



THE ROTARY CLUB OF KNYSNA
NEWSLETTER
AUGUST 2011



PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Rob's Ramblings

Whilst I understand my ramblings should be about the affairs of Rotary and our Club, I felt the urge to communicate the message from our Mayor regarding the recent tragedy in Rheenendal as circulated by The Knysna Business Chamber.

Knysna School Bus Tragedy

The Knysna Community is still shocked to have lost 15 lives to a tragic bus accident in Rheenendal yesterday morning. The accident reminded us once again just how fragile life is and how quickly loss and heartbreak can enter our lives. In the wake of such a loss we are haunted by things we don't, and may never understand. Yet the solace we seek may not come from answers, so we look for comfort in the belief of love's everlasting connection. On behalf of the municipality I offer our sincere condolences those families affected - may this love lift you and hold you close, and give you peace.

The support from individuals, companies and institutions so far has been phenomenal and I want to thank all who have contributed alleviating the pain in Rheenendal. Going forward there are a lot more items that we need, and we would like to call on the public/ colleagues to please support our efforts and help those affected. The children obviously lost all their school items and clothes in the accident, and we need donations for the white school shirts, school shoes, grey skirts, grey socks, stationery and school bags:

These items can be brought to the Municipal Offices in Clyde Street, and the municipality will handle the distribution.

For cash donations, Group Editors, the parent company of the Knysna-Plett Herald has opened a bank account in the name of Rheenendal Bus Tragedy Support Fund to assist the families. The Knysna-Plett Herald has donated R10 000 to this fund and encourage anyone who wants to assist these traumatised families to do the same. Group Editors will liaise with the families and ensure all funds raised go toward assisting them during this terrible tragedy.

The bank details are as follows:

Account Name Rheenendal Bus Tragedy Support Fund, First National Bank, George-Branch number 210114 and account number 62324295676.

The funeral date has not been finalized, but AVBOB already agreed to sponsor the coffins, and the Municipality offered their services in terms of preparing the graves, etc. We are still looking for someone to sponsor a marquee for the event, and anyone willing to help us out can contact the office of the Acting Municipal Manager, Lauren Waring on (044) 302 6300.

As a community we need to stand together and offer our support where we can, and we call on all our residents to help us to help these families. Even in their times of distress, the families and community has requested that their thanks be communicated to all who have assisted whether in action or word.

Thank you

Georlene Wolmarans

Executive Mayor
Knysna Municipality

I believe different times call for different things and I ask for your acceptance, understanding and the reason for this insertion in our newsletter. I urge our Club and members to exercise calm, sensitivity and rational thinking and without panic respond to the genuine needs of this grief stricken community as they arise. The Rotary Club of Knysna together with the Anns have responded immediately and have in the short term provided food for the families. We will continue to monitor the situation and assist where most needed.

WERKSWINKEL GETS NEW TOOLS

Early this year, Joyce and Jeff Barnes together with Barbara and Bryan Baguley, from the UK and members of the Rotary Club of Worsley visited our club in Knysna. Of the many things which they saw in Knysna, and which they discussed several times on returning to the UK, was seeing a young man repairing wheelchairs at the Werkswinkel using tools of very poor quality. They donated £50 to the Werkswinkel to purchase a decent set of tools. When sending the money, they increased it to £100, with the request that something be bought for the ladies as well. Alan Warne obtained various tools along with several pairs of good scissors and a steam press and these were all handed over to the Werkswinkel earlier this month.



With a little help from Knysna Rotary, the sewing machines at Die Werkswinkel will be whirring madly! Here, Rtn Alan Warne presents members of the sewing circle with tools of their trade.



Rtn Alan Warne with Werkswinkel's Mongesi Siko who now has more suitable tools to enable him to repair wheelchairs.

RHEENENDAL SCHOOL GRADE R CLASSROOMS



The Original Building

In 2006, the Western Cape Department of Education built two much-needed classrooms and three toilets for Grade R learners at Rheenendal school. Unfortunately funds were not sufficient to connect the toilets and electricity. As a result the building stood empty for four years!!

e'Pap volunteers approached The Rotary Club of Knysna for assistance. Apparently a letter had been written to the Provincial Minister of Education and Knysna Municipality approached to connect the services. Province and the local Municipality each declared that the problem was that of the other. Finally, after much agitation by a local Rotarian, permission was granted for Rotary to address the problem.



The New Complex

Consequently the Rotary Club of Knysna approached The Rotary Club of Knoxville, Tennessee with which assistance for other projects had previously been arranged. A past President of that Club, Dr Mike Shires, had retired to Knysna 7 years ago and had established the pipeline for Matching Grants. Knoxville's Frank Rothermel got the wheels rolling and the 6th Matching Grant between the 2 clubs was arranged. Matching Grants are a scheme whereby a local Club can partner with another (usually more wealthy Club) to fund a project. The combined funds are then matched by Rotary International, resulting in significant gearing up of the original funding.

Local Rotarian Alan Warne got the plumbing and the electrical connections done and there was money left over for educational equipment which was used to acquire 9 new computers and other learning aids. A most fulfilling completion of another Rotary project, filling real needs in a school in a poor area with hard working staff.

Regretfully tragedy struck the school on 24th August when the school bus veered off the road and landed in a river resulting in 14 learners perishing. (see President Rob's Ramblings)



Past President Lesley Satchel cutting the Tape with Principal Mr. Williams in the background



Gifts from Knoxville Rotary Club



Learners enjoying the new classroom



Past President Lesley Satchel doing the Handover

INTERACTOR INDUCTIONS

This month has seen an outbreak of new Interactors taking over, as the new academic year gets under way.

Oakhill



Tanna Sott inducts Kristi van Staden

Percy Mdala



Mesixole Dyani hands over to new President Nobuhle Number

Knysna Sekondêr



Induction was done in assembly in front of the entire school. The President, Fundeka Mkoko introduced herself and her board to the school and promised to carry on the good work for the community. Rotary President Rob Clark addressed the school and asked them to support the new board and thanked the old board for the hard work they carried out. Special thanks must go to Ricardo Smith - outgoing Vice President who stepped in to help out last year when last year's President resigned.

THE GOGOS GO SHOPPING



Esther Mahafu and her group of children choosing shoes

Last Saturday a group of Rotarians ferried 64 children, and their Gogos, into town on a shopping trip to buy school uniforms. There was much excitement and the complex logistics of getting the right children into the right shop at the right time, mostly worked! Together with the basic uniform and a pair of shoes, each child was allowed to purchase a fun item of clothing.

In 2009 the Rotary Club of Knysna was host to Dr David Harrison from the national LoveLife organization, who told us about the newly launched goGogetter program and its "Gogos". These are a group of mature women who have taken on the responsibility of up to 20 children in need of help, predominantly children from AIDS/HIV affected homes, child-headed homes and abandoned children. David explained that the grandmothers (Gogos) have the amazing ability to promote dialogue between generations, they are key distributors of wisdom and are able to effectively and lovingly educate those who look up to them, namely the children.



Time for a coldrink, Rotarian Peter Klews does the honours

The Gogos have been trained to advocate effectively for school attendance, access to grants and food. This was obviously a great idea, and our Rotary Club immediately funded four Gogos in Knysna. In September 2010 the Department of Social Welfare recognised the value of the scheme and stepped in with support. Nationally, we currently have some 500 grannies (eight in Knysna) doing their bit for charity and the community.

The funding for the shopping trip came from the efforts of a Rotary Ambassadorial Student, Damian Lahoud, during the year he spent away from Knysna studying in Sweden, where he was able to raise an astonishing R118,000 to set up a fund to support the local Gogos. More shopping trips are planned. Further information on LoveLife can be found at www.lovelife.org.za and the Rotary Club of Knysna can be found at www.knysnarotary.co.za



Rotary Anns Linda Smerdon and Isabelle Clark help with fitting out



Back to LoveLife handing out shopping bags. Rotarians Sesel Hartshorne and Gladman Pantsi strive to bring a modicum of order

MATCHING GRANTS

Report for the 2010-2011 Rotary Year

This year the Club has been the Host Sponsor for 6 MGs totalling R952,455:

1) *Born in Africa Vehicle:* Born In Africa (BIA) is a non-profit organization, active in socio-economically disadvantaged areas around Plettenberg Bay. The organization predominantly seeks to provide educational opportunities for deprived children. The initial application went to the RC of Plettenberg Bay but stalled, for a number of reasons. The original request for two Tata vehicles had to be downgraded to a single vehicle when the RC of Knysna eventually managed to resuscitate the MG. A Toyota bus with several useful accessories was purchased with the total funding of R327,496 by the Rotary Foundation, 3 Belgian RCs, 1 German RC and the Rotary Club of Knysna.

2) *e'Pap Contribution:* e'Pap is a pre-cooked fortified food which is distributed to malnourished children by a network of volunteers. This food has been shown to increase resistance to infections and improve mental acuity, so helping these children to get the most out of their education as well as providing a significant improvement in their general health status. Some 3,000 children in the Knysna area receive e'Pap every day. The Amersham (UK) Rotary Club was co-sponsor for this MG and a cheque for R91,245 was presented at the Annual Knysna e'Pap volunteer's lunch earlier this year.

3) *Knysna Sport School:* The Knysna Sport School has established a facility which supports and encourages local schools and their boys and girls in their sporting activities. The Sport School believes in the promotion of sportsmanship, fellowship and self-respect among children in Knysna through the medium of a healthy sporting ethos and environment, and the development of skills in their chosen sport, irrespective of colour or background. The Rotary Club of Knysna is fortunate to have ongoing financial support from the Nieuwkoop RC in the Netherlands. For the 3rd consecutive year they have provided bursaries for deserving children/teenagers at the Knysna Sport School. This year the MG provided a total of R210,459 which will provide support for 129 youngsters.

4) *Gogo Scheme:* This scheme which provides grannie mentors for children without a normal family is described above. When Damian Lahoud, a previous Rotary Exchange Student from the Knysna RC was awarded an Ambassadorial Scholarship to study in Sweden, he used the opportunity to raise funds for a MG for the Gogos. The sum of R118,000 was raised with the support of the Linkoping, Aurora RC, the personal efforts of Damian and the Rotary Foundation.

5) *Preschool Project:* Bath (UK) Interactors raised approximately R50,000 for their preschool project in Knysna and applied to their RC to assist in converting it to a MG with Knysna RC. The money was for playground equipment, paint, fencing and educational puzzles and toys for their upgrading efforts at the preschools. The amount of R105,265 was raised and used during their recent visit when the Interactors combined with local Interactors to put the money to the maximum effect.

6) *Rheenendal Primary School:* About 5 years ago the Department of Education built two beautiful classrooms and three toilets for Grade R at Rheenendal School, but ran out of money and had the sewerage running the wrong way and the electricity unconnected. As a result the building stood empty for four years!! E'pap volunteers approached Rotary to see if they could help. The Municipality refused to put matters right. As nothing was forthcoming from the Department, Joan Huskisson was able to rapidly obtain a MG with one of our old friends in Knoxville, Tennessee, Frank Rothermel and the sum of R100,000 was raised. Alan Warne from Knysna RC got the plumbing and the electrical connections done and there was money left over for educational equipment, including 9 new computers. This was a most fulfilling completion of a MG, filling real needs in a school in a poor area with hard working staff. (see photos and separate report above).

AUGUST FELLOWSHIP



August found Knysna Rotarians enjoying the intellectually challenging fellowship event of a Beetle Drive at the Yacht Club. This was a great fun event, well organized by Elwin Thompson as the Beetle Master and Andre Sandiford who sorted out the logistics.

The event was well supported and the format ensured that the players were regularly interchanged. After 15 closely contested rounds Peter Klews emerged as the Top Beetle with 444 points and awarded the star prize!



All attention on the Beetle Master



Top Beetle – Peter Klews

DORI'S DOODLES

On the 15th August we Ann's had our first and lengthy meeting this year. We are thrilled to welcome Val Himes and Jaqui von Ribbeck as new Knysna Rotary Ann's and wish them both many happy and fruitful years amongst us.

Peggy Lloyd had her birthday on the 6th August and I popped in to visit Les and Peggy at Leisure Gardens with happy birthday wishes from us all. We laughed a lot and Peggy told me about her 8 grandchildren and 9 and a half great grandchildren! Wow!

We were made to feel very special on National Woman's day and thank President Rob and the Rotarians for inviting the Ann's to Rotary Luncheon and for presenting us with a beautiful red rose. Annette Jahnel, the guest speaker at this special occasion, inspired me to tour the world and to read her book "My year of Beds" as she touched on highlights of her solo world tour in her little car, the Renault Kango.

This weekend the three Hospice Ballet Performances take preference and the Anns are baking and organizing to serve tea, scones and sandwiches during interval. Judith kindly offered to sell the tickets for tea and eats in the entrance hall before each performance. Thank-you to all the Ann's and Rotarians doing duty and to all the Ann's and Friends providing eats. To all the Ann's and Rotarians attending the Ballet - enjoy and let the dancers whisk you away into a fantasy world of dream and dance, fairytale, love and adventure!

Our next meeting will be on the 12th September, to which we invited Linzi Jansen to speak about her experience at the Orang-utan Sanctuary in Borneo.

Signing off for now!
Regards.
Dori

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

Remember not to forget that which you do not need to know.

President: Rob Clark; **Past President:** Franc Bentley;
Secretary: John Satchel; **Treasurer:** Adrian Auckland; **Club Administration:** Ina Thompson; **Service Projects:** Alan Warne;
New Generations: Mike Mills ;
Rotary Foundation: Peter Southey; **Public Relations:** Dereck Wheeldon ;
Ann's President: Dori Waterston
Venue for Tuesday Meetings: Yacht Club at the Knysna Waterfront at 12:30 for 13:00