

ROTARY CLUB OF PARRAMATTA CITY Inc. DISTRICT 9675

www.parramattacityrotary.org.au

COMMUNITY NETWORKER No 30/2017-8

Rotary Four Way Test

The Four Way Test challenges Rotarians, in everything they do, to ask of themselves:

Of the things we say or do:

1. Is it the **TRUTH**?
2. Is it **FAIR** to all concerned?
3. Will it build **GOODWILL** and **BETTER FRIENDSHIPS**?
4. Will it be **BENEFICIAL** to all concerned?

Meeting 26th February 2018

Our Toast

PP Bob Rosengreen proposed a toast to the Rotary Club of Jerusalem, established in 1929, the first Rotary Club in Israel. He pointed out it was now 50 years on from the Six-Day War in which Israel went to war against a host of Arab neighbours, led by Egypt. It cost Israel 700 to 800 dead and some 3,000 wounded. Arab forces suffered 15,000 casualties and Israel doubled its size.

Our Guest

Our guest for the day was Dr Jill McRae, an expert on international affairs and development and for 15 years has been a project manager for the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Jill, with 13 university degrees, including seven Masters, can be considered well educated. She has established an NGO to provide medicine and non-food items to victims of conflict in refugee camps in Syria, and is enthusiastically pursuing the idea of providing a community radio station in Jordan for the displaced Syrian community.

PhD Scholars Night **Urgent action required.**

PP Keith Henning reminded the club of the PhD Scholars Night at Oatlands Golf Club on 26th March. Tickets were on sale at \$65 a head and we need to get at least 50 people there so as not to suffer a financial loss. **Members need to register for the event and bring guests also.** He would be putting out 300 flyers for the night at the district conference this weekend.

Registrations at <https://www.trybooking.com.au/354550>. Closing date is 12th March

National Youth Science Forum

PP Keith said he had a call from the science subject coordinator at Marist Brothers Westmead asking whether our club would sponsor students. Keith said he had advised that we could sponsor one student but at the moment we were down on funds. We usually pay \$1,000 towards the costs. The NYSF committee had to select a student anyway.

MUNA

Merrylands High had asked whether the club would sponsor the team to MUNA again this year. Last year their team progressed to the National MUNA event in Canberra.

Rotary Youth Program of Enrichment (RYPEN)

PP Keith said he had been in touch with Andrew Gokel, deputy principal of Parramatta High, regarding students for Rotary programs. Andrew has been seeking a couple of students for the next RYPEN camp. Keith has also mentioned to him the MUNA event.

The Hugging Booth

PDG Barry Antees said he had organised a hugging booth at the district conference at Mudgee this weekend. "I have thought of 10 reasons you need to hug," he said. "The MC at each break will announce one of those reasons. I have put out a challenge to all club presidents to bring along a person they have terrorised over the last 12 months and give them a hug."

FOLIA

PP Phil Brophy said he had had an email from the Cochranes in Bangladesh, who had been working with FOLIA and were coming home sooner than expected. Jill Cochrane was not feeling well. The club was looking forward to seeing them

Dr Jill McRae - Community Radio for Displaced Syrians

Jill said she was very disturbed by the current war in Syria, which had had numerous casualties and had displaced some 12 million people, either internally within Syria or externally in surrounding countries. Jill had a long association with the Middle East. She had been in Beirut during a war in 1972 when Israel did a limited invasion of Lebanon. She had chosen to go to Lebanon because the Israeli diplomatic staff member in London had been rude to her. She had acknowledged the protest by the border official in Beirut that there was "a war on" and found herself a very nice apartment. She had eventually found herself in the office of Mahommed Mosnbok, director of Lebanon's National Ministry of Information. He had invited her to a Beirut University college and she had found herself lecturing there for a semester. One of her tasks had been to teach English as a second language.

Later, Jill had found a job with the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), and from there had gone to Harvard where she had done a couple of Master's degrees. She had found herself in Fiji, working on a joint project between DFAT and the World Bank. She had accepted a suggestion she attend Harvard University. She was too old to be sponsored by the World Bank but Harvard had said it would pay for her. Being at the time "a single mother with sixpence in the bank", she had accepted. She had done "a couple of Master's degrees", and had written to the president of Harvard thanking the university, to which the president in reply said precious few people had ever given thanks.



Jill extended her Middle East conflicts. At Harvard she became close to Farah, the niece of the late King Hussain of Jordan. She had met Farah's parents and the King of Jordan and because her origins were in Narrabri in northern New South Wales, she had found plenty to discuss with him about farming in dry climates. Jill had become a consultant to the Oman Bank, in a country where Islam was more relaxed, and had come to love the Omanis. She found Tunisia interesting because that was where the "Arab Spring" had started – beginning a process that had begun the current conflict in Syria.

In Sydney, dismayed by the failure of peace talks in 2014, she had met Hadi, an imam and leader of the Lebanon community. She had got a board together, which include Paul Sarks, a past district governor of Rotary and a lapsed Catholic. Hadi's community had made generous donations to the Syrian refugees. She had found that the main thing the Syrians in the refugee camps wanted was mobile phones. "They kept asking for them," she said. "What they are desperately seeking and trying to do is to stay in touch with their families, who were separated from the and with whom they had lost conduct. Hadi and I decided they needed a radio station based in Amman, the capital of Jordan, and it would be doing nothing other than serving displaced Syrians. The Jordanian Royal Family had told Jill it would support her project.

Jill said she had spoken to someone who worked for an FM radio station in Canberra and he was going to put her in touch with a radio technician. She had been told that setting up a radio station, once the technology was in place, was simple enough. It would be established "in a closet". But she had to find out what she had to do and how much it would cost. She was seeking funding. PDG Barry Antees said she might be able to get some help from the Rotary Radio Fellowship. Paul Sarks could pave the way for her for a possible Global Grant. He said Jill had a magnificent ideal and any way our club could help, it would.

Joke of the Week

A few of innovative church posters from the United States





For Your Diaries

5th March. Regular club meeting. Alex Heighway to speak to the club about surviving a cardiac attack.

12th March. Regular club meeting. Alex Palmer will be guest speaker, Alex having been autistic and a client of the Northcott Society, since then an architectural technician with special talents.

16th March. ROMAC Anniversary meeting, Parliament House.

17th March. A Peace Conference was being held at the Sydney Town Hall.

18th March. New Members' Breakfast, Camden Golf Club.

19th March. Club meeting, to be addressed by Louise Skilbeck of the Top Blokes Foundation.

20th March. Meeting of the club Board at RDU House, Hunter Street, Parramatta.

26th March. Evening transfer meeting, the occasion of a PhD Scholarships night.