



THIS WEEK'S PROGRAM

December 12, 2023

2023-2024 Board Members

President Edwin Peacock

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Past Pres William Bradley

Secretary John Cantrell

Treasurer Craig Field

Exec Sec Christine Cipriano

Directors 2022-2024

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David Head

Joel Ford

Membership Terri DeBoo

Foundation Joe Morris

Programs Andy Dinkin



Former Harris Teeter CEO Bob Goodale “The Adventures of a Sauerkraut Runner”

by **Elly Clary**

He dressed as Uncle Sam in a successful United Way drive. He danced the hula for his Charlotte Chamber team. He rappelled a tower for the Special Olympics.

On his 90th birthday, Bob Goodale regaled Rotarians with those stories and a handful more. The former CEO of Harris Teeter who was also a North Carolina deputy secretary of commerce hilariously shared life experiences.

Along the way, he dropped jewels of wisdom.

His biggest lesson from Harris Teeter: “Understanding who did the real work. My customers were my associates. They’re the ones who made it work.”

Explaining his penchant for unusual escapades: “I want to be thoroughly used when I die. The older I get, the more I live. Life is a flaming torch which we all have a hold of.”

Goodale titled his talk “Adventures of A Sauerkraut Runner,” an allusion to an early job in his native Iowa as a stirrer in a sauerkraut vat. “I got in, stirred it up, and got out,” he said. “That’s what I’m going to do today.”

The slide show accompanying his presentation showed him in red, white, and blue top hat, tie and tails with a kazoo clenched in his teeth. He was cradling his two infant granddaughters, one in each arm. It was a United Way campaign victory celebration.

As chair of WTVI public television, he got the channel included in a successful school bond referendum. He shared a campaign rally photo of former Charlotte Mayor Harvey Gantt and himself seated with kiddie show celebrity Big Bird.

When his Harris Teeter team was honored for its performance in a Charlotte Chamber membership drive, he donned a grass skirt and hula danced on The Square. The photo, which he shared, was spread across three columns of the front page of the newspaper. When he showed it to his wife Jan, she opined, "It must have been a slow news day."

In another shot, Goodale hovered 30 stories up, in harness, sliding down the exterior of a Wells Fargo tower. He was drumming up support for the Special Olympics.

Goodale was attracted to people who weren't like him, he explained. That led to trips to Israel, Uganda, Kenya, and Morocco.

In Uganda to watch gorillas, a team of four guides hauled him up a mountain Maharaja-style. He shared a photo of that as well as a gorilla he saw up close and personal.

In Kenya, he visited President Obama's grandmother. A of him with "Mama Sarah" was accompanied by a video of their merriment. "The language of laughter," he called it.

Goodale stopped drinking in 1972. He's still a recovering alcoholic.

"I'm wildly imperfect," he said. "That's what makes life interesting."

A recording of the meeting can be found here: <https://vimeo.com/895286934>
The speaker's introduction begins at approximately 36:00 minutes.