

# Synopsis of Fellowship Forum Historical Records and Recollections

Although much of the written history of the Fellowship Forum has been discarded over the years, enough remains to sketch a reasonably accurate history of the organization's development and evolution.

Copies of most of the documents are accessible through links on the Fellowship Forum History web page, part of the Fellowship Forum website. Paper copies may also be available, though this depends on the willingness of generous members to store cartons indefinitely.

For anyone interested in understanding the Forum's history, the original documents should be read. The experience will prove rewarding. This synopsis is meant just to whet an appetite for that excursion, and as a guide to what will be found.

## "The Fellowship Forum - its first twenty years" - Summary

To honor the Forum's 20th anniversary, a group of members wrote a history narrative. This makes for very rich reading. A brief summary follows.

### Part 1. The idea

Two members of the Commonwealth Club, Paul Edwin Stinchfield and John Graeff Kennedy, wanted something similar in Palo Alto - closer to home. Informal weekly lunch meetings evolved into forming a club. In December, 1950 a name, general principles and a rough organizational plan were adopted.

Over the next year the Fellowship Forum grew to 16 members, then to 30 by March, 1952. Members represented a wide variety of occupations, and tended to be well educated and successful. The meetings became more structured, with a speaker presentation followed by questions. The speaker was usually a member.

### Part 2. The early years

In 1951, officers were defined and elected. Program and business committees and a governing board were defined. Then a membership committee was created. Programs moved more to inviting outside speakers. The Forum grew rapidly, and in 1952 decided to impose a limit of 35 members. In 1953 a set of Rules and Regulations was adopted. These were revised in 1955, and the member limit was raised to 40.

By the age of 4 years, the club was dynamic and reasonably well organized. A somewhat turbulent adolescence had been survived.

### Part 3. Maturity

As the club grew and matured, and membership turnover brought in fresh ideas, the governing structure of the Forum expanded and evolved. The Rules/By-Laws were revised fairly frequently - there were 6 major and some minor revisions by 1970.

The programs ranged over a wide variety of topics - 800 total programs in 29 categories by 1970.

As the group grew, finding suitable lunch venues became a problem. After 7 years at the Marie Antoinette Inn, it tried Dinah's, Pioneer Inn, New Cardinal Hotel, and the Marie Antoinette again before settling on the Elks Club for 4 years, the President Hotel for 1, the YWCA for 5 and finally Rickey's Hyatt House.

At the end of 20 years, all of the Forum's records were intact. The authors of this history foresaw the difficulty of continuing this diligence, and their concern has proven to be valid.

### Appendix. History of Rules and Regulations

The authors summarized the changing governing rules as they were amended.

## Rules and By-Laws

The Fellowship Forum By-Laws have evolved a lot since 1950. Much of the change took place during the first 20 years, and is well described in the 20th anniversary history. At least five amendments occurred since - 1974 and 1983, of which published copies exist, and 1979, 1981 and 1982. The following summarizes the contents of these documents except the last three noted, which have been lost.

### Organization name

The name "*The Fellowship Forum*" was adopted by the founding group at an organizational meeting on December 27, 1950.

### Type of members

The Forum was established for members, "**all of whom shall be of the male sex** and shall have attained the age of maturity - until such time as the club may determine otherwise." The By-Laws published in 1974 state: "**The Fellowship Forum is an association of men** ...". There is no record of any By-Laws changes regarding this restriction of male membership to change it - the 1983 By-Laws are silent on gender.

### Meeting rules

Activities were to be directed "to the promotion of fellowship, to helping members keep abreast of the times, and to the development of a broader understanding of the needs and progress of our fellow men." "No partisan politics or denominational religion" has been a rule regarding Fellowship Forum meetings from the very beginning.

### Maximum number of active members

The maximum number of active members was set at 35 in 1951. It was increased to 40 in 1955, 45 in 1957 and 50 in 1963. The current By-Laws, last updated in 1983, specify a limit of 55. In November, 2004 a proposal to increase the upper limit to 60 was debated, voted upon and defeated.

### Classes of members

During the first two decades, Forum members tried several approaches to accommodating members who could not attend meetings regularly. In 1952, missing 3 meetings without explanations was sufficient cause for loss of membership. In 1953, they created Associate membership, but this was dropped in 1955. In 1958, Life member status was defined, and this continued until 1965, when the designation was changed to Inactive, where it remains. The 1974 By-Laws stated that an Inactive Member could only return to Active status when a vacancy existed. The 1983 By-Laws allow an Inactive Member to return to Active status at any time, even if this temporarily increases the total membership above the limit.

### Votes to reject nominee

Since 1953, a vote of the general membership was required to approve a new member. The degree of consensus changed, such that a simple majority could approve in 1952. Two negative votes would deny acceptance beginning in 1953. The 1957 Rules required unanimous approval, which continued until 1968. At that time, 3 negative votes were required to deny approval. Sometime later, after the 1974 By-Laws publication, this was changed to the current 6 votes to deny.

### Name of rules

For most of the first 20 years of the Forum, the governing rules were called "Rules and Regulations", although the term "By-Laws" did appear in the 1955 publication. In 1983 the name was changed to "By-Laws", where it remains.

## Amendment of rules

Since 1955, amending the Rules/By-laws always has required agreement of 3/4 of the Active members present at a meeting to vote. Prior to that it required 3/4 of the total Active membership.

## Complete record

The complete record of all of this can be found in the file named: *Rules & By-Laws 1950-1983*, accessible from the Fellowship Forum History web page. Should the occasion arise where amending the By-Laws is considered, this would be worthwhile reading for the amendment committee, to see what has been tried and changed before.

## Expenses

Fellowship Forum expenses are noted in many documents - histories, By-Laws and treasurer records. The expense records are interesting because of the insight they offer into club activities.

This widely scattered data is summarized below.

### Dues and lunch cost.

Annual Forum dues are first noted in 1955, at \$6.00. By 1969 they were \$12.00, with a rule that reduced them by 1/2 for members joining after mid-year. In 1979 the dues were \$18.00, and rose to \$30.00 in 1984, \$40.00 in 1988 and \$45.00 in 1989.

The charges for lunches during those years were \$1.50 in 1950, \$1.75 in 1960, \$2.00 in 1963, \$3.00 in 1969, \$7.25 in 1981, \$8.00 in 1983 and \$13.00 in 1989. They are now \$20.00.

### Lunches

During its first few years, the Fellowship Forum met for lunch at the Marie Antoinette Inn in Menlo Park. A member fondly remembered that: "The palatial old home that became Marie Antoinette Hotel had spacious grounds and pleasant gardens where greetings and short visits or little strolls before lunch time were enjoyable and where its beautiful old library seemed a natural home for the conversations, speeches and discussions of our meetings." However, by 1958 it no longer provided enough space, and the Forum sought a new lunch venue. Dinah's, Pioneer Inn and the New Cardinal Hotel were all sampled before settling on the Elks Lodge in Palo Alto. This proved satisfactory until 1963. Then the Forum moved for a year to the President Hotel in Palo Alto. In 1964 they moved to the YWCA of Palo Alto, where they remained for five years. The Y then needed the space for its own activities. After a brief stay at Rick's Swiss Chalet, the Forum moved to Rickey's Hyatt House. The Forum met for many years at Rickey's, and the records don't reveal why and when they moved, in or before 1987, to Chez Louis. In the early 1990's they moved to the Sheraton Hotel in Palo Alto, where they remain.

### Ladies' days

Early in its life, the Forum initiated the practice of inviting wives and guests for parties in the summer and near Christmas. These were social get-togethers - sometimes for dinner, sometimes lunch. They were informal, and the programs were oriented to entertainment.

#### Summer Ladies' Day

The summer Ladies' Days initially met at the same location as the Forum lunches. In 1955, Charles Moser and his wife offered to host an outdoor picnic steak dinner (the term 'dinner' may or may not connote an evening meal here) at their home. These proved very popular, and continued until Charles' death in 1965. The baton was then picked up by Emmott Caldwell and his wife, who hosted picnics at their home - it's not clear from the records whether these were lunches or dinners, but some were characterized as 4th of July picnics. After 1971 there is no record of whether these continued or Ladies' Day took on another form. Program records indicate that Ladies' Day programs of their present form began in the '90s.

#### Christmas Ladies' Day

The first record of a Christmas Ladies' day is in 1960. The meal was lunch at the Elks Lodge, for which tickets cost members \$2.50/person. Three entertainers - a pianist and two singers - were paid \$10 each to provide entertainment. In ensuing years, the Christmas party was sometimes a lunch, sometimes a dinner, and usually with paid musical entertainment. About 1970, the party locations moved from wherever lunches were held each week to, first the University Club, and beginning in 1976 the Los Altos Golf and Country Club. By 1989, the meal cost reached over \$1500, the entertainment as much as \$300 and the ticket prices \$18/person. Yearbook Program records show this type of Christmas party continuing through the mid-'90s, after which the current form of December Ladies' Day - lunch and a program - replaced them.

### Memorial gifts

From 1959 to about 1979 the Forum followed a practice of memorializing members upon their death, first by buying flowers for the memorial service, and later by making a donation in the deceased member's name to an organization in which he had been interested. There is no record of this being resumed after 1980.

### Birthday cakes

Between 1974 and 1983 the Forum provided birthday cakes to celebrate the birthdays of members well into their 90s. As with memorial gifts, the practice seems to have been discontinued.

### Year books and By-Laws printing

The first notice of printed yearbooks and phone cards for members is in a treasurer entry in 1971. After that it seems to have been done annually.

The By-laws, by contrast, were printed infrequently, and apparently provided to new members only.

In 2008, yearbook printing was superseded by continuous updating of an online set of documents containing the same information and more. Members could download and easily assemble printed yearbooks from this if they wanted.

### Miscellaneous

Fellowship Forum incorporated as a non-profit in June, 1987, after much discussion and study following a proposal for incorporation in 1983.

## Membership Professions

Most of the data for this analysis comes from the published annual rosters, nearly all of which have been found.

### Professions details

Since members have always provided descriptions of their professional experience, it has been fairly easy to summarize them into categories. Some members have had more than one profession or area of specialization. For the 283 members for which there are records, here is what we know.

#### Professions - 1950-2010

Business: 42% Education: 30% (3/4 faculty, 1/4 staff) Military: 8% Medicine: 7% Government: 6% Law: 5% Church: 2%

#### Areas of specialization within professions - 1950-2010

Aerospace & Defense: 2% Agriculture: 2% Architecture: 1% Arts & social studies: 11% Commerce: 2% Consulting: 6% Construction & Engineering: 3% Energy & Utilities: 5% Financial: 6% Insurance: 6% Manufacturing: 10% Medical & Health Care: 3% Non-profit:

1% Publishing: 4% Real Estate & Stock Market: 3% Research: 4% Sales & Marketing: 3% Science & Technology: 21%  
Telecommunications: 4% Transportation & Automotive: 3%

As the attribution of professions is somewhat arbitrary, and the assignment of profession to resume' description was not done by the members, one could take issue with the result. Therefore, an Excel spreadsheet containing all the raw data is provided on-line for the reader's enjoyment.

## Interviews

To bridge the time gap between the writing of a history of the Forum's first twenty years and the present, some long time members have been interviewed, 2 at a time, to develop an oral history. Interview notes are available on-line.

John Jessup (1977) and Bill Schuyler (1987) June 29, 2010 by Elmo Sanders and Skip Ross

John and Bill reminisced about famous speakers, long time members and amusing anecdotes.

Bill Harris (1993) and Andy Doty (1995) August 31, 2010 by Elmo Sanders and Skip Ross

Among their many memories, Andy recalled originating the "this day in history" remarks when he was president - often making up the events he described. Bill started the practice of jokes at the meetings, believing that "laughter is good medicine".

## Year Books and Yearly Statistics

The yearbooks published each year contained the following: a brief Forum history description; officers and committee memberships; past presidents; member listing with election year, profession, and contact information; memorials to members that died the past year; and the programs from the past year.

During the years 1958 - 2002, the year books also contained a page summarizing the meeting and membership statistics for the past year. It included: number of meetings held; aggregate attendance; number of speakers - guest and member; number of active members, members elected, resignations, and deceased.

While the program records and statistics pages are available in the yearbooks themselves, they are also collected into single files for easier perusal. The yearbooks and the summary files are accessible from the Fellowship Forum History web page.