



# THE HIGHLIGHTER

The Official Monthly Newsletter of Rotary District 5300  
**Charles M. Barr, District Governor 2007-2008**

## LETTER FROM GOVERNOR CHARLES: *March is Literacy Awareness Month*



Dear Fellow Rotarians,

March is Literacy Awareness Month. For a number of years Rotary clubs around the world have realized the importance of literate populations and have been involved in a variety of projects to promote literacy. The ability to read and write is something that most of us take for granted. We, however, must be aware that there are many people (even in this country) that are illiterate. Shocking, yes! But it is true.

Rotary is working on a number of attention-grabbing projects world-wide: Polio Plus, water, hunger, health and sanitation, and peace initiatives to name a few. Many of the problems related to these and other issues stem from illiteracy. How can people understand about good health and hygiene or potable drinking water or sanitation or the mechanics of growing food crops or peaceful existence if they cannot read or write? As Rotarians we can make a sustained difference in the world by participating in international literacy programs.

Recently, the Las Vegas Club joined forces with a number of clubs in Southern Nevada and California to supply school books for children in South Africa. How did that come about? Simple, Michael Gordon, an Ambassadorial Scholar from South Africa, made us aware of the need as he spoke to a number of clubs and wrote a matching grant to address it. Many Rotary clubs then stepped up and contributed to this grant, and with matching district and RI funds together we have begun to provide thousands of needed school books to children in impoverished areas of South Africa.

Participating in Corazon's Super Build is not just about providing much needed homes to impoverished families in the area of Tecate, Mexico, it is also about literacy. In addition to funding the homes we build, our registration fees also fund 4 years of high school for two students with each home constructed. The rationale is simple: Corazon realized the immediate need for shelter but,

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## Letter From Governor Charles continued

also the long range need for improved literacy for young people. Without literacy these young people cannot earn a good living and be able to provide for a family and move out of the cycle of poverty.

To address literacy on the home front, many clubs in District 5300 have initiated school tutoring programs, supplied books for classrooms and libraries, and have funded after school programs to enrich and enhance classroom skills. For a number of years, many California clubs have been a part of the "Reading by Nine" program initiated by the Los Angeles Times. Recently this program was expanded to include Nevada. This is a way for Rotarians to provide books for students inexpensively. I am pleased to announce that 4 clubs in Nevada have already joined this program

In District 5300 we are providing books for children in South Africa, helping with literacy in Baja California thru Corazon, and participating in literacy projects within our own communities. Another club opportunity is adding to the Tower of Books at the L.A. Convention in June. I ask that each club fill boxes of books with reading materials for young children and bring them with you to the convention so that Rotary can not only set a record in the Guinness World Book but also provide reading materials for children in our communities. As Rotarians, we should be very proud of our work related to improved literacy in our own communities and throughout the world.

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## Rotarians Assemble and Dismantle Christmas House

Every year, right after Thanksgiving, San Marino Rotarians assemble the Christmas House at the bus stop on the northwest corner of Huntington Drive and Sierra Madre. Three weeks after Christmas, Rotarians gather to disassemble the House for storage until next year.

The Christmas House, measuring fifteen feet on a side, provides a well-lighted and seasonally cheery shelter from the winter elements. Rotarians, working with San Marino City Maintenance Department, have been working on this project for about two decades.

The San Marino Rotary Club has 116 active members.

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## San Marino Rotary Mini-Grants to Teachers

This February, San Marino Rotary awarded \$21,000 in Mini-Grants to San Marino area teachers. The program, started in 1990, gives awards up to \$500 each to teachers in both public and private schools. The grants are named in the memory of W.H. "Bill" Steele, long-time Rotarian and original promoter of the program. This year 62 applications were made and 50 were approved and funded.

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## The Rotary Foundation (TRF) Monthly Report

**Group Study Exchange (GSE) teams prepare to arrive / depart:** Pam Hayes (Covina), chair of the District 5300 GSE program, reports that this years District 5300 team leader, Larry Skaggs (Green Valley / Henderson), left for five weeks on February 6th with his team for District 9790 in Australia. The GSE team from District 9790 will be arriving to begin to make their visits in this District on March 29th.

**Foundation Dinners:** Our Southern California Foundation Dinner on February 16th in Walnut with Dr. Joe Serra as the speaker was a success. Joe Serra is active within the Rotary World in working with polio victims and he talked about the past, the present, and the future where polio will be a thing of the past. Dr. Serra's message to the 170 Rotarians and their guests at the dinner was that Rotary's role in eliminating polio has been critical, we are close to reaching our goal of eliminating this debilitating disease, and it is important for every one of us to do our part to finish the task of eliminating polio. The Southern Nevada Foundation Dinner will take place on Monday, March 3rd in Las Vegas with RI President Wilf Wikerson as our featured speaker. The High Desert Foundation Dinner on March 8th will feature Rotary Foundation Trustee Mike Abdalla from Orange County as our speaker.

**Grant Activity:** Over 40 Clubs have committed to involvement this year in the international matching grant area and 15 Clubs are using District Simplified Grants to do good works in their communities.

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## Arcadia Junior Interact Receives Check for Clean Water Well

The Arcadia Junior Interact Club, sponsored by the Arcadia Rotary Club, has raised \$1,615 for a clean water project in Accra, Ghana, West Africa. The project will provide boreholes fitted with electric pumps and water storage tanks for a local school for disabled children and six surrounding villages. The club raised the funds with their annual walk-a-thon in November.





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## Arcadia Junior Interact... continued



*Arcadia Junior Interact Club presents \$1,615 check to Clive Houston-Brown towards the water project in West Africa.*

over \$5,600 for this project to provide clean water to children and adults half-way around the world.

The total funding of \$24,000 required for this project has now been funded and includes not only the local support provided by the Arcadia Junior Interact Club, but also the support of our local Las Vegas Central and Burbank Sunrise Rotary Clubs as well as Rotary Clubs in Austria, Finland, and Ghana. Thanks to the efforts and contributions of six local and international Rotary clubs, including the Jr. Interact Club, this project can now move forward. The project will commence implementation later this year.

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## 5th Annual Art Auction Fundraiser

The Pomona Rotary Club would like to invite you to its 5th Annual Art Auction Fundraiser on May 10th from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Sheraton Fairplex located at 601 West McKinley Avenue, Pomona. Dinner will begin at 6:00 p.m. Cost per ticket is \$85.

The auction will benefit Wounded Soldiers from the Iraq/ Afghanistan Deployment and their families who are receiving rehabilitation care at Casa Colina Centers for Rehabilitation.

Since 2001, more than 26,000 service members have been injured in Iraq and Afghanistan, with 60 to 70% of the injuries affecting the brain. The Veterans Administration and military hospitals have transferred many soldiers to Casa Colina, as well as other private rehabilitation facilities across the country. Casa Colina has established clinical and administrative relationships with top surgeons at Bethesda Hospital. These same doctors recommend Casa Colina repeatedly to families seeking another option and/or a place for their loved one to rehabilitate.

For the past four years, the Pomona Rotary Art Auction has received art from celebrated artists such as: Father Bill Moore, Brad Sutton, Marcos Larios, George Rodrigue, Mary Delira, Lynette Howe, Roberto Hernandez, and Mr. Yi Kai just to name a few. We are grateful for their work and commitment to the Pomona community.

In order to make the event a success, the Rotary Club is requesting the public's help by donating a fine art painting or object for the live auction at the event, or with a silent auction item such as a gift basket, tickets to premier events, hotel stays, sports memorabilia, etc.

The Rotary Club of Pomona is proud of its long and outstanding tradition of service in the community and would be happy to provide any additional materials or information that you request about this event or about Rotary, including the club's tax-exempt ID number for your records.

To purchase tickets, please contact Event Chairman, Steve Halligan at 951-741-9500. To make a donation, contact the Art Chairperson, Rick Todd at 909-489-8742. An Art Auction Press Release video has been created, please visit: <http://www.vistainlandempire.com/artauction.html>.

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# Las Vegas Northwest Rotary Supports the Ronzone Elementary School Dance Team

by Judith Filangeri

This year, Ronzone Elementary School started a dance team, partly in response to the buzz created by the Delgado Ballroom Dance program, a program sponsored by the Rotary Club of Las Vegas Northwest, but which has very limited student enrollment.

Students in grades 3 through 5 audition for the dance team after participating in a 3 week workshop each day after school for an hour and ten minutes. These students then auditioned before staff members from both Ronzone Elementary and the Cimarron Memorial High School Dance Team. Twenty-four students were chosen for the dance team from 104 students who participated in the workshop: twenty girls and four boys.



*from left to right, Judith Filangeri (me), Cathy Conger (principal of Ronzone), Joe Germaine (Prez), Kim Raham (teacher), and Martha Alcantor (student dancer).*

The team practices Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday every week, for an hour and ten minutes each day.

None of the students have any previous dance training, so the program begins with the basics. Kim Raham, the instructor, has extensive dance background. She has a bachelor's degree in ballet from Texas Christian University and a master's degree in dance from Louisiana State University. She's danced with the Omaha Ballet, Quincy and Company, Saint Charles Ballet, and the Third Street Ballet. She taught dance (mostly ballet) at Bowling Green State University for 3 years, where she was also the coach of the BGSU Dance Team, a team which performed at college basketball games

and some football games. The dance team is an unfunded program. Kim does this for love of dance...and the students in the program.

Kim has been teaching first grade at Ronzone for three years, after 12 years of "being a mom." She got the idea for the dance team when she saw the intense interest in dance that the Delgado Dance program generated. The dance team uses her dance experience to pass on her love of dance to a whole new generation after school. They're learning team work and the importance of commitment. Many of them come to practices and performances even when they are on track break and officially "off." No doubt they are motivated by the enthusiasm of their teacher, who receives no extra financial compensation for all this extra work. Kim believes the effort is more than worth it. "They are a fantastic group of kids with great spirit and sweet personalities," Kim says of the team.

The dance team has come quite a long way as our club saw when Ronzone Elementary hosted our club for a pre-holiday breakfast meeting. They're ready to consider entering area dance team competitions and very much wanted to have a more uniform appearance for competing. They had matching bandanas, but wanted to get matching vests, which could be passed down from year to year. Our club approved \$500 to help them get started on uniforms.



The Rotary Club of Las Vegas Northwest is proud to be able to support the educational growth of the students at Ronzone Elementary School.

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## Montebello Rotarians Help Deliver Food Baskets, Clothing South of Border

by Anne Donofrio-Holter

For the ninth year in a row, Montebello Rotarians, along with Rotarians from the Ensenada, San Diego, Downtown San Diego, Vista and Avalon Rotary Clubs, helped deliver a record-number 900 baskets to needy families in Ensenada, Mexico.



*Basket distribution in Ensenada.*

Filled with warm blankets and food items including rice, flour, beans and cereal, the baskets are assembled in a warehouse by Ensenada Rotarians early in the week. Upon the week-end arrival of other club members, all participate in adding the final items to the baskets which included over 9,500 cans of tuna donated by the Southern California Sport Fishing Association.

The recipients of the baskets, identified as "the poorest of the poor," are selected by the Ensenada Rotary Club. The baskets are distributed to families as far away as 40 miles outside the city as well as to orphanages and Indian communities.

"This project makes me appreciate being an American and how fortunate we are," said Montebello Rotarian Pete Adriance, who has participated in the project for the past eight years. "The need there is so great and so is the appreciation."

Montebello Rotarian Ted Jones is dedicated to the annual project and it was through his involvement that the Montebello Rotary Club began its participation.



*Ted Jones as King Melchior in Tijuana*

In keeping with the club's spirit of giving, the following weekend, Montebello Rotarians made their annual trip to Tijuana where they delivered clothing and toys to children living in area orphanages and participated in Mexico's Three Kings Day or El Dia De Reyes festivities.

"On the 12th day after Christmas, the Three Wise Men arrived bearing gifts for baby Jesus," said Jones, who represented King Melchior. "The children we visited were mentally challenged; however, they really opened up to us."

His second time in the role of Melchior, Jones said he would do it again in a heartbeat.

"This is what Rotary is all about," he said. "I was humbled by the experience and the love expressed by the children we visited."

The Montebello club donated \$1,500 to this year's project.



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## Russian Delegation Visits Pasadena Area Non-Profits



*Rotarians and their spouses from the West Covina Club.*

The Pasadena Rotary Club recently partnered with the Open World program to bring a delegation of five Russian social service professionals to meet with local non-profit organizations.

The visitors, who were housed by Pasadena Rotarians during their one-week stay, had a lengthy and varied itinerary of meetings, meals and other activities to allow them to learn more about the operation of non-profits of all sizes and missions.

Among the local organizations the Russian delegation visited were: Pasadena Senior Center; Rosemary Children's Services; Monte Vista Grove Homes; Volunteers of America's Maude Booth Family Center; Five Acres; Pasadena Humane Society; Union Station Foundation and Boys and Girls Club of Pasadena. They also enjoyed a tour of Pasadena

City Hall and attended a City Council meeting as well as visiting the Pasadena Police Department and being treated to a BBQ dinner. Since their visit coincided with Halloween, they visited a typical haunted house and experienced other Halloween festivities. The delegates also toured Paseo Colorado and Old Pasadena.



*Our speaker, Dr. Joe Serra.*



*Dinner chairman David Mans with members of the Pasadena Club along with Lucille Ball.*

Pasadena Rotary's participation in the Open World program is one of several international activities in which the club participated during 2007, a priority area of current club president Bud Walker. Pasadena Rotary was

established in 1920 and today numbers approximately 300 members. The Open World program was established by the U.S. Congress in 1999 to enhance understanding and facilitate cooperation between the United States and Russia. Since its founding, approximately 12,000 current and future leaders from Russia and neighboring countries have participated in the Open World program and been exposed to new ideas and practices that they can adapt in their home countries.