



NEW EYE ON THE WHEEL



Newsletter No. 6 (Jan 2011) of the RIBI Marketing, PR & Communications (pages 1-4) and Membership, Development & Retention Committees (pages 5-8)

Lots to look forward to in 2011



All of the members of the RIBI Marketing, PR and Communications and Membership, Development and Retention Committees wish you and your families a very Happy New Year.

2011 is going to be a very exciting year and the early months in particular contain some very special things for all of us to get involved in.

These include the fact that January is **Rotary Awareness Month** and this provides a splendid opportunity to take advantage of the fact that the media are usually hungry for material in the post Christmas period. Please make sure that they have received all of the details of the many community related events that your clubs have organized during December. Remember to include a "call to action" in any articles or interviews either encouraging people to find out more about joining Rotary or contributing funds or physical assistance to your projects.



February and **Thanks for Life** week are approaching fast and plans will now be in the course of being finalized to make the most of this splendid initiative. For example, if you haven't already done so, now is a great time to secure the use of the empty shop premises that will be appearing in high streets for use as a Window of Opportunity. If you are still looking for further ideas for your own club

then the December Tfl newsletter offers a positive cornucopia and can be found on the Tfl website by Ctrl+ clicking on the following link http://www.ribi.org/scripts/documents.php?document_id=2022. Please be warned, however, that it is a large file of over 4Mb.

More than half of the Districts in RIBI will also be involved with their own local **Membership Marketing** campaigns, many timed to coincide with Tfl week. What a great start to a year.



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RI Board makes key decisions for the future



The RI Board approved a number of recommendations and actions at its November meeting to reinforce the priorities and goals of the RI Strategic Plan. The changes, which include endorsing the concept of flexible attendance and meeting requirements and allocating US\$4 million for Public Relations Grants, are designed to keep Rotary vibrant and attractive to current members and prospective members from younger generations.

"By focusing on strategic issues throughout the week, the Board was able to reach consensus on several strategic decisions, which constitute progressive moves by the RI Board," says RI President Ray Klinginsmith (*pictured above*). As mentioned earlier, one of the key decisions was the agreement to fund US\$4 million in PR grants annually, starting in 2011-12 for at least three years, to advance the strategic priority of enhancing public image and awareness. To read more about what has been described as "a historic week for Rotary" just Ctrl+ click [here](#).

Changes to International Service programs and models

The World Community Service and Rotary Volunteers programs will be phased out by 30 June 2011 to reinforce the priorities and goals of the RI Strategic Plan and to shift from a program-based model to a resource and support model. The goal of this new model, approved by the RI Board at its November meeting, is to expand the resources available to clubs for connecting and partnering with each other.

"A significant component of Rotary's new strategic plan is the transformation of Rotary's involvement from monitoring, regulating, and administering specific projects to functioning in a highly supportive mode of providing clubs and districts with essential resources in their international service," says RI Director Kenneth W. Grabeau. The World Community Service program has helped Rotarians find partners for international service projects. RI will continue to fully support Rotarians in their efforts to serve communities in other countries. To read more about these changes and those affecting Rotary Volunteers and the Rotary Friendship Exchange program Ctrl+ click [here](#).



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Immunization campaigns move ahead in Congo Republic



Rotarians in the Republic of the Congo are stepping up their efforts to help stop the recent outbreak of wild poliovirus in their country. The national PolioPlus committee has produced more than US\$100,000 worth of posters, pamphlets, banners, T-shirts, and other materials to help mobilize public support for eradicating the disease. *(Photo left courtesy of Dr Youssouf Gamatie shows the President of the Republic of the Congo receiving oral polio vaccine to demonstrate his support for the drive to end the disease in his country)*

At least 179 people have died in the outbreak, with 476 cases of acute flaccid paralysis (AFP) reported as of 7 December. Most of the cases involve young people between ages 15 and 29 and have occurred in the city of Pointe-Noire. To date, 12 of the AFP cases have been confirmed as polio. Georges Moyon, the nation's health minister, says the Rotarians' support was well targeted and timely. "All you have offered, Pointe-Noire has lacked," he says. "The weakness is a lack of social mobilization."

The outbreak is due to imported poliovirus that is related to the virus circulating in Angola. The Congo Republic recorded its last case of indigenous polio in 2000, and urgent action is required by government and partner agencies to again make the country polio-free. "Polio outbreaks highlight our global vulnerability to infectious disease," says Dr. Robert Scott, chair of Rotary's International PolioPlus Committee. "It reinforces the fact that polio 'control' is not an option, and only successful eradication will stop the disease." Read more about the response and planned NIDs by Ctrl+ clicking [here](#).

A good time for a website health check

With all of the planned activities in the coming months relating to Thanks for Life and the Membership Marketing campaign now is the ideal time to look critically at your club's website. After all you only get one chance to make a good impression and your website can be that opportunity.



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RI have come up with some good tips to make your site more user friendly including:

- Design your website with public relations in mind and always bear in mind the question who is your target audience? Your club members are an important target audience but so are visitors to the site and it should, therefore, ideally be outward facing.
- Provide accurate contact information and ensure that prospective members have an easy way to express interest in your club and learn about joining.
- Keep all of your information current and fully up to date.

Just Ctrl+ click [here](#) for more tips and information on this topic.

Innovative ideas for retaining members

The great majority of clubs now have recruitment of new members as one of their top priorities but statistics prove that retention deserves at least as much attention. There are obvious strategies such as ensuring that new members are involved in projects and on committees right from the start, as people join Rotary because they want to actually do things and to feel that they are helping to make a difference.

It is also important to "think outside the box" like Elizabeth Penny, president of the Rotary Club of South Ukiah, California, who says her club encourages members to bring their children to meetings. As a breakfast club, it meets early enough to allow members to get their children to school. "We're a pretty informal club, and we wanted to be welcoming to younger parents," she says. "It has worked really well for us. The children have their own table and call themselves 'Rotary kids.' They even have their own project: collecting used towels and blankets from hotels and donating them to the humane society."

The Rotary clubs of Sebastopol and Sebastopol Sunrise, California, focus on fellowship. Every spring, Rotarians volunteer to host an evening meal at their homes for three members of their own club whom they're less familiar with. "We match participants based on their **not** having significant relationships with each other," says David G. Mark-Raymond, of the Sebastopol Sunrise club. "The idea is to develop new relationships and be more inclusive." Ctrl+ click to [read more](#).



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Where are we on Membership?

So much is written about resolutions at this time of year that I am reluctant to use the word at all. However now is a good time to review where we are and to renew our resolve to achieve our membership aims. There are several pieces of good news to cheer us on our way:-

I am hearing more and more recruitment success stories. Clubs that doubted that they could recruit have tried something new and been successful.

In the Autumn Thanks for Life generated excellent awareness of Rotary through "Focus on the Crocus". That gives us an opportunity to build upon that stage of the project as the focus moves on to collecting for polio eradication and membership development - always key objectives of Thanks for Life. We must use January to plan activity around 23rd February and, specifically, to plan for a membership dividend from those activities.

Most of the Membership Marketing Campaigns planned for 2010/11 will be run in the early spring. The evidence so far is that success comes to those groups of clubs who identify potential sources of new members, plan local activity to generate potential new members from those sources and make sure that they ask people to join. The advertisements help but, as I have said consistently, they can only support local activity - they do not replace it.

I have attended meetings where groups of clubs in, for example, a city travel-to-work area have been planning to recruit as a group either to take advantage of an advertising campaign or to gain the best possible membership dividend from the PR generated by a large event. We are not in competition with each other for members - we compete together so that more people will give their time to Rotary rather than other activities. By working together where we can, each club spreads its net wider and we are able to offer potential members more choice thus increasing the likelihood that, in one of the clubs, they will feel at home.

I have consistently urged everyone to be flexible in approach; to reduce barriers to membership; to try fresh ideas to make Rotary more enjoyable, fulfilling and attractive to modern professional families. RI & RIBI leaders recognise that Rotary, like all organisations, can not stand still. We must evolve & embrace change to remain relevant to a modern generation.



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The RI Board demonstrated their commitment to fresh ideas recently when they agreed to pilot new membership initiatives. These pilot arrangements will give us the opportunity to try different membership arrangements and, over the course of the pilot, to evaluate their success. I know that many people are eager for more information & all clubs will receive more shortly. In summary at this stage these pilots will enable clubs that are successful in their applications to join the

programme to:-

- Recruit Associate or Corporate members. Excellent ways surely to recruit those who are active in business or professions.
- Form satellite clubs. Great opportunities to extend in some circumstances whilst, in others, to retain members. I can see opportunities to increase extension activity by forming satellite clubs. On the other hand, a club that has declined and is struggling may be saved from extinction by becoming a satellite club to a more successful neighbour. In that way members are retained and, with good will and an injection of enthusiasm or fresh ideas, a struggling club may be re-invigorated and go on to have a strong future.
- Become even more flexible or innovative; to change the way they operate more radically than before. They may want to change the way they meet, to use social media or on line arrangements: perhaps to introduce more relevant and creative membership qualifications. The focus will move from members' attendance at meetings to their engagement.

Interesting and exciting opportunities surely!

In the Rotary year 2009/10 we saw a net loss of 0.6%. (RI net loss 0.5%) Obviously I had hoped for a net gain but, to put it in context, recruitment into existing clubs was 10% higher than in the previous year. I am hearing about more recruitment success this year and confident that we will see a further increase. Retention initiatives are being developed too. We have so many opportunities before us - let's work together to recruit and retain even more members so that we can show a net gain in 2010/11. By using the skills, fresh ideas and energy of new members we can deliver even more service and secure a strong future for our very special organisation.



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The first six months sees new club start - ups flourishing

John Kenny RI President, speaking at the Rotary International Convention in June 2010 said "we value Rotary and our membership in it. We believe that Rotary is needed and that a community with a Rotary club is better off than one without. This is why we are committed to extend "...and Districts in RIBI have already, over the first half of the Rotary year shown that they have really signed up to that commitment.

There was a flurry of new club Inaugurations in December as clubs rushed to beat the increase in basic numbers from 20 to 25 with effect from 1st January and we have ended up with ten new clubs as against seven at the same time last year. From past trends I am sure that these new clubs will, as they continue to recruit, very soon result in an additional 250 to 300 new Rotarians in RIBI.

Some clubs did not make it in time and my sympathies go out to the members of the provisional club of Southampton AM Connect (District 1110) which had to cancel its Inaugural meeting because of adverse weather conditions. However, this club, together with another three which just missed the deadline, plans to Inaugurate early in the New Year.



I have been privileged to attend a number of these inaugural meetings including Braunton Caen in Devon (District 1170 - see photo opposite) which was attended by representatives from over a dozen clubs and we were treated to a magnificent trumpet fanfare at the start of the meeting. It has been a real honour to meet

and talk to the enthusiastic members of the new clubs which, to paraphrase last year's Rotary theme, have the "future of Rotary in their Hands".



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We have also had a good number of new club surveys as Districts recognise potential and it was pleasing to see that amongst these we had surveys for two new e-clubs. . **It is important that new club surveys are undertaken well in advance of any planned new club activity so that there is no delay once interest starts to be generated - please keep those surveys coming in!!**

The next six months will undoubtedly bring about an increase in new club activity as Districts start to implement their new member marketing campaign plans, many of which include new clubs start – ups. Should any club or individual Rotarian recognise the potential for a new club in their area, I would recommend that they contact either their District Extension Officers, or me for any advice and guidance on how to go about starting a new club. There is a real need to find new members and clubs to help us as we seek to Build Communities and Bridge Continents.

We have seen an excellent result in the first six months and as we start the second half of the Rotary Year I wish all Districts every success in their endeavours to attract members to our organisation by starting new, vibrant and attractive clubs, some of which will seek to serve those in need in perhaps a different way...

Tony Bacon, Peter Davey and John Banks