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EDITORIAL

Some positive thoughts from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's 2014 report

Apart from its deep pockets, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation sets itself apart by exuding a sense of optimism that the problems affecting large portions of the global population can be solved within our lifetimes. The rise of China and India has already lifted a billion people out of abject poverty and improving governance is likely to achieve a similar feat in the next decade for even more countries.

You might think that such striking progress would be widely celebrated, and that people would rush to figure out what is working so well and do more of it. But they're not, at least not in proportion to the progress. In fact, we're struck by how few people think the world is improving, and by how many actually think the opposite – that it is getting worse.

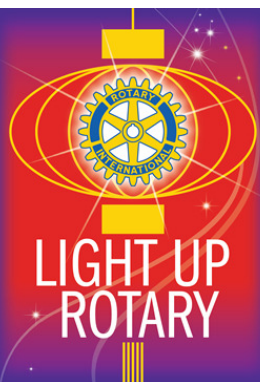
We believe this is partly because many people are in the grip of several myths – mistaken ideas that defy the facts. The most damaging myths are that the poor will remain poor, that efforts to help them are wasted, and that saving lives will only make things worse.

We understand why people might hold these negative views. This is what they see in the news. Bad news happens in dramatic events that are easy for reporters to cover: Famine suddenly strikes a country, or a dictator takes over someplace. Good news – at least the kind of good news that we have in mind – happens in slow motion. Countries are getting richer, but it's hard to capture that on video. Health is improving, but there's no press conference for children who did not die of malaria.

The belief that the world is getting worse, that we can't solve extreme poverty and disease, isn't just mistaken. It is harmful. It can stall progress. It makes efforts to solve these problems seem pointless. It blinds us to the opportunity we have to create a world where almost everyone has a chance to prosper.

If people think the best times are in the past, they can get pessimistic and long for a return to the good old days. If they think the best times are in the future, they see things differently. When science historian James Burke wrote about the Renaissance in 'The Day the Universe Changed', he pointed to one source for many of the advances that happened in that amazing period: the shift from the belief that everything was decaying and getting worse to the realization that people can create and discover and make things better. We need a similar shift today, if we're going to take full advantage of the opportunity to improve life for everyone.

Rotary in February
World understanding month



MEETING OF 28 JANUARY

(Raid on Kromboom Club at Kelvin Grove)

Attendance

10 members: 37%

Visitors

Wenche Hovstad, Elfie Dorum, Hugh Maunder, Austin Cook-Lindsay.

Slots

The most significant event of the evening was DG Cecil's presentation of a fourth Sapphire pin to PDG Michael Johnson's Paul Harris. This was in recognition of his initiative: the Rotary Dictionary of which 80 000 have been distributed through southern Africa so far – as far north as Uganda and Tanzania.

Not the President's quote

"Words have the power of conveying images.
This power has the habit of transcending the truth.
It's why myths persist in the face of facts."

- Prof. Roy Siegfried.

GUEST SPEAKER

Gabriel Athiros, of Historical Media and editor of The Cape Odyssey gave a highly entertaining and well researched account of shipping around the Cape Peninsula under the title "Wrecked at the Cape".

His story started in the late 1400s, when Spain and Portugal were the main ocean explorers and signed the Treaty of Tordesillas of 1494, effectively granting America west of what is now Brazil to the Spanish and east of that to the Portuguese – effectively including most of the Atlantic Ocean, plus the route around the Cape.

Anecdotes covered the earliest wrecks from 1497 in Table Bay, to the Seafarer disaster of 1966 at Mouille Point – a thoroughly enjoyable evening's story telling!

Gabriel was thanked by PP Steve Theron, and suitably rewarded by substantial purchases of his publications after the meeting.

PAGE FILLER

I dialled a number and got the following recording:

"I am not available right now, but thank you for caring enough to call.

I am making some changes in my life. Please leave a message after the beep.

If I do not return your call, you are one of the changes."

GOING FORWARD

Duty Roster



	FEBRUARY				MARCH
	5	12	19	26	5
Sergeant	Todd	Van Eeden	Cleveland	Gavin	Hovstad
Attendance Officer	A O'Driscoll	A O'Driscoll	A O'Driscoll	A O'Driscoll	A O'Driscoll
Wynpress Editorial	Danckwerts	Dietrich	Hovstad	Howard	Jackson
Minutes for Wynpress	Du Plessis	Smith	Overbosch	Cleveland	Du
Door Duty	Dietrich	Du Plessis	Gavin	Gowdy	Howard
Grace	Barnard	Bird	Bredenkamp	Cleveland	Danckwerts
Loyal Toast	Cleveland	Danckwerts	Dietrich	Du Plessis	Gavin
International Toast	Lidgley	Munday	Murphy	A O'Driscoll	K O'Driscoll
Speaker Introduction	N/A	N/A	TBA	TBA	N/A
Speaker Thanks	N/A	N/A	TBA	TBA	N/A
Find Speakers	Barnard, Bird, Hovstad, Jackson, Vivian, Schonegevel, A O Driscoll				Van Wyk, Gowdy, Overbosch, Todd, Murphy, Klotz- Gleave, van Niekerk

Programme

Thu Feb 5	1 st Business meeting of the year
Sun Feb 8	Opera in a Convent Garden
Thu Feb 12	Normal Meeting: Youth Services Meeting
Mon Feb 16	Wynberg Rotaract
Thu Feb 19	Alan Jackson: "Me" Talk / Visit by Haugaland Tech. College
Sat Feb 21	Rotaract Fun Day (Constantia Primary School)
Feb 22 – Mar 1	Visit by Karmøy RC
Feb 23 – Mar 3	Visit by Oddemarka School
Mon Feb 23	RI 110 Today
Tue Feb 24	WRC Board Meeting
Thu Feb 26	Fellowship meeting with Norwegian guests from Oddemarka / Karmøy
Mon Mar 2	Wynberg Rotaract
Thu Mar 5	Business meeting
Thu Mar 12	Normal meeting. Speaker TBC
Weekend 14 th / 15 th Mar	Pearls of the Proms: All hands needed at the City Hall

Sat Mar 14	Baby College – Support needed!
Thu Mar 19	Normal meeting. Speaker TBC
Sat Mar 21	Baby College – Support needed!
Sat Mar 21	Rotaract Training Workshop
Thu Mar 28	Normal meeting: Speaker TBC
Mar 27 – Mar 29	Interact Camp (hosted by Wynberg Rotaract)
Sat Mar 28	Baby College – Support needed!

See the WRC [calendar](http://wynbergrotary.org.za/calendar/) (http://wynbergrotary.org.za/calendar/) for full details.

Like us on ,  follow us on [@wynbergrotary](https://twitter.com/wynbergrotary) and visit the [Rotary Club Wynberg website](http://wynbergrotary.org.za/) to keep up to date

TAILPIECE

Life.*

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