



PRESIDENT'S MINUTE

This has been an eventful few months for RFMA. As you will see in articles in this edition, we had a busy and I think very successful time at the Centennial Year Convention in Chicago.

I would like to express my personal appreciation to all of the Fellowship Executive and to Sally Mackle who led a number of projects for us these past months. The workshop immediately before the Convention and the Symposium during the Convention were well attended and allowed us to reach out to many more Rotarians.

The video thank you to RFMA from Adopt-A-Minefield Ambassadors Heather Mills and Sir Paul McCartney during the Tuesday plenary of the Convention demonstrated how other organizations value Rotarians participation in landmine action.

I would also like to express a special thanks to John Silvers, who produced the RFMA's promotional DVD, "To Walk in Safety". The video was produced with the generous support of the Abatement Office of the US State Department, to whom we owe a big vote of thanks. It is very well done and will prove to a most helpful tool as we try to encourage more Rotarians and Rotaractors to get involved in landmine action. If you would like a copy of this DVD – it is available at this time in Zone I and Zone II versions.

Thanks to Sally Mackle, we also have a PowerPoint presentation that can be downloaded from our website for use in club presentations. These two tools are there to be used and I would encourage all members to use them to promote landmine action and membership in the RFMA.

This will be another year of building the RFMA and transforming it. Your ideas and suggestions and assistance will be most welcome.

Richard Clarke
RFMA President

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The Fellowship of Rotarians for Mine Action is a voluntary not-for-profit association dedicated to building fellowship and landmine awareness amongst Rotarians and Rotaractors.

ANNUAL MEETING

The RFMA held its first annual meeting at the Chicago Convention on Wednesday June 22, 2005.

The membership of the Fellowship as of June 1, 2005 was 176. The annual meeting elected the current Board to a new one year term. That is: Richard Clarke President, Rosemary Barker-Aragon Vice-President, Terri Clark, Secretary, Sandy Boucher Treasurer and Scott Fairweather, Communications.

The meeting passed a resolution to become a Rotary Action Group (see discussion on this page).

The annual meeting discussed and endorsed a number of initiatives to continue building the organization. These include: extending the network of District Chapters and Club champions; connecting with other mine action related organizations; promoting the use of the Rotary mine action project database; developing a speakers' bureau; disseminating our promotional DVD; and having a display at the 2006 RI Convention.



ROTARIAN VIDEO MAGAZINE

Volume 1 of Rotary's latest communication tool, The Rotarian Video Magazine is now available on DVD. It can be ordered via the RI website.

This first volume has a special chapter entitled "Casualties After the War" which includes stories on Rotarians efforts to help landmine survivors in the Balkans and in Cambodia. RFMA members Scott Fairweather and Nina Cole provide commentary in the main story and supplementary articles also included on the

DVD. If you club has not ordered the video – please encourage your club to do so.

ROTARY ACTION GROUPS

At it's June meeting the Rotary International Board of Directors made a very significant decision which will have a major impact on Rotary for years to come. After much consideration, the Board reflecting on the development of several service oriented Fellowships such as RFMA decided to change and expand the Fellowship program area of Rotary. The program area currently identified as "RI Structured Programs" will be renamed, Global Networking Groups with two program areas, a continuance of Rotary Fellowships and an new category, to be known as Rotary Action Groups.

The concept is that this will allow the traditional Fellowship groups to continue as they have for more than half a century, while providing an administrative structure to better serve action oriented Fellowships such as RFMA. Over time each category will have a set of distinct policies that will create the framework need for each category to function well within the Rotary structure and family of organizations.

News of this development was presented to the Fellowships at the annual meeting of the Rotary Fellowships Committee, immediately prior to the annual RI Convention.

The RFMA Board welcomed this new initiative and presented a motion to our annual meeting during the Convention, that was approved, to apply to the RI Board to transform the RFMA from a Fellowship to become the first of the Rotary Action Groups. Our interest in doing so has already been communicated to the RI Secretariat in Evanston.

A special working group is being established by the RI Board to set out the implementation details for this new family of Rotary organizations. We will keep you posted on further developments.

Rotarians for Mine Action Very Active at Chicago Convention

By Sally Mackle, Rotary Club of Seattle (#4)

Rotarians for Mine Action were very noticeable throughout the five days of the Centennial Convention in Chicago in June, hosting three separate events and four booths in Friendship Hall.



On Sunday, June 19, RFMA held a morning Network Meeting at Roosevelt University. Sixty two attendees showed their commitment to mine action by arriving at 7:30 a.m. for the four hour meeting. They were welcomed by Rosemary Barker Aragon, Vice President of RFMA. Sally Mackle, meeting facilitator, then showed a new video called “To Walk in Safety” made specifically for Rotarians to show at club meetings. The video features survivors in Cambodia talking about how landmines had affected them and their families. The video then moves to Rotarians talking about the importance of mine action work, and highlights current mine action projects from clubs. It ends with a call to action for clubs to work together to take on a mine action project. Each attendee received a copy of the video to share with their club.

Two subgroups were formed to focus in on specific aspects of mine action: mine eradication/mine risk education and survivor assistance/economic redevelopment in another. Helping lead the discussions were Rotarians talking about their projects and non-government organizations (NGOs) that partner with Rotary clubs. The informal presentations allowed time for questions comments and networking.

Our NGO partners attending the meeting were:
Adopt-A-Minefield
Center for International Rehabilitation
Chicago Coalition for Mine Action
Handicap International
HALO Trust
Marshall Legacy Trust
PeaceTrees Vietnam
Prosthetics Outreach Foundation
Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation

The opportunity for Rotarians to meet these NGO representatives was so important. We now have a name and person we can contact when it comes to partnering on a project. The information they gave us about the work their organizations did was very helpful to our continued learning about all aspects of mine action.

A highlight of the morning was a presentation by Sandy Boucher, Treasurer of RFMA, of the new website database available to RFMA members. Hosted by James Madison University Mine Action Center, the site allows Rotarians to enter their projects online and use the search function to check on other projects in locations around the world. This important tool will, for the first time, allow Rotarians to keep a record of mine action projects so that we all can see who is doing what, and join with another club on a project if we want to.



Tom Vajda from the Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement, U.S. Department of State, made a few remarks about the important

work Rotarians are doing in mine action. He encouraged those present to continue their efforts and to reach out to others in Rotary about this important humanitarian work.

The meeting ended with a call to action: Each attendee was asked to fill out the Project Action Form they received and return it to RFMA. The Action Form encourages Rotarians to begin now with a new project.

The second RFMA event was a 90 minute symposium held on Tuesday afternoon. Hosted by Richard Clarke, president of RFMA, the symposium featured four panelists speaking about their work in mine action. The group included Martin Barber of the United Nations, Mehendra Mehta, a Rotarian from India who is very involved with Jaipur foot projects, Foundation Trustee Fumio Tamamura from the Tokyo Club that has funded many demining projects in Cambodia, Soren Havemann speaking about what Rotarians from Denmark have been doing in Sri Lanka, and Chuck Meadows - RC of Bainbridge Island talking about PeaceTrees Vietnam. The session was closed with a rousing presentation from Scott Fairweather speaking on behalf of Adopt-A-Minefield and RFMA. The audience of about 300 people included many newcomers to mine action.



Throughout the five days of the convention, RFMA was represented by four booths in Friendship Hall. A double booth at the end of one row held a large display by RFMA and PeaceTrees Vietnam, an NGO whose Executive Director is a Rotarian from the Bainbridge Island Club in Washington State, USA. District 7070 had another booth about the international program Night of a Thousand Dinners assisted by landmine action partner Adopt-A-Minefield. The Chicago Coalition for Mine Action had a third booth that focused on survivor assistance and specifically on prosthetics. The last booth was from the Seattle #4 club and focused on their recent project to clear mines from two villages in Cambodia. Helping at that booth was HALO Trust, their partner in the de-mining. Several NGO's from the Sunday morning network meeting helped Rotarians staff these four booths. Special thanks to: Marshall Legacy Trust, Handicap International, Prosthetics Outreach Foundation, Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation, and Adopt-a-Minefield for their help during the five days. Also helping at the booths were personnel from the U.S. Department of State, Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement. This is the second year the State Department has provided a large display for our booth.

Rotarians who stopped by each of our booths received a lapel tag to wear the rest of the convention. These bright yellow tags with the letters RFMA.org were clearly visible on Rotarians' lapels and badges throughout the convention, giving our Action Group added visibility.

Rotarians for Mine Action can take special pride in their work at the Centennial Convention that helped many, many Rotarians learn about our fellowship and the importance of humanitarian mine action. We hope to see many clubs becoming involved with mine action as a result of our outreach work at the convention.

U.S. and Thai Rotary Clubs Help Clear Path International Reach Out To Landmine Survivors Along the Troubled Thai-Burma Border

When Brian Hafner and Kate Allyn from Prosthetics Research Study first rolled out the plastic-coated canvas grid of the human body at the Mae Tao Clinic's prosthetics department, the Karen and Shan technicians chuckled. The two-dimensional shape of the human body was enormous, made for a westerner. They had even more fun when one of them laid down on it and his physique drowned inside the blue-colored outline.

But the canvas grid map, just one of several components of a new measurement technology Hafner and Allyn were introducing at the clinic on behalf of Rotary and Clear Path International, will work just fine for its intended purpose. Together with a frame that captures the position of patient's hips and another that measures parts of the lower body, the grid will help record the alignment of a landmine amputee's skeletal frame in relation to the projected place for his or her prosthetic.

That means the amputee no longer has to travel to be measured and fitted for a mobility device. The technicians to whom Hafner and Allyn are showing the use of the new "Transtibial Alignment System" or TTAS will be able to backpack into the Karen state inside Burma, make a plaster cast of the residual limb, gather the patient's alignment information and bring it back for production of the artificial limb at the clinic, which is just across the border in Thailand.

That makes the TTAS a kind of silver bullet for the troubled Thai-Burma border region and possibly other places in the world. Many landmine survivors in the Karen and Shan states bordering Thailand are displaced by the constant fighting between Burmese government troops and ethnic rebels wanting independence. It

wouldn't be safe for them to travel even if they could trek across the mountains into Thailand on just one leg or sometimes none.



Rotarians from the club on Bainbridge Island recognized this potential several years ago, when the co-founder of Clear Path International (who is also a member) and representatives from its technical partner, Prosthetics Research Study of Seattle (PRS), introduced the concept to them in 2003.

By that time, PRS and the Center for International Rehabilitation (CIR) in Chicago had already invested considerable time and money into the development of a prototype. Clear Path and the Bainbridge club co-funded the completion of three TTAS units: one for experimentation at PRS in Seattle, one for use by CIR in El Salvador and one for use by Clear Path and the Mae Tao Clinic for ethnic Burmese refugees in Thailand.

Clear Path International, which was co-founded on Bainbridge Island by Rotarian Imbert Matthee in 2000, serves landmine accident survivors in Vietnam, Cambodia and along the Thai-Burma border. During its first five years, the mine action organization has assisted more

than 2,000 landmine victims in Southeast Asia with medical and social services; sent more than 50 containers to hospitals in 14 mine-affected countries; and cleared explosive ordnance from a former U.S. combat base in Vietnam's old DMZ where 400 children now attend the elementary school it sponsored.

The TTAS project is the only initiative Clear Path is doing with support from Rotary. After the Bainbridge Island club first provided Clear Path with a grant to buy materials to make prostheses at the Mae Tao Clinic and another grant to help PRS complete the three TTAS units, the island club sought a partnership with the Thai Rotary club in Mae Sot to go after District 5020 and Rotary International matching funds.

Thanks to the inspiration of then-District President Bill McCarthy, other Rotary clubs in District 5020 also contributed to RI matching funding of nearly \$20,000 for the introduction of TTAS and the purchase of materials to make 200 prostheses for disabled ethnic Burmese landmine survivors in Thailand and in the Karen state. Now that the technology has been introduced by Hafner and Allyn from PRS, the Mae Tao Clinic and the grassroots Karen Handicap Welfare Association are putting together a backpacking team of six to go into Burma and start using TTAS there.

If the system works well in the field, the partner organizations believe it could be used elsewhere in the world to help amputees in remote or politically troubled areas get better access to the kind of hope-restoring physical mobility prostheses offer. Clear Path is still looking for support from other Rotary clubs to help fund its Thai-Burma border initiative on an ongoing basis so it can help hundreds more regain their footing in an already difficult life.



For more information, contact Rotarian Imbert Matthee at 206-780-5964 or visit www.cpi.org.

New RFMA Regional Representative



We welcome, Rotarian Søren Havemann Tårnby Rotary Klub who has agreed to serve as the RFMA Regional representative for Zone 16.

Soren is the Project Leader for District 1470's Mine Action Sri Lanka. Soren served as a member of the Land Mine Action Symposium panel at the Centennial Convention in Chicago.

He will be serving as the chair of the Sgt-At-Arms for the 2006 RI Convention in Malmo/Copenhagen.

**P.S.
Don't forget to register your
mine action projects at
rfma.org.**