

Rotary

NEWS



Chicago moments

RC Bangalore Orchards President D Ravishankar and his wife Paola outside Paul Harris's home in Chicago.



Ravishankar and Paola with RI President Barry Rassin and Esther.



Ravishankar and Paola with PRIP K R Ravindran and TRF Trustee Gulam Vahanvaty.

Inside

12 Spirit of service defines Indian Rotarians: Maloney

An interview with incoming
RI President Mark Maloney.

12



24 Indian doctors reach modern surgical techniques to Madagascar

Another medical mission treats thousands
of patients in the African island.

30 Council on Legislation dazzles delegates in a snowing Chicago

An account of the recently
concluded CoL in Chicago.

34 RI spends \$11 million for DGs' allowance: KR Ravindran

PRIP K R Ravindran gives a pep talk
to incoming district leaders at Disha,
a training event in Kolkata.

40 Celebrating 31 years of Women in Rotary

RID 3201 celebrates women in
Rotary with a conclave in Kochi.

42 RC Madras Central converts shabby schools to Happy ones

Two government schools are completely
transformed, thanks to Rotary.

48 RC Meenambakkam helps to mend little hearts

This club has saved the lives of 100 children
suffering from congenital heart diseases.

60 Of Turkish kebabs in Istanbul... and Budapest

The stunning city of Istanbul
is also a foodie's paradise.

24



30



48



60



40



On the cover: RIPE Mark Maloney
and Gay at the Chhatrapati Shivaji
Maharaj museum in Mumbai.

Picture by Jaishree

Vapi, a jewel in Rotary India's crown

The article on the Rotary hospital in Vapi (March issue) is a great inspirational story for a sustainable and humanitarian service project. RC Vapi has done many such service projects for schoolchildren, nursing schools, hospitals and colleges. Behind all these, there is this great Rotarian, PRIP Kalyan Banerjee. I had the privilege of visiting Vapi with PRIP Wilf Wilkinson in Feb 2007. He had asked me to accompany him to Vapi and I was there to witness the foundation laying ceremony of Rotary Advanced Imaging Centre of Haria L G Rotary Hospital by Wilkinson in the presence of Banerjee. There I saw the work of Kalyanda... what a kind-hearted, humble, down to earth, dedicated, committed and passionate Rotarian.

Aswini Kar, RC Bhubaneswar
Meadows — D 3262

RI Director C Basker is forthright with his vision on sanitation. This is a big problem in rural India, particularly undeveloped villages. Rotary has taken up so many memorable projects to bring change in the community but we still need more planning for better sanitation.

Garlands galore is an excellent article and very colourful too, depicting our tradition and the Indian culture of felicitating VIPs. Another interesting article is the Rotary hospital at Vapi. The city fulfils PRIP Kalyan Banerjee's dream of having an iconic Rotary city in India. Wherever we go in Vapi,



we find Rotary's presense visible through projects and this shows the greatness of our leader. Vapi is a diamond in the crown of Rotary India.

Mindfulness for well-being is informative and useful article. The *Club Matters* is really attractive with nice photos and it's a good encouragement to clubs to carry on with their community projects. One should read the

magazine a number of times to feel the pleasure and the enrichment it gives to readers.

PRN Chandra Mouli
RC Berhampur
Midtown — RID 3262

A clear, blunt message

Rasheeda Bhagat has put certain points bluntly without mincing words while reporting incoming RIDE Bharat Pandya's address in *Let's not make Rotary a touch and go organisation*. "Poor planning and improper leadership positions is another drawback." This is true. With improper planning, many clubs thrust leadership on unwilling people who fail miserably.

"My club is like this only, this is our tradition, we don't want women or younger members in our club." This point hits the nail on the head. In certain clubs, a person or a group wants to control and dictate terms to the president and his team. Past presidents

and senior leaders should be mentors and not dominating factors.

Club leaders should have a strategy to motivate new members to take up leadership roles.

V V Narayanan
RC Chennai K K Nagar — RID 3232

Rotary News turns 'spicy'

The article *Talking about Real Food* in the April issue is fabulous. Some culinary items rock



my memory. I am no foodie but relish the best across regions. For a starter, *dosa* is a delight with its diverse manifestations, a piece de resistance on a table, amidst many delicacies. My taste buds blossom when I think of *oothappam* at Madras K Iyer of Triplicane, where badam halwa was served in a shack. As a student we would rush to enjoy this piping hot stuff fresh from oven.

Goan Vindaloo at the Mavalli Tiffin in Bengaluru was awesome. Here tiffin was served in silverware. Andhra fish curry, Hyderabad biryani, Kerala *avial*, and Guntur's *Avakaya Gongura* chutney and other regional delights leave a spicy tang on your taste buds.

LETTERS

North is different with delicacies made in the tandoor. *Rotary News* has turned spicy as well with a melange of gripping narratives.

J V Reddy — RID 3160

The March issue was impressive with good stories and colourful pictures. The project activities of different clubs (*Club Matters*) are very inspiring to read.

Sudhir Kumar Garg

RC Muzaffarnagar — RID 3100

I thoroughly enjoyed the article *Sending your club president-elect to the Convention* by John Blount, Chairman of RI Convention 2019. He had nicely described the benefits of sending the presidents-elect to the RI convention as it motivates clubs to take up fundraising.

M V Subramanyam

RC Proddatur — RID 3160

Sending President Elect to the Rotary Convention is a great idea as they will get the opportunity to meet Rotarians from over 200 countries, exchange ideas and discuss fundraising. The club will thus learn core values of Rotary: leadership, integrity, service, diversity and fellowship. *Giving them a hand* by Jaishree is an exceptional project where Rotary clubs provide artificial limbs to amputees.

Naveen R Garg

RC Sunam — RID 3090

LN 4 camp project done by RC Mettupalayam, in association with RC Pune Downtown, is excellent. In RID 3000, our First

Lady Sarala Kannan along with her team organised a similar LN 4 camp this year. Flood-hit Kerala has got a benefactor in Dr Azad Moopen, of the Aster Group, who has set aside 20 per cent of his wealth for charity. We wish him well.

S Muniandi

RC Dindigul Fort — RID 3000

Reading *Rotary News* in Tamil is gratifying and touches our hearts. RI Director's message on sanitation, the inspiring message from RI President Barry Rassin and *Let us not build barriers to Rotary* by Rasheeda Bhagat were all interesting to read.

Other captivating articles on the Rotary hospital in Vapi, prosthetic hand, Kathakali and Dr Azad Moopen hooked the readers. The visit of RIPE Mark Maloney has been covered with nice picture and articles. Kudos for bringing the edition in Tamil too.

Pon Muthaiyan

RC Aduthurai — RID 2981

The experiences that I've had as a Rotarian while travelling all over the world is nicely captured in the words of RI President Barry Rassin in his April message. When I travel around the world, I am welcomed by fellow Rotarians. I only have to approach them and give them my travel plans in advance, and the rest happens spontaneously in a flow.

In the last six months, I have met Rotarians from nine different Rotary clubs in six countries. I appreciate the opportunity Rotary offers me

as a member and the excellent hospitality I got while meeting global Rotarians.

The point Rassin expressed about Rotaractors is equally important. The energy and enthusiasm that I have seen in the Rotaract Club of Shishu Mandir is beyond imagination. As Rotarians, it is great to accompany Rotaractors and mentor them.

Manoj Kabre, RC Bangalore

Whitefield Central — RID 3190

Arrest membership decline

Bring to the attention of RI President Barry Rassin, RIPE Mark Maloney and RIPN Sushil Gupta through your magazine the issue of constant fall in membership. Encourage spouses to join Rotary, at half the RI dues and induct quality members. DGs should monitor attendance. After polio, it is time to adopt new healthcare programmes.

Sanat Jain, RC Raipur

Heritage — RID 3261

Let there be all-round coverage

For quite some time, I find projects from southern States getting more coverage in *Rotary News*. Will it not be better if equal importance is given to Rotary projects across the country? I am ready to extend any help to achieve this objective.

Rtn Aniel Sahni — RID 3011

We welcome project reports from all over India. But clubs in the South are more proactive in sharing their projects. Clubs in other regions need to follow suit.

Editor

We welcome your feedback. Write to the Editor: rotarynews@rosaonline.org; rushbhagat@gmail.com
Click on **Rotary News Plus** in our website www.rotarynewsonline.org to read about more Rotary projects.

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Let's celebrate our gigantic democratic exercise

Once again it is time for that opportunity we get only once in five years, our General elections. This time, in the world's largest electoral exercise, 900 million voters will democratically elect our next government in a seven-phase exercise that is already underway. To a mature and knowledgeable group such as Rotarians and their families, one need hardly stress the importance of every vote. It is an integral part of our Constitution, which has made India a democracy... and what a democracy! In this country, a democratically-elected government can fall just by one vote, during a Trust vote in Parliament. As did the Vajpayee government in 1999 after the AIADMK chief J Jayalalithaa withdrew support from the NDA government after just 13 months. Vajpayee stepped down, after making that great speech in Parliament, and returned to power with a greater majority and formed a stable government that completed its full five-year term. A democracy such as ours deserves celebration!

As voters, it is our duty to go out and vote. The complaint often is that the rich or the upper middle classes, or shall we say the 'chattering classes', who are very forthright in giving political *gnan* to the less vocal at fancy parties, do not actually go out and vote. There are also instances of people who take off for holidays if the voting day in their constituency happens to be close to a weekend. How closely involved Indian Rotarians are with the political system can be seen from MLAs and MPs being Rotarians. I distinctly recall Union Railway Minister Piyush Goel proudly tell a packed hall of Rotarians in Jaipur that he was a Rotarian. On a couple of Rotary WhatsApp groups, names of a few Rotarians contesting the Lok Sabha elections have come up. Let's wish all of them well.

But while vote we must, as educated and enlightened Indians, it's not enough that we just queue up to vote and

flash the finger with black ink on social media groups. We have to apply our minds and vote for the best possible candidates to represent us in Parliament and work sincerely and diligently to take our country on the right growth path in the next five years. India is a country with 1.3 billion dreams; we need to send back to our Lok Sabha the best possible people who can steer our great nation in the right direction... a direction of economic growth and development, and justice and equity for all. We need a government that will represent all sections of society; both the rich and the poor, the urban and the rural, and above all, those who toil in the farm sector to put food on our table... the farmers, the landless labourers, and the millions of women who do backbreaking work on the fields, often in scorching heat, through the entire agri cycle — from sowing to harvesting.

By the time the next issue of *Rotary News* comes out, we should not only know the results of this massive electoral exercise, but hopefully also have in place a strong and stable government. Meanwhile, I do hope our *netas* will tone down their shrill pitch in campaigning, and parties will take action against their candidates who are using foul and abusive language during election campaigns. The conduct of such persons doesn't inspire any confidence in placing the reigns of our nation, and its destiny, in the hands of political outfits that tolerate or encourage such coarse language. While it might be too much to expect old world decency from all of those who are aspiring for the powerful position of an MP, the Indian electorate does deserve to see some decorum and decency from our politicians.

As we wind up this issue, news comes in of the heartbreaking and horrendous multiple bombings in Sri Lanka, killing over 300 people and injuring several hundreds. Another horrific reminder of what hatred does, putting into even sharper focus Rotary's Peace programme.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Rasheeda Bhagat'.

Rasheeda Bhagat



Inspiring the youth



Dear fellow Rotarians,

The people who know me best — my family — know that my passion for Rotary is boundless. They also know that I don't expect them to get involved in Rotary the way I have. It's a choice that's up to them. But I must admit, I can't help smiling when I see them making the right choice.

At the end of the Toronto convention last year, my 12-year-old granddaughter turned to me and said, "I'm inspired to do something. What can I do?" Naturally, I did what any other Rotarian grandfather worth his salt would do: I asked her if there was an Interact club in her school. When she discovered there wasn't, she attempted to set one up. Unfortunately, her principal had other ideas, but we should not be deterred from helping Rotary youth programs whenever we can, because their value is beyond question.

Take Rotary Youth Leadership Awards as one example. It transforms young people into more confident, focused individuals with a better understanding of the world around them — changes I was pleased to see in my 16-year-old grandson after he participated.

My family is just the beginning. Everywhere I go, I meet people of all ages whose lives have been changed by our youth programmes. They tell me how, five or 15 or 25 years ago, Rotary Youth Exchange taught them a new language or introduced them to a new culture. Their

eyes light up when they talk about how New Generations Service Exchange helped them advance in their career, or about how membership in Rotaract first ignited their passion for giving back to the community.

Rotary's programmes for young leaders extend our ideals of service, friendship, and leadership development beyond the doors of our clubs to hundreds of thousands of young people each year. And when we serve with and for those young people — as sponsors, project partners, and mentors — it brings out the best in us, and it brings out the best in Rotary.

May is Youth Service Month, and there are many ways your Rotary club can celebrate. Sponsor an Interact club or Rotaract club, and your Rotary club will give young people in your community the tools they need to take action, become leaders and gain a global perspective. Team up with your local Rotaract club for a service project. Get to know the participants in Rotary's programmes for young leaders and share their stories with your community. You'll find more ideas in this year's Rotary Citation brochure, located under the Awards section of the Member Center at my.rotary.org.

This month, let's *Be the Inspiration* to the young leaders in our communities by mentoring them, engaging them and working side by side with them on meaningful projects. It's an investment in their future and in the world they will live in after we're gone. And it's work that will forever enrich their lives, and our own.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barry Rassin". The signature is fluid and stylized, with a prominent initial "B" and "R".

Barry Rassin
President, Rotary International

Message from the RI Director



Future stakeholders

Dear Rotarians,

Asia is home to a large number of the world's young population which indicates the enormous untapped potential we have in our youth to shape the future of the world as a better and safer place. By 2020, India's share of youngsters in its total population is expected to be around 35 per cent. Rotary defines youth as comprising persons of 18–30 years of age. This is when they are brimming with ideas, energy, drive, passion and idealism. The spirit of doing good for others and working for the betterment of the less-privileged take root, and if nurtured well, it can become a life-consuming passion. This is the time when we can use our youth to act as catalyst to bring about meaningful change in social behaviour and attitudes. They can challenge stereotypes, embrace good practices and think out-of-the-box.

Let me share an interesting and inspiring true life story I read recently. With the right screenplay and good production values this story can make an exciting Bollywood blockbuster.

Every morning, at the small village of Banwari Tola in Padrauna area of Kushinagar district in Eastern UP, Deepak (17) and Raju (15) unlock the doors of their modest barber's shop and get ready for business. Customers get the usual haircut, shave and sometimes a head massage from the two "boys". Just that Deepak is actually Jyoti, and Raju is Neha, sisters who, facing starvation after their father was paralysed by a stroke,

began running the shop on their own five years ago. To get around social criticism and unwanted attention from men, the sisters had some time ago begun to dress and talk like boys in public. As they grew older, it became difficult to hide the fact that they were girls. But by then, it was too late. They could either give in to pressure and head back home, saving themselves from the unsolicited advances of their completely male clientele or do something about it. Some of the criticism came from the girls' own family members who were also against them working in, what they said, was a male profession. But they became hair-cutters out of compulsion, not choice. There was nothing else they could have done to feed their family. The sisters not only managed to keep their family afloat, but they also went to school in addition to working at the shop. But their financial situation forced Jyoti to quit school after Class XII, while Neha dropped out after Class X. The shop is doing well these days by local standards, and they dream of opening a beauty parlour someday. These girls have not only supported their family but have fought all odds including social criticism. The teenagers have brought in change with grit and determination. We salute their spirit.

This true life story really touched me in many ways. Rotary clubs must continuously partner with the youth in all phases of humanitarian action because the future generation is an important stakeholder in the growth of Rotary and the country.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "C. Basker".

C Basker
Director, Rotary International

Sushil Gupta resigns as RI President Nominee



My Fellow Rotarians,

It is with a heavy heart that I announce my resignation as the president-nominee of Rotary International. While it was my dream to serve as your president, my health prevents me from giving my absolute best to you and the office of the president at this time. I believe Rotary deserves nothing less than that from those elected to represent this great organisation of ours.

I have made this difficult decision after much soul-searching and conferring with my family. This is not only a disappointment for us, but I am also keenly aware that this will be a disappointment for many Rotarians in India who were so proud to see someone from our country again named as president. I know that this is what is best for Rotary International.

I have been a Rotarian for more than 40 years and it has given me everything I could ask for. I can think of no higher honour than to have been selected by the Nominating Committee as president of Rotary for the 2020–21 Rotary year. I will continue to proudly serve as a Rotary member and pursue some major initiatives that I wanted to accomplish during my year as president, because I know that we are poised to achieve more great things in the future.

I wish nothing but the best to the candidate who succeeds me as president-nominee and thank you all for the support and encouragement you have shown me in the past year.

Sushil Gupta

Selecting a new President Nominee

Following the announced resignation of president-nominee Sushil Gupta due to health reasons, the 2018–19 Nominating Committee for President will convene electronically to select a new president-nominee. The goal is to conclude the selection process no later than Friday, May 10, 2019.

If no challenges to the nomination are received by May 31, 2019, RI President Barry Rassin will declare the selection of the Nominating Committee to be the new president-nominee.

When the new president-nominee is selected, an announcement will be posted on *Rotary.org*.

Message from RI President



Dear fellow Rotarians,
This is a sad moment for Rotary, as I must inform you that Sushil Gupta has resigned as president-nominee of Rotary International due to health reasons.

This was a difficult decision for Sushil to make, and I understand and fully respect his choice to prioritise his health. He is firmly committed to continuing his work as a valued and respected member of our organisation.

The 2018–19 Nominating Committee for President of Rotary International will convene electronically in the coming weeks to select Sushil's replacement.

I have no doubt we will pick an excellent candidate to serve as RI President for the 2020–21 Rotary year. Please join me in wishing Sushil a complete and rapid recovery, and thank him for his service and dedication to Rotary.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Barry Rassin'.

Barry Rassin
President,
Rotary International

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RIPE Mark
Maloney

Spirit of service defines Indian Rotarians: Maloney

Rasheeda Bhagat

RI President Elect Mark Maloney reached his Rotary leadership milestones at a rather young age; becoming the President of his club (RC Decatur, Alabama) at 31, District Governor at 34 and RI Director at 44. A practising lawyer, he has decided to set apart five days a month for his law practice and strongly believes that if Rotary converts volunteer positions into full-time commitments, younger professionals/businesspersons will not come forward to take up leadership roles in Rotary. Maloney's connection with India goes back some 21 years. In Kolkata to participate in some Rotary events in February 2019, the President Elect took some time off for a freewheeling interview with *Rotary News*.

Excerpts

You've been coming to India for 21 years, how has India and Rotary in India changed during this period?

The change in both during those 21 years is dramatic. India has always been a great democracy since its Independence and that has not changed. But in terms of the economic and business advances, the construction and growth of cities and modernity, India has made great leaps forward.

Coming to Rotary, India is our fastest growth

area. In the last 10 years, membership in India has grown 56 per cent, and while many projects are funded with money coming outside of India, now it's the No 2 country in TRF giving.

Talking of TRF, your response to a single Indian, D Ravishankar, contributing \$14.7 million.

Well, it was unbelievable, but what was even more unbelievable was that depending on who you listen to, he has given

away between 70 to 85 per cent of his wealth, a remarkable figure. One thing that strikes me about Indian Rotarians is how service is just a part of their lives. They go to their businesses and professions and do their jobs, but at the same time they give time for service projects. In the US and the West, we mostly do short-term projects, but here in India, projects such as *The Gift of Life, Healthy Little Hearts...* they go on for years. In Surat I visited six projects and some of them

run without continuing Rotary involvement, but in others the Rotarians are there monthly, weekly, daily, I don't know how often, making sure they

That's what we like to say when we feel we are not doing enough.... that we don't have as many opportunities for service as there are in India!

are running schools or a training or skills centre. It would be a rare exception to have such a project in the US.

I suppose there are more opportunities in India to do longer, lasting projects; the need too is far greater here.

That's what we like to say when we feel we are not doing enough.... that we don't have as many opportunities because we have a different social or health structure. RIDE Kamal Sanghvi told me at breakfast that in some villages Rotarians presented sanitary napkin vending machines and I can't imagine such a project in the US. Somebody used the term

'mortuary vehicle'; my club was once approached for helping a crematorium project in India and we told the Rotarians that while we understand there is such a need, it is not going to resonate with American Rotarians. If you want support, are there other projects we can help. A crematorium is not any less worthwhile... but this difference is indicative of the diversity of Rotary. And yet in that diversity we are more like each other than we could have imagined.

In gender balance, India is yet to catch up with the world figure of 22 per cent women in Rotary, though this morning we heard that RID 3250 has 37 per cent women. Even in senior leadership, Rotary continues to be an old boys' network; we are yet to see a woman RI director from India.

Yes, but this is not the only place. We are yet to see a woman director from Africa and Saowalak Rattanavich from Thailand is the only woman director from Asia.

What would you suggest Indian Rotarians do to bring in more women?

In the US, if you made a special appeal to women it would be considered

In the US, if you made a special appeal to women it would be considered sexist. So you want to approach women the same way you would approach men.

sexist. So you want to approach women the same way you would approach men. We must meet whoever they are in their situation in life... I have this concern about involving younger professionals and ensuring that leadership is accessible to Rotarians who are still actively engaged in their businesses and professions.

As we walked into the restaurant this morning, this group of women wanted a photo with me and everybody was proud that it is an all-women Rotary club. And that kind of makes me cringe; our Constitution clearly says we should not discriminate on the basis of gender and I often wonder, wow, should I get my photo taken thus. But then I want to be friendly and a lot of it is cultural. At the Indian airports there are separate queues for women and men during security check and in commuter trains, there are separate all-women compartments for their safety. So it's a



At a glance



RIPE Maloney and Gay at a Japanese restaurant in 2002.

Gay's role in your Rotary journey:

Gay is a Rotarian in her own right, being a charter member of the Rotary Club of Decatur Daybreak, Alabama. She joined Rotary on March 6, 1996 (I can remember because that is the charter date). She had no desire to join my Rotary club because "there is no Rotary club in the world big enough for both of us," she said. We can practice law together, but we cannot be in the same club! Some of my best ideas for Rotary (or other things in life) come from Gay. We are really a team. I seek her advice constantly.

Religion: I'll let other people decide how religious I am in the sense of how well I do, but I will say I am a Roman Catholic Christian and I wear my Catholicism on my sleeve. If you don't know I am a Roman Catholic,

you haven't been paying attention! Wherever I go, the President's office sends out travel guidelines and in those I indicate that if I am in a place during the weekend, and if it's possible, I would like to go to a Roman Catholic Mass. So Bharat (Pandya) and Gulam (Vahanvaty) have been working and at 6.30 am on Sunday morning, Lord willing, I will be at such a Mass in Mumbai near the airport. And Gulam arranged, when I was here in November, our attending a Mass in the cathedral in south Mumbai and I also met the Cardinal Archbishop of Mumbai, Oswald Gracias.

Favourite Cuisine: Italian

Music: Classical

Movies: I rarely go out to movies.

Reading: I am embarrassed to say I do very little casual reading. I read in my profession the things that I need to read, I read newspapers and magazines.

Travel fatigue: Well, in this position you simply have to travel, so you keep going. Somebody said how do you handle jet lag so well. You just do it, but the worst thing for me is to go into a different time zone and for the organisers to immediately put me on a dais. It's fine if it's short and I am not speaking. But I've been to places, at district conferences, or Institutes, where they put me on the dais for the whole day! And I am up there going like this (demonstrates nodding off) and Gay is there in the first row saying 'Keep your eyes open Mark! If I can be in the front row where the crowd's not looking at me, that is manageable. That's the hardest part.

Dream for Rotary; and where he wants to see it in the next 5 to 10 years:

My dream for Rotary is that it grows, in terms of membership, the service that it performs and the dollars contributed to TRF. That is what I hope to achieve, and you were correct to say in the next five years. The objectives that I have set forth for this year in terms of growing Rotary, will not be effectively measured on June 30, 2020, but June 2025 or 2030. Because we are trying to change attitudes and that doesn't happen overnight or in one Rotary year.

cultural thing; I have my prejudices and therefore I apply those, but that doesn't make it right.

What do you think women bring to Rotary? Do they have a different set of skills, are more focused or service-minded? Or do you think this is stereotyping.

I do think it is stereotyping. Women do bring a great variety of skills and so do men. In the US, where would we be in membership but for our women members?

What is women's membership in the US?

Not much more than the average of 22 per cent.

Do you believe that women's entry into Rotary has enriched it and made it more complete?

Of course. Rotary clubs are supposed to be reflective of their community and you've got women executives, lawyers, doctors, etc, and if you are going to reflect the community, how can you exclude



RIPE Maloney gives polio drops to a child in India.

them? For me to suggest how India should address that, I don't have the background to say that.

Whether in membership growth or TRF giving India is rocking in the Rotary world. But shortcomings,

such as transparency, accounting norms etc have been mentioned. What are the areas where Rotary could improve in India?

Well, stewardship has been an issue but its more an exception; only there are more exceptions in India in this



Gay speaks with Binota as RIPE Maloney and PRIP Kalyan Banerjee look on, during the couple's recent visit to Mumbai. Also seen in the picture is PRIP Rajendra Saboo (right).

Maloney's priorities

The theme wasn't difficult. I was nominated on the first Monday in August, confirmed on Oct 1, and within a week I had the theme.

regard than other parts of the Rotary world. How can India improve? That is a hard thing for me to say. The service that is performed here is dramatic... (grinning) maybe they shouldn't push me around so much for photos! But that just shows their enthusiasm. And far it be for me to tell India... I mean, it's like people outside the US giving us advice on Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton and whatever it might be! Well, thank you, but we'll handle it on our own! We may have our own issues but we'll take care of them!

In the interview to *The Rotarian*, you called Rotary the UN of individuals; such an apt description. Has it been used before; I haven't seen it!

I don't know.

How difficult was it to zero down on your theme?

Oh, the theme wasn't difficult. The tie was much harder! To me, connections is what Rotary is all about. Perhaps many individuals who have become Rotary presidents have thought about it for a long time. From time to time it would cross my mind if you ever became president



RIPE Maloney and Gay visiting a school in Lagos, Nigeria, in 1990, after he had completed his term as DG, RID 686.

Incoming RI President Mark Maloney has four distinct priorities which he spells out clearly.

His first priority is to grow Rotary "by supporting our existing clubs and also growing new clubs with a different attitude, not necessarily in a new community." He says often people are very happy that Rotary is doing so great in their community. "Sure, it is doing great but there are so many other segments of society that are not included. We have to get those."

His second priority is to make Rotary more family-friendly. "That's the way Gay and I have lived Rotary from the very start. I was 31 when I was club president, and at 34 became district governor. We just took our daughters along with us. We have three daughters, two biological, but in the last five years we have acquired a third daughter, a young woman, who due to a tragedy in her family has become a part of our family."

Maloney's third priority is to make Rotary leadership more accessible to people who are

still actively engaged in their businesses and professions. "The greatest applause that I received in my theme speech at the International Assembly was when I told the governors that it is not necessary for you to visit each club individually. Now that is heresy here in India because the governor is such a rockstar compared with other parts of the world. But that's so difficult; in the US so many people wait to become governor till they retire because of all the things that we expect traditionally of the governors."

But he concedes that this is not going to happen overnight. "Some past governors will resist the change to conducting cluster meetings or having the governor come only to certain events. It's going to take a change in attitude, a cultural change and cultural changes don't take place that quickly," says Maloney.

His last priority for his presidential year will be to focus on Rotary's relationship with the UN, "because it is the 75th anniversary of the signing of the UN Charter".



Above: RIPE Maloney with his third daughter Suzanna Greer.

Left: The Maloneys with their daughters, Phyllis (right) and Margaret.



what would your theme be, and I would push it aside because I didn't want to presuppose that it would happen. So frankly I didn't seriously start thinking about the theme until I was nominated. I was nominated on the first Monday in August, confirmed on Oct 1, and within a week I had the theme. No matter what you think of

Rotary, connection is part of it. I just cannot imagine anyone thinking of Rotary and not associating connections with it. And I do believe Rotary is the first social network.

What kind of a family did you grow up in?

I grew up in a Midwestern "Irish" community, though



I am no more Irish than I am lots of other things. Though I say I'm a sixth generation Irish, we have barely any connection with Ireland. When I say community, I am talking of a rural farmland five miles outside of a village with fewer than 900 people and the names were Maloney, Duffy, McGuire, all Irish names. Ours was a family of successful farmers. I had a nice upper middle class childhood and my parents and relatives in their generation were college or

university educated. But once again, connection is key in our family. In the US, many people don't know who their cousins are or have never seen them, but in my family, we know our cousins and our children know their second cousins.

Why did you decide to go for law?

I wanted to be a lawyer since I was 11 or 12. In my earlier childhood I wanted to be a doctor. Then I decided that I was not keen

Left: RIPE Maloney sporting a *feta* during his visit to Amravati in Maharashtra.

Below: RIPE Maloney and Gay with RIDE Bharat Pandya during their visit to a school for mentally-challenged children in Surat.



Of dating, a proposal and flowers



How RIPE Mark Maloney met his wife Gay is an interesting story, which he relates with absolute delight. Class-mates at the Vanderbilt Law School in Tennessee, he clearly remembers his first date. "It was on Oct 8, 1977. The law firm where I was clerking, had an office party and I invited Gay to go with me. If you want the full story, I invited her to go and she said no, because she already had another date. But I had never had a woman saying yes to me as promisingly as she said No. She made it clear that she was very interested but had a prior commitment which she had to honour."

They dated for only six months before he proposed to her. She first took him to meet her

family; "I had never been invited to a girl's home before and so I spent the New Year's of 1977-78 with her family and then in early February (3-5) she met my parents."

Maloney admits that this time of the year — mid-February — is a "very difficult time" for him. When he took Gay to meet his parents, "that was the last time we saw them alive. They were killed 10 days later in an automobile accident. This happened 41 years ago, in 1978. So that speeded things up."

He explains that American law schools have a three-year programme; they were in the second year and still had 18 months to go. "I was not necessarily in a real hurry to propose, but six weeks later I proposed to

her by accident. It was not planned. We had just gone out for dinner. I didn't even have a ring. The conversation just kind of went that way and in fact I was so vague about what I was asking that she asked me to be more clear about what I was asking! We dated for six months and were engaged for 14 months."

And then comes the romantic side of the incoming President. I interview him on Valentine's Day and he says: "Since Gay and I are separated this week, I sent her a Valentine card through the mail... and she has already received it. I just didn't want to hand it to her as I was walking out of the door, so as I was leaving town dropped it in the mail box and it arrived home a couple of days later."

What is more, two days later, was Gay's birthday, and he had worked out the details of how she would get not one, but two, bouquets for her birthday. "She will get flowers Saturday night in New York. She returns home on Monday night and on Tuesday, there will be flowers delivered to her in her office. Because normally she would keep the flowers for the entire week but the flowers in New York won't be able to come to Alabama!"

This is the kind of attention your incoming President pays to details!

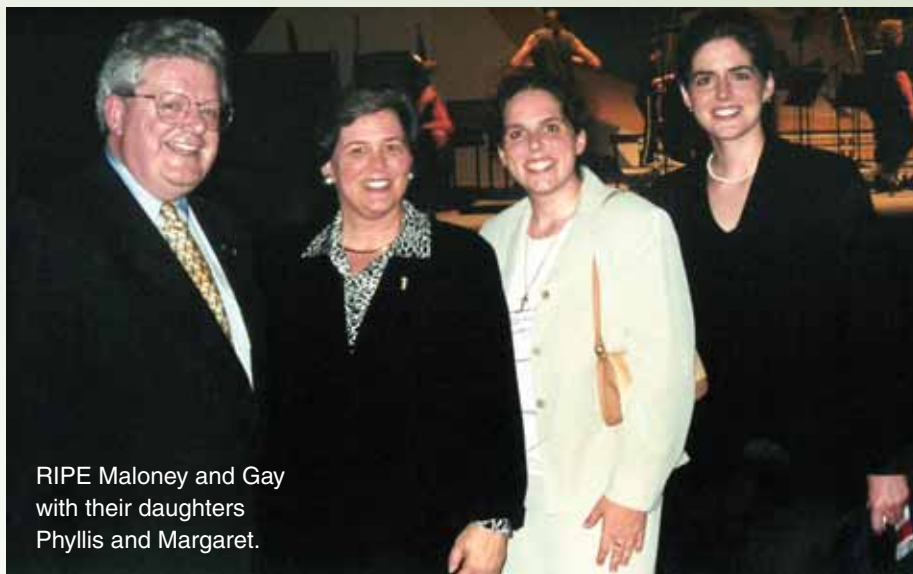


Above: RIPE Maloney and Gay with PRIP Rajendra Saboo and Usha, in Oct 1991, when Saboo was RI President and was travelling to Decatur, Alabama, the hometown of the Maloneys. The event was a fundraiser for an international service project benefitting a cleft palate clinic in Mexico.

Right: RIPE Maloney pondering on his spice tolerance in Indian food.



RIPE Maloney and Gay
with their daughters
Phyllis and Margaret.



on blood and so I started thinking about law.

Why?

I don't know. Perry Mason, maybe!

Tell us about your involvement with the *Future Vision* programme.

I was one of the few involved in this programme from the beginning to the end — from Feb 2005 to June 2015. In Feb 2005, I was a first year Trustee (2004–05) and that February we Trustees spent a half-day brainstorming about what we could do to change how the Foundation operates. That was when Carlo Ravizza was the Trustee Chair. Just when I went off the Trustees I was put on the Future Vision Committee, where I served till it was disbanded.

What aspect of Rotary do you enjoy the most?

The people and the connections... connecting with people, and that can mean so many things. Connecting for projects, for friendship, fellowship... to

come here and be with folks like Kamal (Sanghvi) and Shekhar (Mehta). I've known Shekhar now for 10–15 years, and he invited me to their home in Kolkata. Gay will be very disappointed she missed it because she loves going to people's homes. In some cultures, you never take people to your home, you entertain them in hotels.

What do you enjoy the most about Rotary in India?

Again, the people, and Gay loves the colours, and I read what she said in the article in the *Rotary News* magazine (by Jaishree) that you gave me. I enjoy seeing the differences and how things remain the same in India. As I said today in my speech you connect with people who seem to be different but who are far more like you than you ever would have dreamed.

Pictures by Rasheeda Bhagat, Jaishree and
Courtesy Rotary International

Designed by
Krishnapratheesh

District Wise TRF Contributions as on March 2019

(in US Dollars)

District Number	APF	PolioPlus	Other Restricted	Endowment Fund	Total Contributions	EREY Donors (in numbers)	EREY %
India							
2981	44,002	11,240	0	8,000	63,242	227	5.0
2982	44,648	5,404	0	243	50,295	270	9.4
3000	12,744	1,000	132,766	47,983	194,493	20	0.4
3011	100,165	5,668	32,153	29,930	167,915	119	3.6
3012	71,450	150	312,461	8,800	392,860	106	3.1
3020	19,318	72,865	2,625	5,000	99,808	70	1.8
3030	15,752	0	0	0	15,752	6	0.1
3040	2,819	0	29,950	0	32,769	4	0.2
3053	59,205	0	0	0	59,205	37	1.3
3054	(17,179)	0	121,343	0	104,164	38	0.7
3060	62,288	1,326	155,228	129,269	348,111	738	17.9
3070	90,072	315	4,792	0	95,178	326	11.3
3080	78,126	15,319	15,657	5,000	114,102	66	2.1
3090	37,000	0	0	0	37,000	106	5.3
3100	21,795	475	0	0	22,270	82	4.9
3110	30,488	3,027	34,863	0	68,378	50	1.3
3120	61,822	0	217,897	0	279,720	69	2.2
3131	335,852	21,657	346,944	43,203	747,656	926	18.1
3132	18,119	310	17,129	60,100	95,658	39	1.1
3141	545,596	10,911	1,049,268	76,990	1,682,765	681	13.6
3142	281,522	75	246,041	0	527,639	545	17.3
3150	79,168	4,613	67,276	338,467	489,523	507	14.6
3160	64,464	1,580	0	9,277	75,321	133	5.5
3170	74,948	3,231	71,833	0	150,012	332	6.3
3181	133,760	938	0	103	134,801	521	17.3
3182	86,174	100	11,367	0	97,641	399	12.7
3190	105,098	4,397	117,087	1,509,570	1,736,153	802	16.8
3201	111,526	15,598	221,675	0	348,799	201	3.9
3202	22,062	27,762	35,563	0	85,387	51	1.1
3211	50,082	2,818	0	1,515	54,415	202	4.6
3212	103,749	6,758	5,250	67,002	182,759	115	2.9
3231	26,818	2,480	7,286	6,528	43,112	232	7.8
3232	182,995	2,078	164,000	1,000	350,073	234	5.5
3240	49,959	421	7,374	0	57,754	112	3.9
3250	24,267	1,834	11,216	0	37,317	44	1.2
3261	15,211	1,100	(1,492)	3,000	17,820	22	0.9
3262	27,440	1,000	3,900	5,413	37,753	100	3.1
3291	107,922	206	95,428	51,800	255,356	228	6.3
India Total	3,181,246	226,656	3,536,881	2,408,192	9,352,975	8,760	6.3
3220 Sri Lanka	75,759	2,975	13,676	8,000	100,410	142	7.9
3271 Pakistan	34,947	27,799	2,275	0	65,021	27	1.9
3272 Pakistan	21,408	2,141	0	0	23,548	29	1.0
3281 Bangladesh	138,862	3,000	71,618	17,696	231,176	238	4.4
3282 Bangladesh	53,595	5,065	0	3,000	61,660	200	5.0
3292 Nepal	162,901	24,211	111,762	25,000	323,874	329	7.5
South Asia Total	3,668,718	291,847	3,736,212	2,461,889	10,158,666	9,725	6.1
World Total	85,366,098	20,884,268	14,320,109	19,778,783	140,349,258		

Source: RI South Asia Office



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Practicing as Management Consultant since 2002, he has evolved his core competencies in three areas which include – Developing Management Systems, Facilitating Business Excellence Practices and Establishing Sustainability Reports for Industries and Institutions.

Active with professional / industrial bodies and social organisations, he has held leadership positions in several of such organisation like QCFI, NIPM, ISTD, IMCI, HDCF, FAPCCI, CII, BNI and Rotary International. His current passion as qualified faculty from Rotary Leadership Institute is strengthening Rotary Movement using several initiatives in Clubs, Communities and Corporates.

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Indian doctors reach modern surgical techniques to **Madagascar**

Jaishree and Rasheeda Bhagat

I got a small example of what Rotary can do when I participated in a Rotary medical mission from India in Madagascar recently. I went to understand how these missions work,” RI Director C Basker said recently, addressing incoming district leaders at Disha, a training event in Kolkata. There he saw Rozanne, a 10-year-old girl whose teeth were so badly arranged (see pictures) that she smiled rarely. And when she talked, she kept her palm in front of her mouth so that others could not see her ugly teeth. “Madagascar, I found, is like India was, several

decades ago, a very poor country with inadequate medical facilities. In that medical mission, 19 doctors from India did corrective surgery and other procedures. A corrective procedure was done on Rozanne too, and for the first time she was able to smile before others without any embarrassment.”

Basker added: “This is the kind of opportunity Rotary gives us, to change lives. And guess who supports

these medical missions? Our own Foundation.”

P RIP Rajendra Saboo, who first conceived in 1998 this idea of service beyond borders, particularly for a country which has been a “receiver” for several decades in the last century, said a

Orthopaedic surgeon Dr Romesh Gaur examines an X-ray.





Rozanne sports a broad smile after a successful dental procedure.

team of 19 doctors from RI Districts 3080 and 3070, along with 13 Rotary volunteers, had successfully treated 3,500 patients in Madagascar, RID 9220, during a recent 12-day medical mission, in which RI President Barry Rassin had also joined as a volunteer, apart from RID Basker and his wife Mala, and RI Director Yinka Babalola from Nigeria.

Saboo, who along with his wife Usha, has been volunteering his service at these medical missions, beginning with the first one in Uganda, said, “We had gone to Madagascar the first time in 2004 and realised that this is a country that needs to be revisited for serving humanity, particularly in the health sector. At that time, Shelly Oukabay was the coordinator and I told her that when you become governor, we will come again. And hence this trip.”

The most significant part of this trip, he added, was that it was timed in such a way that RI President Barry Rassin could also join the medical mission as a volunteer. Antsirabe, about 180 km from the Capital city Antananarivo, was chosen. That these 180 km take about four hours of travel gives you an idea of the condition of roads in this African country.

The mission’s venue here, except for ophthalmology, was the civil hospital which had very basic facilities. “But thanks to the local team headed by Shelly and her resourcefulness, our mission got maximum support. For an entire week the civil and the eye hospital became our work place. The Director of the former made available to us all the five operation theatres,” he said.

While most of the emergency cases were attended to by the local surgeons, the Indian surgeons helped the more complicated cases and on PRIP Saboo’s request, the hospital director organised an additional table which helped the Indian doctors to take up additional cases, particularly of plastic and ENT disorders which required local anaesthesia.

On the human side, there were many poignant cases; Saboo recalls the case of a 14-year-old boy who required a major surgery, and Dr Ravjit Singh and Dr Ramesh Paul were working on him, having put the teenager under spinal anaesthesia. “The surgery lasted about two hours and no one except the operation team could enter the room. I was communicating with the boy through the glass door, telling him

through signs how the surgery was progressing. He was smiling all the time and gave us a thumbs-up. I have not seen this kind of positivity in a patient! When the surgery was finally over, I gave him a double thumbs-up signal, which he returned with a broad smile. As we were transporting him on the trolley, I felt his positivity transmitting to me and all the others around me.”

Within a couple of days, the surgeons had to stop further registrations because the list was getting longer and yet there were some cases which could not be refused. An unusual number of hernia cases, including in children between 2–4, were seen and the surgeons decided to give priority to the children, as they felt the local surgeons wouldn’t be able to handle these cases.

“It was remarkable how our surgeons did their best to get the local doctors to perform the surgery with their guidance to make the work sustainable,” said Saboo. He added that the dental department was extremely small with just two chairs “and there were over 100 patients waiting every day and our surgeons worked very hard to take up the complicated

procedures, in the process training the local surgeons.

Thus, in the most trying of situations, 163 eye operations and 73 general, 36 plastic, 34 ENT, 35 orthopaedic, 8 gynaecology, and 576 dental surgeries were performed by Indian doctors in Madagascar. The dermatology department attended to 1,250 patients and distributed free medicines to them. Bone infections, hernia, goiter, clubfoot and burn injuries are common problems in the region.

“I was incredibly impressed with the entire experience of being with the medical mission for a few days. To see the dedication of the Indian doctors to the patients in Madagascar with the significant hours of work they put in, was truly inspiring,” said President Rassin, adding that he felt renewed as a Rotarian to participate with them and feel the spirit of “doing good” permeating the entire team.



Young Nancy is all smiles after a dental correction.

“To be close to the patients and see their deep appreciation as they knew this may be a rare chance to get the help they need made me proud to be a Rotarian. I wish every Rotarian could experience a medical mission

as I know they will understand what it means to ‘be the Inspiration’,” he said.

Recalling the first medical mission which was to Uganda, Saboo said that Rotary has since then sent more than 500 doctors to treat patients in



The medical mission team with PRIP Rajendra Saboo, Usha, RID C Basker and Mala.



RI President Barry Rassin talks to the media about Rotary's medical mission as PRIP Rajendra Saboo and DG Praveen Goyal (right) look on.

43 countries and Indian surgeons have so far performed an impressive 63,000 surgeries in Africa.

It was while doing eye operations that Indian “jugaad” came in handy. To deal with a non-functioning small-capacity autoclave, the surgeon (Dr Nivedita) bought two large pressure cookers and used them to sterilise the surgical instruments, said Saboo.

On the participation of President Rassin, RID Basker and Mala, as well as PRIP Saboo and Usha, DG Praveen Goyal, who along with his wife Basu, was part of the volunteering team, said, “It was heartwarming to see senior leaders moving patients in stretchers from the OT to general ward, trying to calm anxious patients with soothing words and assisting the specialists in their work.”

This mission was a global grant endeavour with RID 3080 being the lead district, and it was supported by international partners — Districts 6200 (Louisiana), 6880 (Alabama)

and 6760 (Tennessee) — and TRF. The Health Ministry of Madagascar extended support to the visiting team. “The project cost was \$87,000 and we had carried with us 1,300 kg of medicines and equipment which we donated to the hospitals in the African country,” said PDG Ranjit K Bhatia, Project Chair. PDG Raman Aneja was in charge of the logistics and administration. PDGs Manpreet Singh Gandhoke and Dhan Chand, accompanied by their wives Poonam and Meena, were among other volunteers.

Antsirabe, where the mission was held, is the third largest city in Madagascar with a population of over 2 lakh, and is economically backward. Most of the people are employed in a brewery which makes the ‘Three Horses Beer’ better known locally as ‘THB’. “I couldn’t meet a person there who has three meals a day. A majority of them survive on rusk and tea,” said Goyal.

He related how an Indian gynaecologist helped in the successful performing of a C-section delivery. “The doctors were struggling with the operation for over 90 minutes and our

gynaecologist, Dr Nirlep Kaur, helped them out.” Medical facilities are almost nil, he said. But despite that, “the discipline among the waiting patients was amazing. There was no queue-jumping, quarrels or arguments. The people organised themselves so well.”

He added that when primary health care was launched in the 1970s, health aides in this African country would visit various places on foot, bicycles, mounted on oxen and on carts to deliver healthcare. “Very little has changed since then as many people still have to walk 10 km or more to receive treatment, though mobile health centres have been introduced in remote and sparsely populated areas. The high cost of prescription drugs is also a major impediment to primary healthcare.

The local Rotarians and Rotaractors helped with translations, as the common spoken languages here are French and Malagasy. They also helped the doctors in the OT.

Some of the doctors from India included eye surgeon Nivedita Singh, dermatologist Vanita Gupta, plastic surgeon VD Singh, general surgeon NS Sandhu, orthopaedician Ravjit Singh and ENT specialist Ramon Abrol. The medical team also included dentists, anaesthesiologists, ophthalmologists and pathologists. Besides treating patients, they trained local doctors modern medical techniques.

General Surgeon Dr Karan Singh, the mission's Medical Director, said, "Each of us trained at least one doctor and recently when I heard that one of the doctors we trained has independently performed 10 surgeries, I was so happy." This was his 17th medical mission, and "this is the first time I have worked 12 hours at a stretch from 8 am to 8 pm. But I never felt exhausted. We were energised when we had senior leaders like the RI President, Director and PRIP Saboo in our midst."

Indian doctors are respected in the African island and admired for

their ability to work under difficult conditions for long hours, and adapt their treatment techniques with available facilities, said Dr V D Singh.

Dental Surgeon Dr G K Thakral, a PDG, who was accompanied by his wife Dr Rashmi, also a dental surgeon, said this was their eighth Rotary medical mission. "It gave us an opportunity to relieve hundreds of suffering people from pain, misery and agony due to various dental diseases." These patients were suffering in silence for two reasons — absence of quality dental treatments and inability to afford whatever was available at the local hospitals.

Some of the latest procedures undertaken to treat them included "root canal treatment, surgical extractions, gum surgeries and Light Cure restorations of badly mutilated teeth. Young children who were shy of talking and smiling due to ugly-looking painful dental problems in the mouth, were all smiles and talking, full of confidence and self-esteem, once treated."

These included the two girls Rozanne and Nancy, whose smiles, as also faces, were dramatically transformed by the intervention of the dental team. "The drastic and positive transformation of their personalities was the biggest reward and appreciation of our skills as specialised dentists. We feel that working as Dentist Volunteers at such missions is more fulfilling and satisfying than any of the other Rotary assignments that have been done by us," added Dr Thakral.

Dr Vanita said that the region lacked trained dermatologists and skin diseases such as scabies and fungal infection abounded. She treated 1,250 patients and distributed free medicines to them. "Most of these are curable cases but neglected due to absence of trained doctors."

P RIP Saboo added: "We were privileged that President Barry Rassin

PRIP Rajendra Saboo, DG Praveen Goyal, RID C Basker and PDG Ranjit K Bhatia with patients.





RI President Barry Rassin and PRIP Rajendra Saboo with ENT specialist Dr Raman Abrol in the operation theatre.



RI President Barry Rassin pushing a stretcher at the medical camp.

joined us and worked as a volunteer and stayed with us in the same hotel. In the hospital he pushed trolleys, wheel chairs and helped in transferring patients from the bed to the operation table. He was accompanied by RID Yinka Babalola. Both of them would sit in the medicine store where doctors and volunteers had a quick working lunch, and they'd join us, eating whatever came for our VTT team!"

He thanked Director Basker and Mala for joining and serving as volunteers for three days. "Basker suggested we give them a permanent gift and our team has offered to set up a dental department there," said Saboo. Once the government provides a building, "Rotary in India will provide total equipment and training for the doctors. The proposal has been given to the Madagascar authorities and we need to pursue it further."

The next Rotary medical mission has been planned for May 5–17 at Mongolia and 17 doctors have signed up for the programme.

Designed by N Krishnamurthy

Council on Legislation dazzles delegates in a snowing Chicago

Rekha Shetty

The 2019 Council on Legislation (CoL) was an awe-inspiring event as 530 delegates filed into the impeccably organised chamber. Past RI presidents, directors and officers conducting the CoL were non-voting members of the Council. Outside, it was snowing in a freezing Chicago. Just the kind of weather when Paul Harris founded Rotary in the city, and cone ice cream was created in this very city.

The CoL is Rotary democracy at its best and it is a heady moment when you realise that the Council is the supreme law-making body of Rotary.

On Day One, 17 enactments were voted down. The first one to be accepted was from RC Madras Temple City, RID 3232, on the need to celebrate and appreciate diversity rather than just have it on the statute books. This had a kind of poetic justice since this club has, for the last 30 years, maintained a strict 50-50 ratio of men and women Rotarians.

The Council passionately rejected any move to dilute the standards that protected the quality of leadership. A move to reduce the number of years needed for a Rotarian to be elected governor was rejected.

PDG Bal Inamdar sought to delete a word from Rotary's constitutional documents by saying that 'high' ethical standards made it sound like there were lower ethical standards! Let's delete the word 'high', he suggested. This was rejected.

This Council did not encourage too much tinkering with our existing structure. A Japanese enactment to increase the number of meetings to 40 was rejected. This was a tough Council, fully aware of its power to overrule even the most powerful people on the Board. Any efforts to reduce representation of districts on

the Council were decisively rejected.

It was exhilarating to receive almost simultaneous interpretations in five languages. Most delegates used tablets and other digital devices to study the legislation. Voting was by digital devices. Results were displayed instantly.

Regional print magazines to remain

A series of proposals sought to shift the Rotary magazines from print to digital media. Print versions were powerfully supported and all other proposals were rejected. "The time will come when the printed word will be obsolete but



The Indian contingent with PRIPs Rajendra Saboo, K R Ravindran, RID C Basker, RIDes Bharat Pandya and Kamal Sanghvi. **Also seen:** CoL Chair Duane Benton and Constitution and Bylaws Committee Chairman T N Raju Subramaniam.

the time is not now. The time will come when click will replace brick but the time is not now,” I said and this was appreciated.

Hence we will continue to get our magazines at our door step.

Indian delegates were well prepared with their points of order. For the first time there were three women in the Indian delegation — PDGs Kalpana Khound, Bindu Singh and I. PDG Raju Subramaniam was on stage as Chairman of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, the first Indian to be assigned that position. He has handled the Indian delegates over the last few years. His training session at the Zone Institute at Chennai ensured that all delegates were fully equipped to participate in the CoL. The delegates also had to pass an online exam, which they all did despite bitter complaints.



A proposal from South Africa to exclude past presidents from Rotary International’s activities was emphatically rejected. “We need their wisdom,” said one of the delegates.

Several attempts were made to ensure fairness in elections. One of the proposals — from RC Madras, RID 3232 — recognising the danger of ‘vote clubs’, sought to ensure that only clubs on the rolls as on July 1 of the preceding year could vote. This was accepted.

Elevate Rotaract

On the last day, Enactment 19–72, the move to allow Rotaract clubs to become members of Rotary International, gradually gained traction after being narrowly rejected the previous day. RI President Barry Rassin urged the delegates to respect Rotaractors and build a bridge to pave their way to Rotary. Elevating Rotaractors to become members and partners of RI was the goal, he said. Many yellow cards and points of order were raised. President Rassin reiterated that any Rotaract club can become a Rotary club if they follow the rules and subscription payment obligations. After a long and animated debate, the enactment was passed with 381 votes.

Rotaract clubs will become part of the structure of Rotary. “Let us remain an inspiration



From L: PDGs Rekha Shetty, Kalpana Khound and Bindu Singh at the CoL meet.

to Rotaractors. They have a choice to be part of the roadmap to Rotary,” said the RI President.

Enactments to reduce qualifications for CoL members, to give more votes to districts with more members, reduce the number of non-voting members, were all rejected.

The Board rejected a proposal that discouraged past presidents and Board members from attending the CoL.

A proposal from Japan to ensure reporting and debate on legislation at Zone Institutes was passed. The next enactment to create more transparency in reporting opposition to clubs and members was also passed.

Two enactments to modernise and streamline the Bylaws of Rotary and simplify the Standard Club Constitution were passed. Delegates were informed that the last time these documents were updated was 17 years ago. The move to change the tax status was the subject of Enactment 19–117. This meant a huge saving for RI, said Vice

President of the Board John Mathews. There was a concerted move to postpone this matter indefinitely, but it was defeated.

Many members of the Board spoke in support of this enactment. PRIP Rajendra Saboo spoke of the benefit to the organisation through this enactment. Many delegates spoke about the cooperation between TRF and RI. It was the most hotly debated subject at this Council and was passed by more than 75 percent of the House.

A proposal giving the Council three more months to bring enactments to the Council was rejected.

On the concluding day, President Rassin appreciated the transformative decisions taken at the Council.

The CoL had great music, good food and healthy debate. Duane Reed, a delegate, said this was the best executed CoL among the last four Councils. And all that remained was a chance to say goodbye!

The writer is a PDG from RID 3232.

A journey from a “happy

Rasheeda Bhagat

At the Disha training event held in Kolkata recently to train incoming district governors and district leaders in our zones, RI Director C Basker conveyed some serious messages through what appeared light-hearted talk.

First of all, he said at *Antakshari*, the previous night's fellowship event,

where all the participants including senior leaders had to sing a song of their choice, he had rediscovered the “collaborative and supporting” structure of Rotary. “I know very well that I can't sing; so when the person who conducted *Antakshari* asked me, I bought myself some time. And when I started singing, people around me (in his team) realised that

I can't sing and many of them, particularly PDG Subra (N Subramanian, RID 3011), supported me so well. I thank them. But the message from last night is that don't worry about your targets; be it in membership or TRF, once you decide to do your best, those around you will support you.”

Basker then had the audience in splits by saying that the previous day

“PDG Rajani Mukerji commented to me: ‘You've become very serious these days.’ It got me thinking and I realised what he says is true. When I joined Rotary I was a very happy man... a happy Rotarian.”

He said he was sharing his entire Rotary journey that day to show the assembled district leaders “how an ordinary person can become better and rise to the rank of an RID.” He joined Rotary in 1988 and was “happy to be a Rotarian; if I wanted to go for a meeting I went, or else I didn't go, till I got elected as my club's president. Then I become a worried man,” he added, amidst roaring laughter.

At that time his club — RC Karur — had only four members. So “just like last evening when I sought some time to sing and then delivered, I thought I would buy some time. I told the other three guys I know nothing about leading a club, I've not even been a club officer, so one of you become the president for a year and I will take on this responsibility the next year. But they said



RI Director C Basker

Rotarian” to a serious man

all the three of us have already been presidents more than twice!”

Having little choice, he agreed to lead the club in the coming year, “totally worried how I could head a club with just four members. So I ran around before my installation and convinced my friends to join Rotary.”

The day he was installed, he inducted 30 new members and the day his term ended, the club had 46 members. “And all the 46 were working people. I did not induct people just to show the governor that I had increased membership in our club. Every single person I inducted stayed back in the club. If you invite 40 right people, they will not only stay behind but they will support you.”

That year his club served the local

community with such earnestness and passion that “looking at the media reports, the local MLA offered to join our club and subsequently became a minister in the Tamil Nadu government. Imagine what this did for Rotary’s public image!”

Basker announced to a huge applause that from 1991 (his year as club president), his club had grown from 46 to 430 members today, becoming the second-largest club in India. “It wasn’t very difficult to grow the membership. All the district membership chairs here, if you make up your mind, along with the club presidents and officers, to invite worthy people into the clubs, it can happen.”

The RI Director added that his performance was recognised and the district chose him to become a governor. When he became



a governor, “from a worried man I became a responsible man”. He found that of the 56 clubs in his district only 44 were active and functional and merged the non-functional clubs with the functioning ones. By the end of the year the district’s membership grew by 10.2 per cent. He urged his clubs to do more service projects and prior to attending the International Assembly took the trouble to learn how matching grants were done, urged his club presidents to give him proposals for such grants

and “that year, of the 44 functional clubs, 42 did a matching grant by themselves, not the district.”

Subsequently he became a Rotary Coordinator and in 2013–14, Zone 5, “for which I was responsible, contributed 35 per cent of the world’s membership growth. And, when I became Director I became serious... looking not at our membership growth or TRF contributions (which were growing) but other anomalies and thought if we are not going to put our house in order, who else will do it?” ■

Don’t worry about your targets; be it in membership or TRF, once you decide to do your best, those around you will support you.

RI spends \$11 million for DGs' allowance: K R Ravindran

Rasheeda Bhagat

Do you know what is the RI budget for district governors? It is more than \$11 million per year. Some governors in our region get handsome allowances. My own allowance when I was DG in 1991–92 was no more than ₹150,000!

And RRFCs, RCs, RPICs, etc cost about \$3 million. Who pays for all these positions? Not Evanston, but Rotarians across the world through their subscriptions. So our members deserve the best; our community, who our members serve, our supporters and our benefactors deserve no less.”

Past RI President and TRF Trustee K R Ravindran gave out these numbers while recently addressing Disha, a training event for incoming district governors and district leaders at Kolkata. “All these stakeholders will measure you not by your muscle but your might;

not by the deeds you are capable of, but the deeds you do; not by how many resources you pour into your service, but by how much those resources change the lives of others,” he added.

This huge power and potential of Rotary to make a difference in the lives of people in the community was in their hands, and they all needed

to discover and put it to good use, he said.

While Rotary meant different things to different people, “I am fortunate to belong to a small group of people... about 110 to 112, who have been able to see from the very top the power of Rotary to do

good and have a bird’s-eye view of what Rotary means to the whole world. To me, Rotary is both a means to an end, and an end in itself; it is a way to make the world a better place, but it also makes my world a better place, for both my family and myself. It is a way to give of what I have; but what it gives in return makes my own life richer.



PRIP K R Ravindran

It allows me to make my mark on the world — and yet it also has made its own mark, indelibly, inalterably, upon me.

At the end of the day, I get more out of Rotary than Rotary gets out of me.”

The TRF Trustee said that as the CEO of his own company, every decision he made had the goal of maximising benefits for his shareholders, “but with zero compromise on ethics, efforts and commitment. So why should it be different in Rotary?”

Urging all Rotary leaders to apply the same principles to all their members, who were really their ‘shareholders’, so that every decision they took worked to their benefit, he asked them to always remember a principal factor: They place their confidence by sending you to these levels of leadership, they subsidise your travel and your position. If you have an allowance as an RRFC, RC or an RPIC, or a DG, they are the ones who pay it.

The office I held as RI President is worth killing yourself for because of the good you can do and because of the almost magical quality this office brings.

Calling upon all the assembled district leaders to use their resources wisely, Ravindran recalled an incident from his tenure as RI President. It was an invitation to attend a TRF event which had been titled ‘A million-dollar dinner’, and for which he had been invited nearly two years earlier as an RIPN, “when my diary was wide open. So I said why not?”

As President, cost cutting was one of his main focus areas and closer to the event, he found he’d have to travel from the east to the west coast of the US to attend the event.

When he called his friend Steve Brown, who had invited him, to ask if he should really make the travel, as it would be rather expensive, he said: “You have to come; we’ve been selling and raising money in your name,”

During the airport transfer “I asked him how much you have raised? He said, it’s a surprise. We’ll tell you tonight.” All the while wondering if his trip would be really worth it,

I am fortunate to belong to a small group of people — about 110–112 — who has been able to see from the very top the power of Rotary to do good.

just before he got up to speak Ravindran found it was more than worth his while to make that trip. The amount was over \$15 million; \$15,420,000 to be precise!

“When I finished speaking, someone got up and said, ‘Mr President, I will match those \$15 million plus amount!’ So the take for the night was nearly \$31 million, more than what any other country gives in an entire year.”

All this, added Ravindran, was not “because of me, but the office. The words I said were heard in a different way, they were listened to so much more seriously, because I was speaking on behalf of this organisation that commands so much respect. Each of you has this opportunity next year.”

of Rotary. During the year your actions will be watched, commented upon and copied. But when you finish your term will they say I want to be like this man or woman? You can choose to be a role model, someone who others emulate or you can end up as an also-ran, who moved into history as unnoticed, uncared for and utterly worthless, and hence discarded. Did you go on an ego trip or at the end of the day activated your members so that people in your community benefitted? The choice is yours.”

But from his personal experience he could tell them that the “office I held is worth killing yourself for because of the good you can do and because of the almost magical quality this office brings.”

Ravindran recited another anecdote to demonstrate the power and influence of Rotary. As RI President, he once had an appointment to meet Pope Francis at the Vatican; he was kept waiting for two hours and then told that as His Holiness was extremely busy, their meeting had

Ravindran told the DGEs: “Each of you has this unique opportunity; each of you is akin to an RI President in your area... everything that you speak is heard as the voice

KR Ravindran told the assembled district leaders at Disha that to safeguard the reputation of Rotary, which is “derived from our integrity, honesty and goodwill, as leaders, sometimes you will have to make unpopular decisions. That’s what I expect you to do. Each of you must feel this power of Rotary to do good... this power to reach every child that we have already demonstrated in polio.”

But to retain that reputation and power of Rotary, they would have to act against unethical behaviour. He had acted as RI President and delisted two Rotary districts — one in India and one in Russia; “I know I am not the most popular man.”

But popularity was of little consequence to him; respect on the other hand was perennial and that’s what one must try to earn. If the interest of the organisation required, they would have to take unpopular decisions.

Ravindran also urged the leaders assembled to never put Rotary before their family or business.

“I have always adopted the simply philosophy — first my family, next business and Rotary only after that. Except for the time I was President and lived in Evanston, I’ve strictly followed this, and think you should do the same. If you neglect your business or profession, even your members will not respect you, because you’ve got where you are in the first place because of your business or profession.”

I know I am not popular



been postponed to the afternoon. But as he had to take a flight to Korea the same evening, “extremely disappointed, I said sorry we cannot wait and left, quite dejected.”

Two days later, he got a message from the office of His Holiness that he regretted missing the appointment and “now he invited me to come back with as many of my friends as I liked. But perhaps he didn’t expect me to return with some 10,000 Rotarians from 63 countries. We filled the entire St Peters Square that day. But he didn’t do this

for me, he did it because of the respect he has for Rotary as an organisation and because he thinks it’s an organisation worth supporting and blessing.”

He also learnt that day that the Vatican Children’s Hospital, one of the best of its kind in the world, was working with Rotarians in Cambodia through telemedicine.

And in a world where Rotary commanded such huge respect, “when you do something wrong,

even though it is only a drop in the ocean, these drops manage to tarnish our prestige. We all know about fictitious clubs, clubs created for awards, or as vote banks. So please ensure your clubs do nothing to tarnish Rotary’s good name.”

He reminded the leaders that the previous evening, during the TRF seminar, stewardship issues were raised, such as dishonesty in dealing with TRF, money taken from beneficiaries, spurious vendors, husband-wife managed accounts, used equipment being passed off as new, misuse

of RI allowances, and the like. “These things need to stop, as they cause us disrepute,” he added, conceding that these were not confined to India alone and as President, he had also taken action against a DG in Japan. The angry DG filed legal action against RI in Chicago, which is very expensive to defend, but the difference was that “the senior Rotary leaders in Japan encouraged and supported me and said: ‘Fight this man, we will support and fund you. We don’t want such people in our country.’ That’s the kind of attitude we need!” ■

Message from RI South Asia Office

TRF Recognition guidelines for contributions from family-controlled corporates/family Trusts

The Trustees have recently clarified the recognition policy for contributions from family-controlled corporates and family Trusts. All such contributions will be recorded under the name of the corporate/Trust. The corporate/Trust may designate a family member, who is on the Board, to receive major donor recognition for the gift. Contributions from public charities or corporates that are not family-controlled will be eligible to receive corporate recognition.

Individual major donor recognition will be provided upon receipt of a letter on the corporate/Trust's letterhead confirming that the corporate/Trust is family-controlled or family-funded. Currently, these contributions will be included in the individual's donation total but will not be separately listed on the Donor History Report (DHR).

Please note that this is a draft decision of the Jan 2019 Rotary Foundation Trustees Meeting. Final decision will be approved at the April 2019 Trustees meeting.

Grant reporting deadlines

Interim/Final reports for activities up to **Mar 31, 2019**, for all open grants must be submitted by May 31, 2019, or the grant will become overdue on reporting. New grant applications from clubs/districts, as well as their international partners, will not be accepted by the Foundation if they have any overdue report for any Foundation grant.

For CSR-funded global grants, timely receipt of all reports will also assist in complying with the proviso

of submission of report to corporates within a standard timeframe.

Contributions to Rotary Foundation for Rotary Year 2018–19

All donors are requested to pay on or before Jun 30, 2019 to ensure that their contributions are considered in the total contribution for the RY 2018–19.

Update membership through My Rotary to receive correct Club Invoice:

Club secretaries must update their club membership details by end-June 2019 to receive correct invoice for July 2019. These changes can no longer be made retroactively. For more information visit My Rotary (<https://my.rotary.org/en>) under Club Administration page or write to data@rotary.org.

Engaging Younger Professionals toolkit

Engaging Younger Professionals is an online toolkit available at <https://www.rotary.org/en/engaging-younger-professionals-toolkit> that helps clubs understand this important demographic. It's a great starting point for clubs to broaden their membership.

Youth Exchange Officers Pre-Convention

Rotarians can plan to attend the Youth Exchange Officers Preconvention and RI Convention, May 31-June 5 in Hamburg, Germany, and connect with Youth Exchange leaders and alumni from around the world. Register online or on-site through link <http://www.riconvention.org/en/hamburg/register>.

Rotary Disaster Response Fund and Grant

The Trustees have approved a new disaster response fund and grant type to supplement Rotary's disaster response strategy. Disaster response grants will support relief and recovery efforts in such areas and are funded by contributions made to the Rotary Disaster Response Fund. The fund can accept cash contributions and DDF. It is a general disaster-related reserve, and contributions cannot be designated for specific events.

Qualified districts in the affected area or country may apply for a maximum grant of \$25,000, pending availability of funds. Districts may apply for subsequent grants after successfully reporting on any prior grants. To apply, the DG and DRFC must complete the Rotary Disaster Response Grant Application and send it to grants@rotary.org.

TRF Mid-Year Review and Strategy Formulation

A mid-year assessment of contributions to TRF from districts in Zones 4, 5 and 6A was held in coordination with EMGAs and RRFCs. It was a reflection of partnership between zone leaders including EMGAs, RRFCs and ARRFCs working closely with their district team to help them achieve their TRF goals through formulation of appropriate strategies. SAO staff provided all important information and statistical update relevant for participants. During the meet, zone leaders discussed various fundraising strategies with the district team. The reports of the meeting were shared with Trustee and Director in India. This programme is expected to continue in future as well. ■

DGs' Review meet

Team Rotary News

A review meeting was held to analyse the performance of the District Governors of Zones 4, 5 and 6A by Director C Basker in Kodaikanal in March. The meeting took stock of the districts' achievement in key areas such as membership, TRF giving, contribution for polio, progress in improving the public image of Rotary and maintenance of district accounts.

In the opening session, Basker summed up the various districts' performance and said while all the districts

were "doing their best" in taking the performance of Rotary in our zones to an impressive level, he stressed the need for the Governors to keep their teams focused and enthused to close the Rotary year on a "memorable note".

According to RID 3190 DG Suresh Hari, Regional and Zone leaders presented the analysis of their zones. While Rotary Coordinators Rajendra Rai and Ashok Gupta made a presentation on membership trends, EMGAs Ashok Panjwani and Sam Patibandla gave a report on the status of Endowments and Major Gifts.

RRFCs Avinash Potdar and Vijay Jalan summed up the districts' performance so far on TRF contributions and RPICs Ashish Desai and Rajadurai G Michael talked about the progress and the efforts made in improving Rotary's public image.

Jatinder Singh from RISAO made a presentation on district accounts and Sanjay Parmar, RISAO, talked about TRF contributions and other matters related to the Foundation. A presentation on polio contribution was made by PDGs E K Sagadhevan and Keshav Kunwar.

Right: RID C Basker addressing the delegates at the Review Meet; **Below:** District Governors with RID C Basker and regional leaders Sam Patibandla, E K Sagadhevan, Rajadurai G Michael and Vijay Jalan.



DG Suresh Hari made a presentation on the proposed 'Peace Drive' planned during June 2019 from Kanyakumari to the Attari border in Punjab, where a couple of representative Rotarians from both India and Pakistan will exchange Rotary flags.

A Peace Monument or Tower will be erected at both the starting and concluding points, the design for which was shared. This is a pet project of Rotarian D Ravishankar, President of RC Bangalore Orchards and a major donor to TRF.

Concluding the meet, Director Basker thanked the DGs for promising to put their best foot forward and revisit their goals on various fronts.

RID 3000 DG R V N Kannan played host for the meeting. ■



Celebrating 31 years of Women in Rotary

Jaishree

Though Rotary was born 114 years ago, it is only 31 years since women became members of this prestigious organisation, says Veena Pathy, wife of DG A V Pathy, RID 3201. The district celebrated this landmark, for the second year, with 20 Rotary clubs jointly hosting a women's conclave — *Inspire 2k19* — in Kochi recently. The event was attended by 180 Rotarians.

DG Pathy, inaugurating the conclave, said, "Including women in Rotary is not just about fairness or equality. Diversity yields better

outcomes, and clubs that reflect the communities they serve may be able to better engage those communities and meet their needs." There is a large and growing number of women in senior business and community roles with a great deal to contribute through Rotary. "We must ensure that they gravitate towards our organisation," he added.

Women were allowed to join Rotary after a long-haul debate since 1950 when an Indian club — RC Ahmedabad — made a proposal that the word "male" be deleted from the Standard Rotary Club



Constitution. But the CoL voted against the proposal. Again, proposals made in 1964, 1972, 1977 were all rejected at the Council. When RC Duarte in California chose to admit women as members in violation of the RI Constitution, the club

DG A V Pathy and Veena inaugurating the women's conclave in the presence of (from R) AG Krishna Sreedharan, Justice A K Jayasankaran Nambiar, PDG Sunil Zacharia and District Chair-Women in Rotary Lakshmi Narayanan.





Women Rotarians with DG A V Pathy and his wife Veena.

was terminated in 1978. The club filed a lawsuit against RI but lost the case. The real breakthrough came on May 4, 1987, when the US Supreme Court ruled that Rotary clubs could no longer exclude women from membership on the basis of gender. RC Duarte was reinstated and it had its first woman president.

Today, there are well over 200,000 women Rotarians across the globe. “We’ve come a long way as women in Rotary. I am very thankful that the decision was made to allow women to join,” said Swetha Vasudevan, a member of RC Cochin. She spoke on ‘Rooted in Rotary’ at the Conclave. “My feet are firmly planted in Rotary,” said this second-generation Rotarian who has breathed and lived Rotary since childhood as her father is a member of the same club. Gender diversity is vital for maintaining and expanding Rotary’s membership base, and in some places, the rate of volunteering for service projects among women is higher, and growing faster than men. More women in Rotary will translate to better delivery of services, as “women are born multitaskers and more compassionate,” she pointed out.

The RI Board has recently passed the diversity policy and RI President Barry Rassin is urging clubs to induct more women and those from other underrepresented groups to take on leadership roles. “As more diverse candidates are elected, the pool of candidates who can serve at the senior leadership level increases too,” he says.

The conclave discussed ideas on how to attract service-oriented women into Rotary.

District Chair - Women in Rotary, Lakshmi Narayanan said, “We need to work hard to encourage more women to join Rotary and dispel the myth that they are not welcome. The future of Rotary depends on enthusiastic membership.”

Dr Ushy Mohandas, talking on the *Power of Vulnerability*, pointed out that vulnerability is the strength of women. “Yes. We are vulnerable; we tend to break. But only when we break, we understand our strength. Women are resilient and we rise with a bigger force after a fall.”

Justice A K Jayasankaran Nambiar, from Kerala High Court,

a past Rotarian of RC Cochin, spoke about the rights of women and interpretation of the laws. Regional Chair - Women in Rotary, Nazreen Anil proposed a vote of thanks.

Four beneficiaries gave moving accounts of how Rotary changed their lives.

Ajitha of RCC Perumbalam, sponsored by RC Cochin, spoke on how the club had transformed her village. Right from building bathrooms to upgrading schools and a hospital, the club is working with this island-village since the 1990s.

The *Surya* project of RC Cochin Global reaches out to visually-impaired people and apart from skilling them, also supports them with classes on mobility, personality development and spoken English. Susheela and Juvanie, two beneficiaries of this project, spoke on how the club improved their lives.

Saritha Kariapilly from the Chendamandalam weaving village shared how RC Cochin Knights helped in reviving their looms and purchasing yarn, as well as repairing their flood-affected homes. ■

RC Madras Central converts shabby schools to Happy ones

Rasheeda Bhagat

Consider this scenario; a Rotary club in Chennai — RC Madras Central — is sitting on a pot of money which is earmarked for converting sad, dilapidated government schools with abysmal facilities into happy schools complete with gender-segregated toilets, cheerful handwash

stations, brightly painted school-rooms, benches and tables and a compound wall. But then thanks to red tapism, the regulatory approvals required to start the work are caught up in some government file or the other.

But with to the enthusiasm of two proactive principals, the club has been

able to give spanking new facilities to two government schools in Chennai — Ponneri and Ennore — and both the renovated schools were inaugurated by RID 3232 District Governor Babu Peram.

It all began six months ago when a team of Rotarians from the club discussed the pathetic facilities in many



schools run by the Chennai Corporation, and thought their club should take up the task of renovating and turning them into happy schools.

A team from the club comprising Director - Special Project, Vinod Saraogi, who is also a past president; Director, Community Service - Development, M Srinivasan; and Chairman, Happy Schools, K P Shrikumar, decided to first survey government schools that required help. They found many schools with damaged classrooms, broken flooring, broken or no doors, damaged or no benches, missing or damaged blackboards, leaking roofs, the electrical wiring in a state of such a disarray that none of the electrical appliances such as the bulbs or fans worked.

The beginning

This project was initiated by Vinod Saraogi. "As teaching is my passion even though I run an investment business, I also got involved along with

Srinivasan, and our Club President R Sarayan extended total support to this project," says Shrikumar. The first school on their radar was a government school in Medavakkam, which is bang within the city limits. "We saw that three classes were being run in one common room and the students of Classes 3, 4 and 5 were all studying from this single room. There were over 90 students crammed in that room and all that the teachers wanted from Rotary were just two partitions so that their students would feel a sense of some progress when they passed from one class to another."

This really jolted the Rotarians who immediately agreed to do such partitioning after discussing the matter with their club members. Saraogi came forward to put the seed money for improving government schools and committed about ₹8 lakh; one of his non-Rotarian friends, Mohan Goenka, agreed to give ₹5.5 lakh; and a member of the club

There were 90 students of Classes 3,4 and 5, all crammed in one room and all that the teachers wanted from Rotary were just two partitions so that their students would feel a sense of some progress when they passed from one class to another.

K P Shrikumar

Chairman – Happy Schools

Bhoovaran Thirumalai announced ₹5 lakh. The partitioning required hardly any money, but the first stumbling block came in the form of getting the required approval from the government. As the file for this school is caught in some dusty government office, the Rotarians were able to identify two proactive Principals who managed to get them the required approvals.

Luckily for these Rotarians, both the schools met their primary benchmark — that at least 50 per cent of the student strength of the school should be girls. The first two schools taken up for transformation were the Jaigopal Garodia Government. Girls Higher Secondary School, Ponneri and the Government Higher Secondary School, Kathivakkam, Ennore. The first, an all-girls school, has 1,631 girl students, and the second has 797 boys and 794 girls.

Transformation

Both were in a pathetic condition. In the Ponneri school, only one functional toilet block was available to 1,631 girl students. Many students were not using toilets during school hours, harming their health. So the Rotarians first took up building of toilet blocks. While the first one was spruced up,





Even though the school had a compound wall, miscreants had broken it and used the gap in the wall to enter the school in the night and use the classrooms for nefarious activities.

another two toilet blocks in a complete state of dysfunction were renovated, and were made fully functional with new tiles, new doors, new plumbing lines and an assured supply of water. The school was till then depending on Corporation water tankers. The school had no compound wall and “since it was a girls school we gave priority to build a compound wall 200 metres in length and with two gates. The flooring was done and benches were provided; till then the students were sitting on a mud floor. The Principal, teachers and students were delighted with the transformation of their school into a Happy School,” adds Shrikumar.

In the Kathivakkam school the conditions were even more dismal. Even though the school had a compound wall, miscreants had broken it and used the gap in the wall to enter the school in the night and use the classrooms for nefarious activities. Dogs



DG Babu Peram addressing students in one of the schools.



Vinod Saraogi, Director-Special Project, interacting with students.



were also entering the school. “Imagine the students coming in every morning to find their classrooms full of filth and with broken liquor bottles on the floor. The students had to do the cleaning, and the weary Principal asked how many times he could ask them to do this work.”

As most government schools, this one too has a spacious compound with 25 classrooms. All the classrooms have been renovated and refurbished with a fresh coat of paint, electrical lines have been restored so that the lights and fans work, grills provided on the window frames, the floors repaired, toilet blocks renovated and a proper water supply line put. “Till then, as only one toilet was functional here, it was being used by the girls and the boys were relieving themselves in the open. Now the school has three proper, functioning toilet blocks. The Principal, teachers and students could not believe the transformation and their smiles were our reward. The block has been christened RC Madras Central Block.”



At the inauguration of the two schools, corporate donors — Vinod Garg from Pulkit Metals, Mohan Goenka from Leather Crafts, Usha Saraogi from Go Colors and the Saraogi family were honoured. “We cannot forget the contribution at the Ponneri School of our member G S Anilkumar, who did the lights and fans in all the classrooms, Sudarshan Rungta who helped in constructing the handwash station, M Srinivasan who helped to construct two handwash stations in the Kathivakkam School and Shrikumar who chipped in to meet the funding requirement, said Club President Saranyan.

Such facilities will put these government schools on par with private schools, improve the quality of their education and hopefully prevent school dropouts.

R Saranyan
President, RC Madras Central

He added that with this pilot project in two schools a total number of 3,222 students have been impacted, who will now be able to study in a safe and congenial, and more important, healthy and hygienic environment.

DG Babu Peram asked the school Principals to maintain the facilities, to ensure long term benefit and President Saranyan assured the DG that RC Madras Central will keep in touch with the schools to ensure proper maintenance. There was also a plan by the women Rotarians in the club to visit the schools periodically and interact with the students on matters related to health and hygiene. The club also plans to install Interact clubs in both these schools.

Phase Two

The president added that in the next phase, the club plans to open a computer lab in both the schools with 25 computers in each lab; provide e-learning kits as well as career guidance and counselling; initiate sports activities; provide an adequately equipped library, and regular medical camps. “Such facilities will put these government schools on par with

private schools, improve the quality of their education and hopefully prevent school dropouts,” he added.

Shrikumar said that the ultimate aim is to scale up the project and create 25 Happy Schools in two years. “We have found that raising money is not a problem as education is something that is close to everybody’s heart. A back of the envelope calculation puts the cost of renovating each school at around ₹13 lakh and we are now confident of doing 25 schools as we have acquired the knowhow, identified the right vendors and will appeal for funds to other Rotary clubs around the world and might even do a global grant project.”

The Rotarians have identified the schools which need their help and are confident of raising the funds; “actually we have some money lying idle; our only condition is the schools must have at least 500 students, with more than half being girls, but we are awaiting government approvals.”

Meanwhile the first school in Medavakkam, which wanted just a simple partitioning of its classes, is still waiting for government approval. ■

Women learn silk screen printing

Team Rotary News



Above : An exhibition of the trainees' creations.

Below : The workshop in progress.



Rotary Club of Greenland Silchar, RID 3240, along with the District Industries and Commerce Centre, organised a three-day workshop where 25 women learnt silk screen printing. The alumni of the Visual Arts department of the Assam University imparted the training.

The art, also called serigraphy, is widely used to design leaflets and invitations and the faculty taught the women to design various motifs on jute, cloth and rexine. At the end of the workshop “the trainees were overjoyed to have created attractively designed table cloths, blouse material, bags, cushion covers and mats,” says Club Secretary Atanu Nag.

Their work was later displayed in an exhibition which helped to popularise their skills. “Some of them even received small job orders from Rotarians and locals,” says Nag. ■

RC Meenambakkam helps to mend little hearts

Kiran Zehra



The only physical evidence that four-month-old Nancy from Chennai, who weighs less than one kg, is alive is the rise and fall of her tiny chest as she breathes heavily in the ICU of the MIOT Hospital, Chennai. “We sleep in the hospital corridor and

eat just one meal a day, but Nancy is fighting the real battle,” says her mother, who is happy at her child’s improved health, thanks to the *Little Big Hearts Project* of RC Meenambakkam, RID 3232. This Rotary initiative helps surgical correction of congenital heart defects (CHD) in children from underprivileged families.

So far, the club, along with TRF, Rotary clubs from RI Districts 3232, 9800 and 7040, and the Genesis Foundation, has organised 100 such surgeries on children. “This is an extremely cost-effective programme offering life-saving cardiac surgeries for children,” says B Dakshayani, Project Chairman from the lead



RID C Basker pins the picture of a child on the Rotary Beneficiary Tree commemorating the Little Big Hearts project's milestone in the presence of Project Chairman B Dakshayani, RC Meenambakkam President Shankaranarayanan Pillai and PDG C R Raju.



Isaiki Sandhya with her mother.

club. In his address at an event to commemorate the project's milestone at the MIOT Hospital, RI Director C Basker lauded the club and said, "You saw the opportunity for success not the barriers. You have made progress and are doing more... you have inspired us through this project."

When Dakshayani found that the Genesis Foundation was looking for funds to conduct more such operations, she thought of expanding the project by roping in more partner clubs and TRF to raise funds along with this NGO partner. Canadian Rotarians and friends helped her reach out to Rotarians in Africa and Italy. "We had \$30,000, which the TRF matched with \$45,000." Along with the District Designated Fund, the total amount reached \$78,000.

In the general ward of the MIOT Hospital's paediatric wing, Isaiki Sandhya, a 10-year-old girl from Chennai, is waiting to be discharged. A mentally-challenged girl, her parents

It's okay if we sleep in the hospital corridor and eat just one meal a day, but Nancy is fighting the real battle.

Mother of a four-month-old beneficiary of the Little Big Hearts project.



A Nigerian child who underwent an open-heart surgery.

took her to a medical camp where she was chosen among other children for the free CHD surgery. "Isaiki means the world to me. It is the will of God that she was brought to this hospital and underwent a successful operation despite many of our relatives asking us to abandon her," said her father.

Srivatsan, Coordinator from Genesis Foundation, said the gender gap in children selected for the surgery has narrowed in the last few years with more girls getting benefitted. "This financial year, we have seen an almost 50-50 gender divide with girls accounting for 49 per cent of the beneficiaries. Also, the number of girls being treated rose by 11 per cent over the last year."

Pointing out that there is no discrimination between Rotary's paediatric patients and other children, Dr Robert Coelho, Director and Chief Paediatric Cardiac Surgeon at the MIOT Centre for Children's Cardiac Care, cited the case of seven-month-old

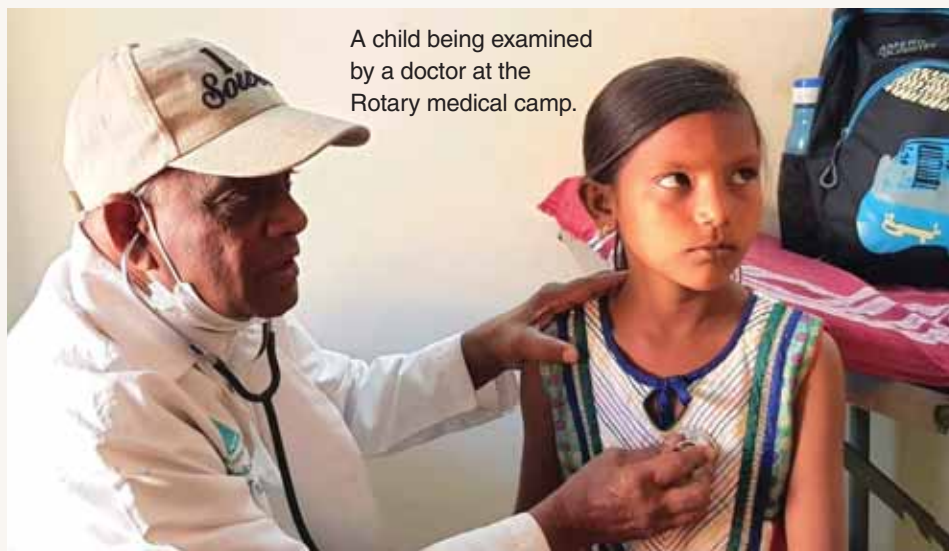
baby girl from Nigeria who belonged to Jehovah's Witnesses, a Christian denomination that shuns blood transfusions. Dr Coelho had to perform a bloodless open-heart surgery on her. "We used a miniature heart-lung machine to prevent excessive blood loss. Haemo filters were used to remove plasma so that the blood cells remain concentrated... saving an infant's life is much riskier," he said.

Dr Coelho and his team have a tough time counselling the parents of such children. "The risk is worth it because you see the results in just half an hour. This child will be able to return home in a few days without the need of medication for life," he said. The club has partnered with three hospitals in Chennai — Sooriya Hospital, Madras Medical Mission and MIOT Hospital — to conduct the 100 CHD surgeries, Dakshayani added.

Pictures by Kiran Zehra

RC Gandevi implements 29 TRF grants totalling \$2.7 million

Rasheeda Bhagat



A child being examined by a doctor at the Rotary medical camp.

In the space of just seven days, thanks to the partnership between a Rotary club in India and a team of doctors of Indian origin from the USA, a massive number of 6,200 rural and tribal people around the villages of Gandevi, a small town in Gujarat, were screened for medical ailments and over 700 identified for follow-up action. And this follow-up action required complicated paediatric open-heart surgeries, one knee replacement surgery (on both knees), nine heart bypass surgeries, eleven valve replacements, two critical spine surgeries and five angioplasties. This is not including over 150 cataract surgeries, 25 angiograms and several other medical procedures.

“And all this was made possible thanks to the magical quality of our Rotary Foundation and the speed with which it works,” smiles Parimal Naik,

Past President of RC Gandevi, situated about 60 km from Surat.

The global grant for \$100,200 “was approved by TRF in just 26 days, and that includes the Christmas vacation. That is the speed with which people in our Foundation work,” he says with both awe and admiration in his voice.

The club itself raised over \$10,000 for this project. In the last 20 years since it was started, RC Gandevi, RID 3060, has been serving the poor and needy people in the surrounding areas, having sponsored 29 global grants worth \$2.7 million.

It all began in 2010, when an NRI friend of some of the club members introduced them to a team of doctors and paramedics belonging to the Association of Indian Physicians of Northern Ohio, US, who wanted to do some service for the underprivileged

in India. This is the third time a team of these NRI doctors, who include general surgeons, physicians, gynaecologists, paediatricians and a neurologist, have come to India to give their medical expertise in treating ill people in the community.

“The doctors and paramedics from the US were here for 10 days and during that time we organised nine screening camps in hospitals, wherever available, or primary

and secondary government schools,” says Naik.

The 26-member team was hosted by Swetal Desai, who is the Charter President of Rotary Club of Chikli





“which was started recently. It is about 10 km from Gandevi and Desai has a large farmhouse there and he was kind enough to host the entire team.”

Once the patients were segregated for follow-up action, including major operations, four charitable hospitals, including the LG Haria Rotary Hospital in Vapi, which does paediatric open-heart surgery, were identified for surgical and medical procedures. The other three hospitals are Yashleen Cardiac Hospital, Navsari; Gram Seva Trust Hospital, Kharel; and Jamna Ba Hospital, Bardoli.



A tribal mother and child.

Naik explained that barely a few beneficiaries had the Mukhyamantri Amrutum medical card given under the Gujarat Government healthcare scheme which was started in 2012 when Prime Minister Narendra Modi was the Chief Minister of the State.

“Under this card, which is mainly given to BPL patients, a sum of upto ₹3 lakh is available for critical medical care. But even though we have the Ayushman Bharat Yojana, none of the patients — all villagers, including tribals — had that card. So it was here that the kindness of TRF, through the global grant, helped and all these patients underwent major medical and surgical procedures totally free of cost. Without Rotary’s help there was no way these patients would have got decent medical treatment,” adds Naik.

“India is a land of pilgrimage so we have termed this project of ours a ‘medical pilgrimage’. And in this project, we have got excellent support from Rotary Club of Bakersfield, US, as well as RI District 5240, who are our international partners for this global grant. Our own district has also supported this project by contributing a handsome amount from the DDF,” adds Naik.

The club has also managed to get the support of RI District 1260 and RC Mississauga-City Centre, Canada, who have also become its partners for implementing this project. “This is the true international spirit of Rotary and I can barely find the words to thank The Rotary Foundation and our other partners, including our own district, without whose support over 700 people could not have been helped to get proper medical treatment... and who can now hope to lead a normal, healthy life,” adds Naik. ■



Patients awaiting their turn.

Canadian Rotarians help RC Madras to build toilets

V Muthukumaran

For years to come, the 38 Rotarians from the US, Canada, Sri Lanka and Malaysia will cherish their interactions with the Irulas, Yadavas and other tribals at Kannankottai village, a remote hamlet in Gummidipoondi block

of Tiruvallur district on the Andhra Pradesh border.

In the first phase, 80 toilets were inaugurated by the 12-member Canadian team from RCs Cataraqui Kingston, Montreal Clayton and Watertown Montreal-Lakeshore, RID 7040, as global partners of RC

Madras (RCM), RID 3232, which is implementing this Water and Sanitation project over the last five years.

The club hopes to complete 321 toilets in Kannankottai, and has already inaugurated 223 toilets at Pandur village in Kancheepuram district and work is on to complete

John Gale from RC Cataraqui Kingston presenting gifts to an elderly woman at Kannankottai village. Also seen are RC Madras President Ranjit Pratap, President-elect Dr Vijaya Bharathi and Rick Fiedorec (right), President of the Canadian club.



Timeless legacy of RC Madras



RC Madras President Ranjit Pratap releasing a special postal stamp to mark the 90th year of the club in the presence of (from L) N K Gopinath, V Sriram, an India Post official and Nikhil Raj at the book launch.

Indians rarely take time or efforts to read historical books and history as a subject was much neglected in the country which was rather unfortunate, said V Sriram, a Rotarian, Chennai historian and Secretary of The Music Academy.

Speaking at the launch of the third edition of *A Timeless Legacy*, a book chronicling the milestone events and mega projects of RC Madras, he said that its Charter

President G G Armstrong, a former chairman of Madras Port Trust, had played a pivotal role in the development of the city since World War-II. "While Madras was the only city to be bombed in World War-I, in World War-II, it was the only harbour that escaped any attack in the country. As a result, Madras became a transit point for Allied forces in Southeast Asia and after the war ended in 1945, the city's population doubled from eight lakh to over 16 lakh, and the credit

goes to Armstrong for the efficient management of Madras harbour, whose history in a way runs parallel to RCM," he explained.

DG Babu Peram said documenting the legacy of a club like RCM by going back to its past and sifting the archives is an invaluable task. He lauded Club President Ranjit Pratap and Archives Committee Chair NK Gopinath for bringing out an updated version of the history book.

120 such units at Paiyanur. "We want to do 665 toilets in three villages benefitting 6,840 people this Rotary year. In these hamlets open defecation is common and toilet use needs to be promoted for better hygiene," said S Ravi, Director, Community Service.

Till now 774 toilets have been built by the club through Term Gifts, district designated funds of both the host and partner clubs, and global

grants since 2014-15 when the first 100 pilot toilets at Amarambedu village in Tiruvallur proved to be a "game-changer," he recalled.

Now the 90-year-old club, third oldest in the country, is setting up toilets at remote hamlets in Tiruvallur and Kancheepuram districts where open defecation is rampant.

At the inaugural ceremony, RCM President Ranjit Pratap thanked

fellow club member PDG JB Kamdar, the first AKS member from South India, whose term gift of \$30,000 was "the seed money for completing 321 toilets in Kannankottai village." The remaining phases would be completed in two months. Kamdar was also part of the delegation that visited the project site.

Club President-elect Dr Vijaya Bharathi urged the beneficiaries to

keep the toilets in good condition and make effective use of these amenities for a clean environment. "It is important for children to use only toilets for defecation," she said.

Past president NK Gopinath said RCM has contributed 18 DGs and sponsored 20 clubs. "Our vocational centres at Gummidipoondi, Selayur, Sembakkam and the Rotary Nagar in Mylapore offer a range of skill development courses like tailoring, computer data entry and spoken English to women and jobless youth." Way back in 1944, the club had adopted a slum colony behind Queen Mary's College and developed a community centre, more popular as Rotary Nagar, and it is celebrating its platinum jubilee this year.

Global partner RC Catarauqui Kingston President Rick Fiedorec said they have partnered with five clubs in Chennai to implement 16 projects across Tamil Nadu in five years at a total cost of \$2 million. It was PDG S Krishnaswami's breakfast meeting in June 2002 with PDG Bill Gray that led to successful

Our vocational centres at Gummidipoondi, Selayur, Sembakkam and the Rotary Nagar in Mylapore offer a range of skill development courses like tailoring, computer data entry and spoken English to women and jobless youth.

NK Gopinath
Past President, RC Madras



A Canadian interacting with a villager and holding her baby.

partnerships for a number of community projects.

RC Chennai Chola President S P Ramesh and Secretary A Venkata Reddy stressed the importance of behaviour change for social transformation. Nalanthana, an NGO, has been engaging the villagers through street plays, puppet shows and word-of-mouth campaign on the need for using toilets for better living.

With a modest ambition of doing just two projects in Chennai and Coimbatore, PDG Krishnaswami discussed the idea with his counterpart Gray from RC Catarauqui-Kingston, which turned out to be a "path-breaking tete-a-tete, as it was helped by PRIP Wilf Wilkinson," said the PDG, recalling how it took Gray only eight hours to respond to his request.

Boys Town Society

In 1989, a residential complex for rural boys was started at Amarambedu over 35 acres of thick jungle which was

cleared for a hostel for students. PRIP Wilf Wilkinson, then a TRF trustee, inaugurated a building block in 2009.

"We provide all the basic facilities including boarding, lodging, nutritious food and clothing for all the students who are going to two government schools on the main thoroughfare," said Ravi.

Over the years, more than 2,800 boys had left the hostel campus after completing their schooling to do higher education. "We have many plans including setting up a vocational centre that offers technical, hands-on training in a number of fields for the boys here," explained Ranjit Pratap.

Besides the Canadians under a week-long friendship exchange programme, eight Americans, RID 7570; 10 Sri Lankans from RCs Colombo, Colombo West; and eight Malaysians from RC Seremban, RID 3300, visited the hamlets in Tiruvallur district.

Pictures by V Muthukumaran

Rotary blood bank, dialysis centre at Dhule

Team Rotary News

Two healthcare projects, a blood bank and a dialysis centre, established by RC Dhule Crossroad, RID 3060, were inaugurated by PRID Manoj Desai and Union Minister of State for Defence Subhash Bhamre in the presence of DG Pinky Patel, IPDG Ruchir Jani and DRFC Ashish Ajmera.

Both the global grant projects were initiated by the club to provide medical assistance to needy patients in the neighbourhood. The newly-opened Smt KC Ajmera Rotary Blood Bank, set up at a cost of ₹58 lakh, will be a modern facility with a blood component separation unit and other high-tech procedures to facilitate blood transfusions at an affordable cost.

The second project — Late Jayantibai Hukumchand Kucheria Rotary Dialysis Centre — has six machines at an NGO hospital which has good infrastructure and



PRID Manoj Desai, Union Minister of State for Defence Subhash Bhamre and DG Pinky Patel inaugurating the medical facilities.

ambience to support the new Rotary facility. “The aim is to treat at least 250–300 patients every month at an affordable cost,” said Nilesh Goti, Club President. This facility cost ₹ 65 lakh.

RC Elmira Heights, USA, RID 7120, along with TRF, supported

both the projects at Dhule. “We are thankful to donors including JB Chemicals, Ankleshwar, Ashish Ajmera, Hukumchand Kucheria, Ashish Patwari, Jayesh Patel and Dinesh Kataria for the successful completion of these two medical facilities,” said Goti. ■

A Cyclothon promotes literacy and sanitation

RC Bhavnagar, RID 3060, joined hands with the Police and the municipal corporation to

organise Cyclothon, an annual event to promote literacy and create awareness on cleanliness.

Two rallies of 25 km and 14 km were flagged off simultaneously by DG Pinky Patel and Inspector General of Police (Bhavnagar) Tomar Saheb. The event had over 4,000 participants. At the end of the event, the club presented bicycles to around 25 needy students.

Vaccination centre
The Permanent Vaccination Centre

(PVC) housed inside the Rotary Service Centre is popular among the people in the city. Since 1999 when it was set up, the PVC has been administering vaccines against various diseases for children from economically weak families, either free or at a subsidised charge.

The centre has 21 staff and Rotaractors too pitch in with the clerical work. ■

Students with their new bicycles.



Club Presidents host District Conference

Team Rotary News

Prerana, the District Conference of RID 3232, was unique in some aspects. First and foremost, there was no core team led by a chairman, secretary or treasurer. The presidents of all the 118 Rotary clubs in the district shared various responsibilities and delivered a seamless, memorable programme. “This paradigm shift made it absolutely unique and path-breaking. Imagine an Indian cricket team without a captain and all the eleven players collectively strategising and winning the World Cup! Yes. It was like that,” said District Secretary S Vijaykumar. Another novel aspect was nominal registration

charges, that made it affordable for Anns and Annets to participate. “Earlier it used to be ₹3,000-plus, and included food. This time we pegged the fee at ₹1,000 and left the choice of food to the visitors,” he said. About 3,300 people attended the conference.

The conference was inaugurated by Tamil Nadu Governor Banwarilal Purohit in the presence of RID C Basker and DG Babu Peram. The Governor expressed his admiration for Rotary and Rotarians for the phenomenal service rendered to the community and presented Rotary’s ‘Service Above Self’ Award to PDG Sv Rm Ramanathan for his contribution to

Rotary’s cause and the Foundation. RID 3211 PDG John Daniel was the RI President’s Representative.

RID Basker congratulated DG Babu Peram and club presidents for adding 12 new clubs and 685 new members. “It is remarkable that your services have inspired so many people to join Rotary and do accept my appreciation for inducting 134 new women Rotarians as well,” he said. He complimented the clubs for setting up dialysis centres which is “the need of the hour, especially as the incidence of diabetes is on the rise”.

DG Babu Peram summarised the district’s performance through an





PDG Natarajan Nagoji, Nandini Nagoji, Meera John, Mala Basker, Shanthi Raju and Nallammai Ramanathan among the audience.

AV presentation. A panel discussion on *Changing Business Trends and Emerging opportunities* was moderated by Rtn S V Veeramani. Panellists P Ravichandran, Managing Director, Danfoss; M Ponnuswami, former Chairman, CII-Tamil Nadu Region; Sangeetha Sumesh, Executive Director and CFO, Dun & Bradstreet; and

Rahul Saraogi, MD, Atyant Capital, shared their perspective on the subject. Neelam Jain, Founder, PeriFerry, that works for social inclusion of transgenders, highlighted the idea of creating employment and business opportunities for transgender community. “Rotary can include upliftment of the community as a focus area, identify relevant job roles and provide training for them,” she said.

A debate on ‘Rotary — then and now’, moderated by PDG AS Venkatesh, reinforced the fact that Rotary as an organisation is renewing itself continuously to remain relevant forever.

Sudanshu Mani, former GM of the Integral Coach Factory (ICF), Avadi, shed light on the newest Vande Bharat Express, better known as ‘Train 18’. It was designed and built in 18 months

by the ICF under the Indian government’s *Make in India* initiative. Hence the name ‘Train 18’, he said. The indigenously-made semi-high-speed intercity vehicle costs 40 per cent lesser than a similar train imported from Europe.

The participants were treated to an inspiring account of the adventurous expedition by six women officers of the Indian Navy. They circumnavigated the globe on the sailing vessel, INSV Tarini. The expedition known as the *Navika Sagar Parikrama* was the first-ever Indian circumnavigation of the globe by an all-women crew. The vessel was skippered by Lt Cdr Vartika Joshi, and the crew comprised Lt Cdrs Pratibha Jamwal, P Swathi and B Aishwarya and Lieutenants S Vijaya Devi and Payal Gupta. The officers spoke about their preparation, training, and experiences during the journey.

Chitra Ravi, Founder and CEO of Chrysalis, made schooling seem so much fun through her presentation on *New trends in education*, while the Chairman of the Chennai Port Trust P Ravichandran highlighted the significant roles played by ports in the economic development of a nation. ■



Left: Tamil Nadu Governor Banwarilal Purohit felicitates PDG Sv Rm Ramanathan and Nallammai in the presence of (from L) RID C Basker, RIPR John Daniel, DG Babu Peram, Anita and Conference Advisor M Chakravarthy.

A Karate black belt club president empowers girls

V Muthukumaran

One could not miss the glint in his eyes and a sense of pride in his tone as RC Chennai East RA Puram President P Vasu explains the vivid details of a 'record of sorts' he has created by training 5,600 girls from 23 government schools and women's colleges in self-defence.

'Sensei' Vasu led a team of two male and two female instructors under the club's *Empower the Girl Child* project across the schools and colleges to help girls master the art of karate. He is a Black Belt Dan level-five trained karate expert, having undergone



RC Chennai East RA Puram President P Vasu teaching karate to students of a government school in Chennai.

training at the Isshinryu Karate, Japan. "I have been imparting martial arts to Chennai City Police, ex-defence personnel and school,

college girls for 26 years," he says.

During his installation last July, Vasu announced his plan to train

5,000 girls in self-defence through 'free workshops' in schools and colleges as part of Rotary's vocational service.



With just three subtexts — how to tackle threat; overcome the fear factor; and protect oneself with available tools — Vasu was able to usher in a dramatic change in the attitude of Chennai girls. “I always tell them that when cornered always be quick enough to use whatever handy things you have like,

for example, a sharp fork, bangles or a pepper spray against the attacker.” And at the end of the 2–3 hours workshop-cum-demo session in a government school, he was “thrilled to hear a spontaneous reply from a student: ‘Sir, we will also use mud, stone or whatever we get our hands into to ward off attackers.’”

He was supported by 10 other clubs and Inner Wheel members Arul Malar (Bay City) and Fathima (Madras North) in getting permission from school authorities and taking caring of logistics.

Grand finale
Indian Revenue Service officer V Nandakumar from the Income Tax

Department (Chennai Region) and District Governor Babu Peram were present at a grand spectacle where 1,000 girls of Chellammal Women’s College recently displayed their newly acquired skills to a large gathering. Vasu now is all set to train over 20,000 girls in and around Chennai next year. ■

Rotary honours Pulwama martyrs

Team Rotary News

Rotary Club of Chandigarh, RID 3080, along with the IPL franchise cricket team Kings XI Punjab, presented a cheque of ₹25 lakh to the families of five CRPF jawans who were killed in the Pulwama attack in February.

The club identified five CRPF jawans, four of whom belonged to Punjab and one from Himachal Pradesh, to provide ₹5 lakh each to their family at an event in March.

Club President A P Singh expressed his thanks to Kings XI Punjab for “choosing us as a vehicle for doing good to the families of Pulwama jawans.” He recalled another project initiated by the club three years back to send 5,000 kg of sweets every Deepavali to jawans guarding our borders.

Kings XI Punjab Head of Operations Anant Sarkaria



From L: DG Praveen Goyal, RC Chandigarh President AP Singh and DIG VK Kaundal handing over a cheque to the family of a martyr as Kings XI Punjab Head of Operations Anant Sarkaria and skipper R Ashwin look on.

said, “We are grateful to have partnered with RC Chandigarh for this project as they have helped us connect with the families of our brave jawans, who put their lives on the line every single day for us.”

Along with the club president, DG Praveen

Goyal, Sarkaria, Kings XI Captain Ravichandran Ashwin and other Rotarians were present at the hand-over ceremony. CRPF Punjab was represented by senior DIG V K Kaundal who interacted with the families of the deceased jawans. ■

Of Turkish kebabs in Istanbul... and Budapest

Rasheeda Bhagat





The ubiquitous Turkish kebab has an inevitable presence in any corner of the world and you can pick it up at your own peril... it is like the draw of the luck. Sometimes it is good, and sometimes it isn't. Recently we picked it up at the Budapest Railway station, on a long eight-hour journey to Ljubljana, the capital of Slovenia.

There were four of us and we had booked the ticket online for a ridiculously low 15 euros a ticket, and till we boarded the train, we were not even sure if this was a genuine ticket.

But it was and the train was as comfortable as all trains are in Europe but more about that exciting journey another day. It turned out to be a no-frills train and we could buy nothing to eat, or drink, either on the train

or any of the stations it halted at! Yes, like you, I was also thinking of the plethora of choices available on our stations — from *idli-vada* to samosa to omelette and of course biryani or curd rice depending on your palate.

But this article is about Turkish food, and returning to the kebabs we picked up at a café at the Budapest station, they were almost inedible. But with little choice available, we downed





as much as we could and discarded the rest.

What a far cry this was from the food we had on our trip to Turkey last year — at both Istanbul and Cappadocia. A confession here — the genesis of the trip itself was a Turkish serial, a lovely soap titled *Love me as I am* on Netflix. In it the heroine's father owns a meatball or *kofteci* (kebab) shop and it is the best one in the entire Anatolia region of Turkey. He later comes to Istanbul to set up a kebab outfit here.

Of course the serial showcases the charms of the magical city of Istanbul, the stunning Bosphorus and its iconic treasures such as the Hagia Sophia Museum and the Blue Mosque. It brought back a longing to return to the stunningly beautiful Istanbul, and the freshest of air that you can breathe of the Bosphorus that separates the European side of Istanbul from the Asian side. Twelve years ago I had visited Istanbul, vowing to return with the husband.

So we found ourselves in Turkey — getting the visa was a breeze! If you have a valid US or Schengen visa, an Indian can get a Turkish visa online for something like \$50. We first tasted the





Turkish meatball in Cappadocia and it was delicious. The meat was tender and juicy and the bread accompanying it among the best you can find in Europe.

The traditional kebab or *kofteci* was so good that it took a while to experiment with other food, though grilled fish and prawns almost became a staple. Once in Istanbul, the scope was much larger. In this breathtakingly beautiful city, we took a couple of personalised tours, and our guide Mustafa took us to a couple of restaurants that looked modest from the outside but served delicious food. Here we discovered that peppers or capsicum stuffed with a rice preparation are a regular part of the Turkish diet, and we did try them but weren't too enamoured by it. The soups on the other hand, were delicious. But *kofteci* was clearly the king. At one of these restaurants we tried cheese kebab,





which was served with peppers and aubergine and was delicious.

Turkey is an olive growing region and table olives form a big part of the Turkish diet and the Turks like to consume olives and each morning, at the breakfast spread in our hotel in both Istanbul and Cappadocia, table olives marinated in brine and spiced up with various Mediterranean spices, occupied the pride of place.

Mezze or a set of starters served in little containers, which is very popular in the Middle East, Greece and North Africa is a big hit in Turkey. The starters come with peta bread and are mainly a couple of dishes of table olives, hummus, finely chopped



Table olives form a big part of the Turkish diet and the Turks like to consume olives in large quantities for breakfast.

vegetables garnished with olive oil and spices, and the like.

But the best meal of our trip happened when taking the advice of Scott, the husband of an Indian journalist friend who is now posted in Istanbul. We took a ferry from the European side (where our hotel was located) to the Asian side. On his advice we visited and walked around Kadikoy, an Istanbul hip residential area on the Asian side. Wonder of wonders, within 20 minutes we had crossed from Europe to Asia!

You would expect the European side of Istanbul to be more hep, and perhaps there are localities which are really fancy on the European side too. We were staying bang in the centre of the city, and within walking distance of its architectural wonders such as the Hagia Sophia and the Blue Mosque, not to mention the magnificent Suleymaniye mosque, which is so stunning that it literally takes your breath away. And yet we found the Asian side to be really fancy.



Lamb casserole

Turkish delight





Kadikoy (sounds so similar to Kozhikode, doesn't it?) was filled with glittering shops and turned out to be a shopper's delight. What struck my fancy were shoes. The price tag was so reasonable that two pairs had to be bought. But the best part was walking towards Ciya Sofrasi, the restaurant that Scott had highly recommended. To reach it we had to walk through narrow streets — a virtual sprawling, fruit, vegetable and meat market of Kadikoy it seemed — with the freshest of Mediterranean fruits and vegetables. It was a literal assault on the senses... stacks of fresh green chillies that reminded one of home; heaps and heaps of pickled and spiced olives in various hues, fish and meats of all shapes and sizes and of course, mouthwatering pastry that tempted you from the glass display windows of pastry shops.

At Ciya, two of the chefs were working on making *naans/rotis* in a



neat little tandoor. The *rotis* were so much like our *rotis/naans* and it was fascinating to watch them rolling out the *aatta* balls a little and then throw them into the air, and deftly stretch them into thin *naans* and then carefully place them inside the tandoor using long-handled wooden ladles (see picture). They were making a variety of *naans*, and we found that one of them was the thinnest of pizza bases. "It is Turkish pizza," one of the chefs explained to us proudly as he put some veggies and spices on it and pushed it back into the tandoor.

We stuck to our recommendation which was the garlic kebab, and a lamb casserole, two specialties of the place and when these arrived on the table, they left us breathless. The garlic kebabs made with garlic, of course, lamb and a pomegranate sauce in the tandoor, and are served along with onions grilled in the

same oven! Simply delicious was the verdict.

On the menu were also a plethora of mouthwatering choices... such as poppy seeds kebab, yoghurt kebab (made with hand-chopped lamb or beef and yoghurt); sour kebab (made with aubergine, tomato and pomegranate molasses) and the most special of all — the Ciya kebab, made with hand-chopped lamb/beef, walnut, cheese, parsley and mint.

While hopefully there will be other occasions to try out other varieties of kebabs, what was I thinking when I packed some Turkish kebabs at the Budapest station? A chicken or cheese burger would have been far safer! Grateful I didn't try the Turkish delight, which was also available!

Pictures by Rasheeda Bhagat

Designed by N Krishnamurthy

Audiobook for visually-impaired children

Team Rotary News



Nupur Sandhu (second from right) with children at the National Blind School.

Honouring children who won the National Bravery Awards on the Republic Day, Nupur Sandhu, a member of Rotary

Club of Jammu Elite, RI District 3070, has dedicated an audio book, *Bharat ke bahadur bache* (brave children of India). Supported by

RCs Indore Marshals and Sagar Phoenix of RID 3040, and RC Randolph Metrocom, USA, this book was released at the Jaipur

Literature Festival 2019 and it will be of great help for the visually-challenged children. It was widely appreciated by the National Association for the Blind.

The stories have been narrated in Hindi by Nishant Vikram, an RJ of Radio Mirchi 98.3 FM and the book has been uploaded on the DAISY portal, meant for the visually-impaired, illiterate and those who cannot read due to old-age or other disability.

It is soon to be adapted in English and Tamil, says Nupur. ■

Convention countdown

Info on the go

Hank Sartin

Before you head to Hamburg, Germany, for the RI Convention, June 1–5, download some free apps that will help you get the most out of the event — and the city.

Rotary Events is essential for navigating the convention. With it, you can plan your daily schedule, learn about featured speakers, and download session handouts. You can also connect with other Rotarians, share photos, rate sessions, and send feedback to convention organisers. The app will be available on May 9; find it in your app store by searching for “Rotary Events”.



The HVV app will help you navigate Hamburg’s transit system. When you open it, you’ll see a map of the area around you. Remember that your Hamburg convention registration includes a pass for the city’s trains,

buses, and even ferries, so you’ll never need to worry about tickets.

Make the most of your free time with the city’s Hamburg app, which offers themed tours, audio guides to attractions, detailed information on boats and ships entering and leaving the port, and suggestions for what to do next based on your location. You can access a detailed city map even when you don’t have an internet connection.

**Register for the 2019
(June 1–5) Rotary Convention in
Hamburg at riconvention.org**

© The Rotarian

Two Rotarians on a global mission to meet service-minded people

V Muthukumaran

Two Rotarians inspired by social service are on a globetrotting mission to discover the motivation and passion behind people who strive for community development ‘through selfless service’. Dr Sudhir Baldota from RC New Bombay Seaside, RID 3142, and his friend Praveen Mehta from RC Bombay North, RID 3141, are crisscrossing the world in a Toyota Fortuner to “meet people who are not in the limelight, but do social work in their communities to improve the lives of people,” says B V Raviprakash, President, RC New Bombay Seaside.

Their travel will take them across four



Dr Sudhir Baldota and Praveen Mehta (in white) with bouquets during the flag-off of the car rally in Mumbai.

continents and 60 countries in 300-plus days, during which they plan to meet at least 120 individuals who have made a difference in their communities. Those who have impacted the

lives of people have been identified, and meetings have also been scheduled with local celebrities and social activists.

The voyage was flagged off on April 8 in Mumbai, from where they went to Udaipur, Delhi and Muzaffarnagar before reaching Bhutan. Next on their route are Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam and China, before they proceed to the Central Asian Republics to enter Russia, Greece, Germany, France and UK.

“From UK, their vehicle will be shipped to the US. From North America, they will

reach Panama and then undertake a challenging land journey via Chile, Argentina before driving through the tropical landscape of Brazil at the end of which they will conclude their 70,000 km car rally,” explains Raviprakash.

Exchanges with Rotary clubs

The two Rotarians will exchange flags with several Rotary clubs across the world. “We have received confirmation from Indian embassies that they will be receiving the Rotarians and giving them logistical support.” The adventurous journey will be captured in blogs, vlogs and later through a book. ■

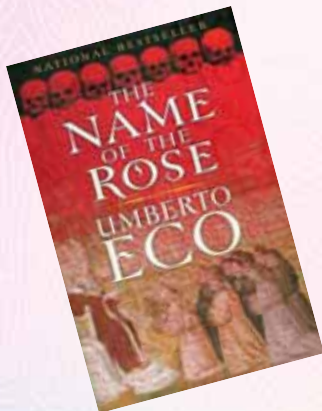


Car rallyists along with Rotarians. Also present is RC New Bombay Seaside President B V Raviprakash (second from right).

Criminal Minds is the name of a popular television series and is one of several popular shows streaming on various digital platforms, but you would be excused if you weren't aware of just how many people also enjoy reading about murders, espionage and mysteries of all kinds. The fact that so many TV shows are based on books has only served to make this genre — crime fiction — even more popular.

Some of the most famous fictional characters come from the world of whodunits. Think Hercule Poirot and Jane Marple, Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson, Arkady Renko (Martin Cruz Smith), John Rebus (Iain Rankin), Kurt Wallander (Henning Mankell), Smilla Qaaviqaaq Jaspersen (Peter Hoeg), Cormoran Strike (Robert Galbraith), Lisbeth Salander (Stieg Larsson), Chief Inspector Reginald Wexford (Ruth Rendell), Inspector Singh (Shamini Flint), and our very own Miss Lalli (Kalpana Swaminathan), Arjun Arora (Ankush Saikia) and Mr Majestic (Zac O'Yeah), to name just a few. As for James Bond, he emerged from the imagination of Ian Fleming long before he occupied the bodies of Sean Connery, Roger Moore, Pierce Brosnan and Daniel Craig!

Long back, when a colleague in *India Today* told me her father was a detective, the picture that sprang



Criminal Minds

Sandhya Rao

Murder, mystery, espionage...
What's so 'enjoyable' about
blood, gore and perverted logic?

to mind was of a hunched character, hatted, coated, collar turned up and wearing dark glasses following clues nose-deep, magnifying glass in hand. It was disappointing to discover that a lot of his work involved 'vetting' young men and women of marriageable age, or checking up on the 'activities' of spouses! A detective interviewed on TV once said that her agency got a lot of requests from parents wanting to know what exactly their children were up to.

Crime fiction novels are far more sumptuous fare. In the case of a writer like Julie Shaw, they are literally homegrown. Her bestselling *My Mam Shirley*, *My Uncle Charlie* and *Our Vinnie* draw from her own family's history of criminal notoriety. Charlie Hudson, for instance, is still spoken of in hushed tones in Yorkshire where, in the 1940s, he ran betting rings and prostitution rackets. To Julie, however, he was just a loving uncle, her just-as-questionable father Keith's brother.

Denzil Meyrick was a beat cop in Glasgow nearly 30 years ago. Today, he has seven published novels featuring DCI Daley. But most writers rely on research, sharp thinking, imagination and superb writing

skills to craft novels that we find unputdownable. The last-mentioned quality is the first and best thing about crime fiction. No wonder, this genre is so popular. It gets the adrenaline seriously pumping as the plots twist and turn and hurtle towards an unexpected ending.

Truth, they say, is stranger than fiction, and truth is the foundation upon which all crime fiction is built: the investigator or investigating agency is after the truth of the matter, whether it is a murder, a theft, or a terrorist plot. In this context, the best person to quote is American novelist Tom Clancy who wrote mostly espionage and military-science thrillers. Famously, his *Debt of Honour* has a character piloting a Boeing 747 into the US Capitol when Congress is in session. The horrific incidents of 9/11 that came after publication of this book, immediately drew comparisons with this scene.

Writing about Clancy after his death in 2013, Christopher Mathews points to three other real-life incidents that Clancy seems to have 'predicted'. Clancy released a video game called 'Ghost Recon' in 2001 featuring the conflict between Georgian rebel forces and Russian nationalists. The game is set in April 2008. The real conflict



between Georgia and Russia took place in August 2008. In *Dead or Alive*, there's an Osama Bin Laden-type character who is finally neutralised by special operatives in a hideout in Las Vegas. The book was published barely a few months before the real Bin Laden was taken out in Abbottabad, Pakistan. And *Clear and Present Danger* predates the US government's secret tapping of phones and use of undercover military operations to counter terrorist activity in West Asia; Edward Snowden enabled this information to be leaked to the world. Clearly, imagination is all to do with the real.

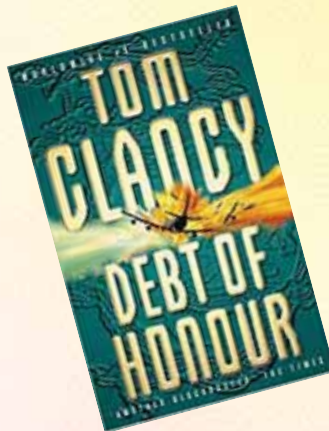
Reading crime fiction definitely helps recharge the grey cells. As psychologist Miriam Henke says: "Mysteries challenge the brain, activate natural chemicals in the body and hold our interest. We love the endorphin release of being told a clue or knowing we've figured out something correctly." Basically, stories of mystery, crime, espionage and the like offer an escape from reality. It's danger with no risk to the reader and generally, justice is served in the end. All in all, it's the perfect formula and the ideal salve for a world-weary reader.

It is interesting to note that fictional sleuths are rarely perfect; they have flaws that could take the form of troubled relationships, or dark pasts, or bad memories, alcoholism or drug addiction, or PTSD. Basically, their

personal lives are often a mess. But when it comes to work, their eccentricities make them brilliant, like Hercule Poirot, for instance. Even the otherwise stable Jimmy Perez of the *Shetland* series written by Ann Cleeves has a difficult daughter, Cassie, to deal with; besides, he is her stepfather, although her real father also lives in the neighbourhood and they share fathering responsibilities in the absence of her deceased mother. So you see, crime fiction is not just about crime, it is also about people.

Sometimes books in this genre can be 'darker'. For instance, the kind of murders solved by Jane Marple in a little English village portrayed by Agatha Christie are a far cry from the menacing undertones of Stieg Larsson's *Millennium* series set across Sweden. Often referred to as 'noir' fiction, the protagonists are often the victims themselves, or the perpetrators of the crime. Although not all Scandinavian crime fiction falls into this category, nearly all the books reflect the icy toughness of the landscape in which the novels are set.

Every country has its cast of crime fiction writers. However, one of the most famous books in this genre must surely be *The Name of the Rose* by the Italian writer Umberto Eco. This historical murder mystery is set in a monastery in the fourteenth century and is a must-read.



In an article titled 'Why people like detective stories', Joe Bunting says they are a game, a puzzle, and people love solving puzzles, in the same way that they love doing crossword puzzles (or Sudoku). "People are puzzles," he writes. "It's often difficult to understand why people do the things they do. Detective stories give us a glimpse into people we would never get in real life... These heroes lead us into the psyches of the dead, and in so doing, help us to understand the living."

Reading crime novels sure gives the brain a solid workout. It's also a way of dealing with stress. A good book is a mood elevator, and crime novels are engaging reads, besides winning you friends. The first time I took the Caltrain in San Francisco, I asked someone for directions. She said she was going the same way and asked me to follow her. We then spent the next 40 minutes chatting — about our favourite crime novels! That was the only time we met, but two years on we're still exchanging notes and she's read and enjoyed Ankush Saikia's *Remember Death*. So, the next time you're on a metro anywhere in the world, sneak a peek at what people are reading. Chances are it will be a juicy 'murder' mystery! Unless, of course, they're reading on 'devices'. Ugh!

Postscript: This is for the uninitiated: apart from the names already mentioned in this column, you may want to try Abir Banerjee, PD James, Sara Peretsky, Sue Grafton, Andrea Camilleri, Patricia Highsmith, Hakan Nesser, John Le Carre, Gillian Flynn, Vaseem Khan, Stephen King, Lee Child, Paula Hawkins, Sujata Massey... and many, many more. Go, find them and read them.

The columnist is a children's writer and senior journalist.

Designed by Krishnapratheesh S



RC Chidambaram — RID 2981

A police outpost was opened at Chidambaram railway station by DG S Piraiyon during his official visit to the club. The outpost, donated by Rtn SR Ramanathan, will enhance the public image of Rotary.

RC Rasipuram — RID 2982

Farmers were given goats worth ₹36,000 at Pudupalayam village near the town. All the goats were insured by the club for ₹2,000. The beneficiaries will return one of the goats to the club which will be given to other needy farmers. This is an ongoing project for over 10 years.



RC Delhi Southex — RID 3011

A mega health camp was organised at the Masjid Moth village near the capital. Over 200 people were given consultations and treatment for various disorders. Patients were provided with medicines for anaemia, calcium deficiency and few general illnesses.

RC Madurai — RID 3000

An exclusive medical camp for women was organised at Andarkottaram village with five doctors and paramedics from the Velammal Hospital, Madurai, examining the patients on maternal issues, uterus problems and diabetes. Around 200 women benefitted from the camp.



Matters

RC Ghaziabad — RID 3012

Gender-segregated toilet blocks along with drinking water and handwash stations were inaugurated as part of WinS project in a government school by DGE Deepak Gupta.



RC Nasik Road — RID 3030

A dental camp was organised for students at Braves School in Sinnar. An awareness programme on oral hygiene was also held benefitting over 250 students.



RC Dhule Femina — RID 3060

DG Pinky Patel inaugurated a sanitary napkin vending machine at the Balika Ashram in the presence of Rotarians and the inmates. This facility is expected to ensure better menstrual hygiene among women at the ashram.

RC Karnal — RID 3080

A five-day vocational training programme in dairy farming was organised for women at the Animal Welfare Society in Mangaluru with 30 participants being addressed by expert Rtn Dr V K Kalra. College of Veterinary Science, Meerut, Dean Dr Rajbir Singh was the special guest.



RC Faridkot — RID 3090

Global Handwashing Day was observed at a government school with students presenting a demo to the Rotarians on how to keep themselves hygienic by rinsing their hands at the handwash station. Rotarians interacted with the students on the need to adopt better sanitation practices.



RC Moradabad Achievers — RID 3100

The Rotarians distributed fresh blankets to students and parents at Ved Mandir School in the city. The club also organised a 'Spot the Einstein' contest for students from Classes 7 to 12 in association with Vidya Mandir and the *Times of India*.



RC Mira Road — RID 3141

Four Vocational Excellence Awards; three service awards to those who had done excellent work in public life; two Rising Stars for children excelling in sports; and Mira Bhayandar Ratan Award to Rtn Anand Bhatkal were presented at a gala event.



RC Gems Nizamabad — RID 3150

A rally on traffic awareness, peace and unity was held with over 100 Royal Enfield Bullet riders riding across the main streets of the city. At the closing point, the bike riders stood with tricolour flags across a huge map of India which enhanced Rotary's public image.



RC Nellore — RID 3160

A PolioPlus programme was conducted at the APSRTC bus terminus, Rotary Club Hall, Gandhi statue centre and Muthukur bus stand in the town in which around 1,000 children were immunised. At the Rotary General Hospital, over 200 patients were examined and free medicines were given.



RC Mapuca — D 3170

A new club, RC Bardez Coastal, the 20th in Goa, was installed with 58 new members, "breaking a 20-year record for the largest number of charter members, which was earlier held by DG Ravikiran Kulkarni," according to Club President Ajay Menon.



Matters

RC Cochin East — RID 3201

A school bus was donated to the Thejus Special School for autistic children in Vechoor Vaikam under DG's priority project *Surya*. The bus was flagged off by District Director Rajmohan Nair in the presence of Rotarians.



RC Katpadi — RID 3231

An eye camp was organised at the club's Happy Village Karigreri with support of Dr Agarwal Eye Hospital. Over 250 people benefitted from the camp and 25 of them were sent to Chennai for free cataract operations.



RC Chennai Korattur — RID 3232

A Siddha medical camp was held in association with the Field Outreach Bureau of the Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Traditional healers from various parts of southern States treated over 1,000 patients. DGND S Muthu Palaniyappan felicitated the healers.



RC Patna — RID 3250

A cataract surgery camp was organised at the Rajendra Nagar Super Specialty Hospital in the city in which 10 patients were treated. The club provided them with medicines and blankets.



RC Jeypore — RID 3262

A three-day mobile homeopathy camp was organised in association with The Homeopathic Medical Association of India. Over 340 patients were examined and given medicines.

Compiled by V Muthukumaran
Designed by L Gunasekaran

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Subscription norms

1. Subscription is for the Rotary year (July to June).
2. **It is mandatory for every Rotarian to subscribe to a Rotary magazine.**
3. The annual subscription for print version is ₹420 per member.
4. Subscription for the full year must be sent in July, in the prescribed form.
5. Those joining after July can pay only for the remaining Rotary year at ₹35 an issue.
6. Subscription account of the club with *Rotary News* is a running account and does not cease at the end of June every year.
7. Names of all members, with their complete postal address with **PIN CODE**, mobile number and e-mail ID must be typed and sent along with the form and DD/cheques payable at par.
8. Copies of Semi Annual Report **SHOULD NOT** be sent as address list.
9. Language preference (English, Hindi and Tamil) should be stated alongside member's name.
10. **Members, please ensure that your name is included in the Subscribers' list that your club sends us. Often, names of members who have paid their subscription, are left out from the club list.**
11. Clubs must inform *Rotary News* about reduction in number of members, if any, before or in May. Please help reduce wastage of copies.
12. Clubs are liable to pay for the number of magazines we despatch according to the list available at Rotary News Trust.
13. Unpaid dues of the club will be shown as outstanding against the club. Any payment received subsequently will be adjusted against earlier dues.
14. **Clubs with subscription arrears will be notified to RI and may face possible suspension.**
15. We are in the process of tallying our subscriber list with RI membership from India.
16. If you want to switch to *The Rotarian*, please do so. But inform us **immediately** to avoid receipt of *Rotary News*. Or else your club will have to pay for it.

Mindful eating

Sheela Nambiar

Mindful eating is the practice of deliberately paying attention to the process of eating. It is a non-judgmental approach to eating. We should pay attention to what, how, why and when we eat, like that of an observer of the process without self-criticism or judgment. It is the process of understanding the internal and external cues that play a role in our eating habits, and recognising and acknowledging our emotional, physical and mental state before, during and after eating.

Food and eating are not always triggered by hunger. Hunger is just one of the reasons we eat. In an ideal world, hunger and satiety should be the only cues to trigger eating. This would help us maintain our weight and prevent obesity. But we now have an unlimited choice of food and other social cues and emotional responses to food. Eating is often controlled by factors beyond our awareness. When we eat indiscriminately and mindlessly in response to cues other than hunger, *our hunger response gets blunted* and true hunger cannot be recognised. This is particularly true when the habit of overeating or eating for comfort starts in early childhood.

Adults often coerce children to eat too much. 'Clean your plate' is often told to a child by a parent/caregiver, without considering the child's true requirement for food. Force-feeding children is the norm, and food is often used as a treat or held as punishment. An emotional link to food such as 'sweets mean reward' or withholding food means 'guilt and shame' can create a

dysfunctional relationship with food as we grow older. As a result, we eat when we are sad, stressed, angry or frustrated and worse, eat all the wrong kinds of food for instant gratification. Rarely would you reach for a bowl of broccoli when you are stressed or bored. More likely it will be a bag of chips with that addictive salty/sweet/sour, crispy feel or that decadent dessert.

These early childhood experiences can blunt our ability to read hunger/satiety signals from our body and encourage us to use food as a form of comfort in times of stress or unease. There may be other pre-conceived, deeply ingrained ideas such as — 'I have to eat at a particular time' — irrespective of hunger, which once again blunts the body's own genuine response to food, hunger and satiety.

Other external factors can also influence how much or what we eat. For instance — room lighting can influence food intake. Ever wondered why fast-food outlets are brightly coloured and lit? This encourages increased intake of food, as also how much those around you eat. A quiet, sober, low-lit, fancy restaurant where everyone is served small portions and speak in a low tone, automatically encourages you to do the same. But a raucous buffet with a huge volume of unlimited food will encourage you to eat way more than you need to. Ambience matters. So do size of crockery and cutlery. In one study it was found that people eat 25 per cent less when given smaller plates.

Another disastrous distraction during mealtime triggering mindless eating is the television, telephone or other forms of screen time. Advertisements

play on our emotions. Picture this: You're watching TV after a good dinner... an advertisement for ice cream comes up, reminding you of the one in your freezer. Or makes you order one on your food delivery App. That is the power of advertising, used for marketing by big food companies.

Mindless eating

Eating on autopilot, not consciously paying attention to what or why we eat, is very common. We all have pre-conceived ideas about our food. How many of you truly believe you should eat three big meals and two snacks every day whether you need it or not. Have you asked yourself if you are really hungry? If you are unaware of the reasons for eating, don't remember what you just ate, or blindly reach for food as a solution to any problem, you are eating mindlessly.



Mindless eating also happens when we are in a social or family gathering and everyone else is in a self-indulgent frame of mind. A great culinary spread, an upbeat mood, alcohol, good company can all seduce us to eat much more than we actually need to or even want to.

Mindless eating results in eating the wrong kind of food, weight gain and chronic diseases and the body signals get blunted, while the real issues such as depression, stress etc are not solved.

How to achieve Mindful Eating

Listen to your body. We often ignore feelings of fullness when we are faced with one of our favourite treats. Or we disregard the discomfort created by eating a certain food that we love.

Be aware of the voice in your head.

Good food, bad food, don't waste, I feel guilt etc — these are age-old conversations that play out in your head regarding food. Some may have been planted in childhood, others, picked up along the way through friends, advertising, fad diets, or big food companies.



You may be making food choices as a result of this programming or old habits. Be aware of this and the resulting behaviour.

Make eating a pleasurable experience.

We may not always be able to do this. A midday snack may be a working lunch, but we could sit down to a proper meal in the evening, have a conversation and enjoy it. Pay attention to the food, flavour, and the company.

Remove all distractions. Television, the smartphone or your computer can be distractions that prevent you from really paying attention to your food.

Be non-judgmental about your body and food.

A dysfunctional relationship with food is often associated with similar relationship with your body. Trying to lose weight can cause obsession about food and you may swing from starving yourself to the latest fad diet, not necessarily paying attention to what *your body* really requires. Not everyone is the same so they may not share your lactose intolerance. Only if you pay attention to how your own body responds can you react appropriately. If you are constantly being self-critical about how much you eat or agonising over an extra spoonful, there's very little time and effort to pay attention. You're too busy self-flagellating. So stop and pay attention.

Understand food. While you should pay attention to what you eat, you also need to understand the basic nuances of food and nutrition. Such as food groups, getting proteins for vegetarians, the serving sizes, and additives/preservatives in that food. It's far easier to make the right choices when you know enough about food. You don't need a degree in nutrition science to be able to manage your own meals, but you do need a keen awareness and

understanding of food. This is probably the area most people neglect, waiting instead for advice from a celebrity or your friend who lost some weight. You are not them. You need to discover what works for you.

Stay in the moment. Savour the moment. Whether it is a simple snack or a five-course meal, savour it, enjoy it, chew well, pay attention to the flavour, texture, smell and sight. Experiencing food with all our senses enhances satiety.

Recognise how external cues influence your eating.

Advertisements for food and drink influence us greatly. Recognise this as an external cue and not necessarily what your body needs. The size of plates, spoons and bowls influences how much we eat. Larger plates and bowls encourage us to eat more. The smell, sight and sounds of others eating also influence how much we eat. Lighting, music, conversation around us are important cues to our own behaviour.

Be aware of your triggers. There may be specific triggers that cause you to eat more or less. Make a note of them. For example:

Positive triggers to eat – (family gathering, celebration, party)

- Apply principles of mindful eating
- Enjoy the process.

Negative triggers to eat – (stress, anger, depression, boredom)

- Make a list of alternative actions to take instead of food
- Understand that food cannot solve this current problem.

The author is a lifestyle medicine physicist and can be contacted at sheela.nambiar@gmail.com

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**RI Exchange
Rate - May 2019**

\$1 = ₹70

Rotary at a glance

Rotarians : 12,24,128

Clubs : 35,930

Districts : 538

*Rotaractors : 161,311

Clubs : 9,927

*Interactors : 551,839

Clubs : 23,993

RCC : 10,303

**Estimated*

As on April 11, 2019

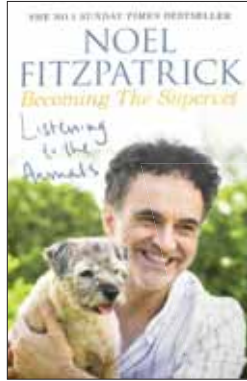
Membership Summary

As on April 1, 2019

RI District	Rotary Clubs	No of Rotarians	Women Rotarians	Rotaract Clubs	Interact Clubs	RCC
2981	114	4,716	212	41	232	203
2982	69	3,108	163	69	117	53
3000	130	5,467	535	233	686	203
3011	82	3,501	736	47	115	25
3012	91	3,584	804	54	131	56
3020	77	4,076	228	56	466	349
3030	91	4,949	619	81	326	179
3040	95	2,114	240	33	135	142
3053	69	3,069	545	10	57	96
3054	128	6,321	1,113	77	324	475
3060	103	4,355	567	59	127	138
3070	103	3,171	342	47	164	58
3080	81	3,453	302	74	226	109
3090	79	2,019	65	36	39	122
3100	78	1,929	118	12	78	146
3110	116	3,862	317	30	52	104
3120	76	3,244	397	31	63	52
3131	132	5,526	1,229	95	312	90
3132	98	3,939	414	38	216	151
3141	95	5,663	1,355	111	273	84
3142	95	3,511	663	76	205	64
3150	95	3,618	367	60	249	109
3160	73	2,568	159	27	48	81
3170	126	5,707	638	59	347	164
3181	81	3,664	331	57	271	115
3182	85	3,382	257	28	278	95
3190	128	5,112	697	125	371	52
3201	144	5,447	346	95	141	49
3202	130	5,079	258	78	447	47
3211	139	4,490	291	8	98	128
3212	99	4,122	329	95	292	142
3231	82	3,433	320	49	216	305
3232	119	4,967	799	116	350	83
3240	88	3,123	402	49	170	171
3250	102	3,927	690	61	217	177
3261	73	2,649	346	9	112	43
3262	91	3,438	421	38	77	76
3291	147	3,753	734	84	136	601
India Total	3,804	150,056	18,349	2,348	8,164	5,337
3220	72	2,025	285	77	213	73
3271	88	1,543	255	54	19	16
3272	147	2,525	384	51	40	40
3281	208	5,807	854	222	94	189
3282	148	4,162	422	124	49	43
3292	117	4,641	718	122	130	113
S Asia Total	4,584	170,759	21,267	2,998	8,709	5,811

Source: RI South Asia Office

On the racks



Listening to the Animals: Becoming the Supervet

Author : **Noel Fitzpatrick**

Publisher : **Hachette India**

Pages : **375; ₹499**

In this memoir, Noel Fitzpatrick recounts the surprising journey where he leaves behind a farm animal practice in rural Ireland to set up *Fitzpatrick Referrals* in Surrey, one of the most advanced small animal specialist centres in the world. We meet the animals that paved the way, from calving cows and corralling bullocks to talkative parrots and bionic cats and dogs. Noel has listened to the many lessons that the animals in his care have taught him. He also shares the time spent with his beloved Keira, the scruffy Border Terrier who has been by Noel's side at all times, when he went through the unbelievable highs and crushing lows of his extraordinary career.

As heart-warming and life-affirming as the TV show with which he made his name, *Listening to the Animals* is a story of love, hope and compassion, and about rejoicing in the bond between humans and animals.



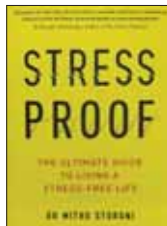
NUMI - The Guarded Loop

Author : **Nupur Sandhu**

Publisher : **Blue Rose Publishers**

Pages : **120; ₹190**

The book takes us through the mystic and intriguing journey of Nuha, a sensitive young girl. She has already hit the quintessential milestones of life, yet continues to look for the oasis, searching for vistas unknown. She morphs from a jovial youngster to an enlightened soul, after inculcating the art of being in sync with the supreme Creator.



Stress Proof

Author : **Dr Mithu Storoni**

Publisher : **Hachette India**

Pages : **261; ₹399**

In this book, Mithu Storoni gives you all the tools you need to handle stress and positively boost your mental and physical well-being. The author helps you to prevent small stressful incidents turning into a situation where you are faced with inflammation, anxiety, depression and other chronic health issues.

The different chapters examine common stress agents and suggest simple ways to minimise their harmful effects.



Doing Good in The World

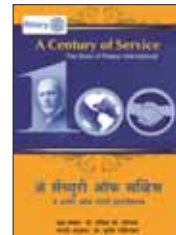
Translated by: **Dr Sudhir Rashingkar**

Publisher : **Dilipraj Publication**

Language : **Hindi and Marathi**

Pages : **220; ₹300**

In the book on TRF, Rashingkar describes the Foundation's journey over 100 years, documenting its history, programmes and the difference Rotarians have made around the world.



A Century of Service: The Story of Rotary International

Translated by: **Dr Sudhir Rashingkar**

Publisher : **Dilipraj Publication**

Hindi and Marathi

Pages : **320; ₹450**

With special permission from RI, Sudhir Rashingkar has translated this book that showcases the spirit of service of Rotary International, a nonprofit dedicated to improving the human condition. The book talks about how Rotarians remain committed to helping their communities and the world beyond. It also throws light on the men and women behind the world's premier service organisation. The book contains stories of ordinary people doing extraordinary work.

The above two books are available to Rotarians at concessional price of ₹500 plus courier/postage charges.

Compiled by Kiran Zehra
Designed by Krishnapratheesh S

Different takes on history, war heroes

TCA Srinivasa Raghavan



In case you are wondering where to go this summer, try Portugal. I went there last summer because it is a country I have always wanted to visit. It was home to Prince Henry the Navigator, the man who started Portuguese explorations between 1425 and 1450 down the Atlantic along the West African coast. You can read about it in many books, none better than Simon Winchester's book called *Atlantic*. Portugal exceeded all expectations. It is a truly wonderful country but, strangely, it is not on the Indian tourists' radar screen at all. This despite the fact it is very cheap to travel around in that country. Just 100 euros a day is enough for two people, including the *Airbnb* rent in the centre of town.

We started in the north from a city called Porto and travelled down gradually by train to Lisbon, stopping at a hill town called Pinhoir in the Duro Valley. Henry the Navigator had lived about 250 miles away in a tiny settlement with a huge castle and church on a small hill called Tomar. The ruins of his home are still there. We took three trains to get there. It's a lovely place with a population of just about 20,000. A large whiskey cost just €2 and a meal €6. And mind, this was in July which is peak tourist season in Europe.

But this article is not about tourism. It is about how countries treat their histories and their heroes. The two countries of interest

In Portugal you do not see battle standards in churches. In England they are the first things things you see.

to Indians are Portugal and England. The contrast is stark. The Portuguese ruled a part of India — albeit a tiny one — for far longer than the English, 450 years against 190. Goa was under Portuguese rule from 1510 to 1962. The man who made this possible — Vasco da Gama — is all but forgotten in Portugal. Indeed, so are the others like Bartolomeu Dias and Pedro Cabral, who charted the seas in the face of the most daunting odds. Most ships never returned. Death by drowning was the only outcome.

Vasco da Gama's remains, relocated from Kochi to Lisbon, are interred in a magnificent church about half a kilometre from the spot from which he sailed for India. But today the place, Belem, is better known for its delicious pastries than Vasco da Gama. This forgetfulness is amazing, considering the fact that but for him and Ferdinand Magellan, Portugal may never have become a wealthy maritime and colonial power.

England provides a sharp contrast. The biggest difference is in the way the two countries treat their heroes and their

churches. In Portugal, they do not use places of worship to glorify their wars and war heroes. In England they do just that, never mind how insignificant the battle or how tiny the contribution of the "hero" was. In Portugal you do not see battle standards in churches. In England they are the first things you see. Portugal does not glorify war. England does. Even in the huge church in which Vasco da Gama is interred, there are no reminders of war. In England, every little church has at least one, if not more.

So even if the British have stopped teaching their shameful colonial history in schools, English churches constantly remind the faithful that — despite its several and extraordinary artistic, political, philosophical and scientific attainments — England was, and remains, an aggressive country at heart. English football fans stand noisy and uncouth testimony to this. We saw some of them in a small town called Cascais in Portugal, just outside Lisbon.

In Portugal, which from 1500 to about 1650 was the only maritime power with colonies, including Brazil and Angola, you don't see statues of their heroes scattered all over. In England, that's routine, even of animals. Perhaps this striking difference is because whereas Portugal did the colonising in the name of God, England did it for commerce. God only followed later. That's what makes Portugal so special. ■

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