

**BASIL SPRINGER COLUMN WHICH WILL APPEAR IN THE BARBADOS  
ADVOCATE'S BUSINESS MONDAY ON APRIL 18 2011**

**THE FREUNDEL ZONE**

**“Don’t be selfish; Don’t try to impress others. Be humble, think of others as better than yourselves. Don’t look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others too” –  
Philippians 2: 3-4**

Last week was a big week for the 69 clubs in the 14 countries which constitute Rotary International District 7030. It was the occasion of the annual District Conference which this year was held in Barbados under the leadership of District Governor, Tony Watkins. As Tony said during his address at the opening ceremony, the successful completion of the personal visits to all the clubs in a tri-lingual (English, French and Dutch) District and the successful staging of the District Conference ranked among the top challenges with which District 7030 Governors are faced during their year.

He was extremely happy with his exploits up and down the Eastern Caribbean chain of territories from St. Kitts in the North to French Guyana on the South American mainland. There were over forty flights, visits to heads of state, fellowship with all the clubs, Rotary Youth Leadership Awards and other exciting events. The feedback from the conference was that it was one of the biggest ever, if not the biggest, with 425 registrants. The quality of the content of the training, business sessions, networking, camaraderie and entertainment were, from all reports, very well received. Indeed, the Rotary International President’s Special Representative John Smarge, in his final remarks was moved to say that, in his report template back to the President’s office, the highest category available for comment was “good”. He advised that he would be classifying this conference as “superior”.

Tony and I entered the Harrison College secondary school on the same day over 60 years ago. We went to the University of the West Indies, Mona in the same year and have maintained professional and Rotary contact over the decades. I was particularly proud when the lot fell on me to be Master of Ceremonies at Tony’s installation as District Governor in July 2010, when he informed his team of his four District Goals for the year 2010-2011. These were: (1) the ever-crucial goal of “Increasing Rotary Foundation Funds”; (2) “Increasing membership” to share the tasks required to deliver value; (3) “Better communications throughout the District” which is especially important since the RI President Ray Klinginsmith’s theme of “Building Communities and Bridging Continents” is most apt for our District 7030; and (4) aggressively attacking the “Diabetes” Caribbean pandemic.

Now that the end of the Rotary year is almost over we can safely say that Tony has been a success as a District Governor. You have acquitted yourself well, “Good and Faithful” servant; you have exemplified the Rotary Motto of “Service above Self”.

Prime Minister Freundel Stewart, who assumed the post of Prime Minister, in his own right, following the death of his predecessor Hon. David Thompson on October 23 2010, was the featured speaker at the Opening Ceremony of the District Conference last Thursday. Even though I had admired the Prime Minister's oratorical style since 2003, when he was appointed a member of the Senate of Barbados, it was only the third time that I was privileged to see and hear him perform live.

The first was in July 2009 when he gave the feature address at the installation of the President of the Rotary Club of Barbados South (2009/2010) in his capacity as Deputy Prime Minister; he was at his eloquent best. The second was less than a month after his appointment as Prime Minister when he gave the feature address at the Gala function of the First Barbados Entrepreneurship Foundation's SUMMIT in November 2011.

I was therefore anxiously awaiting his address now that he was well into his term of Prime Minister; he did not disappoint. The general consensus was, based on individual feedback and the public references to his address by speakers on the following day of the conference, that he unleashed words of wisdom about his knowledge of the Rotary International movement and about the potential for the Rotary Clubs in Barbados and in the wider Caribbean to be harnessed in partnership with regional Governments and other social partners.

He felt that such partnerships could tackle urgent problems in the health sector, in particular, chronic non-communicable diseases (obesity, diabetes, osteoporosis, heart disease, cancer and stroke) consistent with the theme of the conference "Building Healthier Communities; Bridging Regional Cultures".

Also, evident in his presentation from my perspective, was a measured calmness and a firmly exhibited stamp of authority as leader of the nation. This was further reinforced when I had the opportunity to exchange a few words with him at the cocktail reception which followed the opening ceremony.

In the context of the weather "A **frontal** zone represents the leading edge of a wedge of cold/cool air. If the wedge is moving into an area of warmer air, the front is called a cold front. If the wedge is retreating and warmer air is moving into an area previously occupied by cool air, the front is termed a warm front".

My prediction is that as the Prime Minister seeks a mandate from the people, in his own right, as general elections become constitutionally due (in less than two years), we are going to witness a

series of “**Freunda**” zones in the socio-politico-economic atmosphere in Barbados as the leading edge of the wedge, driven by a calm/cool personality, advances and retreats over the Barbadian landscape.

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