

Rotary Club of Narooma Inc. weekly
bulletin

The Beacon



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Laurelle's Musings

Well Happy Valentine's Day everyone!

Tonight we enjoy the Fergusons' hospitality for the last of our summer get-togethers. We should have a good crowd so it promises to be a fun night. Joining us will be David and Deb Graham from RC Canberra East who are here on holidays – David is the Chair of the District PolioPlus Committee.

What I always enjoy about our 'This is My Life' talks by new Rotarians is they always are so fascinating, and Angie's last week was no exception. It all helps us to appreciate each other even more. I am not sure how we reciprocate though so new members find out about existing members – maybe we should also include in our topics for three minute talks something like 'My most memorable moment' or 'Life changing experiences'. Just a thought...

A huge thanks to Tony Fahey for taking the ShelterBox back to District Chairman Ken Adams at Bowral. Ken and Tony had a bit of a yarn about old times as Tony grew up in Bowral and Ken knew Tony's father well.

Many thanks also to Jack and Ted for organising its transport here and Kris for displaying it in the Commonwealth Bank. It took some organising Jack but I think it was well worth it for helping ticket sales.

Jack is going to try and track down the first two ShelterBoxes we donated to see where they went, and now keep track of our latest one.

Enjoy your evening.
Laurelle

FEBRUARY IS ROTARY WORLD UNDERSTANDING MONTH

Program

Tonight: Valentine's Day at the Ferguson's

| TASK | 14 February | 21 February | 28 February |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Greet /welcome/wheel | Meeting at the | Kevin Young | Lin Morey |
| Cashier | Ferguson's | Lin Morey | Bob Aston |
| Toast / thanks | | Bob Aston | Phil Gaffney |
| 4-way test | | Phil Gaffney | Jeremy Ferguson |
| 3-minute talk | | Jeremy Ferguson | Marilyn Gibson |
| FINES | | Marilyn Gibson | Chris O'Brien |
| Introduction | | Chris O'Brien | Kris Elpkick |

If you can't make it to the next Rotary meeting, please ring our attendance officer Ted Bladwell the day before on 4476 4676 or you will be charged for your meal. (R) signifies a Rotary talk, if you can.

COMING EVENTS: Next Week: Meet at VRA Headquarters at 6.00pm followed by dinner at the Whale

| | |
|-------------|---|
| 24 February | Narooma Rotary Markets – NATA Oval |
| 28 February | Club Assembly followed by a Board Meeting |
| 7 March | No Meeting on 6 March we meet on 7 March instead and entertain some cyclists from Bankstown |
| 13 March | A Bollywood Night – The Thomlinson's take us on a tour of India Partner's Night |
| 20 March | Board Meeting |
| 27 March | Combined meeting with Bega Rotary at the Cobargo Pub |

The Foundation Snippet

Here is a summary of the Annual Report (Financial) of The Rotary Foundation for the year 2006-07. The figures in the tables are US \$ millions

Income

| Fund | Investment income | Contributions received |
|---------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Annual Programs | 70.7 | 103.0* |
| PolioPlus Fund | 2.4 | 3.1 |
| Permanent Fund | 31.8 | 13.3 |
| Other mainly unrestricted | 0.9 | 13.7 |
| Total | 105.8 | 133.1 |

*Australia was 7th in the top 20 annual giving countries, giving US\$75 per Rotarian.

Expenditure

| | |
|------------------------|--------------|
| Program spending | 100.2 |
| Program operations | 18.7 |
| Fund development | 12.6 |
| General administration | 6.3 |
| Total | 137.8 |

Foundation Chairman Jack Wightman has the complete Annual Report and will make it available for perusal by interested members.

Wired for success

By Joseph Derr
The Rotarian

Gilberto Mendes Oliveira is limping, but he makes his way steadily up the hilly path, chatting with everyone he meets. He's surrounded by a pack of kids, one of whom spots a monkey in a tree. "We used to catch those when I was their age," Oliveira says. "That's how I got electrocuted."

Oliveira was nine years old when it happened. Catching and selling wild animals was a way to support his family. One afternoon, he climbed a tree near his home in rural Brazil and thrust a bamboo rod through the leaves, hoping to uncover a monkey. Instead, he hit an electrical transmitter, absorbing enough voltage to kill an adult. Oliveira survived, but for the next five years, he was confined to a hospital, 120 miles from his family and friends. Doctors had to amputate a leg and an arm. But he didn't let that slow him down.

In fact, he grew up to become a successful manager for the same energy company whose transmitter nearly killed him. Now a member of the Rotary Club of Betim, he became a Rotarian in late 2005. His first project: training young Brazilians how to handle high voltages – not as victims, but as electricians.

The program takes place at a community center run by Missão Ramacrisna, a charity on the outskirts of Betim, a suburb of Belo Horizonte in the mountainous southeastern state of Minas Gerais. With a US\$7,150 Rotary Foundation Matching Grant and \$9,700 from districts 4760 (Brazil) and 5060 (Canada), Rotarians equipped a classroom with supplies and work stalls that mirror typical household electrical systems. Oliveira and other Rotarian volunteers create the curriculum and teach. Missão Ramacrisna pays the tuition with support from the Betim city government.

Named after a 19th-century Indian guru, Missão Ramacrisna is a nonreligious organization that offers more than a dozen educational and professional programs, many focusing on children and adolescents from poor or troubled backgrounds. Built on several acres in the countryside, the center is filled with the sounds of children practicing instruments and playing on the playground. It is for Oliveira a very special place; indeed, as he negotiates the path outside the center, his voice cracks with emotion. "This is where I lived, and it's still my home," he says. "This place helped me prepare for the world outside."

Discipline on the road to recovery

After he was released from the hospital, 14-year-old Oliveira had nowhere to go. His family was poor, and his hometown lacked services for people with disabilities. Upon hearing about Oliveira's situation, Missão Ramacrisna offered to fund the teenager's education and invited him to live in one of its dormitories. He stayed until he married at the age of 26.

Oliveira, now 45, credits the charity for his success. He's especially grateful to its founder, Arlindo Corrêa da Silva, for treating him like any other student. "He would say, 'What's that piece of paper on the ground? Pick it up!' At the time, I thought it was harsh," says Oliveira. "But now I recognize that he was teaching me discipline. I learned that even though I was missing an arm and a leg, I was capable."

He swept the center's floors and later cared for new arrivals – mostly orphans or abandoned children – before going to work at Missão Ramacrisna's nonprofit pasta factory, his first paying job. After seeing Oliveira blossom at the center, Companhia Energética de Minas Gerais (CEMIG), the state energy conglomerate, offered him work as an office assistant. He quickly moved up the ranks, often besting strong competition.

"Once there were 40 applicants for a single job vacancy," he says. "I studied and studied and even hired a math tutor – and I got the position."

Now a manager of CEMIG's customer service center, Oliveira sees a bit of himself in the students who have entered the training program. On a Friday evening in May, the first group of prospective electricians – 18 in all – are sitting at their desks, already dressed the part in gray uniforms supplied by the Rotarians. They're hanging on every word of their instructor, Nelson Fonseca Leite, of the Rotary Club of Belo Horizonte-Pampulha. For them, the course is the opportunity of a lifetime.

After class, Leite, who headed up the effort alongside Oliveira, says that 20 students had enrolled. “Two left the program,” he says. “One because he found a job, and the other because he committed a crime and fled the police.”

Learning an ethical trade

Even though it has one of the largest economies in the world, Brazil still struggles with the problems of poverty. In the mainly rural region served by the Missão Ramacrisna center, about 70 percent of households live on less than \$400 per month. Jobs and training opportunities are rare, and violence and drugs are common.

To help combat these issues, the Rotarian-funded program goes beyond the nuts and bolts of an electrician’s apprenticeship; the students learn about character too. “There are electricians who will charge absurd rates. We’re learning that you have to charge a fair price,” says Ezequiel Ferreira Gomes, 24, one of the students. “We are also learning what it means to be a citizen and how to work in groups.”

Before entering the program, Gomes worked as a bricklayer and did odd jobs. “I like the electrical field a lot,” he says. “But I never had the chance to get professional training, and my dad couldn’t afford to pay tuition.”

As a child, Oliveira also couldn’t afford to study; even if he could, the closest classroom was 30 miles away. Instead of going to school, he and his siblings helped their parents work in kilns that processed wood into charcoal, or sometimes hunted and sold wild animals – a practice that has since been outlawed in Brazil.

Connecting with Rotary

Oliveira had not heard much about Rotary until 2005, when he met Leite, his future collaborator in the electrician training program. Leite had just become CEMIG’s superintendent for the Belo Horizonte region and met Oliveira while making his rounds in Betim. The two got to talking about topics beyond work: Rotary, Oliveira’s charitable efforts, and the lack of opportunities for young people in the community.

Oliveira invited Leite to visit Missão Ramacrisna. Leite accepted the invitation and was immediately impressed. It seemed “an ideal location for us to do a project,” says Leite. Also, Oliveira clearly “had the spirit of Rotary, because helping others is part of his life’s goal.”

At Leite’s suggestion, the Rotary Club of Betim invited Oliveira to join. “We consider him to be like a precious stone,” says club president Marcio Nogueira Resende. “Gilberto is very charismatic, knows many people, and is always attentive to the needs of others.”

Around the time Oliveira was joining Rotary, Leite’s then 16-year-old daughter, Mariana, was on a Rotary Youth Exchange in Kamloops, B.C., Canada. There she met Sherry Chamberlain, a local Rotarian, and the two discussed possible projects that would link Canadian Rotarians with the Brazilians. Mariana’s father mentioned Oliveira and Missão Ramacrisna, and the Rotary Club of Kamloops pitched in funds and secured additional support from the Rotary Club of Chase, B.C.

Graduation day

That original group of 18 students graduated from the program in July. As of late August, more than half had found employment as electricians. When he mentions this success, Oliveira cracks a wide smile. “I don’t have words to describe how I felt when they graduated,” he says. “I just know it was marvelous.”

The Rotary clubs plan to support classes for at least the next two years, training about 120 more students. That’s great news for Betim, a growing city that needs to invest in a skilled workforce. “As this project helps the students and their families, it helps our city at the same time,” says the mayor, Carlaile Pedrosa.

The advantages of the four-month course aren't just financial. "The young people participating in this project have a new outlook on life," Oliveira says. "Now they can face life with more dignity."

Today, Oliveira lives in a large house close to Betim and has a country home a few miles away, where he raises fruit and fish. The poverty of his early years seems a distant memory, and so does the accident. "I feel no trauma. In fact, it's the opposite," he says. "I have a lot of pride in my job. It helped me build a life. Sometimes a little kid will tell me, 'Hey, your arm is missing,' and then I'll remember."

Funny Side

The Golfer and his Caddy

The Golfer and his Caddy:

Golfer: I'd move heaven and earth to be able to break 100 on this course.

Caddy: Try heaven. You've already moved most of the earth.

The Golfer and his Caddy:

Golfer: Caddy, do you think it is a sin to play golf on Sunday?

Caddy: The way you play, sir, it's a sin any day of the week.

The Golfer and his Caddy:

Golfer: Do you think I can get there with a 5 iron?

Caddy: Eventually.

The Golfer and his Caddy:

Golfer (screaming): You've got to be the worst caddy in the world.

Caddy: I doubt it. That would be too much of a coincidence!

Some Corny Baby Jokes

What does a baby computer call his father?

Data.

The new father ran out of the delivery room and announced to the rest of his family who were waiting for the news: "We had twins!"

The family was so excited they immediately asked, "Who do they look like?"

The father paused, smiled, and said, "Each other."

A man goes to the Birth Registration Office to register his newborn son.

The man behind the counter asks the name he wants to give to the boy, and the father replies, "Euro."

The man says that such a name is not acceptable, because it's a currency.

The man says: "What? There weren't any objections when I called my first two sons Mark and Frank."

"There's a new baby at our house," Sally informed the mailman.

"Is that so? Is he going to stay?" asked the mailman.

"I think so," replied Sally glumly. "He's got all his things off."

One day, shortly after the birth of their new baby, the mother had to go out to do some errands, so the proud father stayed home to watch his wonderful new son.

Soon after the mother left, the baby started to cry. The father did everything he could think of, but the baby just wouldn't stop crying. Finally, the dad got so worried he decided to take the infant to the doctor.

After the doctor listened to all the father had done to get the baby to stop crying, the doctor began to examine the baby's ears, chest and then down to the diaper area. When he opened the diaper, he found was indeed full.

"Here's the problem," the doctor explained. "He just needs to be changed."

The perplexed father remarked, "But the diaper package specifically says it's good for up to 10 pounds!"

Valentine's Day

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia



Valentine's Day is a holiday celebrated on February 14. It is the traditional day on which lovers express their love for each other; sending Valentine's cards, or offering candy. It is very common to present flowers on Valentine's Day. The holiday is named after two among the numerous Early Christian martyrs named Valentine. The day became associated with romantic love in the circle of Geoffrey Chaucer in High Middle Ages, when the tradition of courtly love flourished.

The day is most closely associated with the mutual exchange of love notes in the form of "valentines." Modern Valentine symbols include the heart-shaped outline and the figure of the winged

Cupid. Since the 19th century, handwritten notes have largely given way to mass-produced greeting cards. The mid-nineteenth century Valentine's Day trade was a harbinger of further commercialized holidays in the United States to follow. The U.S. Greeting Card Association estimates that approximately one billion valentines are sent each year worldwide, making the day the second largest card-sending holiday of the year behind Christmas. The association estimates that women purchase approximately 85 percent of all valentines.

Subs for the second half of the year are due – See Kris