

Remembering When ...

Back Row, L to R: Alden Victoria, CT, treasurer; Allen Lanier, GA, editor; Dorothy Bridges, TN, vice president; Harvey Moritz, NJ, vice president; Bill Doughty, CA, vice president. **Front row**, L to R: Barbara Veech, IL, secretary; Fain Hambricht, NC, president; Ron Swisher, AZ, executive vice president; and Dorothy Van Beck, MN, vice president. Photo believed to be taken at the LEAGUE Forum in 1985.



Memories of Past LEAGUE President R. Fain Hambricht

The LEAGUE has been referred to many times as being our extended family. On November 9, 2007, we lost a member of that extended family. When we lose a loved one in our own family, it is the memories that can help sustain us through our grief. The same can be said of our beloved LEAGUE Past President R. Fain Hambricht for those of us who knew him well.

He was a remarkable leader and, to me, a wonderful friend. I met Fain 34 years ago and served as National Secretary with him for eight years on the National Executive Board. First he served as a vice president during that time he was our convention manager. In 1981, he asked me if I would like to assist him with the National Convention in Seattle, WA. I accepted and that is how I got my start in convention planning. Fain went on to become Executive Vice President and in February 1982, he became our National LEAGUE President.

Prior to his ascension to president, the board endured some troublesome and heart wrenching times which led to the removable of the then sitting president. At the LEAGUE Forum in March 1982, as the Executive Board sat upon the dais, Fain was standing at the podium and was about to make his opening remarks when from the back of the room entered the president whom this board had removed from office just a few weeks prior. He proceeded to the front of the room and sat down in front of Fain. The room grew silent while we, the National Executive Board, were swallowing hard and breathless not knowing what might happen. It was then that Fain showed such courage and strength. Although small in stature, at that point he stood 10 feet tall. Without any hesitation, he proceeded with his remarks and answered numerous questions from the audience in reference to the series of events that had transpired over the last 30 days. The person in question got up and left without uttering a word. There is no way to describe that remarkable moment with President Fain Hambricht.

Former Vice President Gil Montanez and I lobbied to have a convention in Hawaii. Fain said, "you have to establish a branch first." So Gil, along with fellow Arizonian Bob Dunn, went to Hawaii to work membership and established a branch. The site committee followed and the 1985 National Convention in Oahu, Hawaii became a reality. It was, and is to date, the largest attendance of any LEAGUE convention. When I left the board in 1985, Fain asked me to continue on as convention manager. It was from him that I learned so much about convention planning, especially in negotiating hotel contracts. He designed his own Letter of Agreement plus other helpful tools and forms that in turn helped me to learn.

Fain could be as stubborn as the next person. If he believed in something, he stood firm and was not afraid to challenge opponents to make his point. He had a tremendous mind and memory, and was a whiz with figures and had great attention to detail. But he also could be like a big ole Teddy Bear ... unselfish, giving, supportive, a great sense of humor, and loyal. He was not only a friend of mine but also a friend of my family. Like so many other past leaders who saw our son Jason grow up in the LEAGUE from age four to 24 before there was a B.R.A.T.S. organization, he treated Jason like his own. He gave him the moniker of Super Sport and, to the end, still referred to him the same, always asking about him and his family.

We have had many great leaders and presidents in our organization, all of whom I have admired very much. However, because of the longevity of knowing and working with Fain and the knowledge gained from him, for me he was Mr. LEAGUE. He loved the LEAGUE with great passion and remained dedicated to its cause. The last National Convention he and Carolyn attended was in St. Louis in 2003. He wanted to come to Nashville in 2006 but declining health prevented that. Delmar and I had the privilege of visiting Fain and Carolyn in their home in North Carolina at the end of September, several weeks before his passing. You can call it a twist of fate that we made that visit, but I want to think of it as a special blessing. We had such a nice visit, reminiscing over past times as well as the present. And yes he asked, "Why didn't you bring Super Sport and his family with you?" Earlier, I mentioned memories help to get you through. I have many fond memories of my co-board member, co-worker and best friend I won't soon forget. But I need a little more time to get me through. Thank God for people like Fain Hambricht and all of our presidents since who are willing to assume the responsibilities necessary and who make tremendous sacrifices to lead our great organization. God Bless each and everyone!

—Barbara Harlean Veech