

## THE RURITAN ORGANIZATION

Ruritan National has nearly 34,000 members throughout the United States that work to improve more than 1,200 local communities. Since the organization's beginning in 1928, Ruritan Clubs have served America with Fellowship, Goodwill, and Community Service. Ruritan is a civic service organization made up of local clubs in urban areas, small towns and rural communities.

Ruritan's purpose is to create a better understanding among people and through volunteer community service, make America's communities better places in which to live and work. The slogan of Ruritan is "Fellowship, Goodwill and Community Service." Club membership represents a cross-section of the community in which the club serves, and is not restrictive with regard to occupation, social position, or any other specific criteria.

Our local [Elkton Ruritan Club] was chartered November 13, 1973 with 28 members. The club's membership is now at 31 and includes three of the charter members Chancellor Lough, Billy Lam, and Ishmal Baugher. Our Elkton Club is part of Ruritan Zone 1 which contains 6 local area clubs. Zone 1 is one of 5 Zones which make up the Rockingham, District 9 which has a total of 33 clubs and a membership of 1100.

Club projects include flag displays, adopt-a-highway, student scholarships, a weather reporting station, donations to area fire and rescue squads, and crisis support for some local residents. The club also supports the Eagle Scout program as well as local Boy and Girl Scout troops. Financial support is also provided for the Spotswood After Prom party, Elkton Little League, E.A.U.S., and the Elkton Area Community Center.

To pay for the above mentioned projects, the Elkton Ruritan Club raises money primarily from the 15 chicken barbecues which are done each year. We occasionally cook pork rinds and engage in other smaller fund raising projects from year to year. The 15 chicken barbecues, also involve over a dozen other community groups who help out with manpower requirements, which enables us to reach out to, and get to know at least 200 other community minded volunteers. While helping the club meet its financial goals it also provides us a great opportunity to create friendships and get to know our neighbors.

The first Ruritan Club was chartered May 21, 1928, in Holland, Virginia. Since that first club, Ruritan has grown throughout the United States of America, and in doing so, has become "America's Leading Community Service Organization".

Tom Downing of Suffolk, Virginia, and Jack Gwaltney of Holland, Virginia, are known as the co-founders of Ruritan. Gwaltney and Downing recognized the need for an organization where community leaders could meet and discuss ways to make their community a better place in which to live. The name Ruritan was suggested by Daisy Nurney, a reporter for the Norfolk, Virginia-Pilot newspaper, and the club's charter members unanimously adopted Ruritan as the organizations name. The word is a combination of the Latin words for open country (ruri) and small town (tan), interpreted as pertaining to rural and small town life.