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FORTNIGHTLY BULLETIN OF
THE ROTARY CLUB OF GAUHATI SOUTH (RI DIST 3240)

RI PRESIDENT
Rtn Holger Knaack

DISTRICT GOVERNOR
Rtn Subhashish Chatterjee

PRESIDENT
Rtn Giti Bujarbaruah

SECRETARY
Nawajyoti Sharma

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ROTARY HISTORY

Friendship Trees : Paul Harris' Lasting Symbol of Goodwill

As Rotary's president emeritus, **Paul Harris** travelled extensively during the 1920s and 1930s, often accompanied by his wife, Jean. During these trips, the nature-loving Harris planted trees to symbolize goodwill and friendship. Planting trees became a hallmark of his travels. In *My Road to Rotary*, Harris recalled: "With the cooperation of Rotarians and local governments, I have planted friendship trees in the parks and playgrounds on five continents of the world and even on some of the major islands of the seas. Our trees stood as symbols of international understanding and good-will."

The Harrises often entertained visiting Rotarians and dignitaries in their Chicago home and planted trees with their guests to mark the occasion. They called the garden their Friendship Garden.

Rotarians continue to plant trees to symbolize enduring friendships and fellowship, to beautify parks and communities, and to contribute to a greener world.



Paul Harris and members of the Rotary Club of Tallinn, Estonia, at a tree planting event in 1932.

From the Editor



For many of us, our Rotary family is an important part of our lives. These friendships connect us to our communities and the world and provide avenues of soul-enriching service. The heart of Rotary is our members—dedicated people who share a passion for community service and friendship. Fellowship is therefore an important feature and integral to Rotary. We share ideas, make plans, hear from the community, and catch up with friends during club meetings and programmes that fuel the impact we make.

The past few months have thrown up innumerable challenges and has compelled us to reinvent, to be innovative and to adapt to the changing circumstances. The essence of Rotary is to stay connected, so Rotary and clubs around the world are engaging through virtual meetings to stay connected to each other. We, at RGCS, have been successfully holding our weekly meetings on a virtual platform for the last few months. We also organised a very successful webinar this week. In-person meetings are no doubt more enjoyable, but in the circumstances there are hardly any options.

Interestingly, a few clubs in the US, like the Rotary club of Stone Mountain in Georgia for example, have adopted a hybrid model. ie. a combination of in-person and online meetings. Their physical meetings are also made available online.

The club is convinced that this model will draw new members, especially the young, who are otherwise busy and do not find time to attend meetings in person. In fact, the hybrid model is part of their strategy to get attract new members. They also believe that this new model will help in retention of members, especially the older members who contemplate moving out of the town or city after retirement. With many clubs facing membership issues, this might just be the way of the future. Hybrid clubs with members attending in person and online—Will this be the new norm?

Rtn. Priyam Goswami

GREEN FINGERS



© Can Stock Photo

When is a tree like a Rotarian ? All the time. Trees are connected through their root systems—and helping neighbours in times of need is the rule.

Rotary Cub of Gauhati South responded overwhelming to the call of District 3240 to participate in the Each One Plant One programme, 17-19 July 2020. In view of the pandemic and restrictions on movement, all rotarians were asked to plant a sapling in their homes to support the environment. The collage below is a representation of our enthusiasm and involvement in group activities.



VOICES OF ROTARY FROM AROUND THE WORLD



Students in Santa Lucia , Guatemala, are making soap from volcanic ash as part of the district grant project to empower students and keep them in school. .

Members of the Rotary Club of Delhi Rajdhani test features of an app designed to provide users with reliable information, especially during these time when fake news is rampant, through a computer simulated chat.




Rotary members cook and serve meals for Emergency Services volunteers fighting the brushfires in New South Wales.

Rotary members Omolara Omotosho and Bolatito Olaboye deliver food in Lagos, Nigeria




TOGETHER WE CAN
DEFEAT COVID-19


Rotary  Rotary Opens Opportunities

**THE POSITIVE SIDE OF
NATURE AND ENVIRONMENT
AMIDST THE PANDEMIC**

Hosted by -
ROTARY CLUB OF GUWAHATI SOUTH (RD 3240)

 Hon'ble District Governor 3240
Rtn Subhasish Chatterjee
will inaugurate the Webinar

Speaker:
Dr. Bibhab Kr. Talukdar
SG & CEO, Aaranyak, India
Asia Coordinator, International Rhino Foundation



ON ZOOM PLATFORM
DATE - 26th JULY, 2020 Meeting ID - 850 6259 8041
TIME - 6.00 PM India Password - rcgs0726

Keeping in mind Rotary International's seventh area of focus, the Rotary Club of Gauhati South organised a webinar on 26 July on *The Positive Side of Nature and Environment Amidst the Pandemic* in collaboration with *Aranyak*, an NGO. This was the first of a series of webinars that have been planned over the next few months. The guest speaker, Dr Bibhab Talukdar, SG & CEO Aranyak India, and Asia Coordinator, International Rhino Foundation made a very lucid presentation on the topic with special reference to Assam. The webinar was inaugurated by District Governor, Rtn Subhashish Chatterjee. Several PDGs and Rotarians and non rotarians from India and abroad attended the webinar making it a huge success.

DID YOU KNOW?

 **Mahi Patir Miri, One of the first 2 Assamese to be selected for the British-Indian Forest Service. Dedicated his life to preserving a small wildlife sanctuary in the 1930s.**

Today that small sanctuary is the Kaziranga National Park, Assam.

MAHI PATIR MIRI
1st Mining Science Graduate (CU)

Statement from Rotary International

Press Release 2 June 2020

At Rotary, we have no tolerance for racism. Promoting respect, celebrating diversity, demanding ethical leadership, and working tirelessly to advance peace are central tenets of our work.

We have more work to do to create more just, open and welcoming communities for all people.

We know there are no easy fixes and that challenging conversations and work lie before all of us. Rotary's strength has long been our ability and commitment to bringing people together. We will tap into that strength now as we stand with those who are working for peace and justice.

Rotary will do our part to listen, learn and take action to ensure that we continue to contribute to making positive change.

ROTARY STORIES

Ordinary Rotarians can find themselves in extraordinary circumstances. In her own words, Marie-Irène Richmond-Ahoua Rotary Club of Abidjan-Bietry, Côte d'Ivoire tells us what it was like to fight polio during a coup.

We were busy planning a Rotary presidential conference that was to be held in January 2000 in Côte d'Ivoire. We had made arrangements for top government officials to attend, but then, on 24 December, a military coup ousted the president and put General Robert Guéï in charge.

Following the initial panic, we waited to see how the situation would evolve. Then the new government announced its priorities: It cancelled the National Immunization Days (NIDs) that were scheduled for January and February to coincide with our conference. I was chair of the national PolioPlus committee, so this was a real blow for me.

I talked with the minister of health, who told me that the government had better things to do than to organize NIDs. I answered that the children of Côte d'Ivoire should be our priority, but it didn't get me anywhere. I tried to plead my case to the new president, but it was impossible to reach him. As a last resort, I decided to pay the new first lady, Rose Doudou Guéï, a visit. Clémentine Anderson, a representative of the World Health Organization's Expanded Programme on Immunization, came with me.

We thought our best chance to see the first lady was early in the day, so we showed up at the gates of the presidential residence at 9 in the morning. A guard asked us if we had an appointment. We didn't. He thought we were two crazy women. We didn't care. We didn't budge and sat on chairs near the sentry box until we were finally allowed inside, where we again explained the purpose of

our visit.

Around 3:30 in the afternoon, we were shown into a parlor to meet with the first lady's chief of protocol. Again, we had to explain why we were there. Finally, Mrs. Guéï agreed to receive us. I told her, "First Lady, you are a wife, you are a mother. You know how essential it is to organize these NIDs." She replied, "But what can I do?" We urged her to talk to her husband, reminding her of the persuasive power women have in our country — in fact, our kings are often counselled by their wives. She talked to her husband that evening, and the NIDs were back on the government agenda. She even agreed to attend.

The first lady was not available for the initial NID round in Yopougon, the most populous neighbourhood in the city of Abidjan, but Prime Minister Seydou Diarra was there. The second round was to be launched in Korhogo, in the north of the country. We flew from Abidjan in a presidential plane. I was sitting near the first lady and the minister of health. But the airplane experienced mechanical problems, so we had to fly back to the capital and take a different plane. The immunizations started several hours later than scheduled. All that time I worried about the mothers who were waiting for their children to be immunized.

In the years that followed, new challenges arose. There was a rebellion in September 2002, and planned NIDs had to be postponed while we negotiated with the leaders of the rebel forces to get access to the areas under their control. In March 2004, large demonstrations took

place to protest the policies of President Laurent Gbagbo. We had planned to launch our NIDs in Man, about 75 miles from the border with Liberia — a country caught up in its own civil war. Rotarians were bailing out, saying it was too dangerous to go there. I convinced one of my cousins to come with me, and we took off in an SUV filled with banners, T-shirts, and hats. Around midnight, we were stopped by an armed soldier. This was the biggest scare of my life. Only when a convoy

with Ministry of Health officials showed up did we know we were going to be safe.

Côte d'Ivoire was declared free of polio on 30 November 2015. That was during my term as district governor. It made all those travails worthwhile.

— *As told to Alain Drouot*

(Source: Rotary.org)



Minutes of the 2105th Weekly Meeting of RCGS held on 17 July, 2020

1. The meeting started on virtual Zoom platform at 6.05 pm.
2. The President called the meeting to order and requested members to rise for the National Anthem.
3. President then joined the members to offer Birthday Greetings to Rtn. AnjanaGoswami whose birthday falls on this date and also congratulate Rotarylets Miss Tamanna and Miss Donna, daughters of Rtn. Arman Ahmed and Rtn. DilipSarkar respectively, for their wonderful performance in the class XII CBSE exams.
4. President informed the members about our clubs plan to hold a webinar within this month on environment protection in association with an NGO called **Aranyak** and also another webinar on our signature project How to Face Interview soon.
5. President then requested Rt. P.D.Choudhury to start his presentation on *Know Your Rotary*.
6. Rtn. P.D.Choudhury through his power point presentation(with 73 slides) explained very lucidly and elaborately starting from founder journey, Objects of Rotary, Rotary as an International Organization, its membership, Rotary Foundation and history of the Rotary club of Gauhati South.
7. President and all the members applauded Rtn. Choudhury and thanked him for his beautiful presentation.
8. Rtn. RajkamalBhuyan, informed the members about the amendments made in the MoU to be signed between our club and the Family Members sponsoring various awards given by our club to encourage the new generations and requested members to offer their comments. It was suggested that outside donors may be accepted if it is specifically related to a rotary cause. The minimum amount of contribution has been raised to Rs.1.5 lakhs from Rs.1.25 lakhs which will be in the form of fixed deposit in any nationalized bank. All such changes in the MoU have been circulated to the members already for comments. A number of members took part in the discussion on these amendments and many suggestions were given. Rtn.

Rajkamal will incorporate all these and prepare a final MoU soon for approval.

9. An amendment in the Clubs Byelaws will also be made for acceptance of the Donations from Non-Rotarians to see their credentials.
10. Rtn. RajkamalBhuyan has also informed that a Vending Machine for producing Sanitary Napkin has been offered by the District free of cost as intimated by PDG Rtn, Arijit Endow, and asked the members whether to accept this offer. In case the club agreed, he will provide necessary space in the trust office to install the machine and appoint one person to run it who will also market the product in the schools in Guwahati to be designated by our club. Cost of each Napkin will not be more than Rs.4/-.
11. President then requested Dr. Anil Mahanta to offer vote of thanks but before that he was requested to speak something about the present situation arising out of the increase in Covid-19 positive cases not only in Guwahati but elsewhere in India.
12. After the speech Dr.Mahanta offered the formal Vote of Thanks to all.
13. President then adjourned the meeting at 7.35 pm. The Secretary recorded the presence of 40 members.



Minutes of the 2106th Weekly Meeting of RCGS held on 24 July, 2020

1. After welcoming the members the President called the meeting to order at 6.05 pm on the virtual zoom platform.
2. National Anthem was rendered just after.
3. Since there were no Birthday and Anniversary greetings to be offered, the President informed the members about the upcoming webinar on *Positive Side of Nature and Environment amidst the Pandemic*” planned on 26th July,2020 at 6.00 pm on zoom where the speaker will be Dr. BibhabTalukdar, SG & CEO, of the renowned NGO, ARANYAK of Guwahati. The webinar will be inaugurated by the District Governor Rt. SubhashishChatterjee.
4. The President then welcomed the Guest Speaker of the day, RotaryletAsthaAgarwal of Guwahati who is a Covid 19 survivor, to speak on her experiences as a Covid +ve patient and her treatment thereafter in the Covid hospital.
5. MsAsthaAgarwal, expressed her sincere thanks to the members of the RCGS for inviting her to share her experience as she was recently cured from Coronavirus infection. She praised all the health workers, doctors and nurses for their relentless services towards the patients and urged upon all the patients to cooperate with them while fighting against this disease. She realized while in hospital that although there are some shortfalls in their services, particularly dealing with aged patients and some lack of cleanliness in the washrooms, overall arrangements provided in the hospital were quite good. She also shared her experience in helping

elderly patients who were unable to take food on their own and to and to dispose off the waste into the bins. She stated that, in addition to the treatment given in the hospital one should also follow naturopathic treatment like *Pranayam*, *Pranik* healings, take immunity boosting foods etc. for quick recovery from the disease. She ended her speech by again thanking all for giving the opportunity to share her experiences.

6. After her speech, members hailed her positive approach to fight this pandemic and congratulated her for taking adequate precautions so as not to transmit the virus to her elderly parents.
7. Rtn. RajkamalBhuyan informed about some changes in the Global Grants procedure, which he has received from the Rotary Foundation. He said that 50% grant given earlier from RF has been withdrawn w.e.f. 1st July,2020. The minimum criteria of contribution of 15000 Dollars from the DGF to RF has also been withdrawn. The project cost should be minimum of 30,000 dollars up to a maximum of 4.0 lakh dollars.
8. Rtn. Swapanjyoti Sharma informed the house that on 10th July last, the Director of National Police Academy, Hyderabad, wrote to the RI President Elect Rtn. Shekhar Mehta seeking the help of Rotary India for a survey to determine the training needs of policemen. PDG Rtn. KalpanaKhound of Assam asked RtnSwapanjyoti whether he could assist. The process includes completion of 6 questioners to be given to different categories of the Policemen for their response and compilation. Rtn. Sharma will start the work shortly. Members applauded his effort.
9. Secretary, RCGS, informed that Rtn. AtanuChoudhury had informed him that some of his relatives staying in Mumbai wish to donate a considerable amount of money for flood relief in Barpeta and Morigaon area and that they were

looking for a reliable and credible NGO like Rotary to do this work. He enquired whether we could accept this proposal. Rtn. Anil Mahanta expressed that flood relief should be done only after assessment of what people really want and to ensure that the relief goes to only deserving people. It may be food materials first and medicines and other materials thereafter. Rtn. DhirajKakati shared some of his experiences in offering relief materials by his NGO in some places like Majuli ,Kaliabar etc. a few years back. Rtn. Mahanta reiterated that we should concentrate on mobilizing resources first if we go for rehabilitation kind of relief. A few members informed that it would be possible to get some additional resources through their contacts.

10. Rtn. DhirajKakati spoke about the recently inaugurated electric crematorium at Guwahati which is the first in Assam and expressed dissatisfaction over the controversy raised by some sections of the people in social media about the naming of the same. He stated that despite being a member of the family of Late B.K.Kakati, he was unaware of the decision of GMDA to hand over the running and maintenance of the crematorium to the Guwahati Municipal Corporation. He opined that the R&M should be given to some society or NGO on PPP model for its effective functioning instead of any government agency. Members supported his idea and assured necessary help by our club in this effort.
11. The Secretary then informed in his report that the total number of participants present in the meeting was 39, out of which there were 36 Rotarians, 1 guest and 2 annes.
12. Rtn. RajkamalBhuyan offered the formal vote of thanks to all and special thanks to MsAsthaAgarwal by calling her a true warrior rather than just a covid survivor.
13. The meeting was adjourned by the President at 7.50 pm.