

GOVERNOR'S NEWSLETTER

Rotary International District 3310 Berhad

September 2013



DG Chew Ghim Bok



My fellow Rotarians,

When you enjoy what you are doing, time passes quickly!

Before we realize it, we are into our third month of this Rotary year. One-quarter of our term is almost over. What have we done so far? Very soon we will be doing our mid-term review; I don't want you to be taken by surprise.

In recent weeks I have been receiving encouraging comments on my monthly newsletters. While I enjoy reading the praises, I also welcome constructive criticisms—it shows you are reading my messages. Please keep your comments coming. I appreciate that.

President Ron Burton has reminded us that the number of Rotarians worldwide has remained at 1.2 million for far too long. August was 'Membership and Extension' month. While there are many good suggestions on how we can recruit more members, at the risk of sounding like a broken record, I still maintain that we do not need more members of Rotary clubs. We need more Rotarians.

While recruiting more members, have you considered revitalizing those in your club who have become inactive for one reason or another? A 'born-again' Rotarian could become a great asset to your club.

It is a given that in society twenty percent of the people do eighty percent of the work. Statistically, in an average Rotary club, only about a third of its members are active. These people keep the club running. Another third are inactive but can be counted upon to do their bits, given the right motivation. The final third are RINOs ('Rotarians In Name Only'). These people just want to belong. It can be very difficult to convince them to participate in your club activities. Take time to find out why such members have become inactive or worse, inert. You may be surprised to hear answers like: "I have not been asked," or "I thought I am not part of your group."

To have a vibrant club, take pains to see that every member feels wanted by giving them a meaningful job to do. Even RI President Ron Burton nearly left Rotary in the initial years of his membership because he was not given anything to do. When members have done work, it is important to show your appreciation by recognizing and acknowledging the work they did.

Recently, a new Rotarian asked me a simple question: "What are our core values?" I must admit I was a little taken by surprise and fumbled on what I thought would be a reasonable response. The point is, although I know what our core values are, I had to take some time to think about them before coming up with an answer.

We often talk about The Four-Way Test. How many of you can quote The Four-Way Test without hesitation? As Rotarians, we must be able to introduce Rotary quickly and compellingly to non-Rotarians (also known as an elevator speech). We must walk the talk. After all, we are expected to know these basics. If we don't know, how can we expect others to know or be interested in our organization?

As I see it, the problem facing Rotary today is the lack of proper orientation for prospective members and the lack of continuing Rotary education for those who are already members. It is safe to say, a majority of Rotary club members do not fully understand what Rotary is all about. Without proper and timely Rotary knowledge and information, how can you expect them to become good Rotarians?

Rotary's core values represent the guiding principles of our organization's culture, including what guides members' priorities and actions within the organization. Values are an increasingly important component in strategic planning because they drive the intent and direction of the organization's leadership.

Rotary's core values

Service

Time and again I need to remind Rotarians that Rotary is not a charitable organization although it behaves like one. Many join Rotary with the misguided notion that we are a charity. True, we raise funds to support our various humanitarian projects but raising funds is not the be-all and end-all of Rotary. Check-writing Rotarians are wonderful and for those who can afford to do so, we encourage them to continue doing it. Many clubs, however, kill the golden goose by continuously tapping on the generosity of such people. This is not what Rotary is all about. Merely giving money does not make one a Rotarian. You don't have to join a Rotary club to do so.

For people who have reached the level to become a member of a Rotary club, their most precious resources are time and their expertise. I ask you to give of your time to help those in need. Very often, your mere presence at ground zero is an indication of how much you truly care.

During my recent visit to Rotary Club of Sibuluan, I met my Rotary hero and role model, Rotarian Penghulu Chew Peng Ann, retired banker. I first heard of him some sixteen years ago when I joined Rotary. Suffice to say that he comes from a well-to-do family and was managing director of Wah Tat Bank (founded by his father) until it merged with Hong Leong Bank in 2001. For more than sixty years, on Sunday mornings, as his father did before him, he would carry his baskets and bell to Sibuluan Central Market to collect food for distribution to the homeless, aged, and destitute residents of Sibuluan Benevolent Society. Stallholders on hearing the ringing bell would come forward to donate food items generously.

He is now eighty-five years of age. In 1999-2000, he received a district award in recognition of his devotion and dedication to humanitarian service. Robert, his son, also a Rotarian, now has mostly taken over from him to do the same thing. I dare say many people of the same status as Rotarian Penghulu Chew would have taken the easy way out by simply giving money or asking their driver or servant to perform this laborious task. It is very humble of him personally to carry out such charitable works.

Utilize your vocation as an opportunity to serve. Doctors, lawyers, engineers, architects, and businesspeople have a lot to share. Devoting several hours a month to serving the needy is more meaningful than any amount of money you can give. Besides, it is good for your soul.

Fellowship

Fellowship is not just about fun and games. Of course, through fellowship we understand one another better. More importantly, through fellowship we can also learn to empathize with our fellow members. It is a very noble cause to be able to help others. In our zest to help others, however, we sometimes fail to realize that there are some in our club who may be experiencing a rough patch and also are in need of our consideration.

DGE HJ Andre Suharto revealed that the moral support given him by his club members when he lost his daughter was a turning point for him. He realized then what Rotary was all about and this made him a better Rotarian.

A close-knit club whose members take care of one another is a strong and vibrant club. This is Rotary.

Diversity

A unique feature of Rotary is our classification principle. This ensures diversity in our membership. We must ensure our clubs do not become alumni of particular businesses or professions. By embracing diversity, we can tap on the expertise of members covering a wide spectrum of businesses and professions. We can provide expert advice to fellow members and the general public.

Diversity does not just cover businesses and professions. It also covers ethnicity, gender, and age. Develop an effective recruitment plan to have your club reflect the diversity of the local business and professional community. This will bring important benefits to your club.

Integrity

Rotary teaches us to be ethical in whatever we do whether in our personal lives or in our businesses

and professions. The Four-Way Test is one of the most beloved and enduring guiding principles of Rotary. Our district has also adopted The Guide to Daily Living, the brainchild of PDG Dr Philbert Chin. If we endeavor to apply the Test and Guide to everything we do, the world will be a much better place.

Leadership

To be a Rotary club president, indeed to hold any leadership position in Rotary, is a tremendous challenge. You are a leader among leaders. Even as a club president you are merely the first among equals. No one owes you a living.

I believe that to be a good leader we must first be a motivator and a role model. We must have passion. We lead by example and walk the talk.

For many, to lead a Rotary club as president is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. How do you want to be remembered? What kind of legacy do you want to leave behind?

I hope that ten months from now, you will have made a difference to your club, to have brought it to the next level for your successor to continue with the good work. Please do not end up as a 'has been.' Each of you is a potential champion and I am proud to be given the opportunity to lead this First Class Team.

You will realize that when you **Engage Rotary** you can **Change Lives**.

Oh yes, 28 August 2013, was historic for many of us. RI President Ron D. Burton was in town to grace our inter-city meeting at Pan Pacific Hotel, Singapore. I should like to place on record my heartfelt thanks and appreciation to President Dr Shahul Hameed of Rotary Club of Singapore and his team for their remarkable effort in pulling off such a successful event at very short notice.

Some 330 Rotarians from the three countries in our district including governors and past governors from Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India were present. Those who attended agreed it was an outstanding event. The great and stirring speech by President Ron Burton cemented our commitment to Rotary.

The evening's highlight was the spontaneous and generous contributions from our Rotarians to The Rotary Foundation. We raised more than US\$690,000 for the Annual and Permanent Funds of The Rotary Foundation, including PolioPlus. Many became Paul Harris Fellows, Multiple Paul Harris Fellows, and Major Donors. Some elevated their Major Donor status to levels two, three, and four. Many present had opportunities personally to engage RI President Ron Burton and had their photographs taken with him, a rare photo opportunity.

I was so inspired by the generosity of those present that I decided to lead by example and became an Arch C. Klumph Society member. Initially I had offered to match donations dollar for dollar up to US\$200,000 but because of the overwhelming response to the fund-raising appeal I raised my own pledge to US\$300,000. I wish to single out for mention the additional US\$25,000—since paid—in matching funds furnished by PP Teo Pok Zin of Rotary Club of Queenstown, already a Major Donor Level 4. He is currently the district fund-raising vice chair.

The spontaneous outpouring of generosity among those Rotarians that night created a new milestone in our district. Never before had we been able to raise such an amount in an entire year, much less in one evening! And we have another nine months before the Rotary year ends, so keep those donations coming and continue to support The Rotary Foundation. Contact PP Michael Yee, district fund-raising chair, if you wish to donate to The Rotary Foundation.

I hasten to remind future governors of our district that they should not take this as something they must emulate. We do whatever we can under our unique and specific circumstances. I believe our Rotarians will rise to the occasion when called upon. The success of any endeavor cannot be the work of only one person but is the collective effort of everyone.

I am humbled and wish to thank everyone for your support. This truly augurs well for our district. The best is yet to come.

An important reminder: a series of District Vocational Service Seminars has been planned for you in October, so look out for the promotional materials and register with your club president or assistant governor.

Till next month, keep your comments coming.