



Rotary District 6920

SERVICE Above Self

Dallas Simon, District Governor

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Membership: Pay It Forward

Do you remember being proposed for Rotary? Everyone does, as it was an honor that the individual proposing you thought enough of you to invite you to be a member of this prestigious organization. As Rotarians, we have the responsibility and privilege for the future growth of Rotary. Wouldn't you be proud to share the same opportunities for fellowship, service and international exposure? Rotary can be shared with friends, family members, business associates, neighbors and other acquaintances. Perhaps we should think of Rotary membership as a gift, and emphasize how important it is to share this gift with others; after all, Rotary is about service above self.

We encourage each club to focus on membership on a regular basis. One way to achieve this would be to ask a few members monthly to share their Rotary story with the club on how Rotary has impacted their lives. This "Rotary Story" would not have to be lengthy but could be used as the club's Rotary Minute to focus on membership. Every Rotarian has a personal memory of how they came to Rotary and for some it has been a lifetime of living in a Rotary family.

Membership is the top priority for District 6920. Recently the president of the Jones County Rotary Club, J. Mike Green, visited the Rotary Club of Downtown Macon and reported they were inducting six new members the following week!

This club is only three years old and has learned the importance of retention and growth.

Are you doing

your part in recruiting new members? If so, we would love to hear from you and share your success stories.

Jan Carlton and Elizabeth Hardin are membership co-chairs for District 6920. To contact Jan Carlton either e-mail

janwcarlton@aol.com or call 478-477-7747. Elizabeth Hardin may be contacted by e-mail at ehardin@mmmcpa.com or call 478-746-6277.

Retention is the Name of the Game

By Robin Shelley, 6990, RIMC Zone 34

Retention is a key component of membership growth. If we do not retain members in our Rotary Clubs, then we are doing something wrong. Maybe our meeting place is not attractive or our meal quality is poor. Perhaps we don't have interesting programs. Maybe we don't have service projects relevant to our community. Possibly we don't educate our members about the many aspects of Rotary. Maybe we forget about the importance of fun and fellowship.

The average Rotary club loses 10% of its members every year. What a pity, because it is far easier to retain members than to recruit new members. If we put all of our energy toward recruiting new members and ignore retention of our current members, then the 10% attrition rate will continue. How do we become more effective in retaining members? Simple, we ask current members their opinion about what the club accomplishes and what direction it needs to go. The club goals should be the shared goals of its members. If members feel they have helped establish the club goals, they will take ownership of the goals and support actions to reach those goals.

How do we find out what is on the minds of our club members? We ask! But you say, "What do we ask?" Again, the answer is simple. Rotary helps us ask the right questions in a survey found in the publication entitled "Membership Development Resource Guide" (publication # 417-en). This guide can also be found on the Rotary web page, www.rotary.org, by simply typing in the number (417-en) in the search box on the Membership page. The "Member Satisfaction Questionnaire" can be found on page 5. If you use this valuable tool and solicit opinions from your club members, you should see your retention rate increase because you will have happier, more involved, and more dedicated Rotarians. Sometimes, despite our best efforts, members do leave Rotary and there is nothing we can do about it. There is another valuable tool in this same "Membership Development Resource Guide," called the "Resigning Member Questionnaire." By using this questionnaire we can learn valuable insight as to why a member is leaving Rotary and how we may be able to prevent others from resigning for similar reasons. If we use these two readily available documents, we should see an increase in retention and growth in our clubs while cutting the attrition rate to below 10%. That would be a good thing. Try it, you'll like it!



SERVICE Above Self

Diamonds! Diamonds! Diamonds! - District Conference

METS Update: It's Been a Busy Year

Rotary District 6920 Medical Equipment Transport, or METS as most people call it, has had a busy year. During the calendar year 2005, METS shipped four containers of medical supplies and equipment. Each container is 40 feet long and goes by ship to its destination country. Two containers were shipped to the Philippines and two were shipped to Guatemala. The supplies and equipment bring about life-changing conditions in the lives of many of the world's poorest.

In the Philippines, a new medical complete with an x-ray room, was set up and almost completely furnished. Other equipment included a large hospital steam sterilizer, hospital beds, exam tables, linens, filing cabinets, desks and much more. It enabled a health care facility to be established where there was not one before. In Guatemala it allowed two health care facilities to receive dental chairs with lights, x-ray machines and compressors, gurneys were sent to three different facilities, two operating room tables went to a needy hospital, wheel chairs went to a handicap facility as well as a hospital, two facilities received drug carts and three different facilities

received some really great teddy bears. One program that works with the poor received 9,216 bottles of Enfamil baby formula for its malnourished child-feeding program. There is a number of other items too long to list. The teddy bears will go to some of the poorest kids on Earth and will be the only present they receive this Christmas.

METS is the boldest and biggest project ever undertaken by this district. It is still fairly new, having been incorporated in August 2003, and still has a lot of bugs to be worked out. As I think everyone knows, we have no paid staff and operate with all volunteers. Myself, Bob Ashley, along with the help of Alan Usher, handle most of the day-to-day operations with additional Rotary volunteers coming in when needed. The volunteer groups come in on Saturday mornings from 8 a.m. to noon. While here, they take the donated supplies and pack them in boxes, list the items on an inventory sheet, weigh the box and place it on a pallet for shipment. The volunteer groups are usually 8-10 people. If your club would like to schedule a visit, let me know. You can call me at 912-398-1440.

Some of the challenges for this coming year will include finding a paid employee to assume the duties of warehouse manager, finalizing our inventory tracking system, establishing more donor hospitals, shipping more containers (our ultimate goal is one a month), and establishing a fund-raising drive that will allow us to buy our own warehouse one day - we need about 20,000 sq.ft. If you have any suggestions, let me know.

This year we shipped 52,758 pounds of supplies and equipment. Dollar-wise, we shipped over \$2 million in goods - not bad for a project still in its formative stage. We want to do better next year, however, and with everyone's help, we will. We need for everyone to contact their local health care facility and get them to call us when they have items to donate.

Well that's about it. Everyone should be proud of what they, their club and their district has accomplished. A tremendous amount of pain and suffering has been reduced, babies are alive that would have died otherwise and over 2,000 kids will get a teddy bear this Christmas - thanks to you.

Rotarians Are in a Position to Help

If ever a city had a soul, that city is New Orleans. It's a place unlike any other: a gritty, unabashed sort of town, too wise to bother much with convention, or maybe too wild to care. It's a place where culture runs so deep that even a first-time visitor can't help but feel a part of something bigger, something immortal.

But for all its brazen spirit, New Orleans is also a city of contrasts. For every noisy Mardi Gras week, when the celebration and the tourist dollars flow freely in the French Quarter, there are months of quiet, when few dollars flow at all in lesser-known corners of the city. And for every mansion on a tree-lined street in the Garden District, there is — or was — a crowded and crumbling shotgun house in the Lower Ninth Ward.

In late August, when Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast and floodwaters gulped down entire New Orleans neighborhoods, much of the country got a glimpse of a city that visitors don't usually see. We saw murky waters lapping hungrily at the eaves of homes in the Ninth Ward. And we saw the faces of those who lived there: faces filled with fear and desperation,

faces mostly of those too poor to flee.

Although New Orleans stole the media spotlight in Katrina's aftermath, the disaster hit the rest of the region just as hard. In mid-September, Senior Editor Janice Chambers and RI Staff Photographer Alyce Henson set out for Mississippi to document the work Rotarians are doing in some cities and towns that typically keep a lower profile, such as Waveland, Mississippi. They share what they saw there in this issue.

"There's just garbage everywhere . . . piles of rubble," Chambers said after surveying the damage in Waveland. "Anything that is still standing is totally demolished inside, everything spoiled and rotted. The worst, I think, was just the people living in the parking lots. And it's so hot."

But amid the devastation, Chambers also spotted some hope. "At one point," she said, "I felt like everywhere I turned, there were Rotarians."

As *The Rotarian* went to press this month, we were just learning the details of what Rotarians are doing to help in the wake of

another nearly unfathomable disaster: the powerful earthquake that struck parts of South Asia in October. You can read about the early response in the December issue, and we'll cover relief and recovery efforts in more detail in our January issue.

Rotarians can be proud of how they reacted to recent disasters. They arrived at the scene early, and they stayed late to help. But their work is not done. When cities like New Orleans reach deep into their souls and find a way to return to their former selves, residents will need help rebuilding their communities. With their longstanding commitment to providing education, vocational opportunities, and other services that can lift people out of poverty and transform struggling communities, Rotarians are in a position to help.

M. Kathleen Pratt is managing editor of *The Rotarian*. This article originally appeared in the December 2005 issue of *The Rotarian*.

District Conference Scheduled May 5-7

District conference organizers are gathering information to post on the district Web site concerning the 2006 conference in Augusta. According to organizers, on-line registration should be up and running some time in January.

The Radisson Riverfront Hotel, in the heart of downtown Augusta's business district, will once again be site of the annual conference. Conference attendees are requested to make their own hotel reservations. Information concerning hotels, the conference agenda, guest speakers and special events can be found at www.rotarydistrict6920.net in the coming months. Make plans to attend now. It's an event you won't want to miss!

On-Line Registration for PETS Now Available

On-line registration for the President-Elect Training Seminar (PETS) is now available. Click the link provided on the District 6920 Web site home page - www.rotarydistrict6920.net - to get to the PETS registration page.

The procedure for registering using a credit card is similar to that used last year with a few improvements. This year, for convenience, a copy of the registration form will be returned to the email address provided. Also PayPal will be easier to use, not requiring a PayPal account.

Our last year's PETS on-line registration was very successful. About 90% of those registering on-line last year did so without help. If needed, help is easily available in your club, from your AG and your webmaster.

PR Tips of the Month

Rotarian's Point of View

What is *our* benefit from Rotary

- * Our Satisfaction of Service
- * Our Fun and Entertainment
- * Our Recognition, Respect, Thanks
- * Our Friendships and Fellowship

The Public's Point of View

What is a *reader's/viewer's* interests in a Rotary story

- * Human Interest/Emotion
- * Problem Solved
- * Action/Drama
- * Their friends and their groups

Those interests are different...
Don't confuse....
Rotary interests with
audience interest

Wishing You and Yours the Happiest of Holidays



Rotary District 6920 Newsletter

A Letter of Thanks

Pat & Dalls,

My name is Mike Patton and I am the project coordinator for a program that provides support services to grandparents who are raising their grandchildren here in Richmond and Columbia counties. The program is run out of The School of Nursing here at MCG where Gayle works.

A few weeks ago she told me about the books that you donated to her and we recently had a support group meeting for the grandparents. We passed out a great number of books, the kids got to go through and pick out what they wanted. Since we are a grant-funded program, we rely a lot on the community to help us provide services to these families. They were extremely happy to receive these books and the kids were going a bit crazy to get as many as they could.

I can't thank you enough for the books and the grandparents were extremely grateful as well. I am forwarding you some pictures from Judith Salzer, our program director. We took them at the support group meeting while the kids were picking out their books. Hope you enjoy them.

Thanks again,
Mike Patton



Club Visit Photos



The Rotary Club of McIntosh County



Club Visit Photos



The Rotary Club of Kings Bay

