PRESIDENT’S REPORT

Farewelling our exchange student Simon Ossing was both a joyous and sad night of Zooming. Joyous because it was very clear from everyone’s comments that it was a real pleasure having Simon in our community – he fitted in so well with each of the host families and in fact with everyone he came in contact with. Sad because no-one wanted him to return home – if only he could stay out his full exchange term everyone would be very much happier! The coronavirus has a lot to answer for!

Everyone of the 22 participants at our meeting was extremely complimentary of Simon and his broad and mature view of the world, his engaging personality, and his willingness to throw himself into all the activities that were offered to him (except for eating vegemite where both our views are, I am pleased to say, the same!).

Farewell Simon, the Warracknabeal Rotary Club has been extremely proud of you, you have been a great ambassador for your country, and we look forward to hosting you again in two years time when you return to complete the safari.

For those of you who missed the meeting or would like a rerun, both Sue and I have a recording of the whole meeting; as well I think it is also on Facebook.

Two final things. First it should be noted that this is the first time in our Club’s history that an exchange student has been hosted totally by non Rotarian families – it clearly worked extremely well so very many thanks to the Keams, the Golders, and the Byrons and to John Aitken and Helen Peters for setting up this new approach to student exchange. Secondly, Simon and the Club have been very lucky to have had such an outstanding student counsellor in Chris Hewitt. Very many thanks Chris and Glenda for a job very well done.

Next Wednesday will be a Zoom Board meeting beginning at 7 pm.

Yours in Rotary, Tony
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Inductions :
Birthdays :
Anniversaries : Sue & Malcolm Watts 16 April

**Two Minute Talk My First Job - Jack Daniel**
This photo was taken last year in front of the business where I started my agronomy career in Naracoorte S.A. 25 years ago.
My first job out of school apart from working for my father was on a farm west of Lucindale. The owner was a very interesting character with unique ways of problem solving and management style. An example that springs to mind is a Suzuki Ute on the farm would leak water through the doors when driving through deep water (it’s wet down there) and flood the floor. This was solved by shooting a 12 gauge shotgun through both sides and creating drainage holes! A 22 rifle with a spirit level attached was used in the house to mark and line up the flu for a wood heater. A bit of a theme here! A bit of an eye opener for me.
In the 1980’s there was the last spurt of land development happening in South Australia post the native vegetation laws coming into place in 1982 and quite a bit of clearing occurred whilst this legislation was being debated in parliament.
My primary role on the farm was to clean up an area of scrub that had been chained the year before. I spent many hours driving an old Allis Chalmers HD7 bulldozer pushing rows of timber, burning then pushing heaps again. This was followed by stick raking/picking and finally ploughing using a shearer majestic Plough. I can still remember my ears ringing after a day spent on the old allis! This country was eventually sown down using a Shearer combine with disc trash floats.
I spent around 4 months on this work before moving to Murtoa to work a property there that my family had purchased. A great experience for a 17 year old aspirational farmer.
Farewell Simon.

Wednesday’s Rotary meeting was dedicated to farewelling our very popular Youth Exchange student from Germany, Simon Ossing. Chairman for the night, and Simon’s counsellor, Chris Hewitt welcomed the many Rotarians who were online for the Zoom meeting, as were two host families, the Keams and Byrons - the RC Horsham President, Don Perry and most Rotaractors. (Apologies from the third host family, the Golders.) Thank you to everyone for joining in.

Simon gave an impressive unscripted summary of the highlights of his year and some of the major differences between our two countries and cultures that he has noticed.

The Highlights
On arrival at Tullamarine airport, the Welcome banner held by the Keam and Byron families, my counsellor Chris Hewitt and WRC President, Tony Gregson, made me feel instantly comfortable and accepted.
I loved Aussie Rules footy, and remember my first footy training and game with the Eagles. I’m so sad not to be playing this season.
I went sand boarding early in my stay, with the Keams and the Byrons. It was so much fun and a great way to get to know my host families.
With the Keams I enjoyed many ‘firsts’ including seeing the fairy penguins at Phillip Island and the beautiful beach at Sorrento.
I love my akubra hat given to me by the Rotary Club for my 16th birthday. I’ve also been wearing my cosy Ugg boots, a farewell gift from Rotarians.
The Wimmera field days and Sheepvention were great ways to understand the what sustains the local economy. I couldn’t believe the sheep prices!!
Major sporting events were memorable, like going to the AFL grand final with the Hewitts, with the tickets so generously donated by Ben Bentley, and later to the Australian Open tennis and an NBL Basketball game with the Golders. These were awesome experiences.
I went on two fabulous trips with the secondary college, one to Sydney and the other was an Advance Camp, which develops team work, initiative and leadership skills in a fun, outdoors atmosphere.
Although I’ll miss the big Youth Exchange Australian Safari, I was lucky to do the mini safari around our district with all other inbound exchange students. I really enjoyed learning to surf.
Other memorable events included a relaxing Australia Day at Lake Boga with the Golders, the Rotaract conference on the Gold Coast, patting the meercats at the Halls Gap zoo, and meeting up with my mum in Melbourne with Chris and Glenda Hewitt.
A big thank you to my final host family, the Byrons. Although we couldn’t do a lot of things they had planned, I’ve really appreciated special family time staying at home playing games, talking and having lots of laughs, while they supported me at a difficult time. When I return, I’ll be excited to open the COVID time capsule we buried, and relive memories of my great time here.
I was inducted by Chris Hewitt. I have been able to learn more about Rotary and its opportunities and inner workings this past year. Experiencing a Friendship Exchange to Canada, completing the Rotary Leadership Institute, working within committees and assisting with ongoing development of the dog park have been enjoyable opportunities that I’ve been lucky enough to be part of. I’m looking forward to many more years in Rotary.
We woke bright and early on the not so sunny, slightly rainy Gold Coast. Boiled the kettle, made the coffee, and packed our “can do, ready to learn” attitudes into our back packs. We’ll get to all the extra stuff Sam decided was essential to take a bit later on. Simon ate his 12th banana of the morning as we walked out the front door. We made our way to the tram stop, which unlike Melbourne is very easy to navigate (provided you know whether you’re going north or south), you get on and the tram moves in a straight line until you get to where you’re going. Easy... We’ll pop in here that Sam also has no sense of direction (which is probably why she needs to carry so much water).

We eventually got to the right side of the tracks and onwards we went to Griffith University. We arrived and as we landed on the platform the not so sunny, slightly rainy Gold Coast became the not sunny at all, very rainy Gold Coast! We ran! We slipped, we got lost and then found, until we stumbled upon our old friend Roary.

Roary for those whom haven’t met him, is a Rotaraptor. He is the very elegant well loved mascot of the Burleigh Heads Rotaract Club, our host for the weekend. We took our official photos with Roary and then spoke a little to the humans. Some new to us and some old to us, but all super excited to see us!!

We moved inside and began the proceedings. Our first keynote speaker was a man some of us had previously had the pleasure of meeting before. Enter Mr Bruce Sullivan.

Bruce had a lot to tell us in a small space of time, and we didn’t want his time slot to end. He was entertaining, relevant and interesting. He told us all about our “Happy Pants”, as well as out “top and bottom draw”. While this all seemed a bit personal for a Saturday morning, no one in the room could look away. He spoke of making choices and how those choices affect our mental and physical health. If we choose to live in the bottom draw we will have a negative mind set and this only see the bleak. If we choose to live in the top draw and wear our “happy pants” then we will have a more positive experience regardless of what goes on around us. He spoke about how more often than not the right story is beautiful boring. Although the story teller in us generally takes over here, when you cut it back to the basics it is beautifully boring.

We talked about change, how all good things have come from change, yet not all change is good. When change comes knocking that is not good for you, it’s not the end of your life, it’s the end of the way did things as we knew it. We can put on our happy pants readjust and learn to cope or we can put on our cranky pants and moan and whinge about it.

He spoke about his beautiful daughter who was born with Downs Syndrome, her name is Hannah. She was having a hard time at school, she was not being included in things she would have liked to have been, but she was also not being excluded on purpose. He used this as an opportunity to teach the world about non intentional exclusion in a very positive way. He went on national TV with his daughter for her birthday and she received 1000s of cards and gifts in support. His last lesson was “Humour Helps” - if it isn’t fun, make it fun. After Bruce’s inspiring words we all put on our happy pants to encounter ……

The. Best. Activity. any of us could have dreamed of at this stage.

Lunch.