

Medical emergencies such as myocardial infarctions, which in Peninsular Malaysia would be managed in a Coronary Care Unit setting, had to be managed in the district hospital level. I'm grateful however, that my staff in that hospital were the best I've ever had the pleasure of working with and were dedicated enough to want to make a difference in their patients' lives.

But poor transportation does not only affect the access to healthcare. Having no roads to be able to transport their agricultural produce for sale means that these people are stuck in a never ending cycle of poverty.

At most, some of them get RM20 to RM50 by selling their produce to middlemen to be sold at the monthly tamu or market at prices that are perhaps only 10 percent of the value of the goods. These innocent people are also preyed upon by traveling cloth merchants, mostly foreigners, who offer them 'easy payment schemes' to buy cloth for clothes, and when they cannot pay for the cloth and the interest accumulates, they end up having to marry their daughters to these men, who often have wives back home in Pakistan.

One of the cases I could never forget was of the family who came to Ranau Hospital just as I was leaving, a family who had failed crops, were hungry and unable to get food. The father collected some toad eggs and fed them to the whole family in a desperate attempt to stave off hunger. When they arrived at our little emergency room, one of the children were dead and two passed away within 10 minutes of arrival in our casualty unit due to poisoning.

Education is a problem in Sabah outside major towns like Kota Kinabalu at the moment. Many children would be lucky to be able to get to a school or even afford to get to one. Most of my patients outside Ranau were lucky to even have a primary school education and a vast number of women marry in their teens.

I've had 14 year olds delivering babies in Ranau, most of them have never ever stepped foot in a school. The education level is so poor that many women feed their children condensed milk thinking that it's better than breast milk.

But at the heart of it all, these mothers want the best for their children but are not empowered with the knowledge to help them. Major towns in Sabah have electricity courtesy of the Sabah Electricity Board, but smaller villages have either diesel generators or rely on candles or lamps when night falls.

How can children study in these conditions? Like many doctors in the districts, I had to learn Dusun to communicate better with these patients who could speak little else.

Forty five years after the formation of Malaysia, the promise of a better life for these poor Dusun, Murut and Rungus patients in the districts of Sabah is a pipe dream at best. How can our politicians claim to have brought development to the state and have neglected these poor people, many of whom still wear the cheap t-shirts and caps given free by political parties from many elections ago.

How can I claim to be proud of Putrajaya with it's beautiful bridges and lamp posts and the Petronas twin Towers when our fellow Malaysians in Sabah are so neglected?

The cycle of poverty and illiteracy one sees in the districts in Sabah brings despair to the heart. Eradication of poverty must tackle the real issues of education and transport and not just handouts to poor people.

By all means, declare Sept 16th a public holiday, but remember it in it's real context, where we made a promise to our brethren in Sabah and Sarawak to treat them as equals in Malaysia, and give them the development they've been long denied.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Last week, I stated that only 2.9% of current Rotarians are alumni of various Rotary programs such as Interact, Rotaract, RYLA or youth Exchange. The main reasons are time, financial constraints and that they were not asked to join. It is heartening to hear that effort on recruiting these alumni have started.

I believe most of you would have read the September issue of the DG newsletter sent out yesterday. The main focus is of course on the "New Generation Month". Thus over the weekend, we join forces with the Rotaractors to bake our cookies for our Interactors to raise fund for their projects. It was fun and it took team efforts to make 90 jars of cookies. Rest assured it is actually quite delicious! It was a first timer for most however we have experts to lend a helping hand. I would like to thank Theresa for the use of her business premises.

The lunar eighth and ninth month always spell happiness for couples to tie their knots. It is synonymous with happiness and prosperity. We extend our congratulations to our CM Rtn Francis and Anna on the wedding of their son Desmond. We will rejoice with the proud daddy Rtn Aldrin on the full moon of his son Issac this weekend.

As it will be Hari Raya next week, the next meeting is cancelled. On behalf of the club, I would like to wish our Rtn Taidin and Rtn Maureen "Selamat Hari Raya" and enjoy your holidays with your family.

Happy Anniversary ...

Rtn Vincent Chua and Siew Lin on 22 Sept.

Speaker Finders

Sept:

24 PP Tsen Kui Loi on "How to Propose a new member".

Oct

8 Gwen Vu

15 PP Victor Wong

22 Datuk Peter Lim

A GUIDE TO DAILY LIVING

Before doing the things we want to do, consider first, the precept of the guide. Ask yourself these 4 questions and act upon them:

First : Have I spent some time to self examination?

Second : Have I spent quality time with my family?

Third : Have I given my best to my work?

Fourth : Have I given some time to someone near and far?

CONTRIBUTIONS

| | RM |
|-------------|-------|
| Sunshine | 44.00 |
| Donations | |
| Fines, etc. | 20.00 |

DUTY OFFICERS are expected to arrive early to ensure that everything has been prepared for the meeting, to welcome visitors and guests and collect Sunshine Fund and Fines.

24th September
Woo Soo Poo
Samuel Yeh

8th October
David Kong
Peter Lim

(I came across this letter that members might be interested in reading - Ed)

Don't neglect Sabah, please : Another Doctor | Sep 8, 08 5:11pm

I refer to the Malaysiakini article Kota Marudu needs more than wireless Internet

I read Dr Hams letter and cannot help but agree with many of his observations. I worked in Sabah for over seven years as a house officer and medical officer. After my housemanship, I was sent to Ranau to serve in the district hospital. What Dr Hams described in Kota Marudu is not something isolated to that district alone in Sabah. It is an often repeated story in the whole of Sabah.

My first introduction to the poverty in Sabah came during my first months there, when a sweet 70- year-old lady from Kota Marudu was sent to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital with deep jaundice. She lived alone in a small village off Kota Marudu and noticed the jaundice about a month before.

She had no money for the taxi fare and so waited a month to sell off her chickens to have enough money to pay RM50 for the transport to Kota Marudu Hospital. She had to walk two miles to get to the road to get to the taxi.

Having been born, bred and educated in Peninsular Malaysia, I was shocked. When she arrived, she was septic and had a gallstone lodged in her common bile duct. The stone was duly removed but she was found to have a heart problem that required a pacemaker. We arranged for her to get a permanent pacemaker but she refused.

When I pressed her for her reason, she told me that she couldn't afford to buy batteries for the pacemaker, having sold off her chickens. Once I explained to her that the batteries would last for years and we would provide them, she agreed to the pacemaker.

Ranau town itself has roads and is on the main highway between Sandakan and Kota Kinabalu. It developed primarily as a result of the Mamut Copper Mines in the district. However, highway in this context means a two lane road with frequent landslides and potholes, with a two-hour drive to Kota Kinabalu.

Outside Ranau, transportation becomes a problem as tarred roads disappear to become gravel or crudely marked logging trails. Anyone who has worked in Sabah would have the same stories to tell, of extreme poverty and poor transportation.

During my 2 years in Ranau, I've heard and seen it all, patients with cerebral malaria, a condition unheard of in Peninsular Malaysia, coming in after 48 hours to the hospital from places like Kaingaran and Karagasan, with relatives having to push the 'pirate taxi' through the mud, spending RM50 on fare during the monsoon season, the equivalent of 2 months income, this too when petrol was only around RM1.20 a litre in Ranau.

Patients having to delay treatment for life threatening conditions because a bridge washed away along the trail (I won't even call it a road) to Tambunan. Emergency surgery such as caesarian sections, appendectomies and even ectopic pregnancies had to be performed in our little district hospitals by Medical Officers with little more than 4 months housemanship experience.

PRESIDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

President Soon Lan welcomed Rotarians before making the following announcements:-

1. President Soon Lan read this week's Rotary Foundation Every Rotarian, Every Year.
2. Manual of Procedures - we still have copies for sale at RM20.00 each. Rotarians please get one.
3. We are arranging to meet with Hotel management to discuss the proposal from the Hotel to increase the rate from RM40.00 to RM 80.00. The BOD has approved a maximum of RM55.00.
4. Early bird for the District Conference will end on 1st October 2008!

OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Club Admin: PP Chang Erh Ling

The speaker today is Rtn Woo Soo Poo who will be talking about transformers. There will be a Family of Rotary fellowship on 18th October. More details later.

Sports Convenor - Rtn Woo Soo Poo

Next Mingo Cup competition proposed on 20th Sept. either at SGCC or Karambunai. I need a sponsor. Vice-President?

By the way, I received a call from Datuk Gabriel William asking me to attend a meeting of the District RYLA committee. How did my name get on the list?

Service Projects Committee - PP Ir. Jimmy Liew

Rotarians who have photos relating to any club activities please send them to me or the Bulletin editor as we are running out of supplies!

International Service - PP Vincent Tan

(As reported by Rtn Woo Soo Poo) Would anyone like to host a GSE team member from Denmark? They will be arriving at the end of October. Please let me know by next Tuesday.

Community Service: V Chua

Yesterday Rtn G3 and his family and I went to Kg. Lapasan with the intention of getting to the source of the water to check out the water supply. However it was very windy and the recent rains have made the hike impossible. We have to make the trip another day.

New Generations Service - Wong Chu Lai

Rotaractors will be making cookies at PP Chang Erh Ling wife's shop this Sunday 20 Sept. for sale to raise funds. The Rotaractors are going to induct 3 new members next Tuesday 22 Sept. Rotarians are welcome to attend the meeting.

Membership Development Seminar - PP Oh Chu Vun

We will be making a visit to the R C of Kota Kinabalu on Monday to promote the Membership Development Seminar and to the R C of Tg. Aru on Friday. R C of Penampang has taken 10 tickets, R C of Sutera 10 tickets, R C of K K South 15 tickets. We must ensure that, as the organising club, we send at least 15 members to the seminar.

Rtn Francis Lai reminded members of his son's wedding reception this Friday.

DATE OF MEETING : 17 September 2008

| MAKE-UP | ON | AT | FOR |
|--------------------|--------------|---------|--------------|
| PP Chio Cheng Leng | 16 Sept 2008 | e-Club | 3 Sept 2008 |
| PP Allan Mathews | 12 Sept 2008 | e-Club | 3 Sept 2008 |
| Rtn Taidin S. | 17 Sept 2008 | e-Club | 3 Sept 2008 |
| PP Philip Chong | 11 Sept 2008 | BOD mtg | 17 Sept 2008 |
| PP Oh Chu Vun | 11 Sept 2008 | BOD mtg | 17 Sept 2008 |
| PP Peter Yapp | 11 Sept 2008 | BOD mtg | 17 Sept 2008 |

PREVIOUS WEEKS' REVISED FIGURES

| Date | Membership | Present | Make-ups | Rating % |
|----------|------------|---------|----------|----------|
| 03/09/08 | 41 (39) | 21 | 11 | 82.10% |
| 10/09/08 | 41 (39) | 22 | 4 | 66.70% |

THIS WEEK

| Date | Membership | Present | Make-ups | Rating % |
|----------|------------|---------|----------|----------|
| 17/09/08 | 41 (39) | 23 | 3 | 66.70% |

Speaker - Rtn Woo Soo Poo

Rtn Woo spoke about transformers, in particular about QTC transformers. He told members about the different types of transformers such as distribution transformers and power transformers. He also explained that if these transformers are properly maintained, they should last a long time. Often, transformers break down because of negligence.

| | | |
|---|---|-------------------------|
| Presiding | - | President Chua Soon Lan |
| Secretary | - | Gwen Vu |
| Treasurer | - | Victor Wong |
| Sergeant-at-Arms | - | PP Michael Wan |
| SaA Michael rang the bell and called the meeting to order and President Soon Lan led the singing of the Negaraku, and proposed a toast to the health of His Majesty the King. | | |



President and Rtn Wong Chu Lai led Rotary spouses and Rotaractors in the Cookies making session on Saturday 20 Sept, to raise funds for the Interactors and Rotaractors for their projects. This was carried out in the premises of Theresa, Anne of PP Chang Erh Ling.



Rtn Francis Lai and Anna shared their joy of the wedding of their son, Desmond, with all Rotarians of RC Likas Bay on Friday 19 Sept, and it was a wonderful evening enjoyed by all.

