

## What is health of Rotary Worldwide?

The health of Rotary is very good, and it is an exciting time to be a Rotarian! Our effective efforts in PolioPlus have placed Rotary on the world stage as a premier organisation, and the \$100 million challenge grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has validated the importance of Rotary's leadership role in the polio eradication campaign. Our membership has remained stable at a time when similar organisations have declined in membership, and Rotarians' contributions to The Rotary Foundation are the highest ever. Equally significant is that our 33,000 clubs have remained active and strong, and they continue to improve their communities through

countless service projects. As we approach the 100th Rotary convention in Birmingham, it is refreshing to know that Rotary's best and brightest days are still ahead!

## What are the major challenges Rotarians will have to face in the coming year?

I think the major challenges are the routine challenges that we face every year. The backbone of Rotary consists of our 33,000 clubs around the world, and their annual challenge is to become, or to remain, effective service clubs through the utilisation of their members' time, talent and resources. I consider all four avenues of service to be equally important, and our club leaders need to keep their clubs strong and well balanced. Experience has

shown that the best method of increasing club membership is through effective programmes in all four avenues of service, and one of my goals is to strengthen and stabilise our district organisations in order to provide even more assistance to our clubs.

## Will we conquer Polio in the next 3 years?

I believe the last case of polio to be caused by transmission of the wild polio virus should occur within the next three years. However, we cannot be sure of which case is actually the last case until the required three year surveillance period is completed for a certification of eradication by the World Health Organisation. As a result, we know the final certification will not occur within



the next three years. However, the absence of any reported cases for several months will be a wonderful cause for celebration, and I hope that happy event will occur within the next three years!

#### **What is the future of TRF?**

The Rotary Foundation is the charitable arm of Rotary International, and it plays a critical role in enabling Rotarians to advance international understanding, goodwill and peace. The Foundation is now in the process of a major transition through its Future Vision Plan, and I believe the new plan will simplify and streamline the utilisation of both DDF and World Fund moneys by clubs and districts. The pilot phase of the Future Vision Plan will begin during my year as president, and I plan to work closely with the Trustees to assure that the plan gets off to a good start. The success of the Future Vision Plan is vital to all components of Rotary, and its implementation may be the most important aspect of my year. The future of TRF is very promising as we acquire the assistance of additional strategic partners, and I fully expect the Foundation to expand and flourish. As a former Rotary scholar, the continued success of the Foundation is of utmost importance to me!

#### **What new areas can be incorporated in the programmes of TRF to make it more relevant?**

The Future Vision Plan will permit clubs and districts to be more innovative in their development of projects for the new District Grants. The Trustees have approved six new Areas of Focus for the new Global Grants in order to concentrate our resources and develop our expertise in a manageable number of catego-

ries, and I plan to recommend the same focus areas for Rotary International during my year. The six broad areas of focus are: peace and conflict prevention and resolution; disease prevention and treatment; water and sanitation; maternal and child health; basic education and literacy; and economic and community development. Both types of grants must understandably comply with the TRF mission statement to improve international understanding, goodwill and peace, and I believe the six focus areas will provide needed direction in solving some of the major problems in the world.

#### **Why did you join Rotary?**

My father became a member of the Unionville (Missouri) Rotary club in 1947. The fellowship of Rotary was slowly added to my psyche through him. His club met on Thursdays at noon and our dinner table at home was livelier on Thursday evenings as my father related stories about the meeting. During my high school years, I noticed the happy banter between him and the other Rotarians. Though it is difficult to identify a particular reason for me joining Rotary, my interest in Rotary was developed by a variety of factors.

#### **When did you feel that you were touched by Rotary's programmes?**

When I was in college at the University of Missouri in Columbia, it was through the personal approach of the Unionville Rotarians that I became aware of the then relatively new Rotary Foundation Scholarships. Since family members of Rotarians were then eligible for the awards, I was encouraged to apply. The resulting award of a Rotary Foundation fellowship for study at

the University of Cape Town was a turning point in my life. The South African Rotarians were extremely gracious and supportive. I travelled 16,000 miles in Southern Africa and enjoyed the hospitality of 43 Rotary Clubs and countless Rotarians and their families. I learnt about a new part of the world and about the beneficial effects of Rotary in a multiracial and multicultural society.

#### **What are your thoughts as you look back on your journey in Rotary?**

Indeed, I owe Rotary more than I can ever repay! As I have tried to make payments in service commitments and financial contributions as a Rotarian, the debt has become larger, not smaller. With each new task, I have gained new friends and experiences worth far more than the value of my time and expense. In fact, I am what Rotary has enabled me to be!

#### **Your "Message" to the Rotarians?**

I am privileged to have been nominated to serve as the president of our premier organisation. The ingenuity of Rotarians in developing projects to make the world a better place is astounding, and it is the creativity of the clubs around the world that make Rotary a special organisation! With the favourable publicity from PolioPlus, we are currently positioned to attract some younger members to continue our tradition of *Service Above Self*, and we need to seize the opportunity to increase our membership and expand our service projects. Rotary as a whole has much to offer to a troubled world, and I am excited about the opportunities we have to improve our clubs, our local communities and the global community. It is a wonderful time to be a Rotarian!