

Rotary International

District 709

Niagara District

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This issue is an every member issue. As last year there will be two such issues. In this issue we would like to convey some special thoughts to you, the club members, who are in the trenches and are the backbone of Rotary.

Fail . . .

At the district assembly this year, we asked each president, as an additional challenge, to fail at least 12 times. That was not a crazy request. One of the basic problems in every organization are the members who point out that an idea won't work. They always seem to sit in the rear of the room. (Have you ever noticed that no one ever sits in front row of the room!) Yes, we have a lot of doubters! But failure is the foundation of success. Paul Ehrlich was a person who failed. He decided to develop a serum which would kill the microscopic wiggly things which caused a feared disease. The first serum he concocted failed. The second was no better. When he reached the century mark he still had failed. Two hundred serums later and nothing. In fact when he reached the 605th formula, his record was 0 out of 605. 606 worked and that was Salvarsan the drug which cured syphilis, a disease which was the "Aides" of its day. His final record 1 and 605! In football or hockey no coach would have survived with that record. But Paul Ehrlich was awarded the Nobel Prize for medicine in 1908 and is the father of modern chemotherapy. Life is not to be judged as we would a hockey season!

In Order To Succeed . . .

In order to survive the effects of this decade's changing society, we have many challenges before us as Rotarians. The first challenge is upon us - Polio Plus. The next challenge is upon us too, but we don't see it. It is hidden from us because we see the wondrous growth in the number of Rotarians world wide. Unseen is the ominous fact that there are fewer Rotarians in North America. In the face of a major decline in the birth rate (Have you extrapolated from the times when fewer students required the closing of schools to the time when those students are of Rotary age?) and the increased need of third world countries for help, we have to maintain our membership roles and increase our aid programs. This will take courageous and original thinking. We can not afford to fear failure. We must seek failure to succeed. That is the wonder of Paul Ehrlich. For each of those 606 formulations he put much creative thinking and he built on his failures. That is what we will have to do in the decade ahead. We will have to try many different ideas to attract new members.

Because Women . . .

One issue we must face is women. Not only new members but the women we have in the Rotary family now! Our spouses. There has been a tremendous change in attitudes of women as to themselves. I am not sure I understand it, but then that's why I married Alex. I leave understanding women to Alex. But I have noticed that the newer generations of women prefer to be called "women" rather than "ladies" and "Rotary Anns" . . . well, ask them about that label! They prefer to make the decision themselves as to their involvement in things Rotary. Some even prefer Scotch to Tea! When they are in the work force they enjoy the traditional competition for improvement and resent having to prepare the meal when they get home. In terms of Rotary this will have meaning, because none of us would be Rotarians if our spouses said "no." If you have time, think about this. If the birth rate is 50% of what it was twenty years ago, and if the professional and management work forces are fifty percent women, how will your club sustain its present membership in the decades ahead?

and Future Members Require It

Frankly, I am deeply disturbed by the thought that the real issue facing Rotary in the next decade may not be should we bring women into Rotary, but will they come into Rotary? If that is the reality, that will be a major challenge! As Alex and I have traveled among the clubs in the district we have been very impressed with the commitment to community and surprised at the lack of commitment to the individual club. This is another challenge. Like the lawyers who die without a will, we often neglect our own houses. That should not be a product of Service above Self. Club organization is often at best casual. There are many presidents with little experience in Rotary leading clubs filled with past presidents. There are even clubs where the president is elected by the directors who, in turn, are appointed by the presidents. Where is the club constituency for decisions affecting the future? If the presidency is a chore to be given only to the newest members, where is the prestige of the office of president? The presidency should not be the means by which a new member learns about Rotary. The organizational traditions of each club will be the soil for future growth. We need constant renewal through new and younger members. When you enter the room for your weekly Rotary meeting what do you see? Is the room filled with active doers or of people retired from thinking, afraid to fail in the face of challenge, or a large group of past presidents led by a youngster learning about Rotary in lieu of a fireside chat? When a club appears messy or old, how can it attract new members? Do you see the challenge to Rotary this year? It is your attitude! What have you done for Rotary this year? What do you plan to do for Rotary this year, next year and each year thereafter?

Porcine Punditry

Last year Borgwart P. Sugg (This name is fictitious to protect the innocent.) was a club president. This year what do you do with Borgie? Bill Lounsbury, Chairman of our World Community Service Committee, says send Borgie to Africa! Would Borgie want to go to Africa? Probably not, he doesn't like bullets. But you needn't be disappointed, you can still send Borgie abroad. Another Borgie! Buy a pig or a goat through WCS and name it after your favorite past president or District Governor etc. and send it to a third world country. Imagine the boat docks in East Bajomey and down the ramp comes this juicy porker, Borgwart P. Sugg, to help procreate third world piglets or to feed people! If you are a little short of money this year because of Polio Plus, instead of naming someone a Paul Harris Fellow, name him a Familia Suidae Fellow and name the pig after the person. Contact Bill Lounsbury for details. 261 Beattie Ave., Apt. #4, Lockport, N.Y. 14094 (716)433-8483 (H); (716)634-3413 (B).

Les

Just as our August newsletter was printed, we received the sad news that Les Davis of the Burlington Rotary Club had passed away. Les was a past president of that club and a major figure for many years at the district level. He was a past chairman of the World Community Service Committee and the Public Relations Committee. To his family and the Burlington Rotary Club we send our condolences and salute a great man of Rotary.

The Very Best of 709

During the 1986-87 year several of our clubs earned presidential citations from President M.A.T. Caperas. The clubs proudly exhibiting citations are Burlington-Lakeshore, Clarence, Galt, Hamilton Mountain, Kitchener-Westmount, Medina, Niagara Falls (N.Y.), Oakville, Oakville-Trafalgar, Oakville West, South Shore/Blasdell, St. Catharines South, Springville, Waterloo, and Westfield-Mayville. How about encores in 87-88?

Spice Up Your Life

Are you getting a little peaked around your Rotary ears? Facing the Rotary middle years droop? Have you begun to realize that your Rotarian friends are repeating their jokes? It's time for a change! Have we got a deal for you! This year the District is operating with twenty-one different committees. One hundred and ninety four appointees from 59 clubs are working! Clubs with no one being revitalized are: Eden-North Collins, South Shore-Blasdell, Orchard Park, Fort Erie, Springville, Hamilton A.M., Niagara Central, Waterloo, Falconer, Lakewood, Delhi, Elba, Kitchener-Grand River, and Lockport. There is room for more people to work at the district level. We only insist that you attend the approximately four meetings required of each committee. Some will meet more. If you desire to put some time in contact your club president, area representative or myself. Believe me its fun!

Harold

Harold Madison, President of the Falconer Rotary club, has an interesting Polio Plus Fund Raising project. He has an enormous garden and each year members of the Falconer Rotary Club have been beneficiaries of Harold's green thumb and generosity. This year they pay! The money Harold earns from the sales of his produce goes to Polio Plus. He expects to earn \$500 by next year when the strawberries come in. The corn is out of this world! Unfortunately by the time you receive this newsletter, Falconer rotarians will have eaten all the corn.

Breakfast at The Country Club!

Burlington Central Rotary has just announced that they have moved. They will now be found having breakfast weekly at the Burlington Golf & Country Club. The starting time remains the same - 7:15 A.M. Please remember no spikes are to be worn in the dining room!

With The Young People

Its back to school time and for Rotarians this is the time to plan the annual assault! There are many young people who need youth exchange or RYLA and don't know it. In fact their teachers and parents may not know it. You know it and that is your advantage. Applications for youth exchange will be due in October. How do you recruit students? Look for a key school employee who knows the value of youth exchange or RYLA. That person could be a principal, teacher, or even a custodian. Someone who is respected by the children for what that person says. Have that person recommend qualified students to you and have that person with you when you talk to the students. Don't forget to thank them for their help. One way of reaching the parents is to involve the local PTA council in your project. When interviewing now for youth exchange look for future Rylarians. Kill two birds in one assault!

Alex's Corner



The other day as Nick and I were "rambling" towards the Hillcrest Restaurant where the Hamilton-Mountain Rotary club meets, my thoughts turned to my experiences as a Rotarian's wife, what it has meant to me and the people who have touched my life.

I thought of a day in December, 1985, when we were on our way to Ellicottville in Nick's red van to cut a Christmas tree. The trudge up the mountain through three feet of fluffy snow, the air crisp and Christmas carols filling the air! First a carol in Portugese, then Finnish, Danish and then in English! Another day again in the van, but now a warm summer day in July going to Ellicottville, with exchange students to swim, fish, barbecue and visit the Salamanca, N.Y. Seneca Indian museum. How else could one share such special experiences except through Rotary? We have never visited Finland, Brazil, South Africa, or Denmark, but we know more about these countries because of the students we have hosted as host parents or relief parents. As I read or hear of these countries I am reacting to the news not only as represented but through my experiences with the students.

At other times my thoughts also have turned to Tavistock, Delhi, Elba, Lakewood, and other towns we have visited only too briefly, but which are no longer unknown places on road signs. Each are communities with a history special and unique to the people symbolized by their Rotary club. But Rotary is not just communities, it is also programs and I have thought of RYLA, Rotex, Rotaract, World Community Service, Interact, 3H, Disaster Aid which are now familiar to me. As I have learned more about the vast scope of Rotary, I want to share with the wives of Rotarians the realization that our men just don't meet for breakfast, lunch or dinner, they meet for vast humanitarian projects that take much time and effort.

I share these thoughts with you because I strongly feel that the more we know about a country or an organization, the more accepting of change we become because we can understand the expressions of the need for change. Knowledge is the key to tolerance. While on our way home from club visits, Nick and I have discussed many times the issue of women in Rotary. But my thoughts often go back to the Rotarian's spouse who said, "Who would not want to be part of such vital organization as Rotary, especially if one is a woman in a managerial position and with a desire to better society."

Putting "Nifty" Into Your Newsletter

How do we best communicate to our members. It would be a lot easier in Arabia because the District Governor could stand each hour in a minaret and shout "Rotary News" to the multitudes. But we don't have minarets. Your club newsletter is our best avenue of information. We have been reading the various newsletters you have been sending us, and we would like you to reconsider your "market." Your market should be your active interested Rotarians and one other group. They are the women of Rotary, your spouses. Spouses write the checks, cook the hot dogs, bake the pies, host the students, help plan the dances, etc. Some newsletters are merely a compilation of what went on at the past meeting. These crucial groups could care less. They heard the speaker or they heard you talk about the speaker. What could attract them? Information about Rotary projects of your club, the District, or Rotary international! We have been handing out the "Rotary menu". It isn't copyrighted, copy any part you would like to copy. As to those Rotarians who didn't show up for the meeting. Send them a reminder card to make up.