



# Town & Country Weekly

Your e-Zine from District 9800

Volume 3 Issue 25 – 7 January 2007

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## **DG Bernie's Weekly Message - The Man Who Hated Christmas**

Welcome to the first edition of our Weekly Newsletter for calendar year 2007. Margaret and I hope that you have all enjoyed a peaceful and happy Christmas and are still abiding by all those New Year resolutions that you have made.

Before the memory of Christmas fades away I would like to leave you with the following story. This is the story of the man who hated Christmas. I came upon this some time ago, from where I do not know, but it touched me like I hope it will touch you.

It was just a small white envelope stuck among the branches of the Christmas tree. No name, no identification, no inscription. It had peeked through the branches for the last ten years or so.

Mike was the Dad in the family and it all began because Mike hated Christmas. Oh, not the true meaning of Christmas, but the commercial aspects of it. The overspending, the frantic running around at the last minute to get a tie for Uncle Harry and the Talcum Powder for Grandma, gifts given in desperation because you couldn't think of anything else. Knowing that he felt this way, Mike's wife, Nancy wanted to get something special just for Mike this Christmas. The inspiration came in an unusual way.

Mike and Nancy had three sons. Their son Kevin was 12 that year. Shortly before Christmas, the school he attended arranged an end of year sporting match with a team sponsored by a church across town. Kevin's team turned up with their coach, their new equipment and neat sporting outfits. The other team were a ragtag lot in motley outfits and no proper gear.

Kevin's team thrashed them. Mike shook his head sadly. "I wish they could have done better. They have the potential but losing like this could take the heart out of them.

Mike loved kids and he knew them having coached a number of junior teams over the years. That's when the idea for the present came. That afternoon, Nancy went to a local sporting goods store and bought an assortment of sporting gear and sent it anonymously to the church who arranged the other team.

On Christmas Eve, Nancy placed an envelope on the tree, the note inside telling Mike what she had done, and that was Mike's gift from Nancy. Mike's smile was the brightest

thing about Christmas in that family that year and in succeeding years and for each Christmas, Nancy followed the tradition, one year sending a group of disabled children to a show, another, a cheque to a family whose home had burnt down a week before Christmas – and so on.

The envelope became the highlight of Christmas in that house. It was always the last thing opened on Christmas morning and the children, ignoring their new toys, would stand with wide-eyed anticipation as their Dad lifted the envelope from the tree to reveal its contents. As the children grew up, the toys gave way to more practical presents but the envelope never lost its allure.

The story doesn't end there. Then came the year that Mike died from cancer. Nancy was still so wrapped in grief that she barely got the tree up. But Christmas Eve found her placing an envelope on the tree and in the morning it was joined by three more. Each of the boys, unbeknown to the others, had placed an envelope on the tree for their Dad.

The tradition has grown and some day will expand even further when grandchildren, standing around the tree with wide-eyed anticipation, will watch as their fathers take down the envelope.

Mike's spirit, like the spirit of Christmas, will be always with them.

What did you do at Christmas time for someone completely outside your circle? Surely you could think of at least one person in real need?

I hope that we can all take inspiration from this story and use it to remind ourselves of what we can do to **Lead the Way** in 2007.

**Bernie Walshe**  
**District Governor**

## **RI PRESIDENT BILL BOYD'S MESSAGE ON ROTARY AWARENESS**

When we are asked, what is Rotary? it can sometimes be difficult to give a quick and easy answer. Rotary is about so many things: friendship and fellowship, international understanding and cooperation, vocational ethics and community leadership. All these values brought us to Rotary, and all are reasons why we stay.

But first and foremost, Rotary is about service and putting Service Above Self. Rotary was founded for fellowship, but it quickly grew into an organization where people who wanted to serve others came together to do it – better, more effectively, and more enjoyably than they could have alone. We're members of our clubs so we can work through them to help others. That is why we're Rotarians. That is why we're here.

The four Avenues of Service are, and always will be, central to Rotary's work. They help us find balance in our choice of projects and aid us in achieving the Object of Rotary. Through Club Service, Vocational Service, Community Service, and International Service, we strive to uphold this ideal. Every project we carry out – every playground we refurbish, every well we help dig, every adult we teach to read, every child we immunize against polio – makes the world we all live in a bit better, a bit healthier, a bit happier. And it demonstrates to others that in the long term, we do not succeed professionally *despite* our commitment to doing what is right – we succeed *because* of it.

Everything we do in Rotary supports the Object of Rotary. When we work to strengthen The Rotary Foundation, we're building greater resources to support our service. When we work to increase membership, we're doing it so we'll have more hands to carry out our projects.

Read the full message at [www.rotary.org](http://www.rotary.org)

## JANUARY IS ROTARY AWARENESS MONTH

### WHAT'S HAPPENING IN CLUBS

#### **Brimbank Central Rotary Club**

#### **Combined Clubs Meeting – Western & Northern Suburbs – Wednesday 24 January 2007**

Guest Speaker: Justice Lance Pilgrim of the County Court, a sometimes controversial, but always challenging and amusing speaker.

Venue: Courtyard Room, Taylors Lakes Family Hotel, 7 Melton Hwy, Taylors Lakes – 6.30pm for 7.00pm start.

Visitors welcome. RSVP & Enquiries – Robert Chessell 0407 312 716.

#### **RC Elsternwick**

**Change of Venue** - The Rotary Club of Elsternwick now meets at Hopscotch, 313 Glenhuntly Rd Elsternwick 3185 at 7.15 for 7.30 am

#### **RC Gisborne**

Meetings over the New Year period are as follows:

- Tuesday 9th January 2007 - Barbeque at President Caroline's Home.

- Tuesday 16th January - Return to Normal Meetings at Macedon Family Hotel

CHANGE OF VENUE as from Tuesday 5th December The Rotary Club of Gisborne Inc. will meet at the Macedon Family Hotel - 33 Smith Street Macedon at 6.45 for 7.15 pm.

#### **RC Port Gellibrand**

#### **Early notice for the big Masked Fort Ball - 31 March 2007**

With Christmas over there is now very little time to book so that you do not miss out on this stellar occasion to be held at historic Fort Gellibrand. Numbers are strictly limited and bookings need to be made well before 1 February when tickets will be mailed out - [click here](#) for details

**Read all about the Big Bay Swim** for 2007, the major fundraising event for RC Point Gellibrand, scheduled for **25 Feb 2007**.

#### 1. **SUPPORT FOR IMPORTANT MEDICAL RESEARCH**

[Click here](#) to read about an opportunity for District Clubs to take up the challenge to help with funding to complete important medical research. If Clubs would like more details on this proposal and how they may be able to help, please contact PDG Des Jones

#### 2. **ROTARY FRIENDSHIP EXCHANGE TEAMS**

D9800 has become the destination of choice for several Friendship Exchange Teams. The Swedish team from D2340 and the Iowa team from D6000 had a great time in the District in October 2006. Another Swedish Team, this time from D2390 will be in our District from 18 March and will be hosted by RC's of Woodend, Bacchus Marsh, Kangaroo Flat and Castlemaine. There will also be an exchange visit in February/March of a Team from D1100 in the UK, which will be hosted by RC's Wyndham, Melbourne North, Gisborne, Bendigo and Albert Park. [Click here](#) to read profiles of these 2 visiting teams.

Return visits to these Districts are being made as follows in 2007 - D1100 (UK) in May, D2340 (Sweden) in June & D6000 (Iowa USA) also in June. There are still vacancies available to join all of these teams but particularly for the return visit to Sweden 12 - 25 June 2007

3. **Rotary Youth Exchange – 2007/8 programme**  
While our current intake of students arrived only in July and our 2007 outbound students have yet to leave it is already time to start thinking about next year's program. [Click here](#) to read further details.

4. **RYLA ALUMNI**  
To all supporters of RYLA (and who is not) follow the link to the long awaited second edition of the District 9800 RYLA Alumni Newsletter. In this Edition you'll find an update on the RYLA Alumni Network, profiles of past RYLarians and some tips on taking action on issues you are passionate about.  
[http://www.ryla9800.org.au/Downloads/RYLA\\_Alumni\\_Newsletter\\_Edition\\_2.pdf](http://www.ryla9800.org.au/Downloads/RYLA_Alumni_Newsletter_Edition_2.pdf)

5. **COCKTAIL PARTY FOR MS**  
Saturday **10th February** has been chosen for a fund-raising Cocktail Party to coincide with the annual MS Global Dinners held around the world.

The D9800 Rotarian Action Group for M.S. Awareness (RAGMSA) is spearheading the function to be held at International House, at the Melbourne University and is looking to District clubs for their support in the committee's commitment to '**Help Prevent & Find a Cure for MS**' - More details will follow in January

6. **D9800 DONATIONS IN KIND - HOLIDAYS**  
The DIK store remains closed until Tues 16th Jan 07  
Emergency only - Call **Bill Dagg** - 0425741045  
Please buy the 1 cent Exercise books from Officeworks in JANUARY 07 to donate

7. **MELBOURNE METROPOLITAN ROTARY BOWLS DAY**  
FRIDAY MARCH 30, 2007 – 12.30PM AT KEW HEIGHTS SPORTS CLUB,  
397 Barkers Rd., Kew 3101 [click here](#) for details and entry form

8. **RYPEN HOSTS WANTED**  
We invite interest from Clubs that wish to host the RYPEN Camps next year that will be held on: **Friday 27<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> April 2007**  
and **Friday 19<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2007**  
This is a great opportunity for Clubs to experience working with our youth and enjoying fellowship over the three days with your Rotary Club members.  
To register your interest and to seek further details, contact Marc Fookes at: [mfookes@bigpond.net.au](mailto:mfookes@bigpond.net.au) or ring him on 0439 456 120.

9. **CAFÉ INTERNATIONALE**  
**Café International 2007: The Golden Globe**" promises to be an exciting night of fine dining and sparkling performances inspired by film and television classics over the last 50 years. 2007 also marks the 50th anniversary of International House. In celebration, the student residents have decided to donate 100% of profits from Café 2007 to **Interplast** Australia. Keep **5th May 2007** free to attend this event.

[Click here](#) for essential details about Cafe 2007 and please indelibly mark Saturday night 5 May 2007 in your diary for "**Cafe 2007: The Golden Globe**". If you have further questions about Café 2007, please contact [Cafe07@gmail.com](mailto:Cafe07@gmail.com)

District 9800 Rotary Clubs will receive a formal invitation for Café 2007 early next year.

10. **AUSTRALIA DAY 2007 INVITATION**  
The Rotary Club of St Kilda invites Rotarians, friends and family to the annual celebration of our National Day on **Friday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2007**. Join us for brunch from 10am at the **South Melbourne Town Hall**. We look forward to seeing you there - [Click here](#) to read all about it.

Australia day is a wonderful opportunity to enjoy and appreciate the benefits of our remarkable country and its people, to reflect upon and acknowledge the history that led us to where we are now and to look forward to the future that we can create.

So have some fun and help to improve the lives of those with less cause to celebrate.

**Mike Williamson, OAM** is our guest speaker and some items to auction include autographed Brownlow Medal memorabilia.

For most of us, Australia is indeed a Lucky Country. Help us to share that around.

**Booking is essential - please [click](#) to access the booking form.**

**New Members** - A big Rotary welcome to:

**RC Balwyn**

Peter Frueh (Change Management – Consulting)

**RC Flemington**

Kaylene Rowe (Community Outreach Services)

**RC Footscray**

Rudy Kelemen (Real Estate Services) [Click](#) for a photo of Rudy

Jo Deans (Chiropractic Services) [Click](#) for a photo of Jo

Anna Fitzgerald (Costume Hire) [Click](#) for a photo of Anna

**Paul Harris Fellow**

**RC Bendigo** Ted Rankins

**Family and Community Service Award**

**RC Bendigo** Rosalie Vanstan

[Click here](#) to read about these awards

**NOTICE:** [Royce Abbey Room](#) (International House)

The "new" Royce Abbey Room is still undergoing renovations but good progress has been made. In the meantime all meetings scheduled for the "Royce Abbey Room" will be continue to be held in the "old" Royce Abbey Room in the Greycourt building.

**RI Exchange Rate**

The January Rotary exchange rate for the AUD is 1.28

**Speakers Bank Update:** [Click here](#)

**District 9800's website:** <http://www.rotaryd9800.org>

You can always check the back issues of Weekly News if you missed something: 2005-2006

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