

The President's Corner



Happy Holidays and a Happy and Prosperous New Year!

This is normally the time of year that we reflect on the past 12 months and decide on the ranking of this year among other years of our life. For some it may have been the best, hopefully for none the worst, but me this year has been a mixed bag of highs and lows. Probably for all of us some part of the year had a low or two. Through Rotary, our lives can have highs that extend beyond our family and friends. We can participate in "service above self" to make our life have more highs than lows. We have the opportunity to share our many blessings with the local and international community.

As we enter the new millennium, our opportunities to help the less fortunate will only increase. No one of us has seen the turn of a century, much less the turn of a millennium. We live in extraordinary times with extra ordinary opportunities to serve our fellow man. With the speed of the Internet, we can talk with others in the world, get first hand updates on disasters, find where assistance is most needed, discover new social causes, learn where Rotary is going and support what is happening in our local community. Yes, these are extraordinary times. We have the opportunity to share in these times through Rotary to make the world a better, healthier, safer and closer world.

This coming year, let us be extraordinary and champion local causes, increase our community service support, seek out new opportunities to help those less fortunate and share with others our through our Rotary Club.

Rise and Shine to a New Year and a New Millennium.

Again, Happy Holidays and a great New Year!

Don

Report from our Ambassadorial Scholar Camrin Christensen who is studying at the UNIVERSITY OF IRKUTSK, Russia.

ROTARACT, UNIVERSITY OF IRKUTSK

I am participating in the Irkutsk-Baikal Rotaract Club. Meetings are held on Wednesdays at 6:30. The usual meeting format is: call to order, introduction of guests (the club is about a year and a half old and actively recruiting members), recent events, new business, upcoming events. Rotaract has become closely involved with two local Children's homes, where the members engage in a variety of tasks. Some members teach English (most of the members were students at the Siberian-American Business school and through Vladimir Donskoi and Rotary, spent a month living and working in the US) while others play with the children. Rotaract has also taken up the project of reconstructing one of the two Children's Homes.

\* ROTARY, Irkutsk-Baikal Chapter Rotary meets on Mondays at 7 pm in the center of town. At the first Rotary meeting I attended, I spoke about my impressions of Irkutsk, and Russia in general. At the second meeting, the club had invited 4 students from the Siberian-American Business school who had recently spent a month in the United States, working in American businesses and living with Rotarians. This club, like the Irkutsk-Baikal Rotaract club, is quite young, though they already have 30 members. Since my first meeting, I have been in contact with the president of the club Vadim Zelenin, through whom I learned about a teaching position at School Leonov. I gave them a flag from the Mission Viejo Rotary club and a book on California. They, in turn, presented me with a book written by Vladimir Donskoi on the founding of Rotary in Russia. I plan to attend future meetings to share the club bulletins and speak about local projects that the Mission Viejo club coordinates.

OTHER AMBASSADORIAL ACTIVITIES

I am now a teacher of English at School Leonov, a private kindergarden. I have 5 students who are all 8 years old. Because their teacher last year was from England, I have the opportunity to introduce them to the United States. The children are still quite young and don't understand English very

well, but their interest is overwhelming. The first day that I arrived at School Leonov, the students were preparing for their Halloween celebration, which was coupled with the Russian holiday celebrating Golden Autumn. Almost wherever I am I find I am telling people about Rotary or America. On my train ride to Novosibirsk especially, I spoke with almost every passenger in my wagon. (It is a Russian gift to be able to spot any non-Russian.) Because Irkutsk is located in Western Siberia, the number of foreigners, until recently, was very limited. They are all incredibly interested in my impressions of Russian life. I have spoken with people of all generations, but they all ask very similar questions. How do I think Russians live? How do I find the language? Do I miss home? Have I experienced a Siberian winter before? Actually, the weather has been incredibly warm this winter, and my host family jokes that I brought the nice weather from California. During the week I am generally occupied with school, singing in a choir, and attending Rotaract, but I find that I meet new people everywhere I go. Just last night, I attended the 5th anniversary of an Irkutsk Comedy company, and the young woman sitting in front of me turned around before the show and talked with me for about 15 minutes. Russian's ability to put a foreigner coupled with their interest in America has made me a very good conversationalist. I am very impressed with Russians' openness and willingness to share about themselves and theirAll of my classes are held in Russian and taught by Russian professors. Both the classes and the professors are incredibly interesting and pleasantly understandable. I am enjoying the broad exposure we have to Russian culture, both historical and contemporary. From my University studies and my immersion in daily community activities (shopping, using public transportation, participating in cultural events), my language skills have improved dramatically, to the point where some people have actually asked if I am from the Ukraine. I have noticed that my classes differ from the format I experienced at Wellesley and even differ slightly from the typical ISU classes. In general, for Siberian students there is much less homework compared with American universities and longer class times. The main concern of the Siberian students is the exams at the end of the semester. My grammar teacher, however, assigns a great deal of homework, and in our video course, we are required to write a 3 page essay on our impressions of each film. country.

CHILDREN CHRISTMAS PARTY SCENES

Each year our club plays host to a Christmas Party for Children at the Door of Faith Orphanage in Mexico and locally for students from the Esperanza School in Mission Viejo at Chuck E Cheese Pizza Parlor. These scenes reflect the happy times as we reach out to make life a little easier for these kids.



CHRISTMAS PARTY VENUE: THE Swim and Tennis Racquet Club (Dean Club) Corner of Mosquero and Chrisanta (off La Paz) Mission Viejo, Ca

COMING EVENTS WEEKLY PROGRAMS

- Dec. 21st. Topic: Tax benefits of charitable giving Speaker: Michael Occhipinti Benefits of smaller gifts. Write a check before the end of year for tax deduction.
Dec. 28th No meeting instead Meeting Dec 19 (Christmas Party).
Jan 4 Joint Meeting with Kiwanis and Lions Clubs
Jan 11 Craft Talks- Kathy Haze and Tim Taylor
Jan 18 Project: Deaf India Update by Dr Raz Desai
Jan 25 District Conference Preview- Ed Hardenberg
SPECIAL EVENTS
Dec 19 Christmas Party-Deans Club
Feb 6, 2000 Improv Comedy Club Fund Raiser
Feb 12, 2000 District 5320 Foundation Dinner
May 04 2000 Mayor's Prayer Breakfast
May 4-7th District Conference
Mission Inn , Riverside
May 20th District Assembly
June 4-7th R.I. Convention Buenos Aires, Argentina

WHITE ELEPHANT

- Dec 21th Dick Paradzick
Jan 4 James Peterson
Jan 11 David Rukstalis, Jr
Jan 18 Tim Strauch

SANTA ARRIVED NOT ONLY AT THE DOOR OF FAITH LAST SATURDAY BUT AT CHUCK E CHEESE LAST TUESDAY WHERE HE DISTRIBUTED PRESENTS FOR THE ESPERANZA STUDENTS WHO HAD FUN WITH THE GAMES AND FILLED UP WITH PIPING HOT PIZZA AND COLD SOFT DRINKS! MOST OF OUR CLUB MEMBERS WERE IN ATTENDANCE AND A GOOD TIME WAS HAD BY ALL!

MERRY CHRISTMAS!!!

