

PETS March 12, 2005

District 7230 Governor Elect Helen Reisler

Thank you, Don.

Good morning everyone. Thank you for coming

It's good to see our Bermuda friends, as well.

I welcome all of you, with great pleasure today, as we gather to prepare for a new year in that unique world we call Rotary, a world that has the magnetic power to bring out a bunch of sleepy, but thoroughly committed people, who don't get paid, to learn new ways to do the wonderful things we do.

I would like to congratulate each and every one of you who have been elected to your club positions because your peers have faith in your leadership abilities and trust that you will lead them in the right direction.

You accepted the commitment, which means giving up some extra hours of sleep, some evenings before the TV, and some time away from your family and work.

From time to time, we all ask ourselves "*is it worth it?*" Some of you hear that question from your spouses. I did too, until the day that Mel and I were driving in New York City and happened to pass NYU hospital where I suddenly remembered that one of our gift of life children was having her surgery. I convinced him to come in with me. The scene he witnessed -- the surgeon emerging from the operating room to announce to the frightened mother that he had just saved the heart of her child so she could live her life -- finally clicked, and made him into a staunch supporter of those extra hours dedicated to Rotary.

We remain in Rotary because we were "bitten by the bug." And the best way to get support from our families is to direct that bug to them. Get them involved in your projects. Let them feel and experience what we do. Make that bug bite them!

I don't even have to go into the details of 9/11. I am so proud of this district and all the wonderful, heroic things we did together, and individually, when disaster struck our own territory so unexpectedly.

"Is it worth it?" We all know the answer.

So now, we are about to embark on a new venture. We are going to begin a new century together, a new page, the first page, of the next 100 years in Rotary. I am honored to have been selected to lead the way, as your District Governor of 7230, as we write that first page of chapter one, together.

I think of our succession of District Governors as links in a chain, each one being supported by those before, while bringing something new and giving strength to the ones that follow. Each governor has a different personality, a different style, each has something to add to strengthen that chain.

Some of you, who have worked with me before, know me better than others, and will tell you that I am first and foremost a "people person." I take great pleasure in recognizing the unique qualities in people, inspiring those individual qualities and skills to emerge, and combining them into effective teams.

I believe in respecting each other's differences, while working together towards our common goals. I am truly hoping that the words "our side" and "their side" will become extinct during 2005-2006, and replaced with "we," "us," "our district," "our team." How can we preach "greater peace and understanding" in the world, unless we commit to practicing it in our own district? In my past experience, it's more effective and certainly more fun.

I have a background of leadership in various areas: education, business, media, family, and 17 years of intense involvement in Rotary. I am familiar with many of your interesting backgrounds and I am confident that as we work together, combine our skills, learn together, stumble and get back up together, that if we keep a positive

attitude, we can accomplish some meaningful things this year. As we begin this new venture, I ask you to commit to supporting each other. There will be times for clubs to go off on their own paths, and times when we must come together as a cohesive group.

Although many of you are creative individuals, and “think out of the box,” as I do, we must recognize that no civilized community or organization can survive without guidelines, rules and regulations.

Some of us, at times, tend to forget that even though we are volunteers, we are still part of an international organization that supports us in various ways and would certainly fall apart if we did not reciprocate. We can be creative within the structure of the larger picture.

In the position of District Governor, I will be in a dual role: the leader of our district and an officer of Rotary International (better known as RI). Will those roles conflict with each other? The answer is no. Rather, they will complement each other. I will be a conduit of information back and forth, a liaison, and since I believe in clear communication, there will be few mysteries. Will I make mistakes? Of course I will, but certainly not intentionally, and I will do my best to serve you.

“*Service above self*” -- sound familiar? Carl Wilhelm, our Rotary International president for 2005-2006, has chosen it for our new theme. The Rotary wheel will be our logo and our colors will remain navy and gold.

Yes, it’s “back to basics.” We have moved ahead, so rapidly, in the last 100 years that, as we begin this new century, and take our place in history as Rotary’s “new centurions,” we must stop and re-evaluate who we are, where we are, and make sure that the new goals we set will keep in step with our basic Rotary ideals and theme. After all, this is what has guided us for 100 years. Do you know of any other service organization that has survived that long and expanded its reach each year?

Carl Wilhelm lives his words. We District Governors-elect, from all over the world were being trained in Anaheim, California during February 23rd, Rotary’s 100th birthday. To celebrate this great occasion, our usual hotel lunch was replaced with a small bowl of soup, and a roll, after we were bussed to “2nd harvest” where we all, in our jeans (including pres-elect Carl and some directors, donned work gloves and boxed cans of food to be distributed to those less fortunate. As a result, pres-elect Carl was able to present “2nd harvest” with a \$26,700 check, the next day -- money that was saved on the hotel lunches. There will be more realistic changes, at the top echelon, as well.

President-elect Carl has stressed 3 areas he would like us to be involved in. But before I go further, I would like to introduce you to the Rotarian who will be our 2005-2006 international president.

(play DVD).

Literacy, water management, and public image Rotary international is stressing continuity. We are planning to focus more on these areas at our district assembly on April 6th, and talk about how your clubs can be involved.

But, of course, being who I am, I have to say a little more about public image. We have all been frustrated throughout the years with RI's lack of response to our requests for some major advertising and more publicity tools. They have heard us and they have responded.

There are new CD's and DVD's that can be presented to local radio and TV stations. There are numerous downloads of press release samples, public relations and publicity tips, and other tools which we will familiarize you with as time goes on.

How many of you have seen the beautiful full page advertisements in the New York Times, USA today, and the Herald Tribune?

Now, the people who did see them: what have you done with them? How did you use them? We will concentrate on that at a future date, as well.

Meanwhile, I have asked each one of my Assistant Governors to ask each club president to choose a public relations chair. We will work with them.

President-elect Carl's goal for membership is very realistic: 1 new member, net, for each club, for the year. That means if a club loses one member, it must recruit 2 new ones. We are planning to have a special membership seminar during the year which should help you deal with this area.

We are working on a Leadership Institute during our "On-to-Bermuda" trip in October, as well as one in New York. There will be continuity with RI's request for "\$100 every Rotarian every year" and foundation chair Janet, has some interesting ideas to make this goal easier to obtain. We will simplify many things. There are still quite a few Rotarians who do not understand the "50% back" benefit.

There will be a presidential citation, which is included in your folders. Please read it carefully. President-elect Carl has made it realistic and achievable. This is a great incentive for your clubs, but pay attention to the deadline.

You will notice, this afternoon, when you vote on the 2005-2006 district budget, that I have not gone over last year's budget, but I have moved some monies around into categories where people have requested more action, such as the newsletter and communications.

I would like your projects and accomplishments to be visible to the rest of the district. I would like you to get to know each other better, to share ideas, to at times combine projects.

We are also encouraging reaching out to other non-profit organizations and corporations, who will work with us and sponsor more of our projects.

Although my budget, this year, is low, I am dedicated to encouraging individual club projects and sharing some seed money from the district designated funds, wherever I can.

You have my support, my sincere dedication, and my commitment. I hope I have yours.

And now, let's prepare to start making another century of history together.