

MAN, GYRO ... AND THE



MYSTICAL "MACHINE"

## HOW GYRO WAS SET INTO MOTION

Since this group was postulated on the premise that friendship was too valuable an asset not to maintain, Jimmie likened the Gyroscope to friendship, because "once set in motion, regardless of outside influences, it would maintain its course regardless – not unlike the benefits of friendship." This concept then evolved into the familiar three defined words which forever cemented the relationship between friendship and the Gyroscope:

**Power** – *symbolizes the power of our friendships in our relationships;*

**Poise** – *demonstrates the steadiness of friendships in times of trial; and*

**Purpose** – *keeps the balance wheel of friendship in men's lives.*

However, Jimmie was not alone in his fascination. During World War I, it seems many men were intrigued by the Gyroscope. One such man was an executive with the Davenport YMCA who had three years of service during the war in Siberia and Russia where he demonstrated and lectured about the Gyroscope. He was so impressed by the qualities of the device, when he formed a sort of Junior Rotary with 25 members in 1920, he called his group Gyro as well. His idea was to get as many "Y" members as possible, but not call it a YMCA affiliate because most veterans did not hold the YMCA in high esteem following the war. They elected officers, had pins made, designed a logo and had it copyrighted. They wrote a constitution and by-laws that were remarkably similar to those of the clubs in the International Association. It wasn't until the following year, however, when a member of the Milwaukee Gyro Club representing the International Association of Gyro Clubs contacted the Davenport organization, that the Davenport club was even aware of another club named Gyro. Needless to say, in short order they joined the larger association.

Research indicates that there were other like-minded men. Limited online references attest to "Gyro" clubs in diverse locations such as Green Bay, WI and Bowmanville, ON. PIP Bill Boyd ('65-'66) related that he was posted to Colorado for the

### Nineteenth Century

Nearly 100 years before the Gyro organization erupted from the fertile imaginations of the three founders, a German scientist first wrote about his theory of the "Machine" – a creation that in time became known as the Gyroscope. Others experimented endlessly for uses and making improvements until a Frenchman, Leon Foucault in 1852 used the machine to measure the earth's revolution. He gave the device its modern name. Shortly thereafter, the advent of electric motors made it possible for the gyroscope to overcome friction and spin indefinitely, thus lending itself to the invention of early gyrocompasses. Nations soon realized the military significance of this device in an age when naval prowess symbolized military strength. Military and strength are synonymous with men.

### Twentieth Century

Later, with the beginning of the twentieth century, another notable creation was the Service Club. Usually born as a businessmen's club formed for the purpose of enabling members to develop personal friendships amongst business associates. An arrangement wherein regularly held meetings, with meals, fun and fellowship, became a pleasant and inspiring occasion for all members. Male bonding thus became a strong element of leisure time.

The first such group was Rotary, in 1905 Chicago, which rapidly became international in 1910. In the next ten years, many other associations followed, including Kiwanis, Lions, Optimist and **Gyro**. The newly formed Cleveland Gyro organization in 1912 was created with the mission to be a Fraternity of Friendship, but also embraced the Service Club concept wherein the members were unabashedly into networking. Because of this, their membership increased rapidly and they soon became international when Toronto joined the association in 1919.

The last man to join the Cleveland group as a charter member was effervescent Jimmie Hubbell. His demeanor and contacts provided many interesting speakers which quickly contributed to increasing the membership. Jimmie's fascination with the Gyroscope and his persuasive arguments overcame prospective names such as "Peerless Perspirers" and "Ready Radiators" and provided this new organization with its name – **Gyro**.

1965 convention to represent International. While there, he was informed that the hosting Denver Gyro Club existed soon after WW I, and like Davenport, before they had any knowledge of Gyro International. Also in 1920, the Association of Gyro Clubs sent a representative to Denver who found a large and lively group of distinguished professional men. He convinced them to join in 1921 and they remained members until 1991.

Other clubs named Gyro are now mere historical trivia. The Gyro Club of Cleveland, formed in 1912, and the International Association soon after in 1917, along with a continuous GyroScope magazine under copyright laws, can lay claim to being the true Gyro organization.

None-the-less the reader might wonder if the Gyroscope embodied some sort of mystical quality that induced men to be so intrigued and caused them to create a number of similar organizations, in diverse locations without knowledge of one another? There is no information available as to whether some of the other 50 clubs formed in the 1920s destined to join Gyro International had been to some degree meeting in a similar fashion as the men in Davenport and Denver, but it seems likely.

## The GyroScope

The most visible symbol of Gyro, that was developed as soon as the Cleveland club was established, is the GyroScope magazine. Initially called the GyroScoop, it was edited by both Gus Handerson and Jimmie Hubbell under the guidance of Albert Kern who was the International Secretary during the war years. These fellows recognized the need to keep the fast growing membership constantly advised as to events, and with a nod to networking, allowed space for each member to advertise his products or abilities. The earliest publication consisted of one page folded in half with ads on the back. As the membership increased, so did the magazine. Following the first International convention in January 1917, the name became the GyroScope and carried the membership lists and other pertinent data for all the clubs then committed to the Association of Gyro Clubs. The magazine by 1918 had grown to 24 pages overall, was produced monthly, and carried as much information about the “Gyro boys” overseas as became available. It also often contained commentary or illustrations of political content. Since these were young men driven to establish a business or profession, they had little love of bigger government or Bolshevism. For a dozen or so years thereafter, it continued to also promote the networking aspect until the negative influence of the Great Depression caused some loss of membership and the failure of several clubs. This loss proved contentious to some who blamed the International

administration for the losses, but following a convention debate, International Secretary Ed Kagy was able to report that, “fortunately we have returned to our original roots, that of friendship.” Thus networking became a non-issue and Gyro returned to its original precepts as so eloquently put forth by Jimmie Hubbell in 1912.

The GyroScope had revolving editors in the beginning – one-year stints by W.F. Johnson, Cleveland; Ed Kuhn, Buffalo; Willis Osborn, Chicago; Joe Bannigan, Toronto; and a 2-year stint by Bruce Brown, Cincinnati. Jimmie Hubbell followed as editor for the next 8 years, followed by Noble Jones of Minneapolis for 6 years and Frank Dowsett, Toronto, 1-year. Bill Coulter of St. Paul started an 18 year effort until 1975 when PIP Warren Schram held the position for 5 years. At that time, John Harding became the nominal Editor.

Fortunately Gyro had a member with a love of Gyro, the attributes of being a newspaperman, and the owner of a printing business. He was George France of Canton. George became Associate Editor. The GyroScope was in competent hands for many years, as George - followed by his son Jim - toiled mightily to edit and print what became a quarterly edition until 2010 when Jim resigned as the Associate Editor.

As Gyro moves into the digital age, the duties of Editor and production are now the responsibility of the current International Secretary-Treasurer.

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## Twenty-First Century

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For the first 100 years the GyroScope magazine has served the fraternity well – bringing ideas, wisdom, membership pictures and reports on conventions, as well as occasional humor. It remains an important tool of the organization and as a strong symbol of the relationship between friendship, the device, and its origins.

As we start the next century of Gyro, the magazine is now produced in digital version four times each year and thus available on the internet, with two of those issues being printed and mailed to members so requesting. Members who prefer can view or print it digitally in color, or receive a black and white edition.

As Gyro moves ahead, the future would indicate that eventually the magazine will be all digital only - succumbing to an ever accelerating electronic world. Today it is possible to view that digital issue visually not only on your computer, but also via television, your coffee table, the door of your microwave oven, or your cell phone. Shortly some will utilize their eyeglasses or contact lens and perhaps eventually - well, one can only imagine. If we can adapt Gyro to meet this changing world, our marvelous fraternity will survive through this new century. And why not? That “machine” that has become so vital to our world - one even resides in your cell phone - must be considered the emotional stimulant to our organization. Mystical or not!

Imagine what Johann Bohnenberger, that German theorist in 1817 would think of that! His “Machine” has not only evolved into a myriad of important and useful devices ... it has stirred the hearts of men. *(To view Gyro symbols and emblems – please see page 66)*

“AND THAT IS HOW GYRO WAS SET INTO MOTION!”