



Rotary International District 5360

Issue number one

District Governor's Newsletter

July 2003



Lend a Hand

As Governor, I welcome all of you to the new Rotary year of 2003-2004. Let us together **LEND A HAND** to our communities – and to the world.
-D.G.Mike

DG Sandy MacKay
congratulates Mike Smith
after the Governor's
Changeover Ceremony.

The ceremony took place
during the dinner honouring
the President of the Rotary
Club of Calgary Centennial,
on June 28.



BUSINESS REPORT FROM THE 2003 ROTARY INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN BRISBANE

By DG Mike

There was a general concern about the costs of the 2004 convention to be held in Osaka. R. I. announced the RYLA Convention, Rotaract Meeting and Youth Exchange Officers Meeting for Osaka had been cancelled. The Japanese clubs met immediately and announced they will pick up the cost of the three meetings.

President Bhichai Rattakul expanded on his principle of an administration that is bottom up from the grassroots level and lead by the clubs. He said he was returning to his club to ask the club president to put him to work. Bhichai put a strong emphasis on ethics and integrity, more so than at the beginning of his year. The delegates responded by showing not only the high esteem they hold for President Bhichai, but also their great affection for him.

President-Elect Jonathan Majiyagbe expanded upon his Family of Rotary concept and four presidential emphases. He also stressed ethics and integrity.

The attendance at Brisbane was some 15,000 and the city newspaper reported we were bringing \$50 Million into the local economy. Prior to the outbreak of SARS some 20,000 had been expected. This prompted the people of Brisbane to rally around us and give their full support to our convention.

The Treasurer announced there will be a resolution at the Council on Legislation to increase the R. I. levy on the clubs in 2004-2005. This is to cover an operating revenue shortfall that stems from the decline in financial markets. For the past 8 years the per capita dues payable by each club has remained steady at US\$35. He also announced for the 2003 -2004 year that the R I board has authorized the use of US\$3.5 Million from the operating reserve account.

The Rotary Foundation (TRF) announced that the Polio Eradication Fundraising Campaign had raised US\$88.5 Million; this is \$8.5 Million over the goal. Canada's contribution is \$7.5Million. At the TRF forum it seemed that the fund will be left open beyond the original closing date of June 30, 2003. The questions and answers lead me to think reaching the last child is going to be more difficult and expensive than considered a year ago.

TRF reported that its asset value has declined by 6 % due to adverse performance in financial markets.

A BIG "THANK YOU" TO SANDY MACKAY

Governor Sandy and Jane, we thank you for giving to us, in the 2002-2003 Rotary year, a year of your life, to serve and extend the cause of Rotary within our district.

Under your leadership:-

- The district increased its membership by a net 61
- The district raised close to \$1 Million for The Rotary Foundation
- A new club, Calgary Millennium, was chartered, the result of continuing it's initiation by Governor Bill Gillott and Richard Kim the previous year
- The district conference was a "sell out"
- You visited most of the clubs a second time

We congratulate you for these significant achievements, while at the same time you continued to treat your ophthalmic patients.

Impacts of the 2003 R.I. Convention in Brisbane on Me as a Rotarian

By Bill Dickson, President, Rotary Club of Calgary Centennial

I am most thankful that my Rotary Club of Calgary Centennial gave me and Karen the opportunity to attend the 2003 Rotary International Convention in Brisbane. Australia is wonderful, and the international fellowship, hospitality, and friendship of Rotarians go well beyond description. We returned home with suitcases full of project and program brochures, and with heads and hearts full of great memories.

Highlights for me began with the powerfully emotional international flag ceremony as part of the Convention opening. Thousands of Rotarians responded to the parading and presentation by youth exchange students of the flag of every country with Rotary. The ceremony was very efficiently executed, but the multitude of flags was a great and colourful testament to the enormous extent and potential of Rotary.

As an incoming Club President, I was impressed by the message repeated and reinforced throughout the sessions of the Convention, that the grassroots work and leadership of Rotary Clubs are where Rotary really happens and how Rotary really makes a difference. Bhichai Rattakul has done much in his Presidency to emphasize the importance and celebrate the impact of hands-on work in the creative initiatives of local Clubs. Top-down and bureaucratic components of Rotary International were clearly de-emphasized. President Jonathan Majiyagbe's "Lend a Hand" theme promises to support and extend the emphasis on local and global impacts made from work at the individual Club level.

Impacts from Rotary Clubs around the world (but especially the South Pacific and "Down Under") showcased the huge exhibition hall at the Convention. The ideas and ingenuity of Rotarians are limitless: incredibly efficient and easily-constructed housing units to replace shacks and slums; simple water purification systems that make huge differences in mortality rates; literacy program models with multiplier impacts on all generations; and medical miracles saving and enabling productive lives in a variety of different ways...all these, and many more, coming from the hands-on initiative of individual Rotarians and their Clubs.

Back to the plenary sessions, the countdown and announcement of the more than \$88.5 million raised by Rotarians for Polio Plus in the 2002-2003 year caused immediate excitement and celebration in the thousands filling the huge assembly hall. So did the official presentation of Club Charters to the two new Clubs from Afghanistan and East Timor, with the memories of recent history and the hope and potential represented by the formation of these Clubs.

Perhaps the greatest highlight for us was the incredible and overwhelming feeling of caring and connection from President Bhichai to the more than 5000 Rotarians in our closing plenary, and the reciprocal feeling throughout the 5000 for Bhichai. The love and feelings of attachment were palpable, and it was hard for Bhichai and all of us to say "goodbye" to each other.

We came away from the Convention, excited about the "Lend a Hand" theme of our new Rotary International President, Jonathan Majiyagbe. His strong focus on family and families in Rotary was heightened by the illness and subsequent death of his wife, Ade. His leadership was clearly expressed in terms of support for Rotarians working individually and together to Lend a Hand in strengthening and diversifying Club membership, modelling high ethical standards, working to help those in need in our communities, and reaching out to all peoples and communities in the world.

Such An Exciting Opportunity In Brisbane!

By Kathy Smith

One of the wonderful and exciting things about attending the International Convention is the opportunity to meet very special people – an opportunity you would never have otherwise. The very special person I met at the Brisbane Convention is the President of the newly formed Rotary Club of Kabul, the first Club to rekindle Rotary in Afghanistan.

I had heard and read so much in the last few years about the difficulties the people – more especially the women – of Afghanistan had been experiencing. The terrible stories of the Taliban’s cruelty. The horror stories of women being denied access to proper medical treatment. My friends and I had listened to what Sally Armstrong had to say about her visits to that country. We also had heard about how Dr. Sima Simar was on a visit to Edmonton when she received the news of her appointment to the Cabinet in Afghanistan. So when the President of this new club was introduced By RI President Bhichai, I was amazed to discover that it was actually a woman who had assumed this responsibility. Meeting her is the highlight of my visit to Brisbane.

We were going through the security check at Brisbane airport when DG Mike said that the woman ahead of us was the President of the Kabul Rotary Club. For me this was an amazing opportunity. I was very excited to meet this inspiring woman who had opted to forgo the comforts of her life in London to return to war torn Afghanistan. She chose SERVICE ABOVE SELF even before she became a Rotarian!

We did not have much time to talk – it was almost time to board our flight. However, I was grateful for the time I did have to hear, firsthand, about Afghanistan.



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MONTHLY ATTENDANCE STATISTICS for our district will commence in the August newsletter.

The District Governor’s Newsletter is published monthly and placed on the district website at rotary5360.org The Editor is Kathy Smith at kathleensmithis@shaw.ca and readers are invited to submit articles for inclusion

