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RCM Returns to Guatemala

By Avi Lank

On March 15, seven members of the Rotary Club of Milwaukee had their weekly luncheon in a wooden one-room schoolhouse in the Guatemalan Highlands. The menu of two hot tamales and a boiled egg was lavish by local standards and served by women of the village of Tziquintze to thank the Wisconsinites for help building a latrine and wash station for their school. The event was part of an eight-day trip to Guatemala during which the Rotarians -- Ran Hoth, Eric and Mary Isbister, Avi Lank, Mary McCormick, George Solveson and Jerry Stepaniak -- inspected several projects the club had helped fund and prospected for more. Also in the group were Jessica Boling and Jennifer Hays of Rotaract -- which funded the wash station -- the Isbister's son Duncan, Dr. Marissa Jablonski of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and her student, Katheryn Cubberley. Jablonski led the group.



Guatemala travelers pose for a photo.

Among other sites visited were a newly completed elementary school at Chitom and a nearby suspension bridge at Salitre, both projects were joint ventures of Rotary and Engineers Without Borders. Florencio Carrascoza, mayor of the area, met with the group to express his thanks and discuss possible future projects.

The main focus of the trip, however, was the Nebaj area in the Ixil Triangle. For the last third of the 20th century, the area was ravaged by a bitter civil war, and many of its residents, including those in Tziquintze, are sustenance farmers, plowing with oxen and planting with sticks in villages accessible only by mountainous, rutted, dirt roads -- many of which the Milwaukeeans traversed.

The group was careful to listen to the needs expressed by Guate-

malans rather than make offers of help without consultation. To do so, it met with Nebaj's mayor, Pedro Raymundo, or Pap Lu in his native Ixil language, and enlisted the help of ACCMARI, a grassroots organization of small villages which is prioritizing local needs. Water systems in the villages of Antigua Xonca and La Laguna are near the top of ACCMARI's list, and the Milwaukeeans met with officials of both communities.



Workers pause for a consultation while building the latrines.

The Milwaukeeans discussed funding the projects through a Global Grant, which combines money from local clubs with district funds and dollars from Rotary International, the scheme used for the bridge at Salitre. The Guatemalan partner for that grant was the Vista Hermosa Rotary Club of Guatemala City and the Wisconsinites had lunch with Julio Grazioso of the club. He said that Vista Hermosa has reached its maximum allowable 10 global grants. For that reason, the Milwaukeeans also met with officials of Rotary clubs in Panajachel and Huehuetenango, looking for another Guatemalan partner. The meeting with David Ramos Mota, secretary of the Huehuetenango club, had an added benefit. Ramos Mota is a coffee grower and as the Milwaukee delegation was waiting in the airport to return home on March 20, one of his team arrived with a gift of 2 kilos of freshly-roasted coffee. The beans are excellent, a hopeful sign for future cooperation. ☺

Look on page 3 for more pictures from the Guatemala trip!

Scholarship Corner - Nhia Vang

By Leslie Hauser

In fall of 2015 Nhia Vang started his college career at University of Wisconsin, Madison. Nhia is a Rotary Scholarship recipient and is taking general courses his freshman year with hopes of being accepted into the school of business in the next year or so. Nhia is also a Gates scholar, chosen from many students from across the country to receive a four year academic scholarship for the school of his choice.



Nhia joined his mentors Leslie Hauser and Bill Coleman at a Rotary luncheon.

Nhia is the first generation in his family to attend college and emigrated with his family to the U.S. approximately 15 years ago from Thailand (where his family sought refuge after the Vietnam War). He speaks multiple languages, including Hmong and Spanish.

Often Madison can be an overwhelming experience for our new scholars, due to the vastness of the campus and the number of students from around the world. Nhia jumped into his college experience with both feet and reached out to other Gates scholars, joined study/tutoring groups and attended career fairs to understand the future job market.

As with many of the Rotary scholars it is important for them to exert their independence, not live at home and be a part of campus life. Though Nhia had spent a considerable amount of time in recent years assisting in the care of his grandfather and was the family's primary interpreter, he and his parents agreed that going away to Madison was the best situation for him.

Nhia's energetic personality and exceptional conversational skills, have made it easy to get to know him and his background. Being his Rotary mentor has been a wonderful experience! ☀

Scholarship Golf Classic

April showers bring May flowers...and college acceptance letters for high school students across Milwaukee! You can help transform the lives of Milwaukee Students – and practicing your swing – at our 8th annual Scholarship Golf Classic on Monday, June 13th at the Wisconsin Country Club!



A golfer is about to swing at the 2015 Scholarship Golf Classic.

The RCM Scholarship fund enables students with financial need to pursue high education and transform their life by connecting them with the support and guidance from Rotarians as mentors. Many of our scholarship recipients are the first in their family to go to college. The program currently supports 24 students and the committee is beginning the selection process of applicants.

Early bird rates are \$1,100 for a foursome, \$275 for an individual golfer and \$60 for a dinner guest through April 19th. After April 19th, rates increase to \$1,200 for a foursome, \$300 for an individual golfer and dinner guests remain at \$60. If you are not a golfer, join us for an open-bar cocktail hour, dinner and the Silent and Live Auctions for only \$60 per person. At it, you will have to make sure to purchase a 50/50 raffle tickets and a cork for the wine pull!

For more details on the golf outing and ways to get involved, contact the Rotary office or search 'Scholarship Golf Classic' on our website. ☀

**Register by April 19th
for Early Bird Rates!**

Untapped Rewards of Rotary Fellowships

By John A. Bernaden, Past President 2014-15

Did you know that Rotary Fellowships can provide a great way to make new friends around the world and enhance your Rotary experience? Fellowships are international, independently organized groups of Rotarians and sometimes their spouses who share a common recreational interest or vocation.

The first fellowship began in 1947 when a group of Rotarians who love sailing began flying the Rotary flag from their boats, calling themselves the International Yachting Fellowship of Rotarians. Today, more than 3,300 Rotarians sail together in one of 109 Rotary fleets in 37 countries.

(<http://www.iyfr.net/new/about>)

More than 60 other fellowship groups similarly unite Rotarians in friendship and expand opportunities to enjoy your favorite recreational activities, hobbies, sports, and most recently your vocation. These groups range from cycling to skiing, golfing and even wine-tasting. Here's the link to see the complete list: (<https://www.rotary.org/myrotary/en/rotary-fellowships>)



Rotarian John Bernaden gathered with Rotarians in Tucson, AZ.

I recently joined the RV fellowship and rallied this February for a week in Tucson with a dozen couples who came from Rotary clubs in Canada, California, Colorado, Texas and Arizona. We toured local attractions together, shared meals and enjoyed the comradery of like-minded leaders including two past district governors. My wife Kathleen and I also hope to someday join over a thousand Rotarians in the United Kingdom who caravan together in recreational vehicles across Europe every summer. The Wine Appreciation Fellowship is a learning tool for those

who are interested in expanding their knowledge and sharing ideas regarding all aspects of wine appreciation.

Like most fellowships, the group has an email newsletter and members are encouraged to visit an interactive wine website (www.rotarywine.net) frequently for updates, features, articles and information on wine events and trips.

While most day-to-day fellowship activities may take place online or through correspondence, the most successful fellowships facilitate regular opportunities for members to interact in person. For example, sporting fellowships hold regional matches and world tournaments, fellowships related to travel or excursions plan destination trips, and vocational fellowships often plan get-togethers at professional conferences and seminars.

A growing number of vocational fellowships have also formed during the past decade. For example, Rotarians who are doctors, lawyers, educators and other professions have begun sharing their expertise and experiences with fellow Rotarians in the same profession from other clubs around. My hope in establishing our club's Global Milwaukee Committee is to encourage international relationship-building not only with manufacturers in other Rotary clubs, but other professions too. This is a way to make that happen. For example, the 63 lawyers in our club could significantly steer and help lead the 600 global members of the fledgling Rotary Fellowship of Lawyers.

Many fellowships also use their special interests to serve others. For example, the Fellowship of Canoeing Rotarians has organized cleanups of polluted rivers; members of the International Computer Users Fellowship of Rotarians had conducted training sessions for Rotarians and others in their community; and members of the International Fellowship of Rotarian Scuba Divers join local Rotary clubs to undertake service projects on each of their diving trips.

Lastly, developing acquaintances and even friendships by participating in one of the international Rotary Fellowships can help improve your understanding of the world. "The best way to cultivate international understanding is through business and social intercourse," said Paul Harris at the Pacific Rotary Conference in Tokyo, 1928. 🌐

More pictures from the Guatemala trip!



A view of the pedestrian bridge built by MSOE students with Rotary support.



Digging a hole for the septic system.



Repairing a water distribution tank.

George Solveson and Ran Hoth work on the latrine wall.



SPEAKER *schedule*

April 5th - Geneive Abdo will present on the Arab uprisings began with seemingly secular cries for ousting dictatorships. But five years on, the initial unity with a state purpose has eroded into a sectarian conflict in some countries and all-out war in others. The strife focuses upon this question: Who is a Muslim and who is an unbeliever? Non-state actors, in particular, who claim a monopoly on religious interpretation, are the key drivers of the conflict. The geopolitical rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia is also fueling the violence. Can there be a resolution or is the region doomed to violence for the foreseeable future? Geneive Abdo is a Nonresident Senior Fellow at the Atlantic Council's Rafik Hariri Center for the Middle East. Abdo specializes in issues regarding modern Iran and political Islam. *This program is sponsored by the A.D. Robertson Fund for the United Nations.*

April 12th - Pat Milligan's talk will cover the findings of Mercer's newly released *When Women Thrive* research report, representing over 640 organizations from 42 countries, covering 3.2 million employees in which 1.3 million are women. This is the second version of this report, and our platform has grown to be the largest of its kind and while we are experiencing a lot of

progress, the reality is what organizations are doing is simply not enough. Some key findings include that women continue to be underrepresented at all career levels, current hiring, promotion and retention rates are insufficient to create gender equality by 2025, and organizations are failing to build future female talent pipelines. The findings are consistent across all regions, proving this is a growing, global issue. The report offers tools and recommendations for organizations to take action to really move the needle. *This is a joint program with the Kellogg alums and Milwaukee Women inc.*

APRIL 19th- Dr. Michael McCrea's research interest focuses primarily on the acute and chronic effects of traumatic brain injury (TBI). He also authored the text *Mild Traumatic Brain Injury and Postconcussion Syndrome: The New Evidence Base for Diagnosis and Treatment* published by Oxford University Press.

APRIL 26th - Mark Murphy is the current president and Chief Executive Officer for the Green Bay Packers of the National Football League. His talk will be about the business of the Packers. *This is a joint program with the Lawrence University alums.*

WELCOME *new members*



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Karen Hung is Founder and CEO, Silver Rock Consulting and focuses on enterprise and business transformation. She has experience across multiple industries including: financial services, retail/branded apparel, healthcare and CPG . Karen has held executive positions in general management, strategy, marketing and innovation and has worked with world-class companies such as MetLife, AbbVie, Land's End, Johnson Controls, GE and Citigroup. Karen holds a Bachelor of Arts from Washington University and an MBA from the Harvard Business School. She serves on the Board of Directors of Junior Achievement of Wisconsin and the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, a member of Rotary and is the President of the Harvard Business School Club of Wisconsin.



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Mark Federle is currently the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and the McShane Chair in Construction Engineering at Marquette University. Previously he was Chief Information Officer for The Weitz Company in Des Moines for nine years. Prior to joining The Weitz Company, Federle was the Professor-in-Charge of Construction Engineering program at Iowa State University, where he taught for nine years. Mark earned his PhD and Masters in Construction Engineering and Management from the University of Michigan. Mark is a licensed Professional Engineer and a Certified Professional Constructor. Mark was awarded The Career Achievement Award by Rose-Hulman in 2005.

BOARD APPROVES NEW MEMBERS

At its recent meeting, the Board of Directors welcomed three new members and expressed thanks to the proposers:

Alex Chou
Milwaukee Center for Independence
Human Services
Proposer: Dan Vliet

Kira Lafond
Milwaukee Business Journal
Publishing
Proposer: Mary McCormick

Carmen Pitre
Sojourner
Human Services
Proposer: Joan Kessler

Spotlight on the Good Works of the RCM Community Trust:

Reading is Fundamental

Rotarians are the face of literacy for many Milwaukee school children, distributing books and sharing how reading is important in their own lives to students in 10 schools in the Milwaukee Area.

RCM has been involved in the Reading is Fundamental book distribution (RIF) program for over 40 years, distributing books to kids in kindergarten through 8th grade. In the past Rotary's annual contribution was matched 3:1 by the federal government, but in 2012, federal funding for the program disappeared. The Milwaukee Brewers Community Foundation stepped up at this critical moment and has since been strong partner. In addition, long time Rotarian Jim Wiensch made a very generous donation this year allowing us to donate over \$17,000 worth of books to hundreds to Milwaukee students!



Rotarian Jon Scholz reading a book to a student at Urban Day School.

Each student at our 10 schools will receive two free books this year through RIF, distributed by Rotarians. For many of the students this is their first book they personally own. At the book distributions, Rotarians join kids as they pick out a book of their choice and hear from Rotarians on the importance of literacy. Rotarians encourage students that reading is the key to success.

This is one of Rotary's most popular volunteer opportunities, and if you have distributed books at it this semester you know why! RIF is now looking for volunteers at its next book distribution at various time and locations during late April and May.



Rotarians Phil Vollrath and Rachel Larrivee distributing books to excited students!

To learn more about Reading is Fundamental or to volunteer at the book distribution next month, please contact the Rotary office. After each book distribution, you will receive a hand-made thank you cards from a student to thank you for visiting them at their school. 🌟



An appreciative student at Vieau School drew a picture for Rotarians after its book distribution.

Special thanks to John Connelly who served as the RIF chair for the past five years. John just retired from US Bank and will pass the chairmanship to Paula Kiely, Director of the Milwaukee Public Library.