

## 35 CYCLISTS CROSS TWO CONTINENTS FOR POLIOPLUS

This summer, 35 bicyclists, including a graduate student at Boston University, Massachusetts, USA, will travel more than 7,000 miles across Asia and Europe to raise money for Rotary International's PolioPlus program.

Boston University doctoral student David Montgomery, along with members of seven Dutch Rotary clubs, helped organize the 2003 Trans-Asia-Europe Ride to Eradicate Polio, which will begin in Vladivostok, Russia, 25 May and end in Scheveningen, Netherlands, 31 August. Of the 35 bicyclists, 19 will complete the entire 7,395-mile (11,901-kilometer) ride, including Montgomery as the only American, along with riders from the Netherlands, France, Germany, and Russia. The ride is purposefully ambitious so as to create interest in the goal of eradicating polio by 2005, Montgomery says.

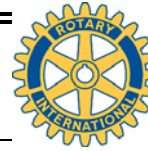
"This is a group of guys who want to go on a bike trip with a purpose behind it," he adds. "People are always surprised that polio exists. Hopefully, we can create enough awareness to get people to contribute. It's a challenge worth undertaking."

But like the polio eradication campaign, Montgomery's mission will be a long and arduous one. The riders will be cycling about 95 miles per day on paved roads and about 60 miles per day on unpaved roads. They will be crossing some of the wildest and most inhospitable terrain in Russia, and Montgomery says he's not entirely sure what obstacles the group will encounter.

The origins of the Ride to Eradicate Polio lie in Montgomery's two years of service with the Peace Corps. in Kyrgyzstan. Montgomery, who has participated in several long distance rides and is currently pursuing a doctorate in religion and international studies, met several Dutch Rotarians who were interested in biking from Russia to the Netherlands to raise money for PolioPlus. When he returned to the U.S., he began planning the logistics of the ride.

The group has raised Euros 130,000 (approximately US\$139,555) so far, but hopes to raise \$500,000 by the end of the three-month ride. Each member is personally responsible for contributing Euros 10,000. With the assistance of the Rotary club of Boston, Montgomery has been soliciting corporate sponsors, auctioned off a bicycle, and held a fundraiser at a local restaurant.

"I've traveled in a lot of the countries where polio still exists and I want to make a contribution and raise awareness," Montgomery says. "What a great feeling it will be to look back and see what we've accomplished."



# The Four Way Flasher

Rotary Club of  
MeadowRidge Newsletter

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Web-site: [www3.telus.net/MeadowRidge\\_Rotary](http://www3.telus.net/MeadowRidge_Rotary)

Meetings: Tuesday 12pm, Maple Ridge Library  
 President: Stan Wade Phone: 604-462-9080 [stanwade@shaw.ca](mailto:stanwade@shaw.ca)  
 Secretary: Kevin Nosworthy Phone: 604-467-8507 [kevinnos@telus.net](mailto:kevinnos@telus.net)  
 Editor: Peter Boekhorst [mrrotary@telus.net](mailto:mrrotary@telus.net)

INVOCATION Feb. 18: Lindsay Hendy Feb. 25: Diane Kirkland

### BINGO SCHEDULE

### BE ON TIME!

	3:30-5:00	5:00-6:30
Feb. 27	Vladimir Cukor	Dave Reekie
Mar. 13	Peter Boekhorst	Merlyn White

Call Peter at 604-465-3392 for assistance or e-mail [pboekhorst@telus.net](mailto:pboekhorst@telus.net)



TODAY'S PROGRAM: Business Meeting

NEXT WEEK'S PROGRAM: Joy from Ridge Meadows Recycling Society

### CALENDAR OF CLUB AND DISTRICT 5050 EVENTS:

Date	Time	Event	Venue
Feb. 27	12:30pm	WineZest Meeting	Library (down stairs)
March 12	6pm, dinner 7pm	RI President Bhichai Rattakul	West Bayshore Conf. Centre
April 5	tba	District Assembly	Western Washington Univ.
May 1-3		District 5050 Conference	Harrison Hot Springs Resort
June 7	7pm - 10pm	WineZest 2003	M.R. Arts Centre

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Feb.19: Craig Vernon  
 Feb.23: Vladimir Cukor, Johanna Thomas (not Reed yet)

50 / 50 draw - Jackpot at \$232 + 1/2 of today's sales, 42 cards, Jackpot on "Queen of Hearts" only!

## LAST WEEKS MEETING

This weeks guest speaker was Chris Wilson from the Esteem Team. For those of you who haven't had the pleasure of meeting Chris, he is a Olympic champion wrestler in the light weight division. He has been involved with the Esteem Team since 1993 and is currently working to expand it to a national program.

He began by thanking our club as well as the Haney Club for our ongoing support of the program. The program also gets sponsorship from the RCMP as well as other corporate organizations. When they embarked on their mission, their intention was to be totally corporate sponsored, but economics have made this a difficult dream to reach and hence they have relied on clubs such as ours to help get their message across to the youth in our province.

The essence of the club is to provide positive role models for the youth through athletes who have achieved successes in their life. The athletes relay to the youth the struggles and obstacles they had to overcome as well as the positive influences in their lives.

They currently focus on elementary students but are available for high school presentations as well. Their target is not so much youth already involved in sports, music or arts, but the children who have no outside interests and hence are at the risk of becoming one of our "bored" youth who may find themselves on the wrong path. They do a one hour presentation which includes demonstrations and interaction with the audience. Rotarians who have been to these presentations have stood up and expressed their amazement at how the students open up to these heroes and receive the message with enthusiasm.

The main focus of the presentation is goal setting, the importance of physical activity, overcoming obstacles and the importance of surrounding yourself with "positive, supportive" friends. The organization has also developed lessons plans for the schools including 2 for before their presentation and 5 for afterwards. They are currently working to make their website more youth oriented and as stated before, spreading the word on a national basis.

A very good presentation for a very good cause.

Also the Social committee is arranging for a comedy night at Giggledams on Wed Mar 19<sup>th</sup>. Cost is \$25 and the theme is Mars vs Venus ( the battle of the sexes) So if you were not at the meeting, please contact Dot at 604-466-5886 and let her know if you are interested.

**Submitted by Debi Pearce**



## A WORD FROM OUR PHYSICIAN

"You have got a virus". These words cause a lot of anxiety among many people, no matter if it concerns a common cold, mononucleosis, the flu, chicken pox or another of the many virus infections affecting us. Many of these can be prevented by vaccination. Most of the remainder cause only a transient illness and one recovers without any lasting effects. There are some notable exceptions though. Last year the appearance of the West Nile virus caused a widespread panic in Central and Eastern Canada and across the

USA. This year the predictions are that this virus will strike again and this time we will most likely see the first cases in B.C. The great majority will recover, but there will be some fatalities like last year.

However it will not be anything like the polio epidemic of 1952 that permanently disabled over 60,000 children in North America. I am old enough to remember the fear that gripped us all, causing panic among parents and children, closing schools, pools and other public gathering places. The polio virus attacks the spinal cord in susceptible children and leaves them crippled with useless legs or arms. Many can no longer breathe on their own and spend years in iron lungs. Many do not survive.

Fortunately Drs. Jonas Salk and Albert Sabin developed two effective vaccines in the mid fifties and it took about twenty years of immunizing nearly every child to eradicate polio in North America. We had the last case in 1979.

In the developing world people are not as lucky. Take Uzma Jahan, a four year old girl in Northern India, who came down with a fever followed by a paralysis. She has now two permanently lifeless legs and will never walk. There is no cure after the virus strikes. Her mother Tehazib Jahan failed to take her daughter for her vaccination even though she was urged to do so. The reason for her neglect? Religious prejudice and unfounded rumors that a vaccination would render her daughter sterile.

Neither Uzme, nor any other child on the face of this planet needs to contract polio. Polio can and will be eliminated if each and every one of us is willing to assist. Last week Stan Wade the president of the Meadow Ridge Rotary wrote in this paper about the most successful public- private partnership in the history of mankind. A partnership of Rotary, the World Health Organization, UNICEF and the National Centres of Disease control have completed 99% of this giant undertaking that was started in 1985. There were polio-epidemics in 125 countries on all continents with the exception of Antarctica. With an extra ordinary single mindedness the members of all 30,000 Rotary clubs have battled this stubborn virus against staggering odds. They have raised US\$500 million since 1985 to buy the vaccine and provide logistical support for this campaign. There are now seven countries left: India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Niger, Egypt and Somalia. Collectively Rotarians have pledged to raise another US \$80 million by June of this year to finish the job. India, with a population of more than a billion people will be immunizing 165 million children in one day. Yes, that is correct: 165 million children under the age of five in ONE day so that the virus will have nowhere to go and dies. Over a million volunteers, public health workers and teachers have been mobilized by over 100,000 Rotarians for this one day event. Similar national immunization days are organized by Rotarians in the six other countries. Without the local networks of Rotarians the other partners could not organize such campaigns, nor could Rotary do this without the help of the public partners. Why spend so much energy and resources on eradicating polio? Once it is eliminated we can stop immunizing all children the world over, freeing over one billion US\$ every year for other humanitarian endeavours.



If we can raise the US\$80 million, we expect that in 2005 the world can be free of the polio virus. As a result of this campaign that started in 1985 there will be eight million children walking that otherwise would have been crippled for life. 2005 is the year that Rotary celebrates its 100<sup>th</sup> birthday and anyone, ordinary citizen or Rotarian who has contributed to this effort can be justifiably proud of his or her participation towards this ever lasting present to the world.

**Submitted by Marco Terwiel**