

General Secretary's Report to the Convention
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The 2004-05 year has been an exciting one throughout the Rotary world. From the letters, e-mails, and photographs we've received, it's clear that Rotarians have celebrated the Rotary Centennial in a variety of novel and ambitious ways.

At the Secretariat, we have also been involved in many centennial activities:

- Some 7,500 Centennial Club Community Projects and 1,200 Twin Club partnerships were recorded and recognition sent to the clubs involved. Many of these activities were publicized on the RI Web site and in *The Rotarian* magazine and other publications.
- More than 200 entries were received for the centennial poster contest, and 31 zone winners were selected, as well as the winner and four runners-up. The winning designs have been made available on note cards, holiday cards, and e-cards.
- The centennial section of the Web site was updated and expanded to illustrate the progress of the Centennial Bell and include short feature stories on various club centennial projects, the centennial volunteer hours application, a centennial guestbook that allows users to "sign" with a greeting, and a centennial interactive calendar on which clubs and districts can post their centennial celebrations.
- Historical PowerPoint presentations were developed on 12 topics and posted monthly on the Web site.
- *The Rotarian* magazine and all other magazines in the Rotary World Magazine Press carried the same anniversary cover in February—a historic first and evidence of the more collaborative relationships developing among the 31 magazines.
- In June, a special double issue of *The Rotarian* magazine explored Rotary's response to and impact on world events over the past 100 years.
- A Rotary Centennial documentary was made available for purchase on DVD. The film has aired on public television and, with the help of Rotary clubs, on about 20 cable access stations in North America.

To capitalize on the public interest generated by Rotary's centennial, materials were developed for a special public image campaign. Entitled Humanity in Motion, the campaign kit included radio and television public service announcements (PSA) along with materials for use in print media and the Internet and on billboards.

Clubs worldwide have made creative use of these materials.

- In Cyprus and Greece, for example, districts 2450 and 2480 launched a public relations campaign in conjunction with Rotary's centennial week during which one of the PSAs aired twice daily on Cyprus' Broadcasting Corporation's programs that also featured Rotary guest speakers.

- Canadian Rotarians enlarged the PSAs and used them as part of a high-quality photography exhibit at their centennial project.
- In Brazil, Rotarians used the "Humanity in Motion" campaign designs to place 35 billboards each in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro during 12-25 March in conjunction with the Presidential Celebration on health concerns in Rio de Janeiro.
- The television PSA "Tree" from "Humanity in Motion" was aired on CNN en Español and other channels throughout Latin America, Puerto Rico, Spanish-speaking North America, and Spain.

As a key element of the RI strategic plan, enhancing our public image continues to be a high priority. Research shows that positive publicity stimulates interest in Rotary membership. For example, the number of prospective member forms submitted to the RI Web site spiked significantly during the week of 23 February when many media outlets covered the Rotary Centennial. To build on the favorable burst of publicity during the centennial year, we will continue to work with clubs and districts and help them to more effectively share their accomplishments with local media.

Throughout the centennial year, considerable energy was focused on planning a spectacular centennial convention, in conjunction with the RI Convention Committee, the Convention Promotion Committee, and the Host Organization Committee. Our goal was to stage an event that would be reflective of our long history of service, Rotary's place in the world today, and the opportunities for the future. To document Rotary's global impact, two video crews traveled around the world to do live shoots of grassroots Rotarian action. Those of you attending the convention have had the opportunity to see these Rotary success stories and to hear from some of the Rotarians who made them happen. I hope all convention goers will also take this opportunity to visit the convention's Secretariat Services area and talk with staff about club projects and learn what useful materials are available from RI.

While the Rotary Centennial occupied center stage this year, the Secretariat was also involved in many other activities as well. Following an RI Board decision in November, staff and volunteers worked together to address issues of sexual abuse and harassment in RI's popular Youth Exchange program. The Board adopted new guidelines that establish a district certification program designed to help clubs and districts prevent abuse and deal effectively with all reported incidents. We have been working with experts in the field to develop materials to assist clubs and districts in making Youth Exchange a safe experience for all participants.

About 95 percent of districts and 30 percent of clubs currently participate in Youth Exchange, making it a highly visible Rotary effort. The fact that we are taking abuse prevention seriously, and focusing on the safety of program participants presents a professional, responsible image to participants, their parents, and everyone else involved.

Responding to other Board action involving the adoption of the Club Leadership Plan and subsequent revisions made to the Rotary Recommended Club Bylaws, staff began

developing resources to help clubs adapt to this new recommended administrative structure. Designed to help all clubs with long-range planning, succession plans, training, and member involvement, the club leadership plan is recommended particularly for new or struggling clubs. A new publication that gives a brief overview of the Club Leadership Plan will be available in 2005-06 and will be distributed to all clubs at the 2006 President-elect Training Seminars. To learn more about the plan, visit the RI Web site, which features a PowerPoint overview, an implementation worksheet, and a list of frequently asked questions.

Other additions to the RI Web site this year include:

- An option for contributing directly to the Solidarity in South Asia Fund to support long-term recovery efforts in communities affected by the December 2004 earthquake and tsunami
- A Membership Best Practices database that allows Rotarians to share effective ideas for membership recruitment and retention
- A new shopping gateway that grants access to the CareClicks Web site, providing shoppers with convenient savings at nearly 800 quality merchants and returns a percentage of purchases to The Rotary Foundation
- Updated Rotaract pages designed to appeal to younger audiences, featuring a prospective member form, news headlines, latest events, online poll, and interviews

Membership continued to be an important concern this year. Responding to the fact that most members who leave Rotary do so in the first three years of membership, we focused on providing information for new members. In addition to the Rotary Basics publication that is carried in August issue of *The Rotarian* and in the Rotary World Magazine Press, staff developed a newsletter that is sent to all new members along with a welcome letter from the RI president. In addition, a section was developed on the Web site to help new members get involved quickly in Rotary activities.

Rotary's membership has remained steady since March 2002 at more than 1.2 million members. We have experienced growth in parts of Asia, Europe, and Africa. Almost 12,000 new clubs were chartered during the first three quarters of 2004-05, and two new countries, Tajikistan and Equatorial Guinea, recently joined the Rotary world.

In an effort to learn more about the service projects that Rotary clubs have carried out in recent years, RI President Glenn E. Estess Sr asked staff to conduct a survey of club presidents. Of the 18,000 clubs contacted, 2,100 responded, offering a creditable sampling from which to draw conclusions.

Survey results indicate that the average Rotary club conducted 56.6 service projects (both local and international) in the last 10 years. This amounts to approximately 5.7 per year, or approximately 182,776 projects for all clubs worldwide. With each service project requiring approximately 13 volunteers and 138.3 hours of labor, about 25,277,921 hours

of labor are devoted to Rotary's service projects every year. Rotary clubs spent an estimated US\$568,944,519 to \$997,331,600 on service projects annually worldwide.

This year, many of those dollars and hours of labor were directed toward helping victims of the devastating tsunami in south Asia. Rotarians in the stricken areas responded immediately with food, water, and shelter. Clubs and districts in other parts of the world sent money, volunteers, and kits with temporary shelter to assist in these Rotarian efforts. In addition, The Rotary Foundation established the Solidarity in South Asia Fund, which raised more than \$5 million for use in long-term recovery efforts. You can find many stories of Rotary's work to help the victims of this catastrophic event on the RI Web site and in *The Rotarian* magazine and other publications, illustrating the powerful impact an international service organization can have when disaster strikes.

Rotarian generosity also extended to the Every Rotarian, Every Year (EREY) effort. Rotarians honored the Rotary Centennial with contributions totaling \$59 million as of 30 April 2005 to the Annual Programs Fund.

One of the Foundation's newest and most exciting programs—the Rotary Centers for International Studies in peace and conflict resolution—reached a milestone in 2004 with the graduation of its first class of Rotary Peace Fellows. This dynamic group of graduate students soon began applying their knowledge to real-life situations. One graduate is serving as an advisor to the president of Lithuania, another monitored the election in Ukraine as part of the Canadian government observation delegation, while others are working for a variety of organizations involved in conflict resolution and development.

The Foundation saw changes in the Humanitarian Grants program this year. The moratorium was lifted on the Health, Hunger and Humanity (3-H) Grants, and the minimum Matching Grant award was raised to \$5,000, effective 1 July 2005. These changes are aimed at focusing on sustainable projects that have a greater impact on communities. In Educational Programs, the Trustees agreed to fund one Group Study Exchange (GSE) team annually from the World Fund.

Throughout 2004-05, staff and volunteers continued to develop a strategic plan based on the seven goals adopted by the RI Board: eradicate polio, sharpen program focus, select new corporate program focus, refine governance/leadership structure, improve training and education at all levels, expand and integrate membership globally, and enhance public image. With such a plan in place, Rotary International can more effectively provide clubs and districts with the service they need to better serve their communities and more confidently meet whatever challenges the future may hold.