

MESA

Worldwide



A NEWSLETTER OF MESA, A DISTRICT 6600 PROJECT, #6

NEXT MEETING: March 9, 2005*
Findlay Ford: 6 P.M.
Warehouse Work Session: 1 P.M.

***Please note change in usual schedule from Tuesday to Wednesday and from 4P.M. meeting time to 6 P.M.**

Highlights from January 11th Meeting

MESA Steering Committee Minutes
January 11, 2005

Ron Stoner reported that we have shipped 6 containers since the last MESA meeting in November. The Diller foundation funded one to Senegal and another to Liberia. Another container shipment went to Peru and three to Panama. The warehouse has been sold and we need to move by April 1, 2005.

MESA has received a Discovery grant for Mongolia. Ron, and two doctors will go in May to check out the medical needs cited by Mongolian Rotarian Do.

Mel Honig showed pictures of the well being dug at El Milagro. A second well (also paid for by MESA, at \$4000 each) was being dug in February. An Oregon church group will be there that month to complete the infrastructure necessary to distribute water to the residents of El Milagro and three nearby communities. The wells were dug at less than ¼ the quoted cost through the efforts of Paul Darilek of Living Water El Salvador, a non-profit NGO.

Stan Kujawa reported that Nubia Arevalo, Wish Star Director is accompanying an 11 month old Salvadoran burn victim to Boston. The child will be receiving several surgeries at the Shriner's Hospital Burn Unit.

District 6600 Rotary Clubs, that supported the Skip-a- Meal food drive last year had their donated food arrive at the St Vincent de Paul orphanage in El Salvador.

Tom Brumley is going Feb 5, for the 10th time, for a 2-week period with 2 other ophthalmologists. They will use the new Land Cruiser donated by a Rotary Club in northern California, and stay in the new guest/staff quarters built with materials sent by MESA. They usually have a waiting list of 150-200 patients; 80 are waiting already.

Maumee Rotary is supporting a vented stove project in Guatemala. Each stove costs \$55 when purchased through Trees, Water, People in Oregon.

UNIENDO Conference– The District gave \$2,500 to support the 7 Rotaracters attending (2 each from U of Toledo, Lourdes, and Owens CC plus Northwood advisor). The Rotaracters are going to visit 2 girls' shelters, the G.C. dump, and other projects. 23 Rotarians and spouses are prepared to attend, with others making private arrangements. Please read the following story by Judy Riggle about the conference.

Bob Haas and 19 volunteers are in Belize for 2 weeks to do school construction and remodeling. Please read the story submitted by Father Bob.

Steve Day, DG, stated that plans are continuing to be developed to provide relief to people affected by last month's tsunami in Asia. Initial feeling is that District 6600 clubs should work through **MESA** on long-term projects. Please read article by Mel Honig on how the Sandusky Club is responding to the needs of tsunami victims.

ROTARY PROJECT FAIR

GUATEMALA, JANUARY 2005

By Judy Riggle

Transported by Rotaracters (Rotarians of college age) to Antigua, an hour from Guatemala City. Sunny, temperature in the 70's. Posado Hermano Pedro in center of cobble stoned city. Father Pedro walked the streets ringing a bell to raise money for the poor. The Pope came to the Guatemala City airport to canonize him about 30 years ago.

The view from our rooftop was spectacular in the morning, when the sun ascended the surrounding volcanoes (one of them active) and lit up the domes of the many churches. Breakfast buffet included pancakes, beans, fried plantains, eggs, cereal, papaya, watermelon, and pineapple-as it did all over Guatemala. (Beans were so good that I had to swear off after several days...)

Project Fair was at the fancy Santo Dominga hotel (400 employees), an ancient monastery with statuary, rose petal sprinkled pools, captive parrots, and ruins. Whereas 7 or 8 years ago there were a

half dozen booths promoting projects seeking a sponsor, there were 50 this year, all with videos, handouts, and ambitious Rotarians from all over Central America. Projects ranged from vocational schools to bookmobiles to sewage/outhouses.

Much interest was shown in our NW Ohio MESA (Medical Equipment and Supplies Abroad) project, which has 20,000 sq ft of donated goods ready to ship to Central America (cheaper than other parts of the world). Tom and I left our money with the San Marcos, Guatemala club, a small new club wanting to build a hospital! Rotary women were seeking more sponsors for the 3 orphanages they run in Guatemala—they arranged for the girl we sponsor in Guatemala City to come to Antigua to spend a few hours with us: the next day we visited her at the orphanage since Tom hadn't been to the orphanage before. We spent the time with Argelia racing around town—buying her some jeans, finding stickers and hair barrettes for other girls and getting a Spanish lesson along the way since we don't share a language. We went to a jade factory for yummy snacks and info about jade (it grows at the tectonic fault lines, tanking the colors from whatever minerals are handy), then to an Argentinean steak house for dinner on the patio.

After visiting the Fundaninas in the morning, I socialized with the elderly recipients of wheelchairs in the afternoon; this is the 4th country where we've been part of the wheelchair distribution of a container of wheelchairs (280) through the Wheelchair Foundation. Exciting, colorful, zestful folklorica dancing in the evening before the closing banquet.

A van tour to prominent Antigua churches expanded to an out-of-town view of the coffee plantations, the active volcano, one to the many greenhouses growing flowers for export, and an organic macadamia nut plantation.

Off through the mountains to scenic Panajachel on Lake Atitlan, the largest lake in the country, 1,500' deep, surrounded by volcanoes. The next day we motored an hour across the lake to a Mayan village called San Lucas Toliman, where for 40 years an American priest has been helping Mayans acquire land (3 acres apiece) and build (1,600 so far) block houses with a tin roof. They just took in a nearby village which had been washed away, killing 60 residents, "giving" then land—cost to family is \$100, which takes a long time to repay until they start earning money from the crops on their 3rd acre (the first 2 acres are for feeding themselves). We traveled by cattle car to a hospital in a nearby village, and to site where a laundry has been built above land they're clearing for a women's center that will have a weaving room, a kitchen, toilet, and meeting space. Preserving fruit, very plentiful in the area, will be one project there.

Visited Ann Cameron's (American children's librarian and author now living in Panajachel) Biblioteca Popular, a lending library unequalled in C.A.. A thrill to find her there. When I visited several years ago, the library had been burned down (by the mayor who wanted the land) and was housed in a nearby school. At the Avon Lake Public Library shop we sold Guatemalan goods to support this library.

Off to Quelzaltenango where the Rotary Club treated us to dinner and a (LONG) presentation about the schools they support, and a charming local folklore dance group. In the morning the mayor handed our Honored Visitor citations in an historic hall before we visited two schools, both in the poor Mayan area. A young Marine with our group and I traded songs and dances with the kindergarten crowd "They did y Eensy Weensy Spider; and others.; we did If You're Happy and You Know It, and the Hokey Pokey. Exhilarating!

Two nights at the resort of IRTRA, with its landscaped grounds, embroidered wall hangings, raucous peacocks, welcome pool in unaccustomed heat—we'd worn every layer we brought in Antigua in the cool

evenings. The next day we were eager to see a Mayan ruin being excavated. Visit a second orphanage (the girls remembered me, crying our "Judi, Judi" when we arrived), and a hillside coffee plantation en route back to Guatemala City for morning departure.

Stunningly beautiful country with a large (60%) proud Mayan population. Traditional woven clothing patterns and customs vary from one region to another. We met committed North American Rotarians from Washington, Oregon, California, Texas, Georgia, and several spots in Canada. Rotarians also came from all over Central America. I was still saying 'Gracias' at the Oberlin grocery today. We came home to another 8' of snow. Beautiful today in the bright sun against a brilliant blue sky.

Below is a special request by Judy:

WANTED: used or new tools

Hand tools, circular saws, lumber (including scraps), hoes, rakes, shovels, cultivators, sledgehammers, crowbars, paint and brushes, roofing (including "paint" to reseal tin roofs), saws, levels Don't you have more screwdrivers or chisels than you need? Clear out your garage and "recycle" those scraps of lumber or plywood, the extra paintbrushes or rollers!

Background:

San Lucas Toliman is the center of 22 small Mayan villages scattered on the steep volcanic slopes above scenic Lake Atitlan, Guatemala. An American priest, Father Greg Shaeffer, has lived there for 40 years, and has helped 511 families organize a coffee cooperative. 1,600 block houses have been built, an orphanage, school, clinic, and old age home built. They've done reforestation projects. But his primary contribution is that he has bought land as he had money. He "sells" 3 acres of this land to villagers for \$100. 2 acres is enough to sustain the family, with the 3rd for a cash crop. The communities have had apprenticeship programs for carpentry and plumbing, but a shortage of tools. Farmers, too, have had to make do with a minimum of tools. Tool donations would truly enable these Mayan to "fish" for themselves, rather than be dependent on others.

Bring tools to Findlay Ford, just off 75 in Findlay. We want to send another container soon!
Judy Riggle

Our Recent Trip to Belize

By Bob Haas

Twenty people from Northwest Ohio went to Belize, Jan. 4-14 to work with the San Ignacio Rotary Club in Cayo District in rehabbing Santa Elena Primary School. The school enrolls 975 students, with 28 classrooms. We worked for two weeks, painting 14 classrooms, upgrading the electric, installing fans and lights in 14 rooms, including the principal's office. Three team members built and painted 12 bookcases at the Aquada Hotel where we stayed, owned by Rotarian Bill Butcher. Ten new blackboards were also made and installed. We were assisted by 12-14 members of the San Ignacio Rotary, their spouses, as well as some children from the school, and several teachers.

Two nurses in the group took part in a diabetic testing program, and three taught family life course for four days to Sophomores and Seniors at Sacred Heart College (read High School) in near by San Ignacio. R and R for the group consisted of a three-day trip to Flores, Guatemala visiting the Mayan Ruins of Tikal. The \$75,000 project consisted of building 6 new classrooms on the second floor of the school, installing insulation in the same, as well furbishing the new rooms and the six below, as well as upgrading a classroom into a teachers' lounge, upgrading the principals office, and helping a teacher to finish painting her classroom. Funding came from the parish (\$20,000+), the Shaw-Haas Fund (\$20,000), \$17,500 from the British High Commission and \$10,000 from the Ministry of Education.

The group visited the Unitedville school that the Ohio group rehabbed last year and were delighted to note considerable other improvements: a new principal's office, upgraded outhouse, sidewalks. playground equipment, outdoor drinking fountain and a picnic area down by the river. The school enrollment has increased from 92 to 125, with 26 in the 1st grade, the largest ever for the school. I was asked in the 7th and 8th grade classroom if we were going to offer scholarships again this year. Up until last year no students from Unitedville ever went to High school, a 12 to 32 mile trip one way. We offer two four-year scholarships a year, at \$500 each. Seven of the current eight 8th graders wish to attend high school.

The Ohio group also took 14 duffle bags of school supplies that went to eight schools there. We plan to send used school desks, as well as school supplies. Last year we sent through MESA 750 desks, and the year before nearly 2,000. Our goal for this year is 1,500 desks with the help of the Salvatorian mission Warehouse out of New Holstein, Wisconsin.

The group intends to return next year and work on one or two more schools. We were happy to learn that two Rotary groups from California and one from Canada hope to rehab schools in Belize following the pattern we have used. The Ohio group is from Wakeman, New London, Norwalk, Nova, Bryan, Alvada and Van West. Only two of the groups are Rotarian, the bulk is from Catholic Churches in the area.

Sandusky Rotary Adopts Tsunami Devastated Village

By Mel Honig

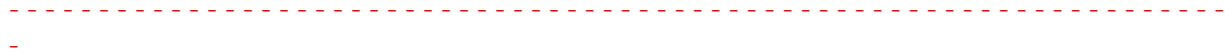
Doing its part to help alleviate the suffering caused by the tsunami of December 26th, the Rotary Club of Sandusky is adopting the fishing village of Paddiruppu, Sri Lanka. Working with K96 Radio (a Sandusky radio station) and the Rotary Club of Kandy, Sri Lanka, a campaign is being planned to help the people of this tsunami ravaged fishing village.

Although all phases of the program have yet to be put into action, initial objectives and plans to meet these objectives are being developed. Brad Smith, Co-Chair of the Tsunami Relief Committee (Susan Drotleff is the other co-chair) established contact with Rotarian Gowri Rajan of the Kandy Rotary, and through e-mail dialogue, is determining the immediate and future needs of Paddiruppu. Initial contacts indicate that fishing boats, with equipment, need to be replaced (cost \$3750 each); housing for those that lost their homes (\$2000 each) and financial support for those orphaned (\$120 per year per child). The Sandusky Club is committing itself to supporting three orphans for 3 years.

The Kandy club is continuing to make contact with village leaders to determine specific needs. As these are identified and this information is passed on to Sandusky Rotary, the club will better be able

determine further allocation of resources, and the direction needed to be taken in the future. Already Club President Mark Gross has been interviewed on K-96 Radio concerning the plight of those stricken by the Tsunami. Further public service announcements are planned and four locations have been identified as drop off points for donations and/or supplies. Collected items will be then be shipped through MESA to Sri Lanka Rotarians.

As more information and pictures of the devastation at Paddiruppu become available, the 6 members of the Sandusky Rotary Tsunami Relief Committee will be intensify collection efforts. If you would like to be part of this effort, you can contact Brad Smith at telephone 419 609 1121, or email: bradsmith@nomsdrs.com.



MESA- Medical Equipment & Supplies Abroad; Leadership Committees

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