

**The Winds of Change**  
**The eClub Concept**  
**Recswusa's First Year Report by President Judy Taunt**  
**5/5/05**

It's interesting how the synchronicity of events evolve into a creative project. I was in the process of filling out host D5510 Achievement Awards when an email came in from the American Holistic Nurses Association requesting that would I, as a founding member, tell my story about the early days of the organization. In thinking about this request and having to remember those early days of 1980 I decided to share my view about what Recswusa's first year was. By telling our eClub story now as we lived it might be fun and a way to orient new members into our club. This program, therefore, is a result of my process.

In 2001 the Rotary International Council on Legislation adopted resolution 01-226 to provide for cyber clubs. In June 2001, Decision 348, the RI Board agreed to support a pilot project establishing cyber Rotary clubs. The **Key Elements** for this project were: To extend Rotary to business, professional, and community leaders who are unable to meet traditional attendance requirements because of extensive travel, or conflicting occupational demands, or physical immobility, or resident beyond reasonable distance from an existing Rotary club. Web communities in this project would foster friendship and good will among its members and pilot clubs would determine the viability and effectiveness of a cyber Rotary club framework.

In November/December 2003 D5510 Governor Greg Podd was notified that his application for a cyber club had been approved. Greg asked me to spearhead this project because I had expressed interest in transferring to EclubOne due to health reasons. In January 2004 we, DG Greg and I, signed the Terms of Participation Agreement while at an organizational meeting attended by PDG Mel Taunt and Rotarian Karen Naranjo who was also the D5510 webmaster. DG Greg designated Mel as the D5510 Special Representative to our provisional eClub to facilitate the chartering process.

The Terms of Participation Agreement included that:

- We have our own eClub Constitution and Bylaws, which includes the Object of Rotary.
- We must provide an online meeting makeup for Rotarians worldwide.
- We must pay RI dues. We also pay Host D5510 dues (we do not have an eClub district as we are in a pilot project).
- We must maintain a web site.
- We must meet on a regular basis using available electronic communication technology.

- We share electronic member orientation and training materials with RI.
- We must participate the full time of the Pilot Project.

In January, February and March 2004 Karen, Mel and I had organizational meetings to discuss web site development which included the online meeting format, constitution and bylaws based on a standard Rotary club Constitution & Bylaws, but with a n eClub concept, marketing the concept which included member retention, and a member application that would include former Rotarians, transferring Rotarians and new Rotarians. By early March, just in time for PETS, Karen had developed the web site, Mel created the constitution and bylaws and submitted them to RI, Judy and Mel developed the club membership application, Inia Burginger, Judy and Mel created the marketing plan, and Barbara Bruce and Judy developed the marketing plan further for radio broadcasting.

By the end of March Glenda Morris and Mel transferred out of their standard clubs to join Inia, Karen, Barbara and myself making us 6 members. Stephen Shearin, a former Rotarian, arrived on the scene and brought in Jonathan Mazinter, Gary Pearce, Amy Davison, Darin Wayrynen & Chad Bassett .. and then we had 12! Whew! ADG Gene Morga wanted to transfer from his standard club as he was retiring from practicing law, so he did - in participation, and legally joined the end of June. Jonathan asked his sister Luisa Mazinter, a former Rotarian who lives in Johannesburg, SA to join us and we had 14! In this pilot project there is no set number of members to charter so we had all the components for chartering. At the end of April we produced our first online meeting. Our charter date was set at 1 April 2004 and our celebration of receiving the charter from DG Greg was at the D5510 conference in June. Beth Wexler joined us late summer and throughout this year Bob Adams, Bill Balough, Jim Hilliard, Larry Levenson, Leny Eidsmore, and Joe Tolson have joined us. We have one member on the west coast, two on the east coast, one in southern Arizona, one in western Arizona, four in northern Arizona. We now have almost half of our members outside of the Phoenix metro area. We are changing, growing and evolving.

(Note ... Nine of our original 14 charter members had little to no prior Rotary association. Seven of our original charter members are still in the eClub in 2010)

As president, I report directly to Rotary International's contact person for this Rotary E-Club Pilot Project, which is the official name. The information I am sharing is from the recent report sent to our contact person. We now have 9 women and 12 men in our club. Two more potential member's applications are in process so when that is finished we will have 23 members. One newest member is 29, four seasoned mature Rotarians are over 65, 8 are under 45, 8 are in their 50's. Our classifications range from hi tech such as website maintenance and design, and an ISP, to marketing, business consulting, law, retired navy pilot, business entrepreneurs, minister, restaurant manager, to chamber of commerce president & bank officer. One of the questions in the report is "does age

make the difference'? Yes, it does, because all of our younger members have the technology integrated. Most of our members have been in Rotary 5 – 10 years. 8 have less than three years in Rotary. A few of us have so many years in Rotary we don't want to say!

We have evolved in supporting youth as part of our service. We sponsored 2 RYLA students last year and will have one this year. We sponsor an Ambassadorial Scholar, Ellan Whetten, who wrote an online program this last year. The commitment for her and for us is about 3 years, so we are really just beginning when she starts her school year this fall in Italy.

We also applied for a District Simplified Grant this year and received \$650 for a project in South Africa. Thank heavens for Liz Lopez, D5510 Matching Grants chair for walking us through this. We should be filing our final report for this service in the next few weeks. The first week in September we held a virtual meeting with our D5510 Governor Gary Whiting. I believe this is a first for an eClub in this pilot project.

One of our strengths is our online meeting and another is our willingness to serve. Each member documents their service hours weekly using the Rotary Four Avenues of Service. We learn about how much we serve when we focus on this documentation. We found most Rotarians serve more than they realize, much, much more. Another strength is that we attend as many of our host D5510 events as we can, including standard Rotary club meetings. Our eClub training is online and we have past & current district managers and training leaders in our membership. We feel, however, it is very important to also be a part of the district that supports us. I do not want to minimize that we have successfully retained Rotarians in Rotary and have provided membership for Rotarians who left for various reasons. They can now be serving in the way they are most comfortable. We have proven the value of this concept in this one area alone....membership retention.

Our challenges are creating new communication streams, updating and refining our website, (I could write paragraphs about our web site challenges and the talented, creative, persevering members who keep us alive), & keeping focused in a changing business climate.

I feel my role has been to be an observer for this pilot project as well as managing the club. Rotarians have asked me all sorts of interesting questions, but one of the main ones is "what does it take to be an eClub member"? I tell them, in my opinion, it is not for every one. The "bottom line" to be an eClub member is one has to know the technology and feel comfortable with it. One has to be very self reliant, take responsibility and READ! As I have observed our membership this year I see how much commitment it takes to be in this venue. One can feel really alone if socialization at a luncheon meeting is what a member needs. Others just love chat rooms and forums

(our method of membership communication) and they would rather communicate that way than regular e-mail. Some members socialize via the forum in the middle of the night. For us mature folk with tiring eyesight, midnight is our max!

To our visiting Rotarians: You make my day and definitely our secretary, PDG Mel's day. Your comments make all the time and effort worthwhile. You help us select programs, you give us feedback about your clubs, and you give us encouragement that we are providing a service that is needed. I feel blessed to read about some of your projects and the service that you provide on an individual, community and international basis. We receive this energizing communication on a daily basis and we thank you for your comments.

We have tried to provide programs that are not only of interest to our members, but also to our visiting Rotarians. We spend hours sometimes trying to be careful of how a controversial subject is presented so that we follow the Rotary precept that we present a balanced view. Not all of us agree with some subjects, but it is our intention to be as fair as we can. Most of all, we wish our programs to be informative.

What do I think the coming eClub challenges are? One challenge is how do we keep changing (web site) in a continuing changing business climate? How do we fulfill members' service and social needs when most of our members are Rotary wide? I think that is coming and we need to be prepared. I think we have the service that each of us provides well thought out in concept, but the challenge is in implementing it. We are accepting the challenge of giving credibility to this concept.

We are the "Winds of Change". We are here and we are creating the Rotary vision.

### **Other highlights of year ONE**

- Also in March Judy, Karen and Mel attended PETS. First recswusa booth established with its banner D5510 E-Club. Display of Cyber club history, recswusa constitution and bylaws, application for membership and marketing plan. Host D5510 paid for the banner and gave eClub \$200.
- By March 31<sup>st</sup> Glenda, Mel, Steph, Amy, Chad, Jono, Darin, Gary officially join.
- Late April online meetings began. We were notified by RI that charter date would be 1 April.
- In May paperwork by Mel/Judy was submitted for Ambassadorial Scholar, Ellan Whetten. 2 RYLA student applications submitted by Judy/Mel for June camp.

- District Achievement Awards application was submitted by Judy/Mel. We received an Honorable Mention at the district conference since we had only three months to complete what normally takes an entire Rotary year. We had a great social at the Rock Bottom Brewery discussing good ideas, having fun and fellowship.
- In June Judy, Karen, Mel work at D5510 RYLA. We have another social, this time at Grazie to finalize the district conference eClub reception. The reception at the conference was a blast and the highlight of the event. We had live Internet hookups displaying our website and even had a past RI president in our hospitality suite looking at this new vision of the future of Rotary.

## **<Link to Online The Party Never Stops>**

- In July, the beginning of the Rotary 2004-05 year there were requests for Matching Grants (India and Mexico), Centennial Sister Club (eclubone). Not having funds for these requests, we had to decline. Judy did apply with the help of Liz Lopez D5510, chair of Matching Grants committee, a District Simplified Grant. We received \$650 for a project in South Africa. Jono and PDG Rodney Mazinter (South Africa) are responsible for the paperwork for this grant. Our social at Radda's restaurant was fun plus planning for the 2004-05 year.
- In summer the online meetings are underway with always refining the format, programs and the process. Karen and Jono visit standard RC meetings. Karen, Chad and Steph give eClub presentations to standard Rcs. Judy and Barbara are on the radio giving Rotary information of Polio Plus, eClub, Ambassadorial Scholars, RYLA scholars etc. Beth transfers her membership to us. In August Beth and Karen came to the mountain for a weekend social.
- First week in September we hold a virtual District Governor visit by Gary Whiting. Judy answers follow up questions from Gary via e-mail. Steph arranges for a social in the valley the third weekend. Barbara, Glenda, Inia, Judy & Mel start meeting for socializing the second Friday each month.
- In October, PDG Mel conducts an eClub panel at Zone Institute convening in Scottsdale. President Judy represents recswusa and PE Karen attends to assist. A recswusa article written by Judy was presented in the fall Zone 25 & 26 Newsletter. It helps us to have friend & newsletter editor PDG Norma Taylor-Roderique. Norma and husband PDG Ron (D5490) have submitted well-received programs for our online meeting!
- District membership, leadership and vocational seminars are attended by Karen, Steph and Jono during the fall.

- Foundation dinner is attended by Judy and Mel.
- Inia arranges a Christmas party with Beth hosting us in her new home. It was a great family event.
- December the 2005-06 BOD is selected. In January paperwork is started for 2005-06 year by PE Karen and Sec/treas. Mel.
- In February Ambassadorial scholar Ellan plays in the Youth Services Golf Tournament fundraiser representing eClub.
- In March PE Karen and 2005-06 Treas. Jono attend PETS in Scottsdale.
- April brings us to our First Anniversary Family picnic chaired by Amy and assisted by Karen. New members Leny (with husband Bill and two children) and Joe attend. New member Larry sends his regards from Prescott. We now have Inia and Bill on the east coast, Bob on the west, Luisa in Johannesburg, SA, Joe in Tucson, Barbara, Glenda, Judy and Mel in northern Arizona. 10 of us live outside the Phoenix area. We have two more potential members applying.
- RYLA 2005 .. Mel is the volleyball tournament referee, Judy and Karen work registration and Karen is a facilitator. Jono brings daughter Elle to observe RYLA.

Now please enjoy a few more pictures of events during our first year.