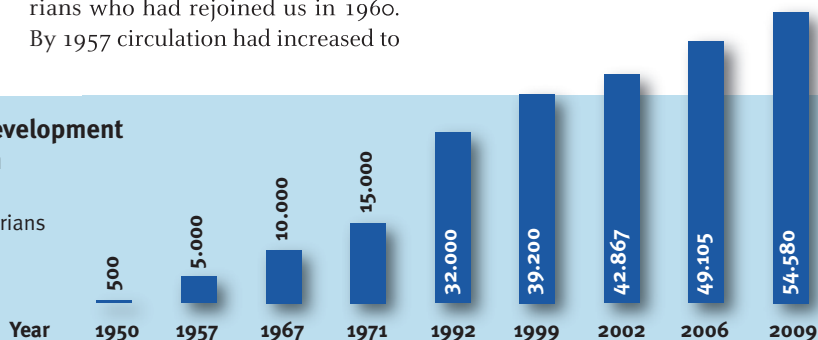
The old gentlemen had recommended the pre-war magazine as a model because of the division between Rotarian reporting and articles of general interest. This distinction was particularly dear to the first editor Karl Wolfskehl. A mere newsletter for Rotary was simply not good enough. "Our magazine", he wrote in 1930, "should reflect the economic and intellectual trends of the time in that humanistic, informed and intelligible fashion which lies at the heart of Rotary."

Even though topics naturally change, the underlying vision has remained fresh for 80 years. Each edition of the Rotary Magazin concurs with this guiding principle and is greatly appreciated because it suitably voices Rotary's task and emphasizes its claim as a social force. In this, Rotary Magazin stands for a tried and tested tradition which remains unchanged whatever the legal structure.

Matthias Schütt

Subscription development Rotary Magazin

The current edition reaches 6,500 Rotarians in Austria



ON THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE ROTARY MAGAZIN

A PREMIUM MAGAZINE FOR PREMIUM READERS

Rotary Magazin is the official regional magazine linking Austrian and German Rotarians with the world of Rotary International. In a certification process Rotary International defines the criteria required for a magazine to be permitted to use the name Rotary.

Nevertheless, a membership magazine focuses not only on committees and authors but above all on its readers. Publisher and editors feel primarily obliged to you, the reader, and do their utmost to create a magazine you will enjoy. The community of Rotarians represents a premium readership which is entitled to expect a premium product.

Of course Rotary Magazine cannot function like the typical magazine for the general public. But as a medium we can provide background, address important developments and encourage discussion in the clubs. This not only concerns the choice of topics but also the skill and reputation of the authors. Occasionally some readers object to title stories featuring non-Rotarian authors. They wonder whether this is com-

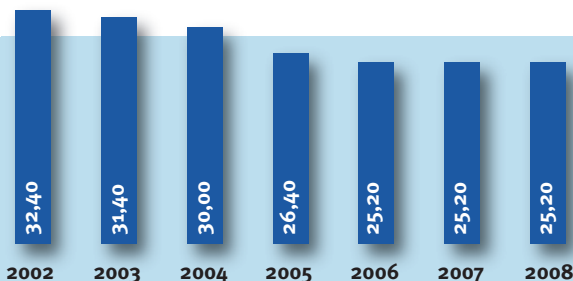
patible with a Rotarian membership magazine. I think it is. Title stories are meant to arouse readers' curiosity. Only people who actually pick up the magazine will come into contact with Rotarian topics. The editorial staff is very discriminating in selecting topics and their treatment in line with the Rotarian canon of values. After all, our membership magazine serves as a professional representation of our community, its aims and values. We want to promote Rotary in the best sense of the word.

Furthermore our editorial efforts are not only spent on title stories but particularly on "Rotary aktuell" and the local news. These sections are treated with the same amount of professionalism, with individual items grouped under a more general topic. These sections are particularly suited to gain new readers and inform them about the work of the clubs, Rotarian officials and committees.

*Johann Michael Möller,
R.C. Berlin-Brandenburger Tor
Publisher of Rotary Magazin*

"Our membership magazine serves as a professional representation of our community, its aims and values.

We want to promote Rotary in the best sense of the word."



Development of subscription fees in Euro.

At the same time the magazine expanded from 88 pages in 2001 to currently 112 pages.

INTERVIEW WITH PAST GOVERNOR RUDOLF HILKER

STIMULUS FOR THE CLUBS

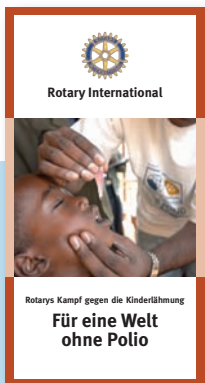
»As the Governor's Council is not a legal entity, we needed a Rotarian legal personality of our own.«

Dr Hilker, what gave the impulse to found a Rotary publishing house at the end of the 1990s?

The re-establishment of Rotary in Germany after the war once more made it necessary to create a regional Rotarian magazine. Rotarian Kurt Christians and his publishing company were entrusted with the job. Our Rotarian friend took to the task with great commitment and proceeded to produce a magazine with detailed reports on Rotarian activities. However, in the course of time the question arose whether there was enough participation from the Rotarian side in this loosely held co-operation. The question gained importance because R.I. posed specific requirements to have our magazine acknowledged as an official regional magazine. Furthermore, the Governor's Council was eager to have greater transparency in the relationships with the publisher. As the Governor's Council is not a legal entity, we needed a Rotarian legal personality of our own. That's why we founded the publishing house Rotary Verlags GmbH – and at this point we need to mention our fellow Rotarians Professor Dieter Feddersen and Hans Müller Rech, a past director R.I., both of whom were decisively involved.

How did that come about?

Prof. Feddersen provided a GmbH, a German limited company, but naturally that still had to be stocked with capital. In this respect I am most grateful to the Rotarian friends in Lübeck and the surrounding area for providing substantial financial kick-off. In turn, this company naturally required shareholders who were personally liable, a function assumed by Past Governor Beimesche and myself. Even so, the company was of course not supposed to belong to us but to Rotary. So we had to find an owner for the company, which is why we created a foundation. It was resolved that all German and Austrian Rotarians were to provide a one-off payment of 3 deutschmarks towards its financial endowment. With 40,000 members back then, this amounted to 120,000 marks. Past-Gov. Beimesche and I subsequently transferred the shares in the company being held in trusteeship to the foundation. Thus the publishing house was now in Rotary's hands, because the foundation's charter calls for the German and Austrian Governor's Councils to propose past governors for appointment to the foundation's Executive Board.



“For a World Without Polio” uses key words to clarify Rotary's involvement against polio



The Rotary International flyer with **“key words”** provides essential information about Rotary, the **Rotaract Club Flyer** informs readers about the youth organisation



How did the publishing firm initiate its business?

The foundation subsequently elected the Administrative Board, which was chaired by the limited company at the time. Among other factors, an agreement had to be reached with Christians' printing company as to how to organise the work. A crucial decision was that the staff were now employees of Rotary's own company. Rotarian Fröhner kindly made himself available in the capacity of managing director. We have him to thank for setting up the internal structure of the publishing house. The final completion of the whole thing, including the move to the present premises, took place during the period held by my successor, Past Gov. Ludger Staby. By the way, it was always important to us that the Austrian Rotarians on the Administrative Board and in the foundation shared responsibility.

One of your pioneering decisions was gaining a respected Rotarian journalist as publisher.

Once the founding phase was over, it all came down to further improving the quality of the magazine's content. We were able to convince Rot. Johann-Michael Möller to assume responsibility for the intellectual guideline. With Viktor Hermann we were also able to win over an excellent specialist for the editorial management in Austria.



A re-orientation with regard to content followed these staff decisions. Why was that necessary?

Past-Gov. Rudolf Hilker at his flat in Berlin

We asked ourselves time and again, what we could, might and should publish in our magazine. Naturally our main focus should be on Rotary: internationally, nationally and regionally. Yet we didn't want to be a simple members' newsletter. We wanted to use interesting topics to provide stimulus for discussion in the clubs as well. By the way, it should be pointed out that, despite numerous price increases for printing and paper, Rotary Magazine is thicker than it was 10 years ago while the subscription price has been lowered several times.

The entire ground work was only successful because Rotarians who were newspaper men contributed to this joint effort to the fullest. My personal thanks go especially to Peter Block (R.C. Augsburg-Römerstadt) and Werner Schrotta (R.C. Linz).



The 30th edition of the **Members' Directory** of the German-speaking Rotaract Club and the German Interact Clubs



The **"rotaract News"** from the German Rotaract Club is published every 2 months. A special edition in English for Rotaract friends abroad informs readers about Rotary's youth



THE PUBLISHING HOUSE AND ITS STRUCTURES

Non-profit foundation DER ROTARIER

Andreas
Waggershauser,
chairman of the
Foundation
Council



Eckard Gehring,
member of the
foundation's
Board of
Directors



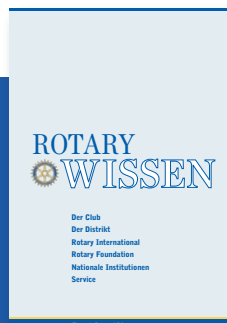
Klaus-Peter
Schulz, member
of the foundati-
on's Board of
Directors



Foundation Council and Board of Directors

German and Austrian Rotarians founded DER ROTARIER, a non-profit foundation, in 1998 in order to create an institutional body owned by Rotary itself for the Rotary Verlag publishing house. This foundation became the shareholder of Rotary Verlags GmbH, a limited company. Executive management is in charge of the publishing house's operational business. Management, in turn, is stewarded by an Administrative Board staffed by Rotarians. The commercial earnings of the publishing house which publishes Rotary Magazin and the German members' directory, are transferred to the foundation. The foundation's committees, the Foundation Council and its Board of Directors are staffed by experienced Rotarians from Germany and Austria. The German and Austrian Governor's Councils propose PDGs for appointment to the Foundation Council. The Foundation Council monitors the foundation's activity and is responsible for staffing the foundation's Board of Directors. The Board of Directors ensures that financial resources are utilised according to the constitutional charter. This obligates the foundation to carry out projects in order "to support the international conviction to promote tolerance in all areas of culture and the concept of understanding amongst peoples." The foundation has awarded scholarships to students in central and eastern Europe. The members of the **Foundation Council** are Past Gov. Heinrich Köhler, Gov. Hans-Joachim Kay and Past Gov. Jürgen Auckenthaler. The members of the **Board of Directors** are Past Gov. Eckard Gehring and Past Gov. Klaus-Peter Schulz.

Published for the first time in January 1989 as the "**Rotary ABC**" and under the title "**Rotary Wissen**" ('Rotary Knowledge') since the 11th revised edition, the booklet conveys the basic principles regarding Rotary



There are 8,900 Interact Clubs and nearly 200,000 members worldwide. The new **Leitfaden Interact** ('Interact Guide') provides information round about Rotary's youngest friends

Rotary Verlags GmbH

Administrative Board

Delegates from the foundation appoint the members of the Administrative Board at the shareholders' meeting. These are currently Past Gov. Wolfgang Heinrich (chairman), Past Gov. Peter Beckmann and Past Gov. Anton Hilscher. The Administrative Board advises and monitors executive management. It appoints the Editorial Board of *Rotary Magazin*.



Wolfgang Heinrich, chairman of the Administrative Board



Peter Beckmann



Anton Hilscher

Publishing House

The responsibilities of the publishing house include the production of *Rotary Magazin* and other Rotarian publications, for example the members' directory, as well as additional services for Rotary.



Jürgen Hopf, managing director



Ines Vasile, secretarial office, distribution



Maike Hellmann, subscription management, directories

Editorial Board of Rotary Magazin

The Editorial Board includes the 3 members of the Administrative Board, and currently Past-Gov. Charlotte Mori, Past-Gov. Hans-Ulrich Stelter and Rot. J.-M. Möller, the Rotarian responsible for journalistic guidelines.



Johann Michael Möller

Magazine

Rotary Magazin (published from 1929-1937 and from 1951-2002 under the name *DER ROTARIER*) is the official magazine certified by Rotary International for members of the German and Austrian Rotary Clubs.



René Nehring, head of the editorial office



Insa Feye, editor



Imke Edzard, editorial office



‘Bröckedde Book’
combines a selection of the favourite columns titled ‘News from R.C. Bröckedde’ from the *Rotary Magazin*



“Pfortensteg”,
a novel about a service club during the Nazi era, by Wolfgang Soergel, 416 pages, EUR 17.80



“Den Menschen Verpflichtet – 75 Jahre Rotary in Deutschland”
(75 Years of Rotary in Germany), a book by Manfred Wedemeyer, provides information about Rotary from 1927-2002