



Annual Reunion of Rotary International Past Officers San Diego, 17-19 January 2009

San Diego Rotary International Assembly 18-25 January 2009

THE REUNION WHEEL

Sunday, January 18, 2009

Plenary Session IV

“Rotary’s Efforts in Afghanistan”

Following the welcome by PDG Anne Fisher (Top Left) and introduction by DG Pam Russell, PDG Steve Brown (Middle Left) & Rotarian Fary Moini (Bottom Left) spoke about RI’s efforts in Afghanistan.

Hoping to assist a generation cast with the tremendous burden of effecting a national recovery after years of conflict, U.S. Rotarians recently broke ground for a school near Jalalabad, Afghanistan. Planning for the project began shortly after Rotarian Fary Moini, a registered nurse, returned from Pakistan, where she served as a Rotary Volunteer supported by a grant from The Rotary Foundation of RI, in early 2002. Moini, a member of the Rotary Club of La Jolla Golden Triangle, Calif., spent two months helping families in refugee camps near Peshawar, Pakistan. Children living in the camps attended makeshift schools with few amenities, and Moini knew that when they returned to Afghanistan, conditions wouldn’t be any better. Rather than allow education to become yet another casualty of war in Afghanistan, where two-thirds of the population is illiterate, California Rotarians decided to support a new school. Led by Moini, who speaks Farsi, a language similar to the one spoken by many refugees, and Rotarian Stephen Brown, members of the La Jolla Golden Triangle club raised about US \$100,000 to build a school on the outskirts of Jalalabad. The largest single contribution was a \$50,000 grant from the William H. Donner Foundation, a New York-based organization that supports humanitarian projects in developing nations. La Jolla Golden Triangle Rotarian Rick Clark, an architect, drew the plans for the school.

With help from Flouran Wali, a U.S. citizen of Afghan heritage and a representative of the Afghan government in Southern California, Brown and Moini organized Southern California Friends of Afghanistan. The group is dedicated to helping Afghans and educating North Americans about Afghan culture. In November 2002, Brown, Moini, and Wali traveled to Afghanistan to meet with government officials and representatives of nongovernmental organizations working in the region, including engineers from the Abdul Haq Foundation, which will oversee the project. Zamarrud Shah, a member of the Rotary Club of Uni Town Peshawar, Pakistan, accompanied the U.S. delegation. Shah, who hosted Moini during her time as a Rotary Volunteer, was to assume responsibility for onsite project supervision after La Jolla Golden Triangle Rotarians returned to the United States.

Steve and Fary have led several humanitarian projects in Afghanistan and participated in NIDs there. Brown is impressed with the Afghan medical community’s high level of organization in support of polio eradication. “Many individuals are involved and they keep very good records regarding not only the number of immunizations but, more importantly, the refusals or missed homes,” he reported in his online journal. Afghanistan’s March 2008 NIDs reached about 6.9 million children. However, fighting between the Taliban and Afghan security forces prevented immunization of all children targeted by the effort. Vaccinating children and keeping track of who has been immunized is a challenge in a country without a census and where families, especially in the southern region, are constantly on the move to avoid danger.



“In the morning you can go in [a village], but in the afternoon you can’t,” says Dr. Rahmatullah Kamwak, who works in support of WHO efforts in southern Afghanistan. Fari stated that elders are very important in the Afghan community for the successful operations of the school; they learn that the school belongs to them. Rotarians enlisted help from the US Military, San Diego State University, Doyle Elementary School, City of San Diego and other clubs to accomplish the following: a school for 4500 children (1500 girls), provide computer labs for the Nangarhar University, create Sister City status with San Diego and Jalalabad, sister University status, sister Elementary School status, create female teacher salaries for 8 women, a new Rotary Club to sponsor Matching Grants, a guest house for foreign visitors, and an almost completed University Women’s Dormitory. Micro-credit grants have also been funded, to support economic development among the female population. These great accomplishments all began because one woman asked people in her Rotary Club to help her help others.



RI President D.K. Lee Gives Keynote Speech



Following the banquet on Saturday evening PRID Michael Pinson introduced our RI President, who began by thanking the audience of nearly 200 Rotarians and their spouses for our support in helping to make dreams real for the world’s children. He told of the small (37 Rotarians) Quito, Ecuador Rotary Club and how its efforts to develop schools and medical clinics have helped the children from low-income families in Quito. He pointed out that when he came into office as the RI President last July 1, 2008, the world’s child mortality rate was 30,000/day. As of September 2008 the rate has been reduced to 25,000/day.

Since the \$100 million Gates Foundation Challenge Grant was announced, Rotarians worldwide are well on the way to meeting the matching monies over the three year period stipulated by the Gates Foundation. As of today there are still four countries that remain polio-endemic nations: Nigeria, India, Pakistan and Afghanistan. There are 500 thousand newborns every month born in the state of Uttar Pradesh in India alone. [Editor’s note: with a population of over 190 million people, it is India’s most populous state, as well as the world’s most populous sub-national entity, and only 5 nations including India itself have more people than U.P.] It has been a challenge to meet the vaccination needs in RI’s effort to eradicate polio, but we Rotarians are committed to see the end of this disease! For this we need to require sacrifice from each and every Rotarian; words alone are not sufficient. We must act! We must pursue and foster new relationships with our fellow Rotarians worldwide, including Rotarians from the highest levels.

Because of the high poverty rate in Athens, Ohio, a Rotary club in India raised funds for the families in need in Athens; the people of India wanted to say “thank you” for the help they had received from the USA in the past. In conclusion, Lee said, “As the problems of the world increase, I am confident that Rotary will have the means to solve them. We must seek out those who will become the next generation of Rotarians. It is what we DO and how we ACT that makes us Rotarians.”

Plenary Session V

“Directors tell it like it is”

RI Director Michael Colasurdo (top left) moderated a panel of RI Directors Eric E. Adamson (second from top), John M. Lawrence (third from top), R. Gordon McNally (fourth from top) and Jose A. Sepulveda (bottom left).

Eric stated that there are too many meetings for Rotarians and that there is also too little training about Rotary at the club level. He feels that this combination needs to be corrected because it leads to difficulty in convincing members to become district leaders.

John Lawrence cited a huge attendance at the Presidential Membership Institutes as proof that the average Rotarian feels excluded from opportunities. He was impressed by the expectations of Generation “Y,” who want to do a project and then leave. He believes that this points out the need for creative thinking about how to include younger people in Rotary club membership.

Gordon McNally discussed the public image of Rotary, citing focus groups that looked at potential members for Rotary and what they thought about Rotary. The image was that of aging Caucasian men and women who basically came to meetings to share meals, but who also occasionally did community projects and other good deeds. This image will not help Rotary clubs attract younger members. He suggested “open days” at Rotary clubs to encourage prospective members to attend and experience what Rotary is all about.

Jose Sepulveda said that we need to separate membership from money; we don’t need money as much as we need members who are willing to actively participate in Rotary club projects. The minimum number of members should be established and a reasonable fee for membership should be created. We cannot rely on interest monies helping to support our clubs any longer. Jose compared Rotary to a tree: members are the roots; the club is the trunk; the districts are the branches; RI is the leafy growth; ideas are the flowers and the deeds that we do are the fruits. Members are the most important and to keep them they always need more reasons to belong.

Plenary Session VI

“Future Vision,” The Rotary Foundation & The Districts

PRI Trustee Mark Maloney presents a succinct overview of RI’s Future Vision Program:

[Ed Note: click on the following link to go to complete information, including the video presentation by PRIT Mark Maloney]

http://www.rotary.org/en/Members/RunningADistrict/FutureVisionPilotProgram/Pages/pilot_video.aspx

In anticipation of The Rotary Foundation’s 100-year anniversary in 2017 and endorsed by the 2007 Council on Legislation, the Trustees set out to develop a plan to move the Foundation toward its second century of service. The Foundation has made only slight modifications to its programs since its inception and the Trustees sought input from a wide variety of stakeholders through interviews, surveys, focus groups, and input sessions in developing the Future Vision Plan. The plan updates the Foundation’s mission and creates a more effective and efficient way to help Rotarians develop diverse projects with greater impact and

sustainable outcomes. The logo selected is “Doing Good in the World.” There are six areas of focus, including: Peace and Conflict Resolution, Hunger & Nutrition; Water & Sanitation; Maternal & Child Health; Disease Control & Eradication; and Economic Development. District Grants will be the responsibility of the district and the district will be allowed to take up to 50% of its DDF to directly select and fund recipients. Global grants will consist of the other 50% of DDF from the World Fund and include 3H-Type Grants, Matching Grants or GSE-Type Exchanges which will focus on vocation. Strategic partnerships will emphasize work with UNICEF, CDC, and the WHO. The pilot phase of 100 selected districts will begin July 1, 2010 for three years. Deadline for applications is May 15, 2009. Training for the selected districts will be integrated into existing training events. Attendees questioned the resources available to RAGS and the RI Staff’s understanding and support of them. Additionally, there was a request for the legal department to be more “user friendly” to Rotarians whenever legal counsel is sought.

Plenary Session VII

“Building a Community of Peace Makers”



Edward Blender, Chair, Rotary Centers Major Gifts Initiative, reports that after approximately three years of fund raising, two-hundred and fifty donors have created a fund of forty million US dollars with a goal to raise ninety-five million by 2015, which will endow the Rotary Peace Program permanently. The selection of Peace Scholars has been changed to allow any district to submit more than one applicant.



Perth Rosen graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in International Affairs from the University of Colorado at Boulder in 1998. Directly following she spent three years designing and executing community level health projects in Central and South America. She pursued a career in training for the subsequent two years as a Health Project trainer for the United States Peace Corps. Upon return to the USA she worked in a non-profit organization targeting the US/Mexico border population living with HIV/AIDS. She is now happily growing her capacity for future work in social justice. Current research interests include pro-active models for social integration of increasingly multi-cultural populations.

Noting that peace scholars have difficulty in finding employment in their very specialized areas, statistics show that 29% of former peace scholars work for NGO’s, 22% for Government agencies, 9% become researchers and 6% work for UN agencies.

Blender noted that the first Peace Symposium was held at the Salt Lake City Convention in 2007 and the second is scheduled to be held in Birmingham, England this year and he invites everyone to attend. PRIP Luis Giay has stated “everything we do in Rotary ultimately leads to peace.” Eddie Blender urges all of us to look for potential donors and for potential scholars.

Plenary Session VIII

“My Rotary Vision”



RIPN Ray Klingensmith was introduced by his aide, PDG Duane Sterling. Ray will be the 100th Rotary International President and the first president of RI who has been an Ambassadorial Scholar. Reflecting on his dreams and plans for Rotary, it is his dream that RI will win Nobel Peace prizes for polio eradication and for our Rotary Peace Centers.

He wants to reestablish the Youth Exchange Program at 10,000 students/year to match clubs, to promote projects and to work to have the International Assembly include the POR. It is very important to strengthen the clubs. He wants a strategic plan for each club that focuses on leadership skills and membership retention and recruitment. He believes that the District Leadership Plan needs improvement because it has too many people reporting to the DG, and he recommends a corporate team approach using eligible younger people.

At the international level Ray wants the Board to be more focused on strategic decisions and goal-setting. He urges all attendees to support the Future Vision Project and to encourage their districts to apply to become pilot districts. He would like to see a World Affairs seminar held at the Assembly, along with the POR.

He quoted Jim Collins, author of “Good to Great” for non-profit organizations, who said to have a great organization you need to focus on what members are passionate about, what are they best at doing, and what resources do they have at their command. Rotary clubs, too, need to focus on these three questions.

Plenary Session IX

“The Next 100 Years”



PRIP Cliff Dochterman discussed his thoughts for Rotary’s second hundred years, noting that few, if any, of us will be around to celebrate if his predictions are accurate. A reasonable estimate of three to four million members will be reliable, especially if the Chinese government opens the doors freely to Rotary. “Education may be our greatest contribution to the peace of the world in the next century,” he said. Cliff also states that it is a critical necessity



for Rotary to return to one of its basic roots: Vocational Service. Rotary, he said, was built on the belief

that business and professional persons must be honest, ethical and responsible individuals. The lack of ethical principles and self-serving deals, Cliff points out, has destroyed and continue to erode the economic and leadership fabric of the world. The world will expect Rotary to provide even greater service because of Rotary’s success in polio eradication. Hundreds of NGOs will seek the support and partnership of Rotary to achieve monumental humanitarian goals. We can expect “a clamor for Rotary to take up the eradication of malaria; the defeat of water-borne diseases; the urgency of basic education, especially for girl children; the elimination of measles; and the defeat of persistent hunger.” Rotary can take the lead in ridding the world of HIV/AIDS. Rotarians will declare war on illiteracy, cancer, avoidable blindness, and child abuse. We will “exercise” our “official status in the U.N. far more vigorously in the future, as we become even more effective ministers of humanitarian and educational services. The real future of TRF is in promoting the potential of The Permanent Fund.” Cliff sees RAGs becoming “the primary means for delivering humanitarian service in this next century.” Our challenge is to dream great dreams -then make dreams real. What we actually do is far more significant than what we say we do.” It’s up to us to make these predictions true, or just make up our own list, he concluded.

Plenary Session X

“On to Birmingham -- 2009”



PRIBIP HOC Vice Chair Peter Offer extends a warm invitation to attend the convention in Birmingham, England June 21-24, 2009. He showed a video of the UK, which includes Wales, Scotland and Ireland. RIP DK Lee was filmed following the footsteps of Paul Harris during his first visit to the area in Rotary's early years. Peter ascertained that over one-half of the attendees at POR have registered to attend the convention and reported that over 12,500 are registered to date.

The Daily Wheel Staff: PDG Ron Goodsite, Editor and reporter

PDG Sandy Goodsite, reporter

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Jim Bradford, Photographer

PRID Dave Hossler, Photographer

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[Editor's Note: A complete Reunion Wheel will be published and transmitted electronically at the conclusion of the POR Monday, January 19, 2009. Please contact me directly at rongoosite@cox.net or leave your contact information with the POR Registrar, Philippe Lamoise]