

Space Center Rotary Club Endowment Foundation talk June 23, 1997.

*By Billy Smith*

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## **Plant A Seed**

How many of you have heard of Johnny Appleseed? Are you familiar with his story? Did you know that there really was a Johnny Appleseed and that he is not just a legend?

His real name was John Chapman and he lived the late 1700s to the mid 1800s.

Not much is known about the particulars of his life, except that he was born in Massachusetts and went west around 1800. He was about 25 or 26 years of age and he was a nature lover.

As he traveled, he carried with him apples for planting. He spent most of his life wandering around in Ohio and Indiana planting and tending apple orchards wherever he found a good spot.

The seeds he planted and the saplings he gave away to the local Indians and the new settlers helped to build the orchards of the Midwest.

Perhaps less known is the fact that he also planted the seeds for many healing herbs such as catnip, horehound and pennyroyal. He was regarded as a healer, and even as a saint by many settlers and Indians.

Johnny Appleseed was a **planter of seeds**.

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Many of you are wondering — Why is he talking about Johnny Appleseed? What does Johnny Appleseed have to do with Rotary?

Most, if not all of you, when you picked up your name badge today wondered why you have that blue and gold sticker on it that says, “Proud Member of Space Center Rotary Club Endowment

Foundation. Some of you have remarked to yourself, I'm not a member of the Space Center Rotary Club Endowment Foundation." Others that are newer members probably said, "What is the Space Center Rotary Club Endowment Foundation."

By its charter, each member of the Space Center Rotary Club is also a member of the Endowment Foundation. You don't have to do anything to be a member — it's automatic.

For the newer members, let me quickly explain the Foundation.

- It is a **non-profit corporation** chartered by the State of Texas and recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3) **charity**. That means that gifts you make to the Foundation qualify as charitable gifts for income tax purposes.
- It is an "**endowment**" foundation and, its bylaws state that gifts of money or property cannot be spent or consumed — only income can be used. As an endowment foundation, its goal is to obtain substantial money and other property which will produce sufficient income to fund major projects in this community. These will be projects of a magnitude that cannot be funded through our annual fund raisers alone. Presently, we are in the growing process and have not identified any specific project, but I can assure you that any such project will have your approval and support before undertaken. Any project will be of significant benefit to our community and will be a credit to our Rotary Club.

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How does the story of Johnny Appleseed connect with the Endowment Foundation and you?

I want to encourage each of us to be **seed planters**. I want us to grow our own fruit orchard here in the Clear Lake – Bay Area. When you give a \$1.00 to the Foundation, you plant a seed because that \$1.00 cannot be spent – it must be invested ("planted") and the fruit which it produces will be used for the good of the community.

You can think of the Foundation as a mutual savings account which we all have established. It belongs to us all and we can only spend the interest. Where else do you have this opportunity?

How many of you receive evening phone calls asking you to donate to various organizations? If I have the time to talk to them a moment, I ask, “How much of what I give will go to the benefit of \_\_\_\_\_?” They are required to tell you and you will be amazed at the percentage that goes to administration expense or, more important, to the fund raiser. When you give to the Endowment Foundation, not only is there no overhead or administration expense — not only does the Foundation get 100% of the gift, but you are giving **seeds** for planting. You are planting the orchard to produce the fruit which will benefit this community, in the name of Rotary, for ever.

When is an appropriate time to give to the Endowment Foundation? ANY TIME, is appropriate, but there are some specific times which may be especially appropriate:

- When someone dies, make a gift to the Foundation in lieu of flowers in that person’s memory.
- When you die. Prepare now by including in your Will a gift to the Foundation. If you have a Will and want to add such a provision, we have forms available for you to amend your Will — it is called a Codicil and it is easy to do.
- To celebrate a birthday or anniversary. What better way to honor someone than to make a perpetual gift to the Foundation.
- You can think of other times and reason for planting those seeds.

The Foundation will send written acknowledgment of the gift to the family of a deceased or to anyone you designate as being honored. Gift cards can be obtained from the folks at the badge desk.

How much is appropriate? When giving money, there is no minimum or maximum — any amount will be accepted and when notifying someone that a gift has been made, we do not state the amount of the gift.

Patterned after the Paul Harris Fellowship given by Rotary Foundation, the Space Center Rotary Club Endowment Foundation recognizes gifts of \$1,000 or more by naming a Floyd Boze

Fellow. You can designate yourself or another person to be so honored. Subject to availability of funds from the Club's Service Budget each year, we from time to time offer matching fund incentives where you give \$500 the Club matches with \$500. This means that a Floyd Boze Fellow can be named for your gift of only \$500.

Suitable property can also be given to the Foundation. It should be real or personal property that the Foundation can either sell or that is income producing and that can be managed by the Foundation. Talk to one our tax attorneys or CPAs about the tax benefits that can be derived from such gifts.

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Each of you is a member of the Endowment Foundation — whether you are a *proud* member is up to you, individually, as a supporter, and up to all of us, collectively, as we determine the kind of Foundation we will have and what it will do. It is our Foundation. What it becomes is up to us.

**Be a Johnny Appleseed for this community — Be a seed planter.**