



Rotary District  
6920



Lend a Hand

Leon Benefield, District Governor  
lwbcdb@friendlycity.net

2203 Emory Drive, Tifton, GA 31794  
(229) 386-4657

## District Conference Highlights April 25, 2004

# The Power of Rotary and You

You hold the power to make a difference in the lives of Americans and those abroad. That was a key message Saturday as District 6920 Rotarians continued their 47th annual conference at the Valdosta-Lowndes Conference Center.

RI President Jonathan Majiyagbe's representative, Ed Knecht, began the "power of Rotary" theme with his morning presentation. "I am particularly impressed with the METS (Medical Equipment Transport Service) you have," said Ed as he spoke to a room full of Rotarians. "When I go back to my district, I'm going to be spreading the word around."

Sharing memories of transporting desks to a Mexican school, a fire truck to Cabo San Lucas and funding the purchase of an ambulance in another underserved country, Ed pushed home the importance of what Rotarians across the world are doing.

"World community service projects don't have to cost a lot of money," he said. "Rotary has power and what we do is appreciated."

Speaking of METS, Bob Ashley, who has worked tirelessly to organize that project, continued the power of Rotary theme by



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talking about the contributions District 6920 Rotarians have made during the past year.

"There's a tremendous amount of good you have done this year," he said, citing the more than \$30,000 in District Simplified Grants, \$20,000 on a matching grant to students in Nepal, \$40,000 on a matching grant

to a free Ear, Nose and Throat clinic in Brazil and \$30,000 on a matching grant for orthopedic equipment to Bolivians. "These are things that absolutely would not have happened without your sustaining membership."

Two containers full of expendable medical supplies and high-dollar equipment will be shipped through the METS program next month; three such containers already have been shipped.

"This district really needs to be proud of what it has accomplished," said Bob.

Perhaps one of the most motivating presentations Saturday was by PDG Jeanette Caneega of Wrightsville. Jeanette, District Chair for Coins for Alzheimers Research Trust (C.A.R.T.), spoke of the devastating fear that she has of developing Alzheimers Disease, which her father, Allen Gibson, suffered from for 14 years before passing away in 1998.

"It has already happened to some we know," said Caneega. "It will happen to some of you in this room.

"In one way, it's easy for me to talk

about Alzheimers; in another way, it's difficult," she continued. "Over time, I watched my father fade before my eyes. There were times I could walk up to the patio door on a Sunday afternoon and I knew my father was scared of me. And, no matter how much I told myself it was this violent disease, inside my heart wept."

Jeanette emphasized that Rotarians can make a difference in Alzheimers research by donating pennies a day to C.A.R.T., which was formed by Roger Ackerman of Sumter, S.C., to address the ever-growing need for

funding for Alzheimers research.

"I hope it doesn't happen to me, that it isn't hereditary and doesn't go to my lovely grandson Michael," said Jeanette. "I don't think I will ask anything of any of you that will be easier than this. Basically, put in your coins and let those coins come together. As Rotarians, we have been called to make a better life for all."



Michael Caneega, 11, shows off the money collected by passing around C.A.R.T. buckets during Saturday morning's plenary session.



Rotarians donate to C.A.R.T.



DG Leon Benefield presents a plaque to Bob Ashley for his dedication to international service projects.



The GRSP students seemed to be the only ones who were willing to take a walk on the wild side at Wild Adventures during Saturday's activities time. The students, who immediately headed for the water park, enjoyed soaking up some south Georgia rays.

## Clubs are Presented District Awards

District awards were presented Saturday, with the Club of the Year Award and Rookie of the Year Award reserved for Sunday.

Bertha Daniels served as chair of the awards committee and was assisted by PDG Lynn Hadwin and DGN Dallas Simon.

Award winners are:

### **Club Service**

- 1st: Dublin
- 2nd: Skidaway Island
- 3rd: Downtown Macon & Warner

Robins

### **Vocational Service**

- 1st: Dublin
- 2nd: Savannah South
- 3rd: Brunswick

### **International Award**

- (small clubs)
- 1st: Skidaway
- 2nd: Metter
- 3rd: McIntosh

### **(large clubs)**

- 1st: Dublin
- 2nd: Augusta West
- 3rd: Savannah South

### **Porter Carswell Community Service**

### **(small clubs)**

- 1st: Wrightsville
- 2nd: McIntosh & Marshes-of-Glynn
- 3rd: Skidaway

### **(large clubs)**

- 1st: Augusta West
- 2nd: Dublin
- 3rd: Tifton

### **Best Bulletin**

### **(small clubs)**

- 1st: Augusta South
- 2nd: Savannah Sunrise
- 3rd: Wrightsville

### **(medium-size clubs)**

- 1st: Augusta West
- 2nd: Skidaway
- 3rd: Metter

### **(large clubs)**

- 1st: Dublin
- 2nd: Downtown Macon

3rd: Milledgeville

### **Best Scrapbook**

- 1st: Dublin
- 2nd: Warner Robins
- 3rd: Wrightsville

### **Best Online Bulletin**

- 1st: Savannah East
- 2nd: Kings Bay
- 3rd: Dublin

### **Dekle Attendance**

- 1st: Vidalia
- 2nd: Statesboro
- 3rd: Millen

### **Best Percentage for Conference Attendance**

- 1st: Valdosta Sunrise
- 2nd: Valdosta
- 3rd: Wrightsville

### **Interact**

Edmund Burke Academy, Waynesboro

### **Best Display**

- 1st: Dublin
- 2nd: Warner Robins
- 3rd: Wrightsville



The entrance sign at the Valdosta-Lowndes Conference Center, left, welcomes Rotarians to the annual conference.



District Director Langga Gay, right, of Millen has graciously served as host of the House of Friendship for the past two district conferences. Thanks, Langga, for keeping us coming back for more. We appreciate all you do to make the House of Friendship one of our favorite places to visit.



## GRSP



This year's GRSP students are Insa Dralle of Germany, Kim Archer of Montserrat, Victoria Andersson of Sweden, Christina Nissen of Denmark, Jesper Larsson of Sweden, Roland Pap of Hungary, Tina Rengifo of Colombia, Fernando Grajeda of Guatemala, Crystal Archer of Montserrat, Kenneth Quin of Scotland, Ksenija Apena of Latvia, Ann-Mari Lillejord of Norway, Lena Tentel of Germany, Gabriel Cruz of Brazil, Morten Winther of Denmark, Mena Martinez of Colombia and Guvenc Acarkan of Turkey. The students introduced themselves and spoke briefly Saturday of their experiences throughout the past year. Each said they were forever indebted to District 6920 Rotarians for the opportunity to study abroad.



## Speech Competition

DG Leon Benefield congratulates this year's high school speech contest winners. Stephen Byxbe, sponsored by the Dublin club, placed third; Johanna Mathis, sponsored by the Sandersville club, placed second, and Hannah Dasher, sponsored by the Effingham Sunrise club, placed first. During her speech, Hannah said, "The best helping hand is at the end of your own arm. There is no better exercise for your heart than reaching down and lifting someone else up."



Ed Knecht speaks at Saturday's Governor's Banquet.

## Our "First" Family



DG Leon Benefield and his wife, Caroline, are pictured with (from left) future son-in-law Ron Skeean, daughter Sarah Benefield, daughter Carrie Henderson and son-in-law Capt. Hank Henderson. The Benefield "girls" were present at Saturday night's Governor's Banquet to support their father.



Bill MacDonald serves as auctioneer of Saturday night's live auction. Proceeds from the auction will benefit the Rotary Foundation, GRSP and METS.

## 'There is No Cure for Polio, But We Can Prevent It'

Verilette Parker Hinkle doesn't want others to endure the pain and suffering she went through as a child. That's why the Valdosta Rotary Club member has made it a personal crusade to speak to others about Rotary International's PolioPlus campaign.

"When I look at shoes, I remember a profound statement in the movie 'Forrest Gump,'" she said, quoting from the movie. "My mama said there's a lot you can learn about a person by the shoes he's wearing. You can tell where he's been and where he's going."

Verilette, who is a polio survivor, said it is devastating what the disease can do to young and old alike.

"There is still a challenge to vaccinate the few hundred people who are near polio," she said. "Since the disease is rapidly decreasing, people don't think there is a great need to eradicate it. Ladies and gentlemen, polio is a virus. It is contagious. We are never safe from polio until it is eradicated."

At times becoming emotional, Verilette presented a slide show depicting polio victims. In one, a young girl about the age of 5, wearing leg braces and on crutches, looks into the camera and smiles.

"My mother would never let me have my picture taken with my braces and crutches," said Verilette, who suffered from polio from the ages of 5 to 12. "But this picture looks like I would have looked: braces, crutches and a smile on my face to make the best of a bad situation."

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'I'm one of the lucky ones. I'm standing here today in hopes that you will continue your support of the PolioPlus campaign.'

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Verilette Hinkle shows the difference in the length of her legs due to the polio virus