



The HIGHLANDER

The Official Newsletter of The Rotary Club of Dundas

FEBRUARY 2015



PROGRAMS:

Feb. 03 - Lindsay Sutherland, *Experiences in Inuvik*
 Feb. 10 - Nerene Virgin & Alan Smith, *Black History Month; The Remarkable Life of Dr. Charles Roman*
 Feb. 17 - A Review of Banda Aceh Indonesian Project
 Feb. 24 - Rotary Business Meeting

BIRTHDAYS:

February 08 - John MacRae
 February 14 - Yolanda Thornton
 February 17 - Bob Glass

Production - Roger Brewer

Photography - Christine Green

Printing - Kim Joseph

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PROMOTING MEMBERSHIP WITH NEW IDEAS...

By Ryan Hyland, Rotary News 21/01/2015

...EVEN SOME THAT CHALLENGE TRADITION!

Strengthening Rotary's membership is not just important for incoming district governors, it's critical. That's the message they received from several key speakers at their training event, the 2015 International Assembly in San Diego.

For membership to grow, leaders must be willing, for example, to ease stringent club meeting protocols and make other efforts to accommodate a younger, digitally oriented demographic.

Seventy percent of Rotary members are 50 years or older, while half of the world's population is under 30, according to Rotary leaders. The contrast shouldn't be something to fear, but rather something to embrace, said Rotary member Michael McQueen, a bestselling author who studies social change, youth culture, and cultural issues and whose consulting firm, The Nexgen Group, specializes in demographic shifts and social trends.

To engage this young demographic, McQueen says that staying relevant is crucial. He shared three key ways that enduring organizations can do that: recalibrate, re-engineer, and reposition.

But relevance does not involve compromise, McQueen stressed; the values, priorities, and commitment of Rotary should never change. "Any organization that is willing to compromise its DNA in order to stay relevant never lasts. After all, if you don't stand for something, you'll fall for anything," said McQueen, a member of the Rotary Club of Crows Nest, New South Wales, Australia.

RI General Secretary John Hewko expressed a similar view when he addressed the assembly. He said it's clear that members have been able to accomplish a great deal, but asked what they are "willing to do" to make Rotary stronger.

"So I'm asking all of you, in the coming year, to be voices for doing everything we can in Rotary, not just everything that's comfortable or easy or the way things have always been done," he said. "Be advocates for thoughtful, positive, and lasting change. We have a great tradition in Rotary, but it's our tradition. We made it, we own it – it doesn't own us; if it no longer serves its purpose, we can change it."

McQueen suggests adjusting some of the traditions, processes, and protocols that "could be the very things that cause us to lose relevance."

In McQueen's native Australia, the Rotary Club of Toronto Sunrise, New South Wales, has three members sharing leadership responsibilities for a year as co-presidents. The club reports that having the skills and ideas of three leaders is prompting other changes, and has already resulted in a 25 percent gain in membership. The club is part of a new Rotary pilot project, now being expanded to 1,000 clubs, which encourages them to experiment with variations on Rotary's traditional club structure. Applications for the 2015-17 pilot are being accepted until March 31st.

According to McQueen, change and innovation are led by people with fresh perspectives. Rotary members can draw new ideas from new members, guest speakers, family members, even children who tag along to club meetings.

"The beauty of people with fresh eyes is that they don't know how things have always been done because no one has told them yet," said McQueen. "They have no trouble thinking outside the box because no one has told them what the box even looks like."

And young people, he said, "represent an enormous opportunity for this organization from a membership point of view. They are an ambitious bunch of natural networkers who, contrary to popular opinion, have a strong sense of civic duty."

Change is never easy, McQueen conceded, but Rotary members must be open to it. "We must avoid the trap of ever feeling we have arrived at the winning formula, which we then set in stone. After all, the moment you think you've made it, you've passed it."

Growing membership is a major goal of Rotary President Gary C.K. Huang. Engaging youth, inviting more women into clubs, and embracing change are all important to increasing and keeping members, Huang said.

Sometimes, he noted, adding a member is as simple as asking someone to join. Since he took office on July 1st, Huang has recruited several dignitaries while traveling, including Ed Royce, a U.S. congressman from California; Mulenga Sata, deputy mayor of Lusaka, Zambia's capital; and Beatrice Lorenzin, Italy's minister of health. All of them, Huang said, praised Rotary's work before being asked to join.

RI President-elect K.R. "Ravi" Ravindran applauded Huang's tireless work, calling him a "one-man army" promoting membership.

"All of you are going to be busy people next year, and I urge you to make a habit of asking other busy people to join. Don't leave them out," said Huang. "Maybe some of them will say no, and that's OK. But I don't want any of them to say they are not Rotarians because nobody ever asked."

He added: "Our membership and services are what make Rotary powerful and strong. To keep it strong, membership recruitment and retention have to be a priority for every incoming Rotary leader."

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FEBRUARY MEETING RESPONSIBILITIES

| | FEBRUARY 3 | FEBRUARY 10 |
|----------------------|---|---|
| Setup/Take down | <i>The Usual Suspects & The Phantom Defendant</i> | <i>The Usual Suspects & The Phantom Defendant</i> |
| Greeter | Christine Green | Roger Brewer |
| Invocation | Tamara Johnson | Garry Barankin |
| O' Canada | John Attridge | John Attridge |
| Intro./Thank Speaker | Carl Loewith | Bob Glass |
| | FEBRUARY 17 | FEBRUARY 24 |
| Setup/Take down | <i>The Usual Suspects & The Phantom Defendant</i> | <i>The Usual Suspects & The Phantom Defendant</i> |
| Greeter | Ian Donnelly | Ellen Boyce |
| Invocation | Ellen Boyce | Marguerite Ward |
| O' Canada | John Attridge | John Attridge |
| Intro./Thank Speaker | Kamal Shankardass | |

Banda Aceh: Reviewing An International Project



The Main Entrance to the RI Health Center at Banda Aceh. Photos: Rotary Awards 2009-2010

The Rotary Club of Dundas, partnered with Hamilton's McMaster University and Syiah Kuala University in Banda Aceh, is working to help re-establish medical education to develop curricula for both Family Medicine and Disaster Planning and provide funding for the operation of a health clinic, an orphanage, an elementary and secondary school and some small start-up businesses at the Yayasan Centre.

Given the vulnerability of Indonesia to earthquakes and other natural disasters, the medical curriculum will fill an important need in both understanding the risk and vulnerability of an area and how to deal with the mass casualties that result from a disaster.

Dr. Kamal Shankardass: Banda Aceh Indonesia,
Post 2004 tsunami update 05/03/2013

ROTARY BRINGS HEALTH TO BANDA ACEH, INDONESIA

When the Tsunami hit Aceh Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam Province in North Sumatra, Indonesia, on December 26th 2004, the Rotary Club of Kuching Central responded immediately with the set up of a committee entrusted to provide assistance to the Tsunami victims and raise funds.

Within nine days after the Tsunami occurred, the Rotary Club of Kuching Central responded by airlifting a total of 7 tons of medical items on January 4th and January 6th 2005. Some of the medical items comprised of the followings: I.V. drips, syringes (of various sizes), pain killers, bandages, Chloroquine, Dyna Lomodum, Medazole, Amoxycillin, Copastin tablets, Nicol eye drops, Asthma Tablets, Vemycin Cream, Chlorhexidine, Triangular Bandage, Sodium Chloride Solution, Face Mask etc.

These medical items were airlifted courtesy of MAS free-of-charge from Kuching to Medan. Upon reaching Medan, they were distributed by a local NGO (Non-Governmental Organization) by the name of Aceh Sepakat who have a few thousand members on the field providing relief works working together with the Rotary Club of Langkat in Medan.

Meanwhile, the club also took the initiatives to publicize this humanitarian works in the local news media which resulted in many organizations and individuals calling to donate money and medical items.

A total of RM 170,000 was raised in addition to the 7 tons of medical aids. While some of the funds have been used for the Tsunami victims, there is still a hefty balance of unutilized funds remaining.

The committee has been looking for a suitable project with a good, reliable and trustworthy partner to ensure that the money is being put to good use

for its intended purpose to help the Tsunami victims. The committee is also adamant that the funds raised should not be used for other purposes apart for providing help to the Tsunami victims because when donors donated their money, they had the understanding that the club was to use the funds raised to help the Tsunami victims.

Upon continuously searching for a partner, the club eventually came to know of the Rotary International Health Center Banda Aceh project. Soon after, the Project Chairman was identified and the club got connected with AG John Soe in February 2009. Active communications followed thereafter.

For more images of the Banda Aceh Clinic opening go to:

flickr.com/photos/johnsoe/sets/72157622867896988/

Photos of the devastation suffered from the tsunami are available on:

projects.mindtel.com/2005/0115.tzone/t1/05-bandaaceh.html

LONG AFTER 2009'S TSUNAMI ROTARY'S YOUTH CENTRE CONTINUES TO GROW...

Jim Luce, The Huffington Post 05/25/2011

I arrived in Aceh a few weeks after the catastrophic Tsunami of December 2004. As founder of Orphans International Worldwide (OIWW), I wanted to use our original project in Manado, Indonesia, as a springboard to help orphans left behind by the disaster in Aceh, Sumatra. We opened OIWW Sumatra and ran it for three years, until we could reunite the children with extended families following Aceh's economic recovery.

Within a year of the Tsunami, most NGOs had left. We stayed three years. But Rotary International is always long-term. The Rotary Youth Centre near Banda Aceh is a group of multi-function buildings catering to the youth of Aceh who were severely disadvantaged by the Tsunami. The center now consists of an orphanage, medical health centre, surgeries and dental facilities, student accommodation for university students, a sports centre, a kindergarten, and even a training center.

Like the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti, the Tsunami was one the greatest natural disasters of our time, killing hundreds of thousands of people in Indonesia, Sri Lanka and other Indian Ocean nations. The wave's epicentre was only 100 km off the coast of Banda Aceh, in North Sumatra, Indonesia. I witnessed Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and Haiti and the horror its people had endured

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and have seen with my own eyes their suffering.

Rotary International, the global humanitarian organization, is one of the most important institutions I know of because it helps alleviate such suffering. Rotary Clubs around the world were quick to respond to both the Tsunami and the earthquake. In Aceh, Rotary Clubs contributed funds to my own effort – OIWW Sumatra – as well as their own Rotary Youth Centre Aceh. Rotary Clubs in Bali and Jakarta, Indonesia, and Turrumurra in Australia were particularly helpful to creating the Rotary Youth Centre Aceh.

Six years after the Tsunami, the well-built Rotary's Youth Centre continues in Aceh. Its components continue to provide support to the people of Aceh who lost so much.

An Orphanage with three housing blocks and a training block. Each housing block accommodates ten children and a housemother. The training block is used for a kindergarten, computer training, a sewing group, religious instruction, and traditional dance. The orphanage has been in operation for four years now and provides a safe environment and food for the children, and ensures a good quality education. The kids attend formal classes at nearby public schools. After school, they are given an opportunity to select an activity for the afternoon, such as sport, Tai Kwan Do, traditional dance, computer training, art, and other skills focusing on activities useful for them after they leave school. There is a session of religious education each evening, important in this Muslim area. Recreational time is also spent by the children developing fruit and vegetable gardens, chicken farming, aquaculture to raise fish for the table, and planting trees etc. Trips to the beach and other locations are provided on public holidays and some Sundays.

The kindergarten was established at the request of the local villagers, and is now self supporting. We provide the work place, but their parents pay for the teacher's salaries and equipment. The orphans are not so lucky. In most cases they have no parents, and at most a widowed mother with several children.

The sewing group are a group of ladies, provided with a workplace, sewing machines, electricity and training to enable them to make clothing for their families and for schools and to otherwise sell their product. This group is also self supporting.

The Health Centre has medical and dental surgeries and equipment, a CT scan, and patients' waiting rooms, with accommodation for visiting medical practitioners and an administration office. The facilities are almost complete and operations will soon commence, to provide health services for the 24,794 people in Syiah Kuala sub district of Greater Aceh.

The student accommodation block has recently been completed, and was initially built to house university students, and international student exchange programs. The last to be funded is the Sports Center, which is a steel framed covered "Futsal" suitable for indoor soccer, basketball and other sports. This building is not yet completed.

For over thirty years, there had been a deadly conflict in Aceh, between the national government based in Jakarta and separatists in Aceh. Ironically, it was the Tsunami drowning hundreds of thousands of people, destroying buildings and infrastructure, and paralyzing the economy that lead to an internationally-brokered agreement between the two sides, allowing peace a chance to establish a sound economy.

I spoke to Fulbright scholar Dedek Arahman, an Acehnese studying in the U.S. who has been involved with the Rotary Youth Centre (RYC) for years. A graduate student for Educational Leadership in the University of Arkansas, she is sponsored by the Bush and Clinton Foundation through the Fulbright Tsunami Relief Program and will return next fall to continue to help the Centre.

"Youth are the future of this country, and education is the secret to lift them out of poverty. The founders of the RYC project believe that it is not enough to provide accommodation and food for orphans and the poor, but that it is also necessary provide the lift necessary to enable them to be self respecting and self sustaining in the future." said Dedek.

I know from personal experience that the \$100,000 you raise for Haiti or Sri Lanka or Indonesia immediately after a disaster cannot be replicated the following year. People move on in their minds. The disaster is over. Sustaining a project post-disaster is the most difficult of all NGO activities. Today, the buildings and other infrastructure, clean water and training venues of the Rotary Youth Centre are almost complete, but they need more funding to sustain them.

When we visited Banda Aceh two years after the Tsunami struck, there

was a lot of rubble and little sign of community facilities. The Rotary Youth Center stood out like a lighthouse amongst the damaged buildings and rutted roads and was a beacon of hope. We met the first group of children who would benefit from the Center and while we could not communicate with words we certainly could communicate with smiles.

I told Dedek that if Rotary would continue to fund the project, I would arrange additional funding from the James Jay Dudley Luce Foundation and Orphans International Worldwide (OIWW). She agreed to try. At the end of the day, at the end of the disasters – whether in Indonesia, Sri Lanka or Haiti, try is all we can do. I urge us all to try harder – for the sake of the children left standing after the disasters pass.

YAYASAN KESEJAHTERAAN MASYARAKAT ACEH -2012-PRESENT-

The earthquake and tsunami natural disasters in Aceh on December 26th 2004 invoked international sympathy to help rebuild Aceh. One organization called Rotary International District 3400, supported by the Rotary Foundation and many Rotary Clubs scattered around the world, has been carrying out humanitarian activities both at the stage of emergency response, rehabilitation and reconstruction phase and even further to the idea of enabling the young people of Aceh to get an education while at the same time fostering a future to a better direction. Rotary Youth Center was the initial name for the whole complex of the project.

The idea supported by the Aceh Provincial Government was realized in the form of development plans for a dormitory for students from the districts and municipalities in Aceh province by the Rotary Club in Banda Aceh (Rotary Club 4300). Through this club the idea of the Aceh provincial government was realized in the form of the construction of a Youth Centre that would be developed as a Center for the activities of the young generation and would be comprised of complete boarding facilities, medical center, place of worship, as well as a sports facility and housing to accommodate orphaned children.

Once the basic plan was created, funding was obtained from the Rotary Foundation, as well as from clubs spread throughout the Rotary world. The Rotary Foundation has allocated funds for post earthquake and tsunami reconstruction in Aceh, through the agency set up specifically for Indonesia, namely The Rotary Foundation in South Asia Solidarity Fund, Indonesia National Committee (TRFSSAFINC). TRFSSAFINC funds and other funds that were collected from various sources were allocated for the Youth Center allowing these plans to be realized in stages. The funds available provided for the construction of the Gampong Aneuk facility, Health Centre and Student Dormitory. On November 14th 2010 a meeting was held between the Government of the District of North Aceh and the Rotary Club where it was agreed upon to build facilities and infrastructure on government owned land located in the district of Aceh Besar in order to continue the education for orphaned child victims of the earthquake and Tsunami as well as developing the youth of Aceh toward being independent. It was necessary to form a body to manage the entire educational activities in the area including the setting – up of Gampong Aneuk and a health center. As a follow-up in March 2012, the government of North Aceh and Aceh Province along with Rotary International established a foundation called "Aceh Community Welfare Foundation", (YAKESMA abbreviated from Yayasan Kesejahteraan Masyarakat Aceh). Currently Aceh Community Welfare Foundation (YAKESMA) focuses on several sectors. In the education sector it has established three schools with different levels. At a basic level Early Childhood Education (Playgroup) Ar Rasyiid has been established to answer the wishes of the local community.

On July 9th 2012, the Yasoida Junior and Senior Boarding School officially opened. The boarding schools use the curriculum that has been modified to accommodate the students from various districts and municipalities in Aceh. An estimated 99% of them come from underprivileged families. The overall cost of students' education is the responsibility of the foundation.

The Health Centre is another facility at YAKESMA. The 2-storey building is now functioning as the Health Center to support the children and the community. In addition, Yakesma also owns a training center, sport center, fishponds, and rice farm. Since there is a limited support from funding, the YAKESMA should be able to run the facilities as the profit, where the income will go to support the orphans and the overall operational cost of the project.

ROTARY RELEASES \$34.8 MILLION FOR POLIO IMMUNIZATION ACTIVITIES WORLDWIDE

By Arnold R. Grahl, *Rotary News* 23/01/2015

Rotary International released an additional \$34.8 million in grants to support polio immunization activities in 10 countries, including Afghanistan, Nigeria, and Pakistan, the three countries where the disease has never been stopped.

The funds, whose release was announced January 20th, will be used by the World Health Organization and UNICEF for polio immunization and surveillance activities in the 10 countries, as well as to provide technical assistance in several other countries in Africa.

The grants include \$8.1 million for Nigeria to support its final push to eradicate the disease. Nigeria experienced a nearly 90 percent reduction in cases in 2014 compared with the previous year, and hasn't registered a new case of polio in the last six months.

"Nigeria has managed an incredible feat," says Dr. Tunji Funsho, Rotary's PolioPlus chair for Nigeria. "However, now we must be more vigilant than ever, as our progress is fragile."

Commitment to polio eradication from all levels of the Nigerian government has proved crucial to the country's recent progress. Disease experts are urging political leaders to maintain this focus as national elections approach next month.

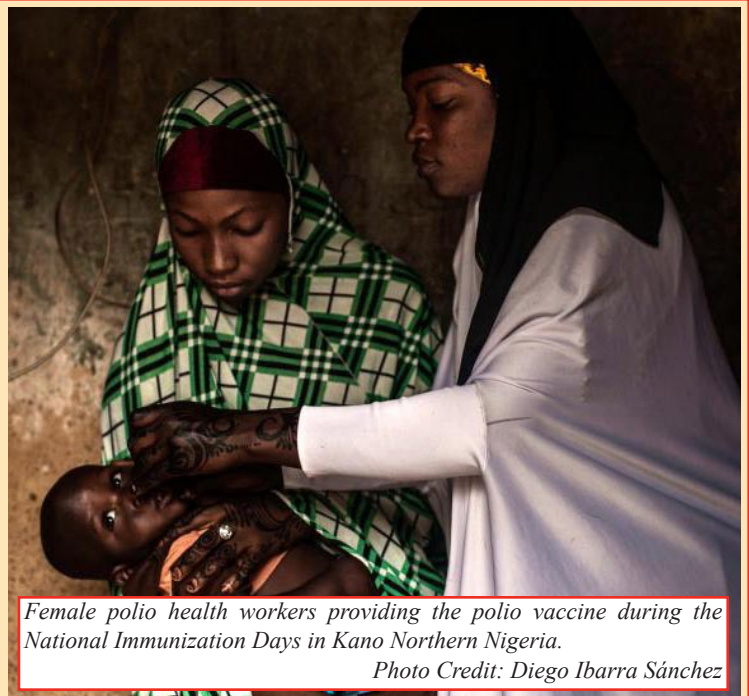
The Global Polio Eradication Initiative, in which Rotary is a partner, made significant progress against polio in 2014 in most places. More than half of the world's cases in 2013 were the result of outbreaks in previously polio-free countries, largely caused by instability and conflict in countries including Syria, Iraq, and Somalia. The outbreaks appear to have been stopped last year following special vaccination efforts in 11 countries that reached more than 56 million children.

"We are encouraged to see the tangible progress made against this disease in 2014," says Mike McGovern, chair of Rotary's International PolioPlus Committee. "However, until we eliminate polio from its final reservoirs, children everywhere are at risk from this disease. Rotary – along with our partners – will work hard to ensure that the world's most vulnerable children are kept safe from polio."

One less promising spot in the polio eradication fight has been Pakistan, which saw an explosive outbreak totaling more than 300 cases in 2014, the most there in more than a decade. As a result, Pakistan accounted for almost 90 percent of the world's cases last year.

Pakistan will receive \$1.1 million of the funds that Rotary is releasing to support eradication efforts there. In addition, the grants include \$6.7 million in Afghanistan, \$7 million in Somalia, \$3.3 million in Democratic Republic of Congo, \$2.8 million in Niger, \$2.5 million in Chad, \$1.6 million in Cameroon, \$1.1 million in Ethiopia, and \$250,000 in Kenya. A total of \$321,000 will provide technical assistance in Africa.

To date, Rotary has contributed more than \$1.3 billion to fight polio. Through 2018, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation will match 2-to-1 every dollar that Rotary commits to polio eradication (up to \$35 million a year). In 2014, there were only 350 confirmed polio cases in the world, down from about 350,000 a year when the initiative began in 1988.



Female polio health workers providing the polio vaccine during the National Immunization Days in Kano Northern Nigeria.

Photo Credit: Diego Ibarra Sánchez

THE ROOTS OF ROTARY'S POLIO EFFORTS



by Arnold R. Grahl, *Rotary International News*

On a sunny afternoon in September 1979, Rotarians and delegates of the Philippine Ministry of Health looked on as volunteers administered drops of the lifesaving Sabin polio vaccine to about 100 children in the Manila barrio of Guadalupe Viejo.

The date was September 29th and James L. Bomar Jr., then RI President, put the first drops of vaccine into a child's mouth, ceremonially launching the Philippine poliomyelitis immunization effort – Rotary's first Health, Hunger and Humanity (3-H) Grant project was underway. Hundreds of Philippine Rotarians and community members were on hand as Enrique M. Garcia, the country's minister of health, joined with Bomar to sign the contract committing Rotary International and the government of the Philippines to the joint five-year effort to immunize about six million children against polio in a US\$760,000 immunization drive.

The success of the project ultimately led to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, of which Rotary is a spearheading partner, created in 1988 by a unanimous vote of the World Health Assembly. It also set the stage for Rotary's signature campaign to rid the world of polio. As a result of Rotary's efforts, more than 2.5 billion children have received the oral polio vaccine. Since Rotary launched its PolioPlus campaign in 1985, the number of polio cases worldwide has dropped 99%, and the virus remains endemic in only 3 countries – Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Nigeria.



In a 1993 interview, Bomar reminisced about the trip. He recalled how the brother of one of the children he had immunized tugged on his pant leg to get his attention, and said, "Thank you, thank you, Rotary."

A BRIEF GLIMPSE INTO ROTARY'S POLIO PAST

“For our first 50 years, Rotary service activities were largely done by individual Rotary clubs selecting projects in their own communities.



However, a major change took place during the 1960s as clubs began to look at the whole world as their community – and international service activities began to emerge.

- In 1963, RI President Carl Miller introduced the Matched District and Club Program.
- Shortly after, in 1965, The Rotary Foundation launched the very first Matching Grants.

• The following year, in 1966, the concept of World Community Service was officially launched. Rotary clubs began to reach across national boundaries and the oceans of the world. International service began to complement local community projects.

• The next year, 1967, Rotary expanded its international activities with Rotary Volunteers Abroad, offering technical and professional assistance to developing nations.

• Disaster relief became another extension of Rotary clubs into worldwide service.

But some rotary leaders dreamed of doing even more...

• In 1978, RI President Clem Renouf initiated the Health, Hunger and Humanity (3-H) program to enable Rotary to complete international projects much larger than any club or district could ever attempt.

(Excerpts from a speech by Cliff Dochterman (RIPP) at the International Assembly in San Diego, California, USA in January 2010)

THE UNITED STATES EXPERIENCED ITS FIRST MAJOR POLIO OUTBREAK IN THE SUMMER OF 1916, WITH THE EPIDEMIC CENTERED IN NEW YORK CITY. MANY SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES CLOSED THEIR DOORS TO OUTSIDERS, USING HEAVILY ARMED POLICEMEN TO PATROL THE ROADS AND RAIL STATIONS IN SEARCH OF FLEEING NEW YORKERS AND THEIR CHILDREN. THE EPIDEMIC LASTED THROUGH OCTOBER, CLAIMING 27,000 AMERICAN LIVES. NEW YORK CITY REPORTED 8,900 CASES AND 2,400 DEATHS, 80% BEING CHILDREN UNDER FIVE.

I was a co-chairman of that first 3-H Committee, and we realized that this was to be a huge departure for Rotary clubs to undertake and support large-scale projects that could really make a difference in the world. The program was not enthusiastically endorsed and was actually challenged and criticized by many senior Rotary leaders.

Fortunately, special funds were being collected to celebrate Rotary's 75th anniversary in 1980, and those funds launched the first 3-H program.

We wanted an immediate success story to demonstrate that the program was effective, so the very first proposal we selected for the very first 3-H project provided polio immunization for six million children in the Philippines.

This effort, and other successful immunization projects, became the forerunner of the PolioPlus program to eradicate polio throughout the entire world.

Other 3-H projects provided community sanitation in Colombia, national literacy programs in Thailand, health care and food production projects in several nations, and much more. Rotary had found a way to launch huge national and regional projects, in spite of the opposition from many Rotary leaders.

Building upon the 3-H program, in 1981, RI President Stan McCaffrey appointed the New Horizons Committee, which set a new path for future decades.

Among the committee's 30 recommendations which the RI Board adopted was... the idea of providing polio vaccine for all the children of the world. The massive fundraising campaign did not really begin until President Carlos Canseco in 1984-85 said, "...It's time to get started. And we did."

Text extracted from "OUR FOUNDATION FOR ROTARY LEADERS" August 2011, Issue 111



Marilyn Bell says, "End Polio Now!"

It all began at 11:00 p.m. on September 8th, 1954 when Florence Chadwick, an American marathon swimmer, began her attempt to cross the frigid waters of Lake Ontario. Meanwhile, two Canadian female swimmers were "lurking" in the nearby woods. One was the well-known local swimmer, Winnie Roach. The other was a virtually unknown Toronto schoolgirl, Marilyn Bell, only 16 years old. Marilyn waded into Lake Ontario at Youngstown, NY, at 11:07 p.m.

The water was chilly, the night pitch black and it wasn't long before Miss Roach was forced to give up her attempt. And after just five hours in the water, Chadwick ended her effort, too. That left just one swimmer, the young lady who almost no one had even heard of. Bell swam for 20 hours and 59 minutes under gruelling conditions – cold water temperatures, waves almost three metres (15 feet) high, and lamprey eels attacking her arms and legs.

Then, at exactly 8:04 p.m. – as all of Canada took a deep breath – Marilyn Bell touched the Boulevard Club's breakwall, just off shore of Sunnyside Beach in Toronto. She had done it! Marilyn had conquered what was now her lake, and over the next two years she went on to conquer two more ominous bodies of water, the English Channel and the Juan de Fuca Strait.

I have had the extraordinary privilege to meet this amazing woman who continues to inspire young and old alike. Marilyn told me that she remembers well the risk of polio when she was a teenager and she even taught swimming to polio victims.



Today, sixty years after her famous Lake Ontario swim, the one-and-only, Marilyn Bell Di Lascio, shows her support of Rotary International's End Polio Now campaign! We hope you will, too!

*Thie C.L. Convery, Rotary Club of Dundas
Chair, End Polio Now, Rotary District 7090*

Rotary District 7090 Newsletter February 2015 excerpt.



PAUL ALEXANDER: MAN IN IRON LUNG DISCOVERS ROTARY

By Arnold R. Grahl, Rotary News 15/01/2015

One might think a man living with polio in an iron lung would know about Rotary. But it wasn't until Paul Alexander had a business meeting with a member in Duncanville, Texas, earlier this year that he learned Rotary fights to eradicate the very disease that left him almost completely paralyzed.

"I was completely blown away by the idea. For all these years, I didn't know the work they were doing," says Alexander, a practicing attorney in Dallas. "It's such a perfect fit for me."

Alexander contracted polio during a major U.S. outbreak of the disease in the late 1950s when he was six years old, and almost died in the hospital before a doctor noticed he wasn't breathing and rushed him into an iron lung, an airtight metal tank that encloses all of the body except the head and uses regulated changes in air pressure to force the lungs to inhale and exhale. Alexander is among a small number of people in the world today still using an iron lung to assist his paralytic polio. The need for the 800-pound machines declined dramatically after the polio vaccine became widely available in the early 1960s.

In October, Alexander became a member of the Rotary E-Club of District 5810 during an induction ceremony held in his home, attended by Rotary's President Gary C.K. Huang through an online connection. Alexander is writing a book about his experience and wants to be an ambassador for Rotary promoting the benefits of eradicating polio.

For 10 years, Alexander never left the device or his house. But then he had a breakthrough, teaching himself to breathe on his own by forcing air into his lungs. That allowed him to get around in a wheelchair for up to eight hours.

"The first day I was outside the house was extraordinary. It was a 100% improvement," he recalls.

Determined to go to college, he moved onto campus and with the help of a nursing assistant attended classes, earning a degree from the University of Texas. He eventually went on to earn a law degree, passed the bar, and practices civil and criminal law.

He has a computer keyboard and a touchtone phone by his head which he can manipulate with a plastic stick held in his mouth. When he goes to court for a case, he has assistants who help him. He's traveled farther from his home on rare occasions. The iron lung, which has wheels, is shipped to meet him at his destination.

His father was president of a Dallas Rotary club in the 1960s, but Alexander says he doesn't remember it. His introduction to Rotary began when he met Duncanville member Alexander Peralta. Peralta told the Rotary District 5810 governor, Bill Dendy, who immediately decided Alexander would be the perfect subject of a video his wife was making on polio eradication. Alexander agreed, and a film crew from the district's e-club came out to shoot the interview.

"I visited him weekly after that," Dendy says. "One day, I said to him, 'Paul, you could be a contributing member of Rotary.' He asked me how that would be possible. And I told him with an e-club, which meets online, it would be very possible."



Rotary e-club member Linda Elliott visits fellow member Paul Alexander in his home. Alexander is among a small number of people in the world today who rely on an iron lung to breathe.

Photo Courtesy of Linda Elliott, Rotary E-club of District 5810

Since joining Rotary, he's become a popular speaker in the Dallas Rotary community. He's already addressed two large gatherings and is scheduled to speak at the next district conference. The Waxahachie Rotary Club, which builds wheelchair ramps as a project, built him a new one when they heard he transports his iron lung to the hospital or for longer trips.

"It means so much to me to belong to this organization," Alexander said during a phone call to his home recently. "I'm having a great time and staying awake at night thinking of ideas. So many people have come into my life. I never knew there were so many caring people out there."

SURVIVING ON KINDNESS: DALLAS MAN IN IRON LUNG RECOUNTS LIFE GUIDED BY COMPASSION

By Shelley Conlon, Daily Light Digital News Editor, 11/08/2014

DALLAS – As a tow-headed 6-year-old, Paul Alexander took apart everything, including his mother's blender, simply to understand how it worked. His father would be close behind, putting the pieces back together.

Alexander didn't know at that time there would be a day he wouldn't be able to take things apart, wouldn't be able to run around in the mud, or do other rambunctious activities the average 6 year-old could do. Paralytic polio would place him in an iron lung, a machine that forces air into his lungs with help from a pressurized system, about a week after he had checked into a Dallas hospital in 1952 and shortly after he was prematurely pronounced dead.

Now Alexander, who is in his late 60s, is one of 10 people in the world who still live in an iron lung. He contracted the deadly illness toward the end of a major United States polio outbreak, and said his survival into his 60s wouldn't have been possible without the good hearts and grace of others like those in the Waxahachie Rotary Club. The Rotarians spent Saturday morning building a ramp to help Alexander transport his 1,200-pound lung to and from the hospital more easily. It's that same hospitality that saved his life in the hospital when he was first diagnosed.

And it's that same hospitality that helped him to finish three different college degrees, including one to become a practicing lawyer, which is his current occupation.

"I remember walking into my mom's kitchen one day and her turning around and saying, 'Oh no,' and I was like, 'Mom, I know I'm muddy and dripping on the floor,'" Alexander said. "She said, 'Paul go get a bath. Right now.' After I got the mud off, she put me up in her bed and she knew instantly. Every parent in Dallas, and everywhere else, was so afraid that the polio epidemic was going to come see their child. So, she knew right away."

continued of next page

THE HOSPITAL

Alexander was put into bed and given coloring books and crayons to keep him occupied. He said he spent the next week coloring as much as he could, as fast as he could. He didn't know why, he said, except that he felt a compulsion to draw.

"Every day, I could do a little bit less," he said. "Every day it was harder to hold onto the crayons."

It was harder to move. It was harder to even sit up.

At one point, he could remember his father having to hold him up to keep him from falling off the toilet. Polio, which attacks the respiratory system and limb movement, paralyzed him from the neck down.

"It was like the devil going through my body," Alexander said, crying. "Shooting all the lights out."

Every day, he would get a little weaker, until the end of the week when doctors realized he wasn't breathing. By the time his parents were able to get Alexander to the hospital, doctors pronounced him dead. They laid him aside, he said, with other children who hadn't survived.

He doesn't know how long he was there for when a doctor came by and re-examined him. The doctor noticed Alexander still had a fighting chance, picked him up in his arms and ran upstairs to place him in the iron lung.

He laid unconscious for several weeks later before he opened his eyes. He didn't know if he had woken up in heaven or hell, he said, because he couldn't move anything to figure out where he was and he couldn't see anything because of a plastic cover hanging over the iron lung.

Only when he caught a glimpse of his mother between a small opening in the cover did he know everything was going to be all right, he said.

"Nobody ever knew what happened or why he picked me up, and unfortunately, I never got to ask him," Alexander said. "But he picked me up in both arms and ran upstairs with me, and performed the tracheotomy, so they could get all the congestion out and so I could breathe. He did all that, and I don't know what he saw – could've been nothing, could've been something – but for whatever reason he was motivated to save this one child."

Alexander would stay in the hospital for nearly 18 months before he was released with his iron lung.

THE "FOREVER" STUDENT

His parents would take care of him until 1971, when he decided to go to college. "The early part was very, very scary, but I'm an Alexander," he said. "My parents taught me to have a lot of pride and self-respect, and God taught me to believe I could do anything I dreamed of – and I did. So instead of letting Polio break me or kill me, I fought it hard. The more it would knock me down, the angrier I would get. That anger, I've often said, is what kept me alive."

Because, again and again, and again and again, Alexander was pronounced dead at the hospital, he said. Doctors would walk by and tell others not to worry about him, he won't make it until dinner time, he said.

There was never a moment when that defiance wasn't there, he said. He would climb on his roof when he could still walk, just to see his world from another perspective, he said. That determination is what pushed him to go to college and what convinced his parents to allow him to do it on his own.

Two weeks before school started, his parents transported him and his iron lung to the University of Texas in Austin. Before he left Dallas to move, he hired another student to meet him and take care of him.

When he arrived at his dorm, the place was empty. This would be the first time he would be on his own. Shortly after, his parents left. They didn't like it, he said, but they did it. On their way out, his father told him if he needed anything, to use a plastic stick with a pencil tied perpendicularly on the end to dial the phone near his head. If Alexander couldn't handle it, he could take the stick in his mouth, push the buttons on the phone, and his parents would return immediately, he said. Alexander uses the stick today to type on a keyboard.

That was the end of security and comfort and love, because Mom and Dad were gone, he said, and nobody showed up afterward.

For three days, nobody knew Alexander was in the dorm, he said. No food, no water, no going to the bathroom.

"I was just lying there, and it was hard," Alexander said. "I had gone from mom's best cooking in the world, and being taken care of perfectly, to zero."

On the second day, he said he was so miserable that he knew if he didn't do something, he'd give in and call his dad. So, he took the stick in his mouth and threw it as far as he could across the room so he couldn't make the phone call. By the third night, he didn't know where or who he was. He was scared, especially when he heard banging coming down the hall that night.

"They were loud and horrible sounds, and it scared me," he said. "I thought the angels were coming after me. Already? I wasn't ready. But it wasn't angels; it was two guys moving in."

The two men found Alexander, and said they would take care of him for the two weeks prior to school on one condition – he had to teach them how to take care of him. So, he did, and when the two weeks were nearly up, they helped post flyers around campus to find Alexander more help.

The last day before school started, the men were at their wit's end, Alexander said. As the hours ticked by, the boys waited and waited, until late that afternoon, someone knocked on the door. A young girl, who happened to be a registered nurse, said she was there to take care of him. God had sent her, he said she told him. She went on to take care of him for the entire semester.

That's how Alexander started his 15-year-long process of earning three degrees, and almost finishing a few others.

THE HOPE

Every single time someone has told him he couldn't do something, or every single time he has felt at the end of the rope, someone suddenly comes along and gives Alexander a chance, he said. From getting his degrees, to making his case in the courtroom, to finding someone who will hand pump a generator to keep him alive when the weather cuts the power to his house, to even writing a book and more, Alexander has been amazed by those who have come along to help. He said he wished others in Dallas and around the world would show more compassion, as those he has encountered.

The Rotarians build wheelchair ramps for someone about once a month as part of the Texas Ramp Project, said Waxahachie Rotarian Mike Fenton. The Waxahachie Rotary Club members found out about Alexander's need through the Duncanville Rotary Club members.

"This is just what we do," Fenton said.

"I told him (Alexander) there's a price for all we're doing for him, and he said 'I know there's no free lunch,' and giggled," Dave McSpadden, another Waxahachie Rotarian, added. "So, I said, 'the main thing we want is, we want you to be the voice of ending polio. He said 'that's perfect, I'm qualified for that.' So, he has that kind of sense of humor. Our whole thing is to serve our human family. That's what we look for, is an opportunity to serve others."

Yet, the ramp built in front of Alexander's house on Saturday morning is just another example of the compassion he's been shown, he said.

"The Rotarians filled a need I had, and I said 'I'm amazed and I don't understand how you guys could be so giving and so caring,'" Alexander said. "They said, 'Oh, Paul, we're your family now. We are your new family.'"

For the past 60 years Rotary International has been a leader in helping eradicate polio around the world. The Rotary Club's motto is "Service Above Self," with Rotarians serving in clubs around the globe working to improve lives in their community, as well as humanitarian efforts on a global scale – polio eradication being a primary mission.

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For more information about the Rotary Club of Waxahachie visit the club's website www.waxahachierotary.org.

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THIS WHEEL'S ON FIRE

WISH YOU WERE HERE

Posted by Kevin Crosby, DGE

Now that you have your 2015 Calendar, make sure you block out the weekend of October 23rd - 25th to attend our 2015 District Conference at the spectacular Holiday Valley Resort in beautiful Ellicottville, NY. Our committees are hard at work planning exciting workshops, fun activities, great speakers, wonderful food selections, and great accommodations.

Check out our conference video at vimeo.com/107083306 and our conference web site at districtconference2015.com.

Registration for the conference is expected to open by April 1st, 2015.

TOP 10 REASONS TO ATTEND

- 10 The Holiday Valley Resort in beautiful Ellicottville, NY in late October. Doesn't get much more beautiful than that.
- 9 Stay in beautiful "ski lodge" setting, rent a time-share condo, or even rent a nearby home. The ski seasons won't have started and the summer season will be over, so lots of great housing options.
- 8 The Village of Ellicottville: Quaint, scenic, filled with great shops, bars and restaurants.
- 7 The Ellicottville Brewing Company: Beer lover? Welcome to heaven!
- 6 John Harvard's Brew House: A friendly full-service pub right at the resort.
- 5 Falling Waters Spa: A full-service spa at the resort. A treat for your partner if not yourself!
- 4 Great food: Breakfast, lunch, dinner and coffee breaks. You may need to take advantage of #3.
- 3 Beautiful hiking and biking trails with breath-taking views throughout this ski resort property.
- 2 Sky High Adventure Park: Zip lines, ropes courses and a mountain coaster. Fun? Wow!
- 1 Programs, workshops and other activities designed to be inspiring, energizing, invigorating, rejuvenating, stimulating, rewarding and, most of all, fun!



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PEOPLE WHO INSPIRE PEOPLE WHO INSPIRE

By Katie Daubs Staff Reporter, thestar.com, 16/08/2012

Photo: Rick Madonik



Thie Convery, Rotary Club of Dundas

Marilyn Bell was 16 when she became the first person to conquer the lake. Now 74, she continues to inspire young and old. Marilyn Bell returned to Toronto in 2004 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of her famous swim. She is standing in the park named after her, only a few hundred metres from where she landed after her 52-kilometre swim in 1954.

Every morning, Marilyn Bell Di Lascio exercises in the deep end of the indoor swimming pool. The warm water ripples as a 96-year-old man swims laps. Di Lascio moved into the retirement community in New York State a few months ago, and her nonagenarian pool partner recently discovered she was a retired marathon swimmer. He doesn't know the whole story, mind you, how Di Lascio was the first to cross Lake Ontario, how she swam through the night, how she became an international sensation.

"I never really was very specific," the 74-year-old says. "Somebody knew, somebody had found out – you know, people Google."

Di Lascio has a degenerative back condition which makes swimming painful, but she loves the water.

"That's one of the beauties of swimming – you can do it, some form of it, for as long as you wish," she says. "He'll say to me, 'So will you watch my stroke, keep an eye on my feet, tell me what my feet are doing.'"

"The famous American got the backing and endorsing of the CNE, and the unknown Canadian did it... the race turned out the way nobody thought it would," said CNE General Manager David Bednar.

The CNE invited Di Lascio and her husband back for the 50th anniversary of the swim in 2004. Bednar, a few years into his new job at the time, was "extremely sensitive" to the history that the CNE had not treated Marilyn well initially.

"I gingerly raised the topic and she said, 'It's such old history you shouldn't even bring that up,'" he said.

It is a tale she has recounted often, and graciously, in the decades that have taken her away from marathon swimming and into the business of starting a family, raising four children and becoming a grandmother to five.

Back in 1954, Bell had trained like any marathon swimmer of the day: swimming and sprinting in the water. There was no land training, no cross sport training.

"That first swim could probably be compared to when the covered wagons were going across the prairies. It was a totally different time, a different world," she says, laughing.

Her coach, Gus Ryder, had a flashlight, a compass and a long stick to pass food to Bell. She ate baby cereal and corn syrup. Ryder used a chalk board to give her messages.

It had been days since she had a full night's sleep. She swam in the wrong direction for a while. It felt like a fog.

"When you trained as much as I had trained, the swimming itself becomes automatic, your body just knows what its doing, but of course it helps to pay attention to the direction you were doing it in," she says.

After almost 21 hours and 52 kilometres, she reached Toronto. She didn't realize she completed the swim until she was in the ambulance afterward. She has no recollection of the huge crowd gathered on the shore. The next night, she was presented with \$10,000 and a parade at the CNE bandstand.

"I've had several conversations with oldtimers here and a thorough conversation with the archivist. It was unique in the history of the Ex, when we talk about accomplishments and sense of notoriety, it stands head

and shoulders above anything we can think of," Bednar says, noting other daredevil rope walkers and Evil Knievel.

At the time, the swim was a controversial one. Several of the sporting voices, the powers that be of that era, doubted it could ever be done by a human, certainly not a woman, Di Lascio remembers.

"My husband always told me this from early early on – that swim really changed the way most people or many people looked at what women were capable of. I never really thought about it until I got much older...

"When I hear about young women, or older women going back and trying it a second or third time, who have already accomplished the feat, I'm in awe of that, I'm thankful I had a little part in perhaps getting the ball rolling."

This summer, seven swims across Lake Ontario have been scheduled, with potential records for both the youngest and oldest women to make the crossing. Annaleise Carr, 14, plans to make the swim on Friday. Colleen Shields, 60, had to postpone her Aug. 11 swim until September because of bad weather.

"I think after all these years, it's wonderful to know that there are still so many swimmers that see Lake Ontario or any other body of water as a challenge," Di Lascio says.

Di Lascio swam the Straits of Juan de Fuca and the English Channel before she retired from marathon swimming with a triple crown of sorts in 1956. She married Joe Di Lascio, a lifeguard she met while training in Atlantic City.

"I felt like I was going to something better, more important to me, which was him, and boy did I ever make a good choice," she says.

She became a teacher and raised four children in New Jersey. Di Lascio's husband – her biggest fan in a crowded group – died of cancer five years ago, a few days shy of the couple's 50th anniversary.

"Sometimes I look in mirror and say, 'Who is this woman who lives in this body? I've grown in so many ways. They say out of a great loss a lot of good can happen, that is exactly what has happened to me. I feel very blessed, I have such a good life without any regrets,'" she said.

A few months ago, Di Lascio moved into an apartment near one of her children in New York state. She still receives letters, emails and phone calls from children wanting to do a school project on her swim. Some send her a long list of questions for her to answer.

"Because I was a teacher for many years and I don't believe in doing kids' homework, I will contact them, sometimes by phone or by email, and I will give them links, I'll make suggestions – if you wish to get the correct information on this particular part of the subject try this website, let me know how you do, if you run into trouble, email me back," she says.

The connection she has with Toronto – a city that bears her name on a ferry, park and commemorative plaque, is a special one. Di Lascio acknowledges that for a time in the 1950s, she became "everyone's daughter."

After all these years, she doesn't expect anyone to recognize her, even though many still do. When she is introduced at various functions, she is always amused by a common reaction in the audience.

"It will be usually be a gentleman turning to his wife and saying, 'boy she got old.' Because I was 16 – and my picture was used so frequently. There is a neat little thing about that, for people I've never met, it's like I've never aged, it's like how I feel about Shirley Temple," she said.

"I understand why that happens. It must be a heck of a shock."