

SPINNING DREAMS - CAMBODIA, R C OF BUKIT TIMAH, SINGAPORE

The Gone Cyclin' designated project for 2011-12 involved raising funds for an Australian NGO called "Carpets for Communities" (CfC). CfC empowers mothers of children in Cambodia to break the poverty cycle by providing them with a source of income to firstly place and then keep their children in school. CfC provides immediate intervention to children at risk of child labour and human trafficking. This is done by empowering mothers to earn an income through the production of hand-made, eco-friendly rugs and the development of micro-enterprises such as 'cricket farms' (fried crickets are considered a delicacy in the area), and also in areas of growing produce for sale in nearby markets.

CfC works in the Poi Pet Commune in Cambodia, on the Thailand border. Here, many children are at risk of human trafficking and being sold into prostitution as they are on the streets begging or working to support their family. Equally important, by working and begging they are deprived of an education that would otherwise improve their long-term livelihoods.

This ultimately has them trapped in a "cycle of poverty" that CfC aims to break by empowering the mothers and their families. Around 36 families in the area are currently enrolled in the program, some families with up to eight children.

As well as raising direct funds to directly help CfC, the efforts of Rotary Club of Bukit Timah and Gone Cyclin' with the "Spinning Dreams – Cambodia" project was also to raise awareness of this particular NGO and the excellent work they are doing in Cambodia. (By raising the awareness of Carpets for Cambodia, we also hope to make sure that there are ongoing sales of these carpets in Singapore and the region, to provide the necessary support to allow CfC to help the growing number of families in Poi Pet who are participating in their programs.

The Gone Cyclin' adventure involve a grueling 389km bike ride from Ho Chi Mihn City in Vietnam to Siam Reap in Cambodia. For the 2011-12 Gone Cyclin' project, a total of nine cyclists participated, and were escorted by a bike tour operator in Vietnam. They were accompanied by a crew of three people from LateNite Films (from Melbourne, Australia), who filmed the entire six-day event, and made a 45min documentary.

The RCBT carefully mapped out the fund raising strategy. In addition to pledges and grants, there was a launching of the documentary which was sponsored by the Australian High Commission. The screening of the documentary raised S\$10,000.00 from donations and carpet sales and auctions. In all, we raised a total of more than S\$42,000.00 from this project. (Note – this will be an ongoing project for RCBT over the remainder of 2011-12 and in the coming Rotary year 2012-13.)



The team at the start of the journey in the town of My Tho, Vietnam.



The team covered in mud but still all smiles after a challenging day



Rtn Ashwin & IPP Michael at the Senja-Cashew Com. Centre – 25/11/11



Pres. Andre with some of the children of CfC, Poi Pet, Cambodia.



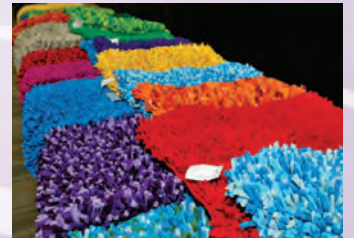
Gone Cyclin's founder & Rotarian Ashwin introduces Pres Andre



A Full House - standing room only at the screening.



Viewing the carpets on sale



A sample of the Carpets on Sale at the December 9 screening



Cambodia documentary launch, Siem Reap 30/3/12



The carpet store in Cambodia. Really bright colors!



Frantic buying of carpets after the screening.



Pres. Andre thanking Deputy High Commissioner Ms Julie Heckscher



Ms Ris Simara (Dep. High Com. addressing the audience.



Most of the Gone Cyclin' crew and friends after the event

FULFILLMENT OF A PRESIDENT

The 47th Installation Night function that was held late June last year was like a recent happening. Wearing a wig to address the audience was a moment of madness to raise more funds for the Club. Though I was elected as President Elect some eighteen months before taking office, I was barely prepared though I have attended PETS twice. There was so much more to learn. You never know how well prepared you are until you step into office. I would like to say I would be a better President given a take two. Ha ha! I have to count my blessings as RC Bandar Seri Begawan, despite its size (a small club with 20 members and barely half active), is a very vibrant club with a few extremely dedicated Rotarians who have great passion for Rotary. They are very capable leaders in their own right. These are the members every President dreams to have. The Club, however, should not be living on this “Dream Team” for too long, as pointed out by District Governor Haji Zainie, during his and the First Lady Hjh Kalimah’s trip to our Club. Though we have always been aware of the problem, the gentle reminder from DG was a wake-up call. The low attendance did not help our cause. We needed immediate injection of new members. This is for the future.

My Rotary year has been an exceptionally fun and fulfilling one. It started with a water project in the remote area of Ulu Miri called Ba Bare. There is no electricity, sanitation and potable water. Villagers collect water from the river and boil the river water for drinking. We had to travel to Miri by car (approximately two hours) and one hour flight to reach Long Seridan (the only airport that is serving the vicinity). I found out upon our arrival that there was no mobile phone coverage (or even fixed line) from the moment we touched down. Then we needed to travel by four wheel drive for 1.5 hours and 3.5 to 5 hours tracking on the loggers’ trail depending on how fit and how quick you can be. Being the President of the Club I was given the privilege to travel in the four wheel drive (which was air-conditioned). On the trail, everyone has to track at their own pace. Being the biggest guy, needless to say, I arrived last. As I was ill-prepared for this trip, it was a struggle all the way. Every bit of my energy was sapped. Eventually it was my will power that pulled me through. I almost passed out on a few occasions. Giving up was never an option, I thought, so I pushed on. The constant incline was a real challenge. All the sufferings were all forgotten when I arrived at the river bank, the ideal settlement of the Penans. The air was fresh. The sight of familiar smiling faces of my friends including ever-reliable Project Chair PP Jeff Yong, made me felt like I had arrived home, at least for that moment. Site reconnaissance started immediately as light would be fading in less than an hour. The team needed to climb up a hill to find the water source and evaluate the water quality and technical feasibility of bringing the water pipe across the river Bare. At the same time taking measurement for the length of the pipe and material needed to do the job. The job was completed 3 months later.

We, as Rotarians, who helped, realize we are more fortunate than others. At times we did not realize how lucky we are until we see what is lacking with our own eyes. I presented this project during the Bursary Award ceremony in the presence of school children, teachers, principals and their parents. Everyone showed great appreciation for the project.

My terms will end in less than two months time. I am thankful for the support I have received. I need to reflect on the mistakes that I wish I didn’t make and the decisions I wished I didn’t have to make. Overall, I am happy to walk away with one silver award, two merit awards and one gold award (courtesy of a joint project with our sister club). Last but not least, I would like to thank all the members in my Club for their support and guidance. I also would like to thank DG Haji Zainie for giving me the opportunity to write a few lines and Hjh Kalimah for her friendship. Finally, I would like to thank my wife and my children for their love. May God bless you all.

President Wong Chin Toon,

President 2011 - 2012

Rotary Club of Bandar Seri Begawan.



APRIL MEMBERSHIP & ATTENDANCE

Rotary Club of:	Group No.	State	Total Members as at 1st of April	Total Members at 30th April	Ave. Attendance % this month	No. of Meetings held this month	No. of Meetings cancelled this month
A'Famosa	1	Melaka	13	13	40.40	4	1
Kota Laksamana Malacca*	1	Melaka	10	10	0.00	0	0
Kota Melaka	1	Melaka	25	25	54.67	4	0
Malacca	1	Melaka	24	24	21.20	4	0
Tangkak Ledang	2	Johor	13	13	54.00	5	0
Batu Pahat	2	Johor	21	20	31.25	4	0
Muar	2	Johor	21	21	46.00	5	0
Pontian	2	Johor	14	14	68.00	4	1
Kluang	3	Johor	23	24	83.00	4	0
Mersing*	3	Johor	22	22	72.00	2	0
Segamat*	3	Johor	16	16	52.00	3	1
Kota Tinggi*	3	Johor	16	15	65.00	2	2
Kulai*	4	Johor	21	21	71.80	5	0
Pasir Gudang	4	Johor	20	20	65.00	2	1
Puteri Lagoon	4	Johor	16	16	62.49	4	0
Tebrau*	4	Johor	21	21	60.00	3	1
Johor Bahru	5	Johor	56	56	81.50	4	0
Johor Centennial	5	Johor	13	13	75.00	4	0
Johor Straits View*	5	Johor	14	14	61.00	4	0
Queenstown	6	Singapore	44	45	82.00	4	0
Sentosa*	6	Singapore	63	66	43.60	4	0
Victoria	6	Singapore	10	4	25.00	2	2
Singapore	6	Singapore	149	149	35.17	4	0
Tanglin	6	Singapore	23	23	39.40	4	0
E-Club Singapore	6	Singapore	21	20	50.00	1	0
Jurong Town	7	Singapore	38	37	61.00	4	0
Singapore East	7	Singapore	34	34	57.00	3	1
Singapore North	7	Singapore	32	32	41.00	5	0
Singapore West	7	Singapore	54	56	53.00	5	0
Singapore Centennial*	7						
Changi	8	Singapore	26	26	49.00	4	0
E-Club 3310	8	Singapore	26	25	30.00	N/A	0
Pandan Valley	8	Singapore	48	48	61.20	4	0
Serangoon Garden Orchard*	8	Singapore	15	16	70.00	4	0
Suntec City*	8	Singapore	32	32	48.00	2	0
Bugis Junction	9	Singapore	32	34	48.00	4	0
Bukit Timah*	9	Singapore	18	18	53.00	4	0
Garden City	9	Singapore	35	35	40.91	4	1
Marina City*	9	Singapore	36	38	54.70	4	0
Raffles City	9	Singapore	48	48	38.50	4	0
Shenton	9	Singapore	20	20	45.00	4	0
Bandar Seri Begawan	10	Brunei	20	20	67.00	3	1
Belait*	10	Brunei	10	10	47.00	3	2
Labuan FT	10	Labuan	16	17	49.00	4	0
Mini*	10	Sarawak	10	10	60.00	4	0
Bintulu*	11	Sarawak	29	29	45.69	4	0
Bintulu Central*	11	Sarawak	16	16	60.00	5	0
Sibu	11	Sarawak	29	29	64.00	5	0
Kuching*	12	Sarawak	37	37	55.00		
Kuching Central	12	Sarawak	38	40	64.00	5	0
Kuching South*	12	Sarawak	14	14	50.00	5	0
Kuching Jaya	12	Sarawak	17	16	69.00	5	0
Kota Kinabalu*	13	Sabah	63	63	80.00	4	0
Likas Bay	13	Sabah	44	46	92.31	4	0
Kinabalu Sutera	13	Sabah	15	15	54.60	3	1
Kota Kinabalu South	13	Sabah	34	34	43.90	4	0
Luyang	13	Sabah	20	21	64.00	5	0
Penampang	13	Sabah	15	14	63.70	4	0
Tanjung Aru	13	Sabah	18	19	58.00	1	0
Sandakan	14	Sabah	44	44	33.89	4	0
Sandakan North	14	Sabah	30	31	66.10	4	0
Tawau	14	Sabah	31	32	65.05	4	0
Tawau Tanjung*	14	Sabah	22	22	68.00	3	1

* No attendance figures received for the month.