



MESA Worldwide

A NEWSLETTER OF MESA, A DISTRICT 6600 PROJECT, #12

BY MEL HONIG - MESA NEWSLETTER EDITOR

NEXT MEETING: March 21, 2005
Findlay Ford, 4 PM
1 P.M. Warehouse Work Session

Highlights from the January 31st Meeting

Jim Heinrich (St Mary's), MESA Treasurer and **Andrew Timothy (Sylvania)**, reported that Katrina funds would be allocated soon to relief efforts in and around Biloxi, Mississippi. Although a specific project was not chosen, MESA will be working in conjunction with Rotary clubs in the area and possibly Rotaractors from the Owens Community College. These Rotaractors plan on going to the Biloxi area to help in the rebuilding process. Monies will be used for materials and supplies, as the Rotaractors plan on using their own resources for transportation and living expenses. Tsunami funds will also be dispensed in the near future, pending the recommendations of a Rotarian recent visit to Sri Lanka.

Ron Stoner (Bowling Green). One container was shipped to Belize in early January (see Bob Haas' article). Container shipments continue to lag behind last year's because of the difficulties of finding a shipper and Universal Heart funding being diverted to Hurricane Katrina relief efforts. The District 6600 MESA Hurricane Relief Fund paid the transportation costs of sending a truckload of relief supplies to Kiln, Mississippi. **MESA, The Bluffton, Ottawa/Glandorf and Findlay Rotary Clubs** collected the supplies of sent books, bikes and household goods. An ambulance (**Oak Harbor**, see accompanying article) and a fire truck (**St Mary's**) were recently donated and are waiting shipment to Honduras and Guatemala, respectively.

Stan Kujawa (Findlay) is recuperating from heart surgery in Florida. Ron Stoner submitted his resignation as Director of Operations effective July 1, 2006. MESA is actively looking for a new Director. The Warehouse Committee is continuing to explore warehouse locations in Waterville, Findlay and Fostoria. The most promising at this point is Don Manley's warehouse in Waterville, with negotiations under way. In preparation for the move the inventory at the current location is being culled in order to eliminate obsolete, inoperable or not needed supplies and equipment. This is a major undertaking and any help from District 6600 Rotary Clubs would be greatly appreciated.

Father Bob Haas (New London) and a group of 17 Rotarians, family members and friends continued their work in rehabbing educational facilities in Belize. See below for his story on their mission.

The recently completed **Uniendo Conference** generated several projects and initiated several new associations among Rotarians. Some of them are noted below. Next year's Uniendo Conference will be in San Miguel, El Salvador.

- **Dan Reyes-Cairo (Owens Rotaract Club)** gave a slide show presentation of their clubs activities in Honduras in conjunction with the conference. They gave a \$2000.00 check to fund a micro-banking project in Valle de Angeles. This money will be used to provide small loans to individuals so they can start their own business.
- **Jim Heinrich's (St Marys)** involvement at Uniendo generated several projects, among them a water well system for about 120 families, potable water system for about 50 families, filtered water system for schools, starting a sewing machine cooperative. These projects, in 3 different countries, have \$50,000 in commitment funds.
- Through the round table discussions, and a project fair, many other contacts were made, projects identified, and efforts to find solutions to mutual problems faced, especially those of shipping and having goods pass through customs.

Aaron and Nicole Coulter (Oregon), gave a slide presentation on their recently completed trip to Haiti. A container was recently shipped there filled with school equipment and supplies, a water well drilling machine, computers, tools and clothing. The contents of the container were primarily destined for Le Cayes with coordination through the Le Cayes Rotary Club. The majority of the school supplies were destined for the Little Schools, an NGO that operates 100 schools in the Port au Prince area. The Oregon-Northwood and Swanton clubs, and Universal Heart paid the shipping expenses.

MESA will spend \$13,000 to provide for kitchen updates and equipment to the San Martin orphanage in San Miguel. This is a special needs orphanage for 120 handicapped children and young adults.

Several projects to help fund **MESA** and **MESA** projects were discussed at the meeting.

- **Ed Stewart's (Elyria)** proposal to officially have **MESA** help sponsor the **Annual Rotary Bicycle Tour** gained the support of the **MESA** Board. Their aim is to raise \$25,000 in unrestricted funds for MESA in this year's tour. The tour is scheduled to start on June 18th, with bicyclists leaving from Elyria and spending evenings in Marion, Findlay, Brian and Bowling Green before returning to Elyria on June 23rd. Participation in the tour is open to all.
- **Children's Wishing Star** will be having their Tenth Annual Lucky Star Night Event on March 4th in Findlay. Ana Saca wife of President Tony Saca of El Salvador will be the honored guest. Tickets for the event are \$60.00. For reservations call 419 425 2345 or e-mail athenay@findlayford.com.

Belize Mission to Rehab Schools

On January 4, 2006, 16 Ohioans and I left for two weeks in Belize in continuing efforts at rehabbing schools in that poverty stricken country. This time we were to rehab the Mt Carmel Infancy School (grades K to 2) in Benque Viejo, a small community located close to the Guatemalan border.

The Infancy School consists of two buildings with seven classrooms each and a central building in the courtyard housing one classroom. Also working on the school is a California Rotary Club that last year had already started rehabbing two classrooms in one of the buildings. We immediately started working on the other classrooms; cleaning, painting, installing fluorescent lights and ceiling fans, as well as building frames for blackboards and bulletin boards, making bookcases and tiling the restrooms. We were joined in our work by some of the local teachers and Rotarians from the **San Ignacio Rotary Club**.

One main effort was painting and fitting 1131 wooden louvers for the windows. We were a little disappointed that the container, that MESA helped us ship to Belize in December, did not arrive while we were there. It contained computers, books, desks, fluorescent lights, sewing machines and school supplies.

In addition to the Infancy and Grade Schools (1161 students), the parish also runs the Mt Carmel High School (450 students), and four small grade schools in surrounding villages. All these schools continue to need money, equipment and supplies in order to enrich the educational opportunities of the local people. Many of the teachers are volunteers from the United States. Tuition for high school students makes 'higher education' a luxury that few can afford. About a third of graduating 8th graders continue into high school.

I must thank all those who volunteered their time, money and effort. We are looking forward to returning to Belize to continue our work, not only in upgrading their school system, but also making a high school education universally available.

Father Bob Haas

An Ambulance from Oak Harbor for Honduras **By Ron Stoner**

Thanks to Oak Harbor Rotarians, **MESA** has another ambulance for Central America.

Oak Harbor Rotarian Ron Heicks overheard that Mel and Wanda McCord, had a fully equipped, rugged, diesel-powered ambulance they were willing to donate to a worthy cause. The McCords were owners of Ottawa Ambulance Inc. Ron Heicks told Mike Stone, President of the Oak Harbor Rotary Club. Mike contacted MESA, and the deal was made.

Diesel-fueled emergency vehicles are especially popular and needed in Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador. A home for this one was found at the Rotary-sponsored *Uniendo Americas* Project Fair in Honduras in late January. There MESA Secretary Judy Riggle met a Rotarian in Honduras who was looking for an ambulance for one of their service projects.

The 1991 Ford ambulance, which had been out of service for five years, is in excellent running order, after having been fitted by MESA with new batteries and brake pads, and reconditioned for the road.

Sylvania Rotarian Andrew Timothy has agreed to drive the vehicle to a Gulf-Coast port in early March, when he and the Perrysburg - Owens College Rotaract Club will be doing a service project to assist in New-Orleans hurricane relief. One the trip south it will carry material and supplies for use in the New Orleans project.

The ambulance will be shipped from there to San Pedro Sula, Honduras, where the Rotary Club of Valle de Sula-San Pedro Sula, Cortes, will see that it is put to use in a local EMS service.

An earlier plan to send this ambulance to a project in Mexico was abandoned due to unresolved problems with exporting emergency vehicles to Mexico. From left to right are Ron Heicks, Wanda McCord, Mel McCord and Ron Buehler. The McCords donated the ambulance. Heicks and Buehler are Oak Harbor Rotarians.



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MESA Ships Hurricane Relief to Kiln, MS

By Ron Stoner

As a result of Hurricane Katrina, many school systems on the Gulf Coast sustained significant damage. Due to the efforts of Channel 1, a news program for schools, many of the school systems are receiving help from schools across the country. Bluffton High School “adopted” elementary and high schools in Kiln, Mississippi. Kiln, the home town of NFL quarterback Bret Favre, is located halfway between New Orleans and Gulfport in a region hard hit by Hurricane Katrina.

Even when school-building structures survived, flooding destroyed library books, school furniture, supplies, teaching materials, musical instruments, uniforms, and athletic equipment. In addition to the damages to the schools, approximately 40% of the staff and students’ families lost their homes. Today the grounds of Hancock County High School in Kiln are filled with mobile homes and recreational vehicles that serve during the day as elementary classrooms, and at night as homes for school staff.

The Bluffton High School Student Senate organized a campaign to collect materials for Kiln, but needed help to ship it all to Mississippi. Pam Riffle, math teacher and advisor to the Student Senate, asked Bluffton Principal Greg Denecker for suggestions. Denecker, a Rotarian in the Bluffton-Pandora Rotary Club, suggested she call MESA. DG Abe Kuttothara agreed to use some of MESA’s hurricane relief fund for shipment, and MESA joined the Kiln relief effort.

Materials were contributed by several communities around Bluffton, and also by Rotary Clubs in District 6600. MESA contributed three pallets

of library and textbooks and three file cabinets. The morning and noon Findlay Rotary Clubs collected two pallets of household goods that were boxed and palletized by MESA. The Ottawa-Glandorf Club contributed 25 bicycles from their recent bicycle roundup. Communities from New Knoxville to Bluffton responded to a call for contributions published in a Lima newspaper. The Bluffton school system contributed more than half a truckload of school furniture, bookshelves, books and athletic equipment.



Trailers and RVs double as classrooms and homes in a school parking lot in Kiln, MS.

A 53-foot semi-trailer from Motor Transport Services in Northwood, Ohio, was loaded on December 14 at the MESA warehouse in Findlay and at Bluffton High School. A large crew of Bluffton Rotarians, high-school students, and teachers took only an hour to completely fill the 53-foot semi-trailer. The truckload of supplies was delivered in Mississippi on December 16, where a similar crew of volunteers unloaded and distributed the help from Northwest Ohio.



Bluffton Rotarians Justin Byers and Greg Danecker pose with loaded materials in the background.



Pam Riffle and Greg Danecker with Bluffton students loading the truck

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