



Community Networker

Rotary Club of Parramatta City, District 9675 | Meeting 11 August 2014



Frederik Andersen presenting a pennant from his sponsoring club, the Rotary Club of Ebeltoft, to Parramatta City Rotary Club

Our Guests

The club welcomed prospective member Mat Fisher, who is a fundraiser at the Westmead Hospital, and renewed welcome to Sze Chuah, about to join the club. We welcomed Frederik Andersen, 16, an exchange student from Denmark, sponsored by the Rotary Club of Ebeltoft. A tall lad, Frederik shows great proficiency in English and was about to start at Parramatta High School. A keen participant in a number of sports, including handball and basketball, Frederik, being hosted for the moment by Natalie, should have no problems settling in.

Our speaker for the day was Carol Ireland. Carol, senior executive officer of Epilepsy Action Australia, has been with the organisation eight years and did prior service with Vision Australia and the Home Care Service of New South Wales. A counsellor by training, Carol has been drawn into the area of marketing, fundraising and management. She has spent more than 35 years in the not-for-profit sector but has a particular interest in epilepsy because she is primary carer for a brother who has the condition.

Club Updates

The Rotary International Convention

Former President Keith has sent this wonderful collection of photos of the RI Convention for viewing by anyone who missed out. They can be found at:

<http://clubrunner.blob.core.windows.net/00000050081/en-au/files/stories/ri-sydney-convention-3/corroboree-vol-7/CorroboreeEdition7-Final.pdf>

It is worth a quick browse by anyone.

Polio Plus

Bob Rosengreen said there were problems with the Polio Plus initiative in the countries where it was still a problem: Afghanistan and Pakistan, where polio vaccination teams were being attacked. Some were being bombed and shot at, apparently because of a perception among some people in those countries that these teams were in fact sterilising the population.

Community Service

The Harris Park Community Centre is looking for volunteers to conduct a sausage sizzle on September 24. Natalie has called for volunteers for the "Paint Parramatta Read" campaign and feels

The Rotary Four-Way Test

The Four-Way Test challenges Rotarians, in everything they do, to ask 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?



Acting President Malcolm with Carol Ireland

she now has enough. The event, on 10 September, will be two days before our "Walk With Us" barbecue.

Youth Services

Treasurer Phillip Brophy reported that the two students nominated for National Youth Science Forum had been accepted into the program.

As this is the first time we have had two nominations accepted it was possible that one of the students may be able to be sponsored by another Rotary Club. Ben Jackson was following this up.

Epilepsy

Carol Ireland said epilepsy was the world's most common serious brain disorder. More than 800,000

people in Australia, and 100 million world-wide, would be diagnosed with epilepsy at some point in their lives. Research showed that in Australia, 50 percent of the population knew somebody who had epilepsy. But it was so little understood. It could be fatal and in fact kills more people than breast cancer. Former test cricketer and media personality Tony Greig, who developed epilepsy as a result of an accident at the age of 12, was a member of Epilepsy Action's Board for 19 years and was its ambassador. Although it was well-known that Tony was suffering from cancer, epileptic seizures played a part in his death. Carol spoke about the Sudden Unexplained Death in Epilepsy, which is a symptom similar to SIDS with babies. Yet despite the prevalence and menace of epilepsy, it did not get anything like the publicity breast cancer

received.

Carol said the disease was not well understood. There are cases of discrimination and even persecution, eg A boy suffering epilepsy was not invited to his friend's birthday party; recently one person suffering an epileptic seizure was robbed while unconscious.

Carol said there were 45 different forms of epilepsy syndrome or seizure types. The seizures could vary from the convulsive type once known as "grand mal" epilepsy to the "absences", formerly called "petit mal", to others where there might be something odd about the person's behaviour or facial expressions. Some people could go for years without a seizure, others could be fitting all the time.

A seizure could come without warning. Sometimes there was an "aura", a feeling that came over someone where they could prepare themselves. In other cases there was no aura. Some people suffered epilepsy only in their sleep. Sometimes there were identifiable triggers. One was a lack of sleep. Some people were photo-sensitive where a seizure could be brought on by flickering light.

The causes of the condition varied. There might be a genetic component, or the condition might arise because of an accident. The public needed to be educated. When a person had a partial seizure, it might be

misunderstood. One woman was taken the police because she was making strange facial expressions, in another a man thought the other was “taking the mickey” out of him. A lot of sufferers did not disclose they had the condition. In the case of Tony Greig and former Rugby League star Wally Lewis, they were compelled to because they had a seizure in public.

Carol said the condition could be managed through medication, or in one percent of cases, with surgery where part of the brain was removed, as happened with Wally Lewis. There was constant research on the condition. The Epilepsy Association, now known as Epilepsy Action, had been formed 62 years ago and operated nationally, distributing information, sponsoring community nurses and doing everything it could to make the lives of sufferers easier and more enjoyable. That included holding camps for families affected by epilepsy. People suffering from the condition were encouraged to do things that would help them, including keeping an “epilepsy diary” with precise information about the seizures and the circumstances in which they occurred, for information the doctor could use. One objective was to try to find the “triggers” that may provoke an epileptic attack and devise means to avoid them.

Carol said the cost of running the

operation throughout Australia was around \$7 million a year. Yet only \$200,000 of that came from government. The rest had to be raised from the public.

Upcoming speakers:

18 AUGUST:

Mark Wallace, editor of Rotary Down Under magazine.

Dates for Diaries

12 SEPTEMBER.

Northcott “Walk With Me”
Barbecue.

21 SEPTEMBER.

UN Day of Peace.

12 OCTOBER.

Triathlon Pink Barbecue,
Parramatta Park.

18 OCTOBER.

Bunnings Barbecue, North
Parramatta.