



## Rotavision The weekly newsletter of the Rotary Club of White River



20 July 2015

Edition Number: 3



### On my soapbox

Well we haven't quite made it onto Twitter but Debbie has revived our Facebook page! Please visit it and tells her you 'like' it. To keep it topical she will need to get your stories. So if you want your Rotary baby to be liked send Debbie lots of pictures and snippets. Its up to you!

CHOC descended on White River last night on the way to negotiations with the Mpumalanga Department of Health. Their aim is to get the help of the Province to improve the care of children with cancer. At present an Mpumalanga child's thirty minute contact with an oncologist in Pretoria takes up more than three days travelling and waiting time. Of course we are no strangers to children with cancer and it was heartening to hear the praise that CHOC heaped on our Camp Quality. Last year was the first time that our club and CHOC really worked together to recruit campers and there is every indication that our cooperation will grow in the future. Watch this space – Brian is already gearing up for the next Camp Quality to be held in April 2016.

The club was invited to visit Lwaleng Primary School, our newest project, on Monday. What Rotarians lacked in numbers was certainly made up by the visitors' enthusiasm for the project. It was the first day of the new term and the school was swarming with young children. The building has made remarkable progress under George's guidance. Round Square has done a really good job and we look forward to the next group of Round Square students who will arrive this weekend to finish off the building at Lwaleng and Masoyi.

Many thanks for everything you do,  
Patrick

### Monday's meeting – 2015

**Guests:** Ray Achillah, Ina Schomper, Adri Ludick, Sylvia Croucamp, David Reynders, Carl Queros (All from CHOC)

#### What happened?

Huffy showed a water filter that could be used in rural areas

LLew encouraged as many Rotarians as possible to come along to the Youth Exchange presentations at the Botanical Gardens (R120 pp)

Brian announced that Nelspruit Club are having a potjie competition on 1 August. Cheryl to organize a team.

Our club sang! We sang Happy Birthday to President Patrick! (Rotary clubs in the USA are known for their singing, we are not!)

The CEO of Choc and Professor Reynders – a paediatric oncologist- addressed the club and told us about the work done by CHOC and also the need for early diagnosis and speedy treatment of cancer in children in order to ensure a full recovery.

George thanked everyone who went out to Lwaleng in the morning.

**Wine draw:** JD won the wine draw.

**Rotary Information:** Mike Lewis tol his story about his journey in Rotary, from joining in 1979 until now.

**Sergeant:** Frances was the sergeant

**Polioplus pig: (Pretty Belinda)** Pretty Belinda has been decked out in finery and made up, complete with long false eyelashes.

- Hitesh is happy that Nakul passed all his subject in the June exams
- Patrick put in some money for his birthday
- Cheryl is happy to back at school (was that tongue in cheek Cheryl?)
- Ronald put in some money from the Ruffians
- Albie is happy that Elna's knee operation was successful
- Brian was happy to see a delegation from CHOC at our meeting
- Adri from CHOC was happy to be there.
- Mike hopes we never see a case of polio again!

**Next week's duties:**

- **Organiser:** Netto
- **Grace and Fellowship:** Mathew
- **Sergeant:** The Anns

**The week ahead:**

Saturday afternoon /evening: Youth Exchange presentations and braai at the Botanical Gardens

Next week's meeting: Guest speaker – Louise Williamson about her energy saving stoves etc.

- Tony Parry (Still gadding about in Australia)
- Malcolm Cameron ( leave of absence – hope its going well now)
- Kosy Donga (leave of absence – get well soon!)
- Peter Doble (Overseas)
- Erik Howland
- Stoffel de Kock
- Hein Gehle
- Liz Mackintosh – make up. Its an amazing job you are doing with Round Square!
- Netto Maluka
- Arie Muller – Leave of absence while in the USA
- Don Priest
- Patrick Robson
- Gavin – in Zimbabwe – have fun!
- Leon van Zyl

We missed  
you



Happy Birthday Patrick! 20<sup>th</sup> July

Adrienne Cleary and Ronald Daintree – 26<sup>th</sup> July

JD and Dot – 26 July

## Telling our stories .

**To dream the impossible dream – the dream of Lucy Ngobeni.**

Masoyi is a rural community twenty kilometres north east of White River in the province of Mpumalanga. It comprises four villages totaling approximately 20 000 inhabitants.

When Lucy Ngobeni was employed by the Provincial Government as a “Health Promoter”, tasked with educating rural people on basic health matters, in the course of her work she became aware of the desperate circumstances of people in the



community suffering at home with AIDS, Cancer, TB and various other debilitating illnesses. In addition, a spiralling number of AIDS orphans was identified. On a purely voluntary basis Lucy formed an organisation named “Masoyi Home Based Care”.

As founder of this organisation Lucy recruited unemployed people from the community and trained them to go into the homes of sufferers and orphans, and assist in basic household tasks such as bathing the ill and their children, cleaning, cooking, collecting water and firewood, washing clothes etc.

It soon became apparent that there were many families in rural communities with disabled children, so Lucy then turned her attention to this issue. She identified 156 mentally and physically disabled children in the area.



In African culture there is traditionally a stigma attached to having a “disabled” child. It is common for parents to hide the disabled children away from the community. In nearly all cases the father abandons the family. Either the mother is unable to work because of the burden of caring for the child, or, as sometimes happens, she locks the child up while she goes out to work. In one such case Lucy discovered a 12-year-old girl in the back room of a shack. The child was deaf and dumb and had spent her entire life in the room.

Parents qualify for a meagre Government pension; however, the practicalities and logistics of collecting this from a central payout point often prove overwhelming. Access to most homes is by foot only.

The children need constant supervision, but the mothers, who are often ostracised by the community, are unable to seek any form of assistance. Without access to even the most basic needs, health, education, stimulation, therapy and other developmental requirements are not addressed. Although the provision of facilities to assist such people may be seen as the responsibility of the Government, funds are simply not available.

In 2001, Lucy approached the White River Rotary Club for assistance to achieve her dream of a care centre for the disabled in Masoyi. The club originally assisted with a Christmas party at a community hall in Masoyi. Parents were invited to bring their disabled children out into the open and the community was encouraged to accept and become involved with them. The gathering received unprecedented support from a 700 strong crowd, the health services and informal supplementary services. Ambulances, usually in extremely short supply, ferried children unable to walk. Vehicles of all descriptions including commercial taxis supported them. Many children simply arrived on their mothers’ backs, having in many cases been carried several kilometres.

The local chief provided the rights to use a piece of land under his jurisdiction. Two unsuccessful boreholes were drilled on the property, but the chief once again came

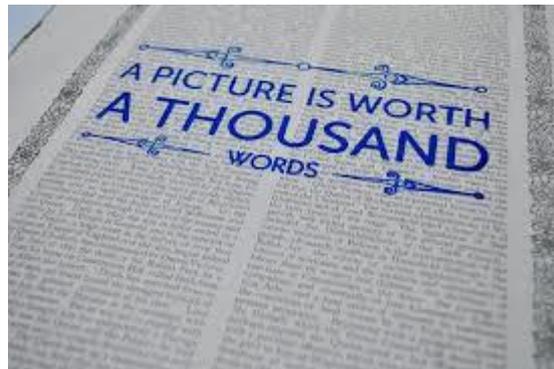


to the rescue by allowing a borehole to be drilled on his property next door, which yields 2000 litres per hour. Over the next 18 months, an engineer-designed brick-clad, steel structure under roof, 180 square metres in extent, was built, with the support of many benefactors, including Nomads and a Rotary International grant.

The Masoyi Special Care Centre continues to do great work under trying circumstances and with limited funding. They cater for up to 60 children per day. They survive on donations and social grants from the Government, which are unreliable and insufficient, and the generosity of individual donors. They are also grateful for the support of a group of cyclists who ride the Argus Cape Cycle Tour in support of Masoyi. The income generated by the Argus cyclists has funded the purchase of educational toys and therapeutic equipment, and a water harvesting project involving guttering and water tanks.

There are nine care-givers, who are either voluntary or who get a modest stipend every month.

In 2012 a group of students from around the world on a Round Square tour spent two weeks at Masoyi building a classroom, in collaboration with the White River Rotary Club. This serves as a learning and skills training centre for those children who are educable, who develop a huge sense of pride and accomplishment at being able to read, write and learn a skill. The classroom is also used after hours as a community centre.



g



President Patrick with the group from CHOC



New Classroom and Library at Lwaleng



Playtime at Lwaleng School



Rotarians looking at Lwaleng School



One of the classrooms at Lwaleng



Every month, I am planning to put in a slot about Rotarians in our club. The first one, getting to know you, getting to know all about you (as the song goes) is our new President, Patrick. Beware – you might be asked for an article!

I was born into a family of teachers – the laatlametjie of four with only my brother escaping into mining engineering. I was educated at St John's, where my father taught Science, passing through every class, from the bottom to the top. At Wits I did a BSc in Botany and Zoology, thinking that I would be a conservationist, but the lure of Medicine was strong. After eight years at Wits I became a House Officer, as they called us rooky doctors, at the Johannesburg General Hospital. I was greatly inspired by the teaching of my boss, Prof Harry Seftel, and abandoned my early surgical aspirations to become a Physician. After two years as a Medical Registrar I was lured into research and worked for my life-long friend and mentor Prof Tom Bothwell. His field was Iron Metabolism and so it became mine.

Medical Research was, and is, not a career on its own and had to be combined with teaching and practicing Medicine. Everyone in this position juggled the roles of Researcher, Teacher, Doctor and reluctant Administrator – any of which could have been enough on its own. But my halcyon days were the few years I was able to spend in full time iron research. Iron is a fascinating metal. It occupies a central role in all living things. I was privileged to work with some of the greatest 'Iron' minds in the world and we dipped into many aspects from Iron Nutrition to molecular biology. In spite of its vital role, research funding for iron work was not easy to come by and, besides, there were so many other distractions including developing new ways of teaching Medicine and local medical politics.

Because iron is in the blood, the step to Haematology was logical. This also involved treating leukaemia with chemotherapy and, almost inevitably, being swept up in the new field of Medical Oncology. I was always a reluctant Oncologist and, when the opportunity to retire arose, I was happy to follow my long-standing interest in IT and statistics and accepted a job with Prof Ian Sanne at Right to Care to explore the Epidemiology of the HIV epidemic. Here was money in abundance, courtesy of Uncle Sam, and a whole new world opened up. Ironically the last ten years of my academic life was more productive in terms of published papers than any other decade.

Medicine alone was not my life. I came from a liberal family and early memories of the Torch Commando and the Black Sash ensured that politics was to play a role in my life. I dabbled in NUSAS, the Young Progressives, student politics and served the fledgling Progressive Federal Party. Although tempted, I never got nearer to public office than Election Agent to Horace van Rensburg, MP for Bryanston! Occupations in my spare time have, like most people, passed through phases. I used to do a lot of carpentry, and made many pieces of furniture that are still in use. I still have a well-

equipped workshop and I *will* get back into it. I love books and I read avidly. The computer lures me into its clutches too often and wastes a lot of my time. Lately it has been watercolours! I do mostly landscapes and sometimes succeeding in getting the paint to do what I expect of it, gives me great joy and satisfaction.

And, of course, I have a lovely family. Julie and I enjoy shocking people with the idea that we fell in love over a cadaver as we studied Anatomy together. We were married while we were still students, she supporting us as secretary to AS&TS while completing her degree with UNISA and I in final year Medicine. Catherine came along sooner than expected and Ali followed two years later. Nine years later Jonathan joined the gang! Catherine has grown into a world-renowned Medical Geographer and it is sobering that if you Google 'MacPhail' she comes up first! Alison, full of quirky fun, was a talented graphic artist but was robbed of life and a career at 28. Jono shines in his own special way. He is a wiz with horses and loved by all in sundry. He occupies a special place at Camphill in Hermanus, growing herbs and representing his fellow residents in a true MacPhail way.

# *On the lighter side*

## **Some daft definitions**

- Adult - a person who has stopped growing at both end and is now growing the in the middle
- Beauty parlour - a place where women curl up and dye
- Cannibal - someone who is fed up with people
- Chickens - the only animals you eat before they are born and after they are dead
- Committee - a body that keeps minutes and wastes hours
- Egotist - someone who is usually me-deep in conversation
- Handkerchief - cold storage
- Inflation - cutting money is half without damaging the paper
- Mosquito - an insect that makes you like flies better
- Secret - something you tell to one person at a time
- Skeleton - a bunch of bones with the person scraped off
- Toothache - the pain that drives you to extraction
- Tomorrow - one of the greatest labour saving devices of today
- Yawn - a honest opinion openly express
- Wrinkles - something other people have.