



Annual Reunion of
Rotary International Past Officers
San Diego, 16-18 January 2011

San Diego Rotary International Assembly 16-22 January 2011

THE REUNION WHEEL

Editor's Note:

This is the third of three daily reports of the proceedings from the 2011 Rotary International Past Officers' Reunion held January 16-18, 2011 at the Manchester Grand Hyatt Hotel in San Diego, California.

This online version is in color and records the final day's plenary sessions and closing remarks of Tuesday, January 18 2011, and which were not distributed in hard copy.

Many thanks to PDG Dick Thorn and PDG Sandy Goodsite for their reports; and to past PRID Dave Hossler, PDG Tony Brockington and past RC president Jim Bradford for their photography.

If you have any questions, additions or corrections please e-mail or call me at:

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THE REUNION WHEEL

Tuesday, January 18, 2011

Plenary Session XIII

“Youth Protection Policies”



PDG Sandy Goodsite (D. 5500 New Generations Chair, Tucson, AZ) introduced the panel of three experts from D 5300 who explored the latest Youth Protection Policies for all of Rotary's New Generations programs. A poll of the audience revealed that most had participated in some way in Rotary Youth Programs as a hosting family, counselor, sending family, RYLA staff member, Rotaract- or Interact-support worker. Goodsite related that many policy changes have occurred in rapid succession, due to problems with youth safety. In her own District, two Rotarians failed their background checks; and, despite having had charges previously brought against them in other states for sexual conduct with a minor, they both insisted that the charges were due to misunderstandings, and that they should be allowed to work with youth in their Rotary programs. Rotarians are not wont to suspect and are ill-prepared to accept the fact that other Rotarians in their clubs may be guilty of aggressive predatory behavior, so background checks are very helpful.



PDG Jerry Tambe has led SCANEX (11 Districts in southern California, western Arizona, Hawaii and Nevada) as “Responsible Officer” for 18 years. He interfaces with the US State Department arranging entries and departures of students involved in Rotary Youth Exchange, and leads the Youth Exchange officers from all 11 Districts in meeting and/or exceeding the legal requirements of the US State Department and Rotary International in executing the exchanges of high school students from beginning contact to final departure back to home countries.

Tambe discussed the constantly changing rules for Youth Protection issued by the State Department, the state in which the exchange program is operating, and RI rules. He attributed the evolution of tougher standards to abuse of educational/exchange visa holders by hosts who have not fed students, not provided a bed for them, used them as an unpaid maid or housekeeper, or not given them monthly allowances that their parents had prepaid to their exchange program. Many other programs pay the host families to defray expenses. Their misbehavior has created rules that Rotary programs must follow, even though the offenders do not. This raises the cost of our programs, which are run by volunteers and are non-profit, with sending parents only paying for air fare, health insurance, and minimal outbound program overhead cost fees.

Rotary host clubs provide host housing (room and board) as well as a minimum of \$75. per month allowance, and pay a fee to the district Youth Program to cover expenses for orientation, special events and communication by District officers with the sending country as well as the US State Department.

US Schools are enrolled in CSIET (Council on Standards for International Educational Travel) that in the past spelled out appropriate standards for exchange programs and their administrators. For a Rotary District to appear in their approved directory, a 100 page application must be successfully completed.

In 1997, an audit program began that costs an average of \$5,000- \$10,000. annually, and covers how hosts are chosen and trained, and how Rotary club counselors and youth committee members are to be trained. Since 2006, anyone 18 and over with direct unsupervised contact with a youth must have a background check successfully completed every 3 years. Current US State Department rules published November 2010 will require an annual background check, which will further add costs to the program, unless the rule is rescinded. Background check costs depend on the depth of investigation and average from \$6 USD to \$15 USD or more.

In 2005 RI began a program for certifying each District's program that evaluates policies and procedures regarding hosts, counselors, District Youth Committee members and background checks. This involves an annual written report and a District may be randomly selected for in person sets of interviews with RI staff within the District for approximately 2 days. All exchange records must be kept safe in case of an audit, inquiry or lawsuit, since in most states a minor may file a suit until they are 21 years old against anyone who they claim has harmed them. California is among the states that require an exchange program be registered with the State Attorney General's office.

Federal law requires host families to be interviewed by host club members as a family and individually. Interview questions are standardized and answers must be noted and kept by the District and club. Background checks of anyone living at home who is 18 years or older are required. Photos of the home, yard, kitchen and student's proposed bedroom are to be taken and kept. Hosts must have training and orientation prior to the student's arrival and club counselors must be trained separately.



PDG Charlie Barr spoke of his completed task of developing District 5300's protection policies and procedures for all youth programs to protect youth from any harm. He has served as "Youth Protection Officer" for more than 5 years for his District and has assisted other Districts in reaching compliance. Violations of local, state and federal laws in his District that involve students in Rotary programs as either victims or perpetrators must be reported to him for action by him to assist and protect the victim and to protect the district from any possible liability for failure to protect. Charlie emphasized that **EVERY ROTARY YOUTH PROGRAM** should have and follow written youth protection policies not only on behalf of possible youth victims, but also to protect Rotarians against false accusations.

Barr recommends that "Youth Protection Policies and Procedures" be reviewed annually and noted that his program trains 150 to 200 adults each year. He also said that some Districts train on-line or have adults trained through Boy Scouts Youth Protection program.



Our third panelist was PDG Gene Hernandez who retired after 35 years in law enforcement, the last 9 as Chief of Police for Chino, California. Gene discussed background checks which have the mission to help provide a safe environment for youth involved in Rotary programs. He stated that based on his police background experience, predatory adults are drawn to youth activities. Background checks have also become an insurance requirement for many projects or programs since the abuse allegations against the Catholic Church.

People who are required to submit to a background check have several legitimate causes for concern: they want to know who will have access to the information, because they worry about identity theft or revelations about youthful indiscretions such as DUIs or drug possession arrests. Others may be reluctant to submit to a background check because they are aware that they will not pass due to prior convictions of illegal activity involving youth. Whenever someone resists, (s)he does not have to submit to the check, BUT as a consequence, (s)he should NOT BE ALLOWED to participate in activities involving his/her having contact with youth.

Once criteria are developed and the depth of a background check is determined, Gene recommends that an independent company perform these checks. Report details should be kept by that investigative company, and only “pass” or “fail” scores reported to the District Youth Officer who requested the background checks. In the event a District is participating with other Districts in a joint youth project, the DGs should sign off on a statement that their Districts have been in compliance prior to the event.

PIO (Press Information Officer) is another new, sadly necessary, Rotary District representative. Each District should have written policy on who will release information to the press so that numerous misinformation sources are not used about an incident or about Rotary. This will prevent harm to the club, the District or to Rotary’s image. The shooting event in Oregon involving youth exchange students was an example of the need for one person releasing information and revealed the fact that RI’s Evanston staff immediately provided advice and background information to assist the local Rotarians who were faced with dealing with the press while trying to properly notify family members of their student’s status.

Audience members had many comments and questions:

*ESSEX (another group of Youth Exchange Districts) requires FBI background checks for its youth programs.

* It was reported that one District was saved from a liability suit due to their compliance with RI Youth Protection Directives.

*Regarding placing students in host families of non-Rotarians, background checks give a better level of confidence that the student will be safe.

*Background checks provide protection to youth AND host families

*Negative reports require fast action to separate the person who failed the background check from the youth activity and to use due diligence in handling the issue of whether the person should be dropped from Rotary.

*RI has uniform rules for all countries, however some countries do not allow background checks.

*Ambassadorial scholars also need protection from abuse, sexual harassment and verbal harassment.

The entire panel continued answering questions during the break, to address additional questions raised by members of the audience.

Plenary Session XIV

“Future Vision”



PRID Ron Burton (left) and PDG Steve Brown, trustees of The Rotary Foundation, updated attendees on where the Future Vision process is at this time.

Steve reported that we are “fine tuning” the grant procedures between the 100 pilot districts. Concerning District Grants, to date 74 of the 78 applications received have been approved. Of those approved, 70 have received grant monies.



[Editor’s Note: Please hyperlink to the specific RI Website areas below indicated in blue for in-depth information.]

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

Of 318 Global Grant proposals received, 142 actual applications have been considered, of which 98 have been approved to date, 33 of which have been funded. The average Global Grant award is \$23,000 USD.

http://www.rotary.org/en/members/runningadistrict/futurevisionpilotprogram/Pages/fv_global_grants.aspx

Steve stated that one of the problems with the Future Vision Grant process is that the goal to simplify is not as yet being met, especially as it relates to the District Grant component. There are a number of issues to be discussed by the Future Vision Committee over a four-day period in April. These issues will cover both the District Grants and Global Grants include the number of staff needed to review proposals; travel permits other than those allowed for vocation training teams; can District Grants be allowed to support Youth Exchange Programs in “underserved” countries; and grants for scholars, either for basic or more advanced educational programs are to be reviewed.

Ron Burton indicated we are working to develop “packaged” grants with microcredit agencies and with nursing education personnel to design and to implement training programs. These are strategic partnerships directed toward developing literacy programs, vocational-specific skills and business-planning. The school of nursing at Aga Khan, for example, reflects the needs of the community. All nursing students must be employed in health care facilities near the university.

During the Q & A session, questions were raised concerning sustainability, collaboration between Pilot and non-Pilot districts and whether projects (such as water and sanitation) in non-Pilot districts can be sustained if their partner district has been designated as a Pilot district.

While sustainability is a requirement when considering Global Grants, the potential for partnering between Pilot and non-Pilot districts has not as yet come up for discussion by the Future Vision Committee.

Currently the committee is measuring about 98 items, utilizing a “traffic light” system in the program’s evaluation process.

The following link is a comprehensive overview of the Future Vision Program:

http://www.rotary.org/en/MediaAndNews/News/Pages/110119_IA11_foundation.aspx

Plenary Session XV

“The Bill Gates Challenge” and “How Close Are We to Eradication?”



The panel, moderated by PDG Marty Peters, included PRID John Germ, Vice-Chairman of TRF (top photo), PRIP Raj Saboo (middle photo), and PRID Bob Scott (lower photo), discussed the current status of the End Polio Now campaign.



The impact of activities in 2010 under the new Strategic Plan to allocate \$500,000 on an emergency basis as a stimulus to deal with polio outbreaks, has been significant. For the endemic countries, Nigeria and India have had a dramatic decrease in the number of new polio cases in 2010 compared to 2009. In Pakistan, however, there have been new cases, especially in mountainous areas and regions where rebellion is an ongoing problem. And in Afghanistan, the fourth endemic country, every new case of polio can be traced back to Pakistan.



For the non-endemic countries such as Tajikistan and the Republic of the Congo, where recent polio outbreaks have been quelled, unfortunately up to 34% of those infected have died. The others are crippled for life.

Thanks to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Polio campaign financing received a much-needed boost with the \$100 million Challenge Grant in 2008 and the subsequent Challenge Grant of \$255 million since then, totaling \$355 million. Rotary International's matching effort in response is called Rotary's US\$200 Million Challenge, which must be completed by 30 June 2012.

Panelists pointed out, however, that although the G8 community of nations have had a significant decrease in contributions to the campaign this past year, there have been significant fund-raising efforts on the part of Rotary clubs and districts and that contributions from philanthropists such as Rajashree Birla have totalled well over \$5 million dollars this past year. “Goodbye Polio - Thanks Rotary” illumination projects have helped to increase the public awareness of Rotary International and our campaign to eradicate this dreaded disease once and for all. Other projects include: RIBI's “Focus on Crocus” where millions of purple crocus bulbs planted across the RIBI region are supposed to bloom on February 23rd; in Switzerland sunflower seeds selling for \$6 dollars/packet have raised over \$700,000 to date; Rotarian bicyclists around the US are “Riding for Polio Eradication” to the International Convention in New Orleans; where Rotarians in Kentucky have donated 8% of concession receipts during the biennial International Equine Summit in April last year; where Afghanistan school children collected \$584.82 to help a polio victim, a crippled child; and several other examples from selling popsicle-stick bridges to individual Rotarians to RIPE Kalyan Banerjee's individual donations and a commitment to have a portion of the DDF allocated to the campaign has raised over \$800,000 to date -- all totalled we have raised \$162,100,000.84 to date towards meeting the Gates Challenge by next year.

PRIP Raj Saboo spoke about the 42 cases in 17 districts in northern India and how we are “winning the war” with the development and use of the Bivalent Polio vaccine (P_1 and P_3) and how RI played a role mediating interaction between local governments in the affected regions and the central government of India. Today the number of NID's has decreased. The expectation, he added during the Q & A session is that by the end of this year there will be zero new cases of polio in India. For a country to be certified polio-free, there must be three years of zero new cases.

[Editor's Note: Please go to <http://www.rotary.org/en/ServiceAndFellowship/Polio/Pages/ridefault.aspx?housead> for more information about this most important and timely topic]

Plenary Session XVI

“Looking Forward/My Vision”

RI PRESIDENT NOMINEE SAKUJI TANAKA



[Editor’s Note: The following is the edited text from the presentation given by RIPN Sakuji Tanaka, following an introduction by PRID T.D. Griley. It is reproduced almost verbatim.]

“Good morning!!

“Past RI Presidents, Past Trustees, and Past District Governors,

“It is my honor to be invited to this occasion today.

“When in junior high school, I wrote that I wanted to be a ‘prime minister.’ However, it did not mean that I wanted to become a politician. In my mind, to be a ‘prime minister’ is to be ‘at the top and to be the best’ in whatever job one might have in life. I strived to do just that, and this remains my goal today.

“Since I joined Rotary, I have a firm belief that vocational service is the value of Rotary. The spirit of vocational service urges us to answer to callings with the best of our abilities, with dignity and pride, be it running a country or shining shoes, as there is honor in every vocation.

“I am honored to have been nominated to serve as RI President in 2012-2013. Now, it is my duty to rise to the new challenge that faces me, and to help Rotary to rise to the challenges that face us all, with the best of my ability, with sincerity and humility.

“For the past 100 plus years, Rotary has had many successes. However, the world today is changing faster than ever before. In order to continue our successes in service and fellowship, we must face the challenges that come with such change, without losing our strengths or traditions.

“If Rotary International is to remain at the top and the best organization, the ‘prime minister’ of all organizations, we must support and strengthen our clubs, one of the three priorities in the revised strategic plan.

“As we all know,

A strong club is friendly, with members genuinely caring for one another.

A strong club is diverse and inclusive, with members of different age groups and genders, reflecting the cross sections of the community.

A strong club has interesting meetings.

A strong club addresses its members’ desire to make the club attractive, and responds to the needs of its community. And,

A strong club is where every member actively participates in services and activities.

“It is my belief that every Rotarian must keep in mind the responsibility of making clubs better. And, as leaders, it is our responsibilities to offer ideas and lead with a shared vision so that clubs can become stronger in reality.

“As the saying goes, if you want to get things done, ask a busy person. Busy people are good at making time and getting jobs done efficiently. If we are asking people to join Rotary, we cannot waste their time. Every meeting must be productive, and every Rotary activity should be enjoyable and worthwhile.

“In the work environment today, it is unrealistic to ask professionals to take two or three hours out of their workday every week to attend a club meeting. **We** need to adjust our thinking and practices to accommodate such reality.

“It is also true that Rotarians today are juggling many responsibilities, and many competing demands. To help members attend meetings, we can start with some changes that are easier to make. For example, club meetings can be held in the evening instead of over lunch, so that it would be more convenient for people to attend; and, to ensure the meetings begin and end on time, so that busy people can plan their days effectively. Making members’ expenses more reasonable may be another alternative to be considered. These can be some of the changes to attract members who will become the next generation of Rotary leaders.

“In business, the key principle for good profit is to make quality products and advertise them honestly. If we want to bring in new Rotarians, we must make Rotary membership appealing, and show its advantages candidly. By doing so, people will see that joining Rotary is a privilege and a way to contribute to societies. These are the values of Rotary that once a member joined, won’t give up easily, even when facing competing demands on his or her time and energy.

“People join Rotary for many reasons. But, I am sure all of us here stay in Rotary because it makes us happy and makes our lives meaningful, because, Rotary provides us the opportunities to give joy to others.

“In coming years, I look forward to facing the challenges of Rotary leadership and to rising to meet these challenges with your kind advice and support. As a Rotarian and as a past officer, I thank you for letting me share the time with you today.”

Wrap Up and Close

POR Chairman Fernando Favela thanked attendees, POR staff and all presenters for helping make this year's POR one of the most successful. There were 199 registrants. The hope is for those who attended to return again next year and to invite other past officers from their own districts to register for the 2012 reunion.

Fernando again recognized Ed Futa for his ten years of service to RI and presented him with an engraved wall plaque.

He closed this year's meeting with a quote from Ghandi:

“Freedom is not worth having if it does not include the freedom to make mistakes.”

We learn from mistakes and these mistakes make us better workers. No historically great person has ever achieved greatness without making mistakes.



The Star of India ship was illuminated with an End Polio Now message at the Maritime Museum of San Diego, California, USA, during the 2011 International Assembly, on Wednesday evening, January 19, 2011.

(Photo and caption from the Rotary Website at www.rotary.org)

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