

The Abingdon Kiwanian

Tue, Feb 2, 2010 • Vol 2, No 17

We meet this noon at Greenway Haven Party House

A weekly publication of news, information and images from the Kiwanis Club of Abingdon, Virginia

We Had 'Mo Sno'

But Tuesday's forecast is for Sunny & 45



Faithful Friends



Whitetop Wonderland

This Week's Program

The Newspaper and the Methane Gas Fund Scandal



Todd Foster

J. Todd Foster is **Managing Editor** of the **Bristol Herald Courier** and the man behind the recent news series that revealed how millions of dollars of payments for coalbed methane gas, taken from the property of area land-owners, is tied up in an unaudited state account

that is beyond the reach of most of those owners.

This series ran for more than a week on the Herald Courier's front pages. And its aftershock is being felt by our General Assembly delegation, who made passage of remedial legislation a top priority this year.

How does a newspaper decide to commit its scarce resources to the months of tedious (and costly) investigation required by projects of this sort?

What is the role of the Publisher, who runs the paper on behalf of its owner; the Managing Editor, who heads the news department; and the reporters who dig out information and then write the articles?

Foster will discuss these issues and more in his talk to us, plus his background in newspaper reporting and editing, and his philosophy of local journalism.

Investigative series of this sort can win Pulitzer Prizes for the newspapers involved. We just might be hearing about a Pulitzer in the making?

Abingdon Club Develops New Leaders

Most Kiwanis clubs will recycle presidents. Our first president, E. Ferrell Legard, served for two years. But none of the 67 presidents who followed him has served more than one term.

Our Presidents Since 2000

2000-2001	Hugh Ferguson
2001-2002	Burt Bassham
2002-2003	Tom Phillips
2003-2004	Robbie Blevins
2004-2005	David Neal
2005-2006	Jean Neal
2006-2007	Bob Craig
2007-2008	Ann Musgrove-Rife
2008-2009	Gary Crane

Happy 95th Birthday, Kiwanis

Improbable as it may seem, Southwest Virginia was one of the early places Kiwanis spread after its Detroit founding

This is a little late, because the 95th anniversary of chartering of Detroit Kiwanis Club #1 was on January 21. But we still will use the opportunity to review with you the beginnings of Kiwanis.

You may be surprised that no grand desire to serve mankind existed at the birthing. Rather, Allen S. Brown enlisted a Detroit friend to form a new fraternal club of businessmen with the motto, "We Trade."

Their idea was for the members to do business with each other.

First called the "Benevolent Order of Brothers," the name soon

was soon changed to "Nunc-Keewanis" (from the Otchipew Indian language). The members thought their new name meant "to express one's self." Later, it was shortened to "Kiwanis" and further research into Otchipew disclosed that their name likely meant: "We have a good time - we make noise!"

From that inauspicious start has grown an international organization of 8,000 clubs with 240,000 members in 90-plus nations – all committed to changing the world, one child and one community at a time.

Once those early members decided their purpose should be to help others, not promote their businesses, Kiwanis quickly spread to other mid-western

and northeastern cities – then to what is now the Capital District.

Our first club was in Washington, D.C., chartered in 1917, just two years after the Detroit club was organized. The next two years saw clubs formed in what is now the Capital District in Baltimore, Norfolk, Richmond, Roanoke and Wilmington. Kiwanis, thus, had a foothold in Southwest Virginia within four years of its founding.

The year 1920, saw the Kiwanis Club of Bristol chartered. While it chose to be in another District, Bristol in 1921 sponsored the first Capital Dis-

trict club in Virginia's far southwest at Norton. In 1923, the Norton club sponsored the new Big Stone Gap Kiwanis Club and co-sponsored the Coeburn club. So, eight years after its founding, Kiwanis not only was in Roanoke and Bristol, but had been firmly planted in our coalfield region.

Our Abingdon Kiwanis Club was formed much later. A group of local leaders – for reasons they chose not to share – withdrew from the Abingdon Civitan Club in 1942, at the height of World War II, and founded this Kiwanis Club. The Bristol Kiwanis Club also was our sponsor and they were present for our 65th anniversary dinner event in 2007.

-- Jack White, Editor

