



Stories

GUEST SPEAKER DECEMBER 10th

DAMIAN SECENA

"Russia, a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma"

2013 perspective from an Australian in Moscow

Damian SECENA is a senior member of Macquarie's global infrastructure investment business, and spent three years based in Moscow between 2009 and 2012 running Macquarie's Russian and CIS infrastructure fund.

Current roles:

- Executive Director, Macquarie Infrastructure and Real Assets, Macquarie Group
- Chairman, Macquarie Russia and CIS Infrastructure Fund
- Trustee, Committee for Economic Development of Australia
- Member of the Expert Group on Banking, Russia
-

Duty Roster for Tuesday 10th December 2013

Chair	Greg Cuthbert
Sgt	Michael Bromby
Greeter	Russell Rolls
Reporter	Richard Bowen
Photographer	Allan Driver
Door	Bernie Gerlinger
Director Report, Vocational	Jillian Cavanagh
Bulletin Editor	Tony Thomas

CHRISTMAS PARTY - DEC 17

We're all looking forward to divine music from members, scintillating wit from our Sergeant, and near-endless Christmas frivolity at our RACV party on December 17. Don't forget your hamper bags!

BULK SPICES, NUTS AND DATES FOR GREEN BAGS



Upcoming Events

Christmas Party

RACV City Club

Dec 17, 2013 at 07:30 AM – 09:30 AM

Board Meeting

RACV City Club

Dec 18, 2013 at 06:00 PM – 07:30 PM

Board Meeting

RACV City Club

Jan 15, 2014 at 06:00 PM – 07:30 PM

Speakers

Dec 10, 2013

DAMIAN SECENA

"Russia, a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma"

Dec 17, 2013

CHRISTMAS PARTY

Dec 24, 2013

NO REGULAR MEETING THIS WEEK (Christmas Eve)

Dec 31, 2013

NO REGULAR MEETING THIS WEEK (New Years Eve)

Jan 07, 2014

Informal Breakfast in RACV Bistro

Jan 21, 2014

Bernard McMenamin FCA, FCPA, CTA, TEP

Estate Planning

[View entire list](#)

Bulletin Editor

David JONES (If you have any comments or questions, please contact the editor)

Sponsors

When Margaret Thomas says she can 'buy in bulk' for our members' green bags for refugees' hampers, she really meant 'bulk' !

Here's the consignment of about 75-80kg offloaded onto the Thomas's manicured nature strip.



LAOS STUDENTS LOVE THEIR SCHOOL AID Part Two

Posted by Tony THOMAS

Pics Below: The new high school kitchen (left) and the old unhygienic huts it replaced.



Children (below) at the hilltop primary school

Right: A tribesman welcomes us with his unusual flute



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Roy Garrett hands over a load of schoolbooks to a high school.

Our party to Laos distributed to schools a ute-load of books, pencils and student supplies bought in Luang Prabang from a kitty of \$850. This was created by a whip-round among members plus a \$200 donation from friends of the 2012 Laos party. That donation was in memory of one member, Jill Lewis, who died of cancer in September 2013. The books included highly-prized Laos-English dictionaries.

The previous day we checked on two new classrooms at the particularly hard-to-get-to Ban Houe Yen primary school. These classrooms were financed by \$1,000 each from Roy's 2012 15-member Laos group members, and funnelled through our informal partner, Melbourne's Your Own Two Hands Foundation.

To get to this school, we were offloaded on one side of a shallow 70m wide river, and poled across on rural long-boats. On the other side was a muddy hill, on which sat the school.

The classrooms were chock-a-block with kids and as usual, we were accompanied by senior Communist officials who introduced us to teachers and principals. Four of our members last year – Frank O'Brien, Herb Greenwood, Roger Thornton and Roy Garrett – had spent two days in blazing heat giving the completed classes a paint job.

Our group's Guyon Wilson of Geelong broke the ice crooning to his guitar and got kids, teachers and us literally dancing in the aisles. We were presented with baskets of potatoes, pumpkin and legumes as a thank you for the two classes.

Left: lunch time at a school for hilltribe student boarders



This school is still without electricity and has a dire need for ceiling fans in the low and crowded classrooms.

We were also struck by the hard life of the villagers, as we watched middle-aged women lugging sacks of rice down to the river boats and men hefting 40kg bags of cement across from the other side. Every component of the two classrooms' construction had to be handled across the river in the same way.

Walking out of the village last year, Roy noticed a small boy sitting moping while his peers were off on a festival trip. The boy had a disfiguring large growth across his nose. Through Roy's local facilitator Somnuek, and a visit

by an Australian medico, there is now a chance for the boy to get to Adelaide Children's Hospital for surgery, perhaps with ROMAC input.

We journeyed on to a special high school for disadvantaged teens from hill tribes, who got some of our stock of library books. The boys' dormitories are incredibly cramped double-tier bunk sets, under a low ceiling. The heat and insects during the night must be appalling.

After more off-road travel, we came to typically-poor rural village Ban Hue Thoa, where our club funds of \$18,000 (including a \$5,000 District Grant) will re-align and re-construct a two-room primary school. The status quo is bizarre – the village, with electricity and road access, is at the foot of a sharp hill, while the primary school is on the hilltop 200m away, without power or road. Imagine 6-year-olds in torrential rain scrambling up the goat track with school bags...

Some years ago the government planned to shift the whole village to the hilltop. The school went first, but then the rest of the move was scrapped, leaving the school isolated.

The local people are delighted with our club project for 2014, and laid on a feast of exotic chicken and fish

pieces. Each table was covered with a single giant banana leaf in lieu of tablecloth. Our Luang Prabang go-between Somnuek is now liaising with authorities on plans and contractors.

ELEMENTS OF OUR SUCCESSES IN LAOS

Many elements have come together so that children near Luang Prabang can go to better schools and escape the poverty trap. Past-President Kay Stevens says success has come from:-

- All members' hard work in fund-raising, so that well over \$30,000 in club money was available. (The 2012 charity auction gave a particular fillip to the club coffers).
- The Laos grass-roots expertise of our informal partner Rod Fraser's Your Own Two Hands Foundation
- International Director Roy Garrett's passion and expertise to improve kids' lives in South-East Asia
- The services of our in-country and trusted contact Somnuek, who has liaised with local officials to design and build the projects
- Our Rotary partner on the exercise, District 3360 centred at Chiang Mai, Thailand. District Governor Ms Suparie Chatkunyarat is happy to collaborate on the Laos cross-border project.
- Willingness of club members and friends to get on planes and do on-site inspections, ensuring that the jobs are done on time and well.
- Cooperation of the Laos government, which values all the education help it can get.

Footnote: The 2013 Laos party was Roy and Annie Garrett, Kay and Robin Stevens, Alan and Robyn Seale, Tony Thomas, Peter Johnson (Shepparton Rotary) and wife Carmel, Guyon and Bron Wilson (Geelong), Sally Edwards (Melbourne) and Jane Camphin (Brisbane).

The 2012 party was the Garretts, the O'Briens, the Thorntons and the Greenwoods, plus friends.

SUPARIE SAYS WATER PROJECTS AREN'T EASY



Suparie with Kay Stevens at Chiang Mai

Suparie Chatkunyarat, Rotary District 3360 Governor in Thailand, believes that even simple village projects for water and sanitation require a new set of attitudes in the village. Our RCCMS met Suparie in Chiang Mai and exchanged notes for nearly an hour.

"We have found that unless we follow up with education and literacy initiatives, things like new school toilets, tanks and water filters can fall into disuse within a few years," she says. "Obviously clean toilets require a reliable water supply. A program also needs to be coupled with improvements to farming, including hens and school vegetable gardens. People's first need is always food."

Her district in northern Thailand is concentrating on water and sanitation aid to 12,000 hill tribespeople near the Thai-Myanmar border. Related efforts include family planning and prevention of drift of young village women to cities and undesirable lifestyles.

The project intends to cut the severe maternal and early-childhood death rates. The tribespeople are willing to donate their labor free, especially as villagers in the dry season sometimes have to travel 20km for water, or walk uphill for an hour. Local water is often riddled with disease-causing pollution.

All this makes for complex planning and her group has signed up for Rotary Foundation's Project Enhancement Process (PEP) and Rotary Action Group for expert advice. Ten pilot projects are under way with help from Global and District grants from Rotary International global level.

The project funding is about 50 % local and 50% from Rotary International, and totals about \$200,000 for the next 2 years. "We'd welcome any help from Australian clubs with open arms," she says. "Let's do good for the world together."

Suparie was the first woman in Chiang Mai North RC, its first woman club president and the second woman District Governor in Thailand.

She joined Rotary 13 years ago after participation in Group Study Exchange program (GSE) of The Rotary Foundation. She learnt and experienced Rotary through great clubs and members in D5240 where she

visited in April 2000.

She graduated MBA in hospitality and business from Payap University, and has studied at the famous hospitality institute at Les Roches, Switzerland. After hotel management work, she lectured in tourism and then set up her own tour business Learning Holiday Co and a restaurant called ImSook. She is a leading tourism identity in Chiang Mai, serving on government bodies and with private foundations. "But this year my business is Rotary business," she says.

Her targets as Governor include:

Help set up a second Rotary club in Laos, in Luang Prabang (the first club is in the Laos capital Vientiane), and potentially a club in Myanmar. Obtaining regulatory approval is always the first task. Her district is already aiding some Myanmar villages near the Thai border.

Take her District from 1430 to 1700 members. She is delighted with her District's new club Buddhachinaraj in Phitsanulok Province, which has rocketed to 40 members in only one year.

Get all District members - even the conservative ones - on to email, ending the laborious posting of letters. The main issue is people's problems with the heavy influence of English language on the Internet. She has hopes for a Thai-language e-club for Thais working worldwide.

Expand young people's involvement through Rotaract - her District already has 11 Rotaract clubs, plus 38 Interact clubs and 2 Earlyacts. (She is finding it hard to recruit in companies because they often run their own charities).

Discover potential sister clubs worldwide -- though again, there are language barriers.

Get Thai-English dictionaries into village schools. "The internet can't substitute for a good word-book," she says. # ...TONY THOMAS

TWO BIG NEW PROBUS CLUBS LAUNCHED



Cruises are a high-end activity for many Probus clubs

District 9800 is getting great results on a much-overlooked aspect of Rotary – the formation of Probus clubs for active retirees. Last May Keilor East RC launched the Keilor East Combined Probus Club, now with 169 members, and Brimbank Central RC in November launched Taylor's Lakes Probus, now with 95 members.

Laverton RC is hoping to get a Probus club set up. Several clubs have included Probus set-ups in their current goals.

Earlier Probus club creations were Melbourne Sunrise Probus (set up by RCCMS in late 2010, now with about 80 members), and Carlton Parkville Probus (set up in 2009, now with 100+ members).

On the down-side, the long-standing Canterbury Mens' Probus Club closed recently. The average age of the two dozen members was about 85.

There are 98 Probus clubs in D9800 but at least half the clubs have lost contact with their sponsoring Rotary club.

Bruce Cameron AOM, aged 80, has been with East Keilor Rotary (42 members) for 29 years, and is an ex-president of the club and of its offshoot Keilor Probus Club. He retired at 57 as a divisional chief after 38 years with Ford.

He said the Probus club had a cap of 100 on members and a waiting list of 34. He sought unsuccessfully to have the cap lifted two years ago, and decided to start a second Probus club instead. He got his Rotary club behind the project last May, and the new Keilor East Probus Club has no cap in place despite its 170 members. "It's great, they're younger women and men, all enthusiastic," he says.

"I got hold of a Melways, ripped out the Keilor East pages, carved the streets into zones and told my Rotary members, 'Hi guys! I need your help this weekend. Take your spouse or a pet for a walk and unload these 6000 fliers.'" It only took two weekends. Cameron personally boxed 1000. They also got mentions in the local press 'what's on'.

Because the club was a bit over-large, he decided last May to help set up a second club, Taylor's Lakes

Probus, via Brimbank Central RC (about 45 members). The letterbox drive lasted a fortnight, first with 6000 fliers and then a further 5000.

The Keilor East and Taylor's Lakes Probus clubs had turnouts of more than 100 and 55 respectively to the 'interest - meetings' to form the club. Sub-group leaders from the Keilor Probus club told the prospective members about activities like walking groups (slow, medium and fast), crafts, movies, lunches, theatre, bridge etc. The new Keilor East members were so quick to get the idea that at least 45 have booked for a group Pacific cruise next June.

Cameron now wants to help set up a third Probus club at St Albans, with members including a dozen shifting from the two new clubs. Ideally, each of the three clubs would have about 130 members.

Cost to sponsoring Rotary clubs is only \$500 to a maximum \$2000 for Probus seed funding.

The new Probus clubs were invited by the local hotels to use function spaces free early in the week. The owners get extra lunch business. #

MEETING REPORT December 3rd 2013

Visitors: Sat Mishra, Pamela Robertson, Slav Covic

Announcements:

- Bernie Gerlinger was in hospital, however is now home and improving.
- One volunteer is needed for Community Village this Saturday night, 7th December. Please contact Russell Rolls if you are available.

Director Report: Club Administration

- A Website Resources Committee has been established to look after all things website. Marjorie Gerlinger is the first point of contact
- If anyone is having difficulty accessing the club photographs through Picasa, please contact Alan Driver for access
- Reminder that we have a high profile corporate speaker next week, Damian Secen from Macquarie. An additional 50 seats have been made available for the breakfast so that we can encourage our colleagues and business networks to attend. Please let Neville Taylor know who is joining you so that we can ensure ample seating
- The annual Christmas Breakfast is on the 17th December. Please flag with family and friends for what will be another wonderful, fun morning
- The Peninsula BBQ is locked in for February 16th at the Meehans. Roger Thornton is organising
- The Early Bird registrations for both the District Conference and International Convention close next week. Please go to the following websites to register or find out more information:
 - District Conference (7-9 March) <http://www.rotary9800conference.org>
 - Rotary International Convention (1-4 June) <http://rotary2014.com.au>

President's Report:

- The Tree of Joy in LaTrobe Street now has tags thanks to Marjorie and Roger
- Thanks to Jillian and Anne for organising the Vocational Visit to the Car Museum and Kangan Tafe at Docklands. It was a pleasant social outing
- The members who have been in Laos arrive back tomorrow. We look forward to hearing about the trip.

Sergeant Session:

Aside from three ahem wonderful golf jokes, the poem continues... Thanks to David Jones, it seems that Sofia is not going away lightly...

Speaker: Father Bob Maguire

Father Bob amused, shocked and impressed with a fast succession of one liners, as many as possible are captured below:

- The media has the ability to isolate and demonise anyone they please. They're currently picking on bikies. Could it be collective groups such as Rotary in the future?
- Australians need to learn that our best national asset is our "bullshit detector"
- Or we can choose to be a product of the western world and suffer from "affluenza"
- It is a strange world, with no discipline. Human beings need discipline which is where Rotary comes in. We learn discipline and commitment.
- Community is based on laissez faire. We lost the Vietnam War due to laissez faire – we smoked in the jungle and they could smell us a mile away
- We have everything now in society handed to us on a platter. All we need is chaff bags so we don't have to look up
- It's not fatal. We're only 200 years old. We have plenty of time to turn things around

- We're still writing the history of Australia – we still have blank pages
- We need a sense of humour to get through Australian History
- What we need now is local and timely action – and that's what Rotary does. Rotary works for that
- Thanks to all the blood donors. I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for you. I need infusions every 5 weeks to survive
- Women and men handle illness differently. Women see it as another event in their day. Men have Tobin Brothers on speed dial.
- Rotary has realised the value of women and brought them in. The Catholic Church is still somewhat behind. The Pope is just starting to play on the edges – on the thin edge of the wedge in bringing women into the organisation
- The Royal Commission results are due out this week. The Catholic Priests who are diseased with this nasty disorder will be exposed
- Communitarianism is the next stage in evolution
- Russia tried it – they called it Communism
- Evil is evident when good people do nothing. Rotary changes this
- The Catholic Church has land now – took them 100 years to get the St Patrick's patch of land. It's now the life work of some, such as George Pell, to fill the churches
- The churches should make their land available for everybody – they only shelter their own
- Since I "retired" from the Catholic Church, the Father Bob Foundation has found a home in secular society in a building on the corner of Dorcas & Montague thanks to the ETU and CFMEU
- The Foundation supports everyone that might be considered "outsiders"
- The Foundation is not federally funded, so that it can remain impartial. It's hard to take dollars from someone you're not always nice to
- We need to bridge the gap between awareness and action without resorting to social pornography
- In order to get the message across we sometimes have to tell the truth – and sometimes that might be offensive to some
- Do we dare to go beyond the façade – scratch the surface of society and you'll be horrified

The people who are crazy enough to think that they can change the world, probably will

Father Bob sought feedback on commencing his presentation with the video from the project. If you wish to provide feedback, please email him at: info@fatherbobsfoundation.com.au or visit his website at: <http://www.fatherbob.org.au>

Reporter Disclaimer: the notes above reflect the opinion of Fr Bob Maguire and have been included as stated to the best of the Reporters writing ability.