



PRESIDENT'S MINUTE

Rotarians For Mine Action is a voluntary non-for-profit association dedicated to building awareness amongst Rotarians and Rotaractors, who are interested and involved in efforts to rid the world of landmines and to assist those who have been injured by them. Won't you join us?

The purposes of the RFMA is to: increase Rotarians and Rotaractors awareness and knowledge of landmine related issues; encourage Rotarians, Rotaractors and their clubs to become involved and/or share in projects that promote landmine risk education in countries afflicted with landmines and other unexploded ordinances, support the removal and decommissioning of landmines, provide survivor assistance to landmine victims and their families, and support the rebuilding of sustainable community development in landmine cleared communities.

Membership in the RFMA is open to all Rotarians, Rotaractors and their spouses. Memberships are \$10.00 US and will be valid through the Rotary year. To join simply go to www.rfma.org and follow the link 'Join RFMA' and complete the form online. You will automatically be included in our email database and will receive periodic newsletters about our activities and progress.

In the first quarter of the Rotary year 2006-07 we will be soliciting nominations for the RFMA Executive.

We now have just under 200 members and 8 District Chapters. Congratulations to all who have joined RFMA and have become part of the solution. Particular kudos to our new RFMA Chapter in District 1470 for getting an article into the May 06 Rotarian!

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.

News Shorts:

2006 International Conference

RFMA will operate a booth in the Hall of Friendship – an information piece will be distributed, as will RFMA.org tags. Please drop by or, better yet, volunteer to assist in running the booth (it's a great way to meet new people). The stand number is **B4 -038**. Set-up is on June 10th and the booth operates from the 11th to the 14th. Dismantling will be done on June 14/15. Thanks to Carol Edwina Andersen of the Copenhagen International Rotary Club for getting this organised. You can contact her at carol.edwina@mail.dk. Here is her photo so you will know who to approach to volunteer!



On June 13th from 14.30 – 16.00 – Hall B5. – Meeting Business Seminar Room there will be a business seminar titled **“How Do We Make the World Safe From Landmines**. Panellists include:
Hanne B. Elmelund Gam, Head of Office, Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
Peggy E. Pope, U.S. Department of State Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement;
Paul Macintosh, Head of Danish De-mining Group – Denmark;
Rosemary Barker Aragon, Past District Governor (D-5030), USA Vice President RFMA;
Erik K. Lauritzen, Rotary Club of Frederiksberg, Frederiksberg, Denmark.
Board Resource Liaison: Yoshikazu Minamisono, RI Director, Rotary Club of Hofu, Japan

The session will be followed by a mine detection dog demonstration by DANIMAR A/S



The RFMA will hold an information meeting on June 14th. 14.30 - 16.00 Room 20 (2nd Floor). This is an opportunity to meet other members, to share information about their projects and to discuss what more can be done to encourage more Rotary landmine action. **Please bring pictures and details of your projects and plans.**

Encourage others to join RFMA

Just like in your Rotary Club – membership, membership, membership. Size matters when you are trying to influence. We believe that many Rotarians around the world are concerned about the landmine issue and believe, as we do, that it is solvable with a concerted effort. We need to be able to prove it. Our numbers need to grow in order to do so.



Form a District Chapter!

One of the key ways to build RFMA is through the creation of District Chapters. Right now there are registered Chapters in Districts 7070, 5030, 7080, 7090, 5130, 5150, 5240 and 1470. It is easy to form a Chapter – just get your District Governor’s approval to form a Chapter and then let us know at info@clmf.org. Need to know what to do next? Sent an email to one of the Chapters through www.rfma.org and ask!



Register your Projects:

A database has been created by a team under the direction of RFMA Treasurer Sandy Boucher (RC Toronto) and with the support of the staff of James Madison University and funding from the U.S. Department of State.

The initial phase of this project involved the creation of an on-line, public, searchable database containing program descriptions for landmine related projects that Rotary Clubs have implemented. Initially this database will be populated with projects known to Rotarians For Mine Action. As the database matures, emphasis will be placed on encouraging Rotary Clubs to list their own projects. [Register your mine action project at www.rfma.org](http://www.rfma.org)

Copenhageners Support Demining in Sri Lanka

By Carol Edwina Andersen

Twenty years of civil war has left Sri Lanka torn apart and impoverished. As always, it is the poor who take the brunt of the suffering. Some of those people living on the North East coast of Sri Lanka are now among the poorest of the world's poor.

Landmines are one of the causes of their poverty. Fields of mines cannot grow food. Houses used as ammunition dumps cannot be used as homes. More than 700.000 people became refugees within their own land.

The brokerage of a peace treaty in 2002 enabled the Danish De-mining Group to begin work in the heavily mined areas in the North of Sri Lanka. From 2003 they have had extra support from Rotary district 1470, which consists of clubs in the greater Copenhagen area.

The results are impressive. Since 2002 when landmine related accidents numbered over 140, the current statistics show that numbers dropped last year to approximately 50 a year. Two thirds of the displaced people have now been able to return to their villages.

Where mine-fields once terrified the population, rice fields are now being cultivated. Houses that were once used to store unexploded ammunition have become homes again.



Danish Demining Group working with locally trained de-miners.

“Sri Lanka is a wonderful place to clear land-mines,” says Paul Macintosh, head of the Danish De-mining Group based in Copenhagen. “Almost before we have finished clearing the last mine, people are back in the fields ploughing, planting and rebuilding bombed ruins. We return after a few months to see the rice growing and families living in peace. It is very gratifying.”

After the tsunami there was a sudden and urgent demand to use the consecrated ground in grave yards for burial of the dead. Many of these areas were still mined, but in the tropical climate relatives and mourners could not wait. The Quick Response Team, which is financed by Rotary in the Copenhagen Area, stood by day and night to advise people. There were no casualties.



Since DDG began their work in 2003 landmine related casualties have fallen by 75%. The Quick Response Team has finance from Rotary clubs in District 1470 to continue work until mid 2007. Every kroner collected goes directly to the landmine clearance. There are no administration costs.



Carol Edwina Andersen
Copenhagen International Rotary Club

RFMA Chapter Profile: Verna Andrews, District 7080

Verna Andrews of the Rotary Club of Oakville-Trafalgar, first became involved in the landmine issue in 2000 after attending a session organized by the Canadian Landmine Foundation. She volunteered to work with a District Committee coordinated by Peter Thoen of the Rotary Club of Burlington-Central designed to raise awareness of the landmine issue. This Committee, and a similar group formed in District 7070 under the leadership of Chris Snyder of the Rotary Club of Toronto, became the models of RFMA District Chapters.

Verna is a nurse by training – having worked in Canada, England, United Arab Emirates and South Africa. She is the Rotary/Faculty Advisor for both the Oakville Trafalgar & St. Mildred's Interact Clubs and is President-elect of her Rotary Club for the 2007-08 Rotary year..

Verna was one of the key people attending the Seattle Conference in 2002 that advocated for RFMA and has served as Chair of the 7080 Chapter for the past three years. Through the years she has been one of the strongest supporters of Night of A Thousand Dinners – hosting events both with her Rotary Club and with her church and inspiring many others to undertake landmine events through her cheery positive leadership.

Here is Verna preparing for Night of A Thousand Dinners



Thanks Verna!

So in closing, please:

- **Help to staff the booth at the International Conference**
- **Attend the Landmine Workshop on June 13th**
- **Encourage others to join RFMA**
- **Form a RFMA District Chapter**
- **Register your mine action projects on rfma.org**
- **Share this newsletter with others!**