

HORIZONS

Central Blue Mountains Rotary

Effective - Energetic - Enterprising - Empowered

Rotary District 9685 - Australia

Wednesday, August 28, 2019

Active is: Central Blue Mountains Rotary

A busy weekend of activity for
CBM Rotary.

Friday at Blue Mountains
Grammar School Sports Day.

Sunday at the Waterways
Festival, Wentworth Falls Lake.



up front

Rotarian rides again



Edwin Velarde is a member of the Rotary Club of Westlake Village, California

Image credit: Samuel Zuder

“I thought I could create awareness by riding to conventions,” says Velarde, who was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes when he was 29”.

On his way from his home in California to the Rotary International Convention in Hamburg, Germany, Edwin Velarde took an unusual detour.

In an effort to raise awareness of diabetes, Velarde, 57, rode a bicycle for the last leg of his trip, cycling 525 miles from London to Hamburg.

After making stops along the way to visit Rotary clubs and talk about the impact of diabetes, he arrived on 31 May after 13 days of riding.

He spoke to clubs in the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Germany.

This was not the first time Velarde, a board member of the Rotarian Action Group for Diabetes, had cycled to a convention.

“I thought I could create awareness by riding to conventions,” says Velarde, who was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes when he was 29.

He biked from Busan to Seoul, Korea, in 2016, from Chicago to Atlanta in 2017, and from Rotary headquarters in Evanston, Illinois, to Toronto in 2018.

This year, the journey had added meaning; Velarde dedicated this ride to his son Davis Edwin Velarde, who died at 22 of lymphoma in April.

When diabetes is not controlled, it can result in severe damage to the eyes, kidneys, and nerves and can double a person’s risk of heart attack and stroke.

The World Health Organization estimates that the number of people with diabetes rose from 108 million in 1980 to 422 million in 2014.

Several years ago, when Velarde was feeling fatigued and depressed about his illness, a friend gave him a bike. He took it out for a spin.

“That ride woke me up to the fact that I was not fit,” he recalls. “I realized I wanted to become a cyclist, and not just someone who rides a bike.”

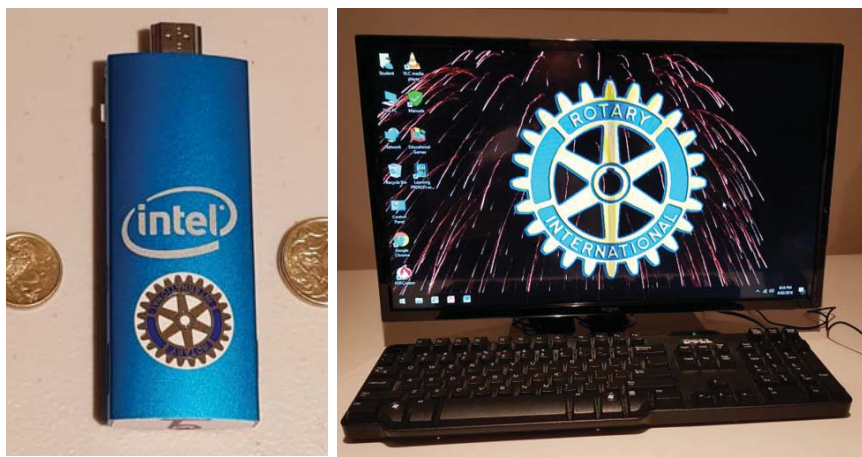
Velarde’s goal is to rally support among Rotarians to find a cure for diabetes, and to spread the word that a healthy lifestyle can help people who have type 2 diabetes better control the illness.

“We have what it takes to conquer the diabetes epidemic,” he says. “Imagine the 422 million people we could help.”

— ANNEMARIE MANNION

• This story originally appeared in the September 2019 issue of The Rotarian magazine.

Computers for the World



Latest equipment being installed - the computer capsule plugs into the back of the monitor and keyboard.

One of the many humanitarian projects being undertaken by Rotary Australia World Community Service (RAWCS) is Computers for the World under the guidance of Phill Isaacs, Upper Blue Mountains Sunrise Rotary.

Already, computers have been installed at schools in remote areas of Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea.

In a recent project, working with NSW TAFE in Vanuatu, computers were connected to a solar power system and 220 students were taught to use a computer. Many had never used a mouse or a keyboard.

Previous to the work in Vanuatu, solar panel systems and computers were installed at schools in the highlands of PNG - Vanimo, a tiny outpost on the western edge of a remote country, Fomu and Mt. Hagen.

"Our computers have to be simple, they have to work on low power, be capable of surviving in high humidity and they need to be about \$500 each. That's a tall order.

"This is a great Rotary project. To see the reaction of teachers and students in remote areas when we install the equipment is amazing.

"Most students and some of the teachers had never experienced using a computer before, so it was delightful seeing their excitement when they were introduced to the technology.

"There was also a positive difference when shy children who were scared of touching a computer mouse had a lot of laughs while learning numeracy and literacy skills in a fun, interactive learning environment," Phill said.

About RAWCS: According to Phill Isaacs it is one of Australia's best kept secrets.

It is a company with an enormous number of ongoing projects in Australia and overseas and it has a major role to play in the future of Rotary and humanitarian activities.

"Sometimes the true benefits of dealing with RAWCS are not recognised.....we are actually the financial infrastructure system to help Rotarians in our region raise tax deductible donations to undertake their great work," Phill Isaacs said.



Spectacular official opening at Katoomba RSL

A wonderful ceremony marked the eagerly anticipated official opening of the new Katoomba RSL Club, Saturday.

Hundreds of people enjoyed the formal reopening of the club which, following a disastrous fire in February 2017, has taken more than two years to rebuild.

The stunning new venue is now one of Katoomba's biggest entertainment venues. It also supports men and women who have served or who are serving in the Defence Force, and their families.

The new RSL Club has already transformed the precinct and there are high hopes for it to become a great focal point for the upper Blue Mountains community.

Welcome to Country was presented by Aunty Carol Cooper, a Gundungurra – Darug elder, followed by speeches, songs by local school children, and an unveiling of the official plaque.

The doors opened to the general public for celebrations and a chance to look at the new venue.

Two of the features of the new club are the huge glass curved window and a double-height soaring ceiling in the a' la carte restaurant, also an auditorium to seat 600 guests at a sit-down convention.

The entire structure is clad in sandstone to reflect the sandstone cliffs of the Blue Mountains.

Story and images: Vivianne Byrnes



Central Blue Mountains Rotarians in attendance were Brian Turner, RSL Club President; Ian and Jennifer Scott; Kevin Schreiber, BMCC Ward 1 Councillor; Rick Tasker, Katoomba RSL Sub-Branch President; Chris Van der Kley, BMCC Ward 2 Councillor; Vivianne and Allan Byrnes; Ray Wiles.

Mountain Ghost

According to the Ghost, turtles live in the sea and have flippers and tortoises live on the land and have stumpy legs. All tortoises are in fact turtles (reptiles having bodies encased in a bony shell) but not all turtles are tortoises. The Ghost hopes that makes sense.

Turtles and Tortoises in the Blue Mountains

The Mountain Ghost was having an argument (discussion) with his granddaughter about turtles and tortoises.

According to the Ghost, turtles live in the sea and have flippers and tortoises live on the land and have stumpy legs. But the grandchild was right. All tortoises are in fact turtles (reptiles having bodies encased in a bony shell) but not all turtles are tortoises. The Ghost hopes that makes sense.

What brought on this argument, sorry discussion, was a report in the Blue Mountains Gazette about concerns for turtles in the Blue Mountains especially the Eastern Long Necked turtles.

The young hatchlings are loved by foxes according to Dr. Ricky Spencer. He is hoping to build an island nesting station on either Wentworth Falls Lake or Glenbrook Lagoon.

The most important thing to remember about tortoises is that they are exclusively land creatures (The Ghost is thinking he may still be right.) They live in deserts and wet tropical forests and any place in between, and don't generally have much to do with water except to drink it.

Tortoises are vegetarians while turtles are omnivorous. Sea turtles are estimated to live for about 80 years while some tortoises such as the Galapagos tortoise can live up to 200 years, that's older than the Ghost. There are 200 species of turtle and tortoise worldwide and 18 species are found in Australia.

So what turtles or tortoises or both are found in the Blue Mountains?



Green Sea Turtle

There is the Eastern Long Neck turtle, the Broad Shelled Turtle, The Murray River Turtle (rare) and the Red Eared Slider Turtle. This latter turtle/tortoise is actually an introduced species from North America.

The Ghost visited The Australian Reptile Park near Gosford some years ago. He was amazed to see an Alligator Snapping Turtle. It was huge, well over 50kgs and ugly. These turtles have been known to take a finger or two from anyone who handles them without proper care.

Leonardo, the Snapping Turtle was actually caught in a Sydney drain in 2000 and was adopted by the Australian Reptile Park. He has been there for the last 19 years getting bigger and bigger. The Ghost wondered how it got in the drain.

Well these turtles are native to the southern states of US and were smuggled into Australia probably as a pet. As it grew bigger the owner released the turtle into a drain. It survived and thrived until it was caught. All turtles and tortoises are protected in Australia. Some may be kept as pets but under very strict guidelines.

The Ghost remembers having a recipe for turtle soup but it seems a bit barbaric.



Galapagos Tortoise



Snapping Turtle

In the 18th and 19th Centuries, England's Green Turtle Soup was all the rage with the upper class. The turtles were caught in the West Indies and the Ascension Islands and transported to England in large barrels, still alive. Because of the popularity of the soup, Green Turtle numbers plummeted and the soup skyrocketed in price. A new cheaper soup was introduced called Mock Turtle Soup made with sheep head and oysters. It sounds revolting.

The Ghost hopes this article has been interesting to his readers.....

...that's all folks