



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings fellow Rotarians and friends, I am very excited to be taking over leadership of RFMA at this time, but first I must offer my profound thanks and congratulations to those who have gone before. Richard Clarke and Rosemary Barker-Aragon have been outstanding leaders over the first critical years of our existence. They have taken us from being a loose group of keen and committed Rotarians interested in the landmine issue to an active and focussed team with a clear identity and a way forward. I thank them both for their commitment, wisdom and experience and hope that I can continue to meet the high standards that they have set.

There have been many others who have played important roles in our development and I am thrilled that many of them remain active in the group and in active leadership positions, my thanks to them too.

RFMA although still relatively quite small, has come a long way in a short time and I believe we now have all the pieces in place to move forward with our goals and grow much bigger. Some of our efforts have really begun to bear fruit, while others are still in their early stages and require more work. I would like to take this opportunity to outline some of the areas that your board are going to be focussing on over the next year.

1. Our primary focus will be on communication and finding ways to improve on the ways and the frequency with which we interact with each other around the world. The newsletter has been a great success and my thanks go to all those who have worked so hard on that front (Sally Mackle, Scott Fairweather and Richard Clarke).

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

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The website has also come a long way and has some great functionality but is still fairly rudimentary and we have in hand plans to improve it further, again our thanks, especially to Scott Fairweather who has done so much work on this.

In particular we will be replacing the bulletin/chat board which has never worked the way we wanted it to. I believe that the website will become the focal point of much of what we do and will allow members all over the world to see what is going on and get involved. The other area that we are currently working on is a replacement for the PayPal system for members to pay their dues and make donations. As with the website, this tool was chosen as a result of the extremely limited funds and resources that we have available, but it has rarely worked outside North America and we are aware that it has been a major source of frustration to members and prospective members.

2. The second area where we will be focussing our attention is the expansion of our membership. We need to continue to spread the message about our efforts, and identify and recruit people who are already active on the landmine issue or who wish to be. Our District Chapters program has been very successful and we know that even a small group of committed Rotarians can do great things when they get together and work as a team.
3. Thirdly we will be promoting the development of more landmine projects by members and Clubs worldwide. Although RFMA itself can not and will not undertake project work, we will be working with clubs and members to provide information, resources and connections to allow them to put together and run successful landmine projects large and small. We know that many projects have all ready been undertaken and completed and we want to learn about them and get the details into our project database. Nothing will underline our message better than a long list of projects, concrete proof of what we are doing and what can be done to rid the world of landmines and help those affected by them!

I am looking forward to meeting and interacting with all of you over the next year, plans are already afoot to get together in Salt Lake City in June at the Rotary Convention.

Best regards,

Sandy Boucher
President, RFMA



MARIA ZEFANIAS GULELE'S STORY

submitted by Christo Schute, RC Pretoria East



After Mozambique became independent from Portugal in 1975, a brutal civil war between the ruling Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (Frelimo) and the rebel forces of the Mozambique National Resistance (Renamo) broke out. Women and children were kidnapped by rebel soldiers and forced to move with their captors. Children as young as twelve had to carry weapons and food while walking in front of the rebel soldiers during patrols, and were used as human shields and living landmine detonators. Maria Zefania Gulele, now aged 37, was one such young girl. She was captured in Vilanculos, a small coastal village in the Inhambane province, 720 km north of the capital Maputo.

During a reconnaissance patrol, Maria stepped on a landmine and was gravely injured. Her captors left her bleeding and mutilated in the field where she fell. Fortunately, Frelimo soldiers found her when they investigated the cause of the explosion. They took her to the ramshackle hospital in Inhambane, where both her legs were amputated above the knee. Maria Gulele: another landmine statistic, another innocent casualty of a futile war.

During her rehabilitation Maria proved to be a courageous survivor who was determined to fight for her independence. Although forced to use her hands to drag herself through the blisteringly hot sand, she refused to give up, and managed to teach herself the art of braiding and hairdressing. When she returned to her hometown of Vilanculos, she borrowed ten dollars to buy the basic equipment she needed to start her own business as a hairdresser.

Maria worked in front of her house in the sand, where she sat on a small chair with her clients in front of her on a grass mat. Her customers sat for hours in summer temperatures of between 35-45 °C (sand temperature of 40-50 °C) to have their hair braided and styled. During the torrential rainy season, Maria could not attend to her customers in her open-air salon. Without customers, she had no income.

In 2005 the leader of a South African project assisting landmine victims with prosthetic limbs and humanitarian aid enquired about landmine victims who could not reach the rehabilitation centre in Vilanculos. He was told about Maria and decided to visit her. After travelling along the rough, sandy roads which are typical of the area, he found her sitting outside her hut, busy braiding a client's hair. After seeing the conditions in which she worked, and having witnessed her irrepressible energy, he decided to build her a truly African hair salon: a spacious oval structure with cement floor, pole-framed walls, and thatched roof. Maria and her clients were now more comfortable -- shaded from the harsh African sun in the extreme summer heat and sheltered from the rain. Since then, Maria's business has expanded; her income has increased; she has started to teach others the art and craft of hairdressing; and she is now in a position to employ the students she has trained.



Maria is a single parent of two children. Since she cannot move far from her home, she supplements her income by acting as a day mother, and takes care of her neighbours' children while their parents are at work or visiting relatives in the countryside.

Maria's new hair salon was officially handed over to her at a ceremony at the beginning of August 2005, during which donations of hair products, clothing, and toys were presented. Maria also received a wheelchair, cooking pots, and blankets. Even though the wheelchair cannot be used beyond the immediate environs of her house, because of the sandy terrain, it has given her a new-found mobility which has added immeasurably to the quality of her life. The radiant smile of joy and gratitude on her face will long be remembered by those who witnessed it. Her happiness, reflected in the faces of all who had the good fortune to share her joy and understand its significance, bears eloquent testimony to the strength, fortitude, and generosity of the human spirit.

To show her appreciation, Maria reciprocated with an age-old Shangaan tradition. As a token of her gratitude, she gave two of her most valued possessions -- a white goat (a token of serenity) and a chicken (a tenth of her wealth) -- to the people who helped her. She prepared the meat

herself, as is the custom, and, together with her donors, enjoyed a fine celebration in true Shangaan style.



While driving through the beautiful, seemingly boundless African countryside, a place of ancient baobab trees and cerulean sky, on the way to the peaceful coastal village of Vilanculos, it is hard to imagine that only a few years ago a young woman named Maria was lying in a lonely field, grievously injured by an indiscriminate landmine. It is worth remembering that the town of Vilanculos and its outskirts is still a mine-infested area, cruelly burdened with the subterranean menace of undiscovered landmines. The town waits for a sustained and effective de-mining operation which will prevent innocent people from losing a limb or losing their lives while they plough their lands and cultivate their crops. In the brutal lottery of war and its aftermath, it is only a matter of time and chance before the next landmine maims, or kills, another human being.






Visitors to Maria's new hair salon will find a serene and optimistic Maria, a young woman of great dignity and courage, at ease in her surroundings and determined to live her life to the full. Maria Zefanias Gulele is no longer a statistic. She is a symbol of hope for landmine victims all over the world.







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.

ROTARIANS FOR MINE ACTION BOARD 2006-07

<p>President: Sandy Boucher joined the Toronto Rotary Club (D7070) in 1999 after relocating from Hong Kong. Since joining he has played an active role in his club's International Service Committee and was chair in 2001. He is also a founding member and captain of the club's Dragon Boat Team – now in its fifth year, and is currently on the club's board of directors. Sandy serves on District 7070's land mine committee where he has actively supported the District's successful Night of A Thousand Dinners.</p>	
<p>Past-President: Richard Clarke is a member of the Parkdale-High Park Rotary Club in Toronto, Canada. A Rotarian since 1984, Richard has served as President of two clubs and served as DG for District 7070 in 2002-03. Richard is current a member of his District's land mine committee. He is currently serving D 7070 as District Foundation Chair, is an Annual Programs Fund Strategic Advisor to the Rotary Foundation and is a RI Zone Membership Coordinator for Zone 22.</p>	
<p>Special Advisor: Rosemary Barker Aragon, a third generation Rotarian, has been a member of the Rotary Club of University District of Seattle since 1987. Rosemary served Rotary as District Governor for District 5030 in 2002-03. During her term as governor, Rosemary sponsored a very successful Rotary Landmine Action Conference in Seattle. Rosemary has co-lead a Polio NID to Ethopia, and been to Mexico twice and Guatemala three times on humanitarian projects.</p>	
<p>Secretary: Terri Clark joined Rotary in 1992 and is now a member of the Rotary Club of Arcata Sunrise. Terri served as District 5130 Governor during the 2002-2003 Rotary year. She and her husband, Marty Lay, also a Rotarian, have made their home in Humboldt County (northern California) since the 70's. They have participated in the Festival of Brotherhood, a project fair in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico since 1997.</p>	
<p>Treasurer: Seemoir Ho, C.A., is a member of the Rotary Club of North York (D7070). Since joining Rotary in 2002, Seemoir has been a very active member of her club, serving on the club community service and fundraising committees. She served as President of the Rotary Club of North York during the 2005-2006 year. In 2006 she joined the Canadian Landmine Foundation as the Manager of Finance.</p>	

<p>VP, External Relations: Scott Fairweather is past-President of the Rotary Club of Toronto-Forest Hill (D7070) and a current Assistant Governor in District 7070. He was the founding Chairman of Rotarians for Mine Action in 2002. Scott is President and CEO of the Canadian Landmine Foundation and Director of Adopt-A-Minefield Canada. He is an honorary member of the Canadian Association of Veterans in UN Peacekeeping. Scott is active in promoting RFMA and in the RFMA D7070 Committee.</p>	
<p>VP, Africa: Mayowa Adeyemi is Immediate Past President of the Rotary Club of Shomolu (D9110). Previously he served as Club Secretary, and is past-President of the Rotaract Club of Yabatech. Mayowa is an Associate Member of the Institute of Chartered Management Accountants and Executive Secretary of the Sonny Kuku Foundation.</p>	
<p>VP, North America West: Sally Bader Mackle has been a Rotarian since 1992 and is a member of the Rotary Club of Seattle #4 (D5030) where she has served as chair of the International Services Committee and a Board member. She was a key organiser of a 2002 Landmine Action Conference for Rotarians and a 2005 follow up workshop at the Centennial Convention in Chicago. Sally led a District-wide project to raise funds to demine three villages in Cambodia and is currently working to fund a fourth village.</p>	
<p>VP, Europe: Wolfgang Jockusch is a member of the Rotary Club of Claremont Sunrise (D5300) and is a captain in the German Air Force currently serving in Afghanistan and a Minister in United Methodist Church. His expertise lies in Humanitarian Aid and Refugee Assistance. Once his current tour is completed, Wolfgang will be posted to Berlin.</p>	



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, 5320 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)



So in closing, please:

- **Encourage others to join RFMA**
- **Form a RFMA District Chapter**
- **Register your mine action projects on rfma.org**
- **Share this newsletter with others!**