

Rotary District 7680 NEWSLETTER

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Service Above Self—Defined Again With Flight of Honor for Our Vets



by Bob Wilson
District Governor

If you ever need an updated definition of “Service Above Self” or ponder why you are still a Rotarian, I suggest that you find yourself a Guardian of the Flight of Honor team that just returned last weekend from an unforgettable day in Washington D.C.

This inaugural,

chartered, USAir flight was sponsored by Rotary Clubs throughout our District (plus a few major sponsors) and it took 120 World War II veterans from our communities on a day trip to visit the WW II Memorial constructed in their honor. In addition, the entire team visited numerous other sites in

Washington, making it a complete day for our veterans.

Each of our Guardians was responsible for the care of three vets, who had an average age well north of 80 years. Some in wheelchairs, some on oxygen, all moving slowly, these men and women from The Greatest

Generation gave each of us an incredible blessing for being allowed the privilege to serve them. I had high expectations of the event, and trip organizer Mitzi Ellis and her committee far exceeded them. This was a team effort, all the way and we owe a special “thanks” to the committee and its leaders. They are: **Mitzi Ellis** – our grand organizer-extraordinaire **Sandy Osborne**—application wizard and divine organizer. **Steve Brandt** – tireless public relations and interaction with the press and sponsors. **David McKnight** – liaison with airport, flight memorabilia, oxygen guru. **Richard Theokas** – outstanding



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Registration Extended for Reunion District Conference at the Beach!

There's still time to join 500 or so fellow Rotarians in Myrtle Beach May 1-3 for the district reunion conference.

It'll be the first joint reunion for District 7680 and its "mother" district 7670 since an administrative shuffling in 1991 and 1992 separated the two.

Last-minute registrants should contact District Secretary Jack Setzer at 704-502-9921 or stzr8@aol.com to announce their intentions. The availability of rooms at the conference site, the Marriott Grand Dunes Resort, can be determined by calling 843-449-8880.

Highlights of the event will be the participation of incoming RI President Ray Klingensmith, presentation of Club of Excellence and other club awards, recognition of 52 Distinguished Rotarians, exhibits in the House of Friendship Hall, and a service project to help fight hunger worldwide.

The conference executive committee will arrive at noon on Thursday to begin preparing for the weekend. Registration for other earlybirds begins at 2 p.m. One of those will be incoming RI President Ray Klingensmith, who will be honored at an invitation-only dinner that evening.

Friday morning will be devoted to more preparations, including getting the exhibits in the House of Friendship Hall ready for its 10 a.m. opening to conventioners.

Karen Shore, DG Elect for District 7680, will preside over "Team Spirit Day" from noon to 2 p.m. The keynote address will be

delivered by former Carolina Panther player Mike Minter, who will speak on "Taking the Four-Way Test into the Workplace." Minter will then sign copies of his book in the House of Friendship.

Business sessions begin Friday at 2:15 with concurrent sessions on subjects such as retaining members, motivating volunteers, time management, building consensus, and the role of the club secretary. Everyone will have an opportunity to meet Klingensmith in a reception from 3-4 p.m., and he will commune with Paul Harris Society members only from 5-6 p.m.

District 7670 Governor David Sink will preside over the event's first joint plenary session at 7 p.m. Friday evening. The pomp and circumstance of flag ceremonies, introduction of notable guests and dinner will be capped by a keynote address from Klingensmith. When the event breaks up at 9 p.m., the Tams will take the stage and offer musical entertainment for dancing and fellowship late into the night.

The House of Friendship will be open most of the day on Saturday. Both districts will begin the day at 7:30 a.m. with breakfast buffets leading into individual plenary ses-

sions. Those sessions will feature presentation of club awards, announcement of showcase projects, greetings from the visiting GSE team and financial reports.

Two presentations of informational sessions will be held beginning at 10 a.m. and 11:30 a.m., featuring club and district projects.

Rotarians and guests will have Saturday afternoon completely free. Those interested in community service can lend a hand in bagging 10,000 meals from 4-6 p.m. on behalf of the "Stop Hunger Now" organization.

Saturday night's dinner and plenary session will begin at 7 p.m. The visiting GSE teams from Chile, India and Egypt will make presentations, and speakers from each district will talk about their clubs' international projects. At 9 p.m. there will be a "showcase of incredible Rotary talent" featuring members who've volunteered to showcase their skills.

Events wrap up Sunday morning following the third joint plenary session, which will be hosted by Carol King, district governor elect for 7670. It will include a memorial service and presentations on projects that focus on youth.

Flight of Honor Exemplifies Service Above Self

guardian organizer and trainer, **Mary Ellis**—Event and District Secretary and camera sheik.

And, a special thanks to the hundreds of Rotarians, family and friends who took time out of your Saturday evening to meet our flight at 8:30 Saturday night. Your

applause and flag waving set the final stage for what will be remembered by our veterans and by all of us for the rest of our lives.

Service above Self? You bet it was! It was "Service above Self" at its best!

Honored to Be There: Personal Reflections on An Extraordinary Day

by
Steve Brandt
*District Public
Relations Chair*

I am seldom at a loss of words. But what words can I use to describe the inaugural Rotary District 7680 Flight of Honor? 120 World War II veterans had the opportunity to visit the World War II Memorial and other sites in Washington, D.C., that most of them would never have seen.

Appropriate words include, "Thank you...overwhelming...patriotic abundance...bonds of brotherhood...new friends...tears (of joy mixed with some of sadness in memory of those lost)...dream come true...awe-inspiring...humble...grateful...Service Above Self."

I'll quit while I'm ahead.

In this the year of RI President D.K. Lee's theme, "Make Dreams Real," DG Bob Wilson had a dream to expand the vision of Flight of Honor Founder Jeff Miller that every WWII veteran who wants could go to Washington at no cost to see the memorial built to honor the sacrifices of "The Greatest Generation." Since many are dying every day, waiting was not an option. DG Bob knew Rotary had the resources to make the dream a reality.

The story of the tremendous effort that went into Flight of Honor is for a future arti-

cle. As Public Relations Chair for the district, I had the honor of participating in the journey.

"Thank you." Sure it was our way of thanking the veterans who served this country in a time of national peril. The emotion was overwhelming as we stood at the Memorial. Total strangers of all ages approached our vets with a hand extended, asking what branch they served in, and thanking them for their service.

"Patriotic." The degree of patriotism was outstanding. Members of a local mili-

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Photos below - 97-year-old vet Henry B. Heath; Deb Bowen greets vet Mitchell Mack; Three vets wear smiles and matching Flight of Honor caps; Experiences shared around around the memorial fountain.



Clubs Can Help Young Leaders Grow With New District Summer Program

The district is expressing its commitment to youth this summer with the new “Seminar for Tomorrow’s Leaders” for rising high school juniors and seniors. Program organizers Calvin Gaddy and Angela Mills of the Albemarle Rotary Club hope to enroll as many as 75 students in the July 23-26 event at Catawba College.

Three professional facilitators from The Center for Creative Leadership, a worldwide not-for-profit organization based in Greensboro, will lead participants through an intensive interactive curriculum of exercises, simulations, discussions, and games

designed to increase their self-confidence, practice team building, learn to appreciate different leadership styles, and improve communication skills.

Student applicants should have at least a B average and demonstrate leadership potential for serving school and community. Participants will be nominated by high school principals, reviewed by local Rotary club selection committee, and selected by the program’s district committee. Each will be sponsored by \$400 commitment from local Rotary clubs. Participating clubs will also receive 500 points toward club of excellence awards.

Mills, who recently retired from a 34-year career as a classroom teacher, principal, and assistant system superintendent, agreed to get involved as a way to maintain her involvement with young people. She said the curriculum is specifically designed to promote leadership development in an atmosphere that students will find challenging, fun, and engaging. Activities include a 6:30 a.m. hike around campus, blindfold trust walk, sessions in ethical decision-making and effective team building, and simulations that demonstrate ways to turn conflict into a productive encounter. Students will also create blog entries on a Facebook page throughout the weekend to document their impressions of the program. “The key is that it’s very interactive,” said Mills. “They’re not sitting and listening to lecturers. They’re engaged in activities that will teach them a lot about themselves.”

In addition to the three CCL facilitators, Mills and Gaddy and other Rotarians on their committee will be on-site for the weekend to chaperone and help as needed.

District clubs are invited to begin picking nominees now, and should submit their choices to the district committee by mid-May. Mills and Gaddy will present the program during a session at the district conference this weekend, and an orientation session for participating students will be held at Catawba College on May 18.

District membership chair Debbie Corbett, pictured here with RI President D.K. Lee, met the Rotary leader while attending the Zone 33 Membership Seminar, followed by the Presidential Membership Seminar....



The gatherings examined trends in Rotary membership around the world. Attendees also studied the dynamics of membership growth and stagnation, and looked at ways to help clubs address membership concerns. Corbett said President Lee continues to emphasize recruitment of younger Rotarians, and suggested that social networking sites can be valuable in promoting growth. In that regard, he offered this link to all the social networking sites associated with Rotary International: http://www.rotary.org/en/MediaAndNews/Multimedia/social_networking/Pages/ridefault.aspx

Corbett said that District 7680 growth has been good since the midyear assembly, with 27 clubs adding a total of 68 new members in February and March. The Union West club led the way with seven new members, followed by Lake Norman/Huntersville with five.

District Hosts Rotary Guests from Egypt as Our GSE Team Flies There

Rotary District 7680 is in the midst of the Group Study Exchange (GSE) experience. A team of young Egyptian professionals from District 2450 is being hosted by clubs all over our district, and young professionals from our area will leave April 27 for a five week visit to Egypt.

Both groups got together for an afternoon at Baden Lake, and Mecklenburg County-South Rotarian Bill Burnham, who's leading the American team, said his group got plenty of good advice about Egyptian fashion, weather, phone cards, and sites they shouldn't miss. Another common experience for both groups will be participation in a district conference. The Egyptians will make a presentation at the District 7680/7670 Reunion Conference in Myrtle Beach, and the Americans will participate in a district conference in Alexandria, Egypt. Burnham said his group is looking especially forward to that because the district includes several countries, allowing them to meet not only

Egyptians, but Rotarians from Armenia, Bahrain, Cyprus, Georgia, Jordan, Lebanon, the Sudan, and the United Arab Emirates.

Burnham said he and his team members have been preparing for their visit with regular meetings. They have learned some rudimentary Arabic language, Egyptian history and culture, fundamentals of Islam, and cultural mores. They have developed a PowerPoint presentation about our district, received their uniforms, printed brochures with biographical information on each member, and taken care of their visas and inoculations. "Everyone's on pins and needles and ready to go," said Burnham.

A central focus of each group's visit is arrangement of appropriate vocational visits in the foreign country. American GSE participant Bryant Eckert is a banker, and will find out from Egyptian bankers how their system operates. Likewise, Regina J. Boyd will study language instruction in schools. Whitney Hodges will learn about Egyptian town planning. Chris Miller will visit with police personnel in Egypt, and group leader Bill Burnham is eager to learn more about the Egyptian practice of his profession – herbal medicine.

The Egyptian visitors are business consultant Karim Morsi, automotive engineer Bahaa Hallabo, oral surgeon Moataz Amr Abd ElAziz, social worker Radwa Nawar, corporate accountant Mona Moustafa Zakaria, and team leader Salwa El Haddad, a Rotarian and pathologist.



Jean and Champ Land hosted the GSE team and several members from Statesville's three Rotary Clubs for a reception and dinner in their home. Jean is a member of The Rotary Club of Statesville/Fourth Creek. (front l-r) Bahaa Hallabo; Moataz Amr Abdel Aziz; and Mona Moustafa Zakaria. (Middle l-r) Radwa Ahmed Nawar; Dr. Salwa El Haddad, and Karim Morsi. Champ and Jean Land, hosts, are on the third row.

The Ballantyne Rotary Club sponsored the annual Steele Creek Elementary School's traditional spring Easter Egg event...

For more than 20 years, Peggy Harkey, mother of one of the kindergarten teachers, hosted the event at her home across the school. After she passed away four years ago, the Ballantyne Rotarians stepped in every year to sponsor the event and make sure the tradition continues for the 200 kindergarten students at the school. Rotarian Betty Register organized the event with help from other members.

Ballantyne also partnered with the brand new Polo Ridge Elementary school... to sponsor an essay exercise on the Rotary International theme, "Make Dreams Real." All 800 students wrote about their dreams, and the three top winners from each grade level won three tickets for the Ballantyne Rotary - Harlem Ambassadors fun-raising event, a certificate and a cash prize. The top winners were: (Third place) Isabelle Glendenin, who wants to be a kindergarten teacher when she grows up, and will do this by going to school for a long time. (Second place) Rylen Bass, who wants to save and rescue unwanted animals, and will do this by teaching people how to take care of them. (First place) Mollie Wasserman, who wants to be a professional singer and will do this by taking singing lessons and entering contests. She was awarded the honor of singing the National Anthem at the Harlem Ambassadors game.



Students with the Easter Bunny and Rotarians Axel Lindenbeck, Sonetra Stinson, Betty Register, Harold Howell, Don Morris, Ineke Van der Meulen.

The Charlotte North Rotary Club has furthered its assistance to the high-poverty Shamrock Gardens Elementary School...

in Charlotte with donation of two "smart boards." These computerized screens are linked to the internet and run common software, as well as accepting free-hand drawing by the teacher or students via an electronic marker. Club members held a recent meeting at the school to see the smart boards in action. The school had earlier installed a dozen smart boards in upper grade halls. The two most recent acquisitions of the \$3,600 devices will be used in kindergarten and first grade halls. They were purchased with club funds, and a matching grant from the district. The club began partnering with Shamrock 5-6 years ago with promotion of a reading program. Last year the club gave students school supplies for all 400

students, and book bags for 150 of them. Club members also teach junior achievement classes at the school.

The Rotary Club of Statesville/Fourth Creek collected canned and packaged foods...

during the four weekly meetings in the month of March. At the final meeting of the month, the items were presented to Iredell Christian Ministries. Accepting the donations of food were Reverend Don Shuman and Natalie Rickabaugh. To the right is Earl Spencer, a member of the Fourth Creek community service committee, who introduced the guests and made the presentation. (Thanks to Evelyn Funderburk)



Reflections on an Extraordinary Day

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tary school greeted our veterans with a salute when they gathered at Charlotte-Douglas airport, and the USO welcomed them at the reception area and gate. That was just the start. When we landed at Reagan National Airport in Washington, the veterans were greeted by large American flags on luggage carts on the tarmac, US Airway ground employees waving flags as the plane passed, and a salute from a water cannon.

Inside the terminal we walked down a gateway decorated with flags and bunting, and arrived to a cheering crowd of more airline employees, volunteers and passersby. All of this was accompanied by musicians playing the anthems of the various branches of the armed forces. They met Senators Bob and Elizabeth Dole, who stopped by to shake hands and take pictures. The Doles also made a generous contribution of \$5,000 to the effort.

After lunch the group toured the Lincoln, Vietnam, Korean, and Roosevelt Memorials. Bonds formed between previously total strangers as our new old veteran friends told stories to each other and shared their common experience. Then it was on to the Iwo Jima Memorial. Imagine viewing this magnificent sculpture while standing next to a Marine veteran who actually witnessed the flag raising that the memorial depicts. It was an honor to have him on our trip and to stand next to him as he viewed the scene.

Then it was back to Charlotte, and one last surprise. About 250 Rotarians and their family members, friends, and families of the veterans applauded and shouted until the last veteran passed through the aisle they made. Children on the shoulders of their dads held up posters saying "Thank you!" and "Welcome Home!"

I still can't find the right words to describe the day, but I have never been prouder to be associated with the greatest service organization in the world— Rotary International, and District 7680 in particular. This was their day, too!



Bill Wilson
District Governor
2005-2006



SERVICE Above Self

