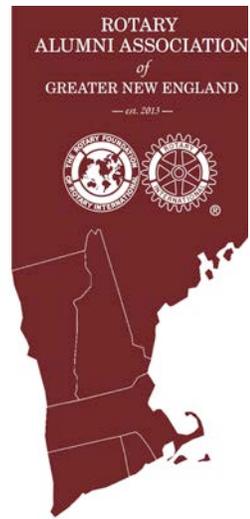


# Rotary Alumni Association of Greater New England



Newsletter 13, June / July 2014

## Message from Our President

Dear Alumni and Friends,

Since our last regular newsletter much has happened and I hope that you enjoyed our special newsletter about the Annual General Meeting in Baltimore. If you missed it, go to <http://www.raagne.com/newsletter> and you will find all past newsletters. RAAGNE's treasurer and AGM attendee, Dave Gau, gave his personal perspective on the AGM in this newsletter.

First, our first project, the "Zabuli Education Center" was launched in early June and we were more than happy that we achieved our goal within just a few days. Thanks to everyone who shared our project and to all donors for their generous support. R

Meanwhile, the 105th annual Rotary International Convention took place in Sydney and PDG Klaus Hachfeld as one of the founding fathers of RAAGNE will tell you more about his impressions and experiences in this issue.

Another highlight from recent months was the promotion of the End of Polio campaign from Roberto Manuel Silva Pérez, a Rotarian and RAAGNE member from Chile, who has shared his unique experience with us in this newsletter.

Do you have ideas how to make RAAGNE better, or just want to get more involved?! Just send us an email!

Best regards,

Christopher Uschnig



RAAGNE President Christopher Uschnig  
[christopher.uschnig@gmail.com](mailto:christopher.uschnig@gmail.com)

## [The 2014 Rotary Convention in Sydney: Attendee Perspective from PDG Klaus Hachfeld](#)

Each year Rotary International organizes its 4-day convention, typically early June, with the venue moving to a new location each year. Last year it was in Lisbon (Portugal), this year Sydney (Australia), then 2015 Sao Paolo (Brazil), 2016 Seoul (Korea) and 2017 Atlanta (USA). If ever you get the chance to attend, do it! It brings together a wonderfully diverse assembly of people from all over the world, young and old, all of them friendly.

This year the attendance was typical, more than 18,000 Rotarians, Rotaractors, Interactors, and Rotary Foundation Alumni. Besides the core convention program, there are additional events like the Rotaract pre-convention, the Rotary Alumni Celebration, the World Water Summit, and fun events that included the breaking of the Guinness Book of Records for the most people standing at the top of the Sydney Harbor Bridge; a fund-raiser to help end Polio world-wide.

My wife, Glenys, and I had attended six previous conventions and can tell you that this one was outstanding as much for its location as the content. Sydney is one of the friendliest places, with great train, light rail and ferry service to all parts of the city. The river system dominates the city, with superb tourist attractions at Circular Quay where Sydney Opera House is located, and Darling Harbor where the musical fountains and restaurants are a big draw.



Sydney is ALIVE, and showed us its imagination with the month-long Vivid Festival while we were there. At that time the Opera House and many major buildings were illuminated with exotic designs and laser projections. As a laser-junky, I was impressed with the laser projected 3D ballet dancers cavorting in the spray from a water fountain in Darling Harbor. You get the picture; it was pure magic!

Oh yes, the convention. All the Rotary programs were in buildings in Olympic Park, built for the Year 2000 Olympic Games. One day the Olympic flame was lit, which tempted a few Rotarians to jump into the space below the flame while surrounded by waterfalls. OK, I know, you need to have been there at the time!

The plenary sessions, especially the opening and closing sessions, make your hair stand on end. Think of 18,000+ Rotarians filling the many levels of a major arena, with huge state of the art screens showing all the action on the stage.



You could also visit the House of Friendship and cuddle a live Koala Bear, check out the Wombat, watch great live musical entertainment, eat, relax, talk with Rotarians from everywhere, and spend money on Australian opals and endless "Rotary stuff" at the hundreds of booths showing product and displaying Rotary projects. It proved to be a good place to talk with attendees about RAAGNE, give them the RAAGNE contact cards and encourage their District leaders to get engaged with us.

There we met and talked with Evan Burrell, who runs an e-club in Australia. Specifically we explored the opportunities to expand the RAAGNE website to give alumni the chance to participate in webinar meetings from anywhere in the World, as per a visitor to an e-club. He is willing to work with us.

We attended the Alumni Celebration, a morning of presentations including one by Ms. Maya Ajmera, an Ambassadorial Scholar Alum and recipient of the 2013-14 Global Alumni Service to Humanity Award. I talked with Maya because she created an organization that guides and supplies funds to small self-help communities, so she is willing to give us some guidance as well. I mentioned RAAGNE's first project supporting a girls' school in Afghanistan. This Celebration gave us another opportunity to promote RAAGNE as we distributed cards and talked with attendees.

Dr. Bruce Aylward of the World Health Organization presents the latest progress report on the Eradication of Polio at each Rotary Convention. We had heard him speak several times over the years and found it fascinating as he told of the twists and turns the three types of Polio have taken. Rotary has been spearheading the eradication for 25 years and the effort is clearly coming to an end, provided political and religious factions will allow the immunizations to continue.

Prior to and during the convention, we were generously hosted in the home of a Rotary Club president. What a super way to get to know Rotarians on the other side of the World and compare notes! Also one evening in common with many other clubs, his club hosted several convention attendees for dinner. You have to experience this to realize what an amazing organization Rotary is.

Would we go to another Rotary Convention, or is seven enough? Well we are really not convention junkies, but I can see myself saving pennies to go some other time. Where else can you find such a positive spirit of cooperation and meet so many people doing extraordinary things to help others?

Kind regards,

Klaus Hachfeld



Klaus Hachfeld, PDG District 7910

# Rotary Alumni Association of Greater New England

Newsletter 13, June / July 2014

## RAAGNE's Ray of Hope in Afghanistan - Story from Project Chair Amanda Zeidan

In June 2014, RAAGNE (<http://www.RAAGNE.com>) started to support the Zabuli Education Center in Afghanistan that provides free education to young women and children. The school opened its doors in March 2008, and now provides free education to more than 400 Afghan girls who were previously denied educational opportunities. The curriculum is both academic and practical, taught by experienced, native teachers. The school was founded by Afghan native Razia Jan through the Razia's Ray of Hope Foundation.



RAAGNE is the only electronic e-Alumni Association within Rotary that welcomes alumni, Rotarians and Rotaractors ([www.raagne.com/join-us](http://www.raagne.com/join-us)) from all over the world. As a very young organization within Rotary, RAAGNE set the bar lower for this as their first project to test their outreach, but was able to reach their goal within just a few days!



The funds will go towards purchasing computer equipment and providing teachers for education of these young women. To stay updated on this project and future efforts, follow us on <http://www.fb.com/RotaryGreaterNewEngland> or register online. If you would like to work with RAAGNE, contact President Christopher Uschnig (<mailto:christopher.uschnig@post.harvard.edu>).

Finally, learn more about this project at <http://www.raagne.com/projects>

Sincerely,

Amanda Zeidan



Lighting up Easter Island with an End Polio Now Message – Story from *Roberto Manuel Silva Pérez, RAAGNE Member, and Public Image Project Leader for District 4340 (Chile)*

From: <http://blog.rotary.org/2014/05/27/moai/>

The gigantic, brooding monoliths of Easter Island have been impressing visitors to the remote island, 2,000 miles off the coast of Chile, for years. We wanted to illuminate some of these statues with an End Polio Now message, but it was no easy task.



The stone statues are known as moai, the living faces (aringa ora) of deified ancestors of the Rapa Nui who inhabited the island. The Dutch navigator Jacob Roggeveen came upon the statues on Easter Sunday in 1722. The island has several ceremonial platforms, called ahu, upon which statues are displayed, and each is associated with a family of nobility.

The construction of the moai was quite an event. They average 10 to 16 feet in height, and weigh about five tons, although some are as heavy as 10 tons. Archaeologists have registered more than 1,000 statues around the island.



*The crew of 45 Rotary members and 70 Youth Exchange students pose for the official picture.*

Our goal was to light two of the 15 moai on Tongariki, the biggest ahu on the island located about 40 minutes from the town of Hanga Roa. The two figures we wanted to light are both unique, the second from the right is the only one with a hat, and the fifth from the right is the largest of the set.

But doing so is complicated. Besides the lack of electricity, the ahu are protected sacred sites. For our event, we needed authorization from the governor of Easter Island, the mayor of Hanga Roa, the National Corporation of Indigenous Development, and the senior council for the Rapa Nui.

On 6 May, permission and equipment secured, about 45 members of Rotary and 70 Rotary Youth Exchange Students from Chile, all wearing red End Polio Now T-shirts, traveled to the island and gathered in front of the Tongariki with local residents for our effort to raise awareness for polio eradication and publicize just how close we are to ending this disease.

Once everything was ready, we went to the ahu and sat down for the official picture. We finally made it!

Learn how you can [help us eradicate polio](#)

## The RAAGNE Annual General Meeting, Perspective from Treasurer Dave Gau

RAAGNE's AGM was quite an amazing event to attend. I have to say that helping to organize an event all via e-mail and Google Hangouts was a first for me. Having never met anyone else in RAAGNE in person, I was worried if our first interactions would be awkward or not, but this was not the case. We had a strong group of 14 at the event. Of course, there was no better way to start our day than with a local service project. We spent a few hours of our morning at the Weinberg Housing and Resource Center making sandwiches for the homeless. I lost count after we made 200 sandwiches but I'm willing to bet that we make close to 500.

Feeling energized from the sandwich production, we began the AGM with a fantastic lunch and introduction to RAAGNE. We also heard about project ideas and settled on the Zabuli Project which I thought was great. I was also excited to hear from Past Rotary International President Bill Boyd. As one of the founding members of RAAGNE, it was great to hear his suggestions and vision for what we could become.

Following the meeting, we concluded with dinner at a local restaurant and spent the rest of the evening checking out all the hospitality suites. Needless to say, the entire day was busy, but it was great to see everyone in person. I am thankful for the Rotary Foundation for helping us make this event possible and also to District Governor Peter Kyle of 7620 for allowing us to host our meeting alongside the District Conference. I look forward to the next RAAGNE AGM next year (especially since we've hosted one now and will know exactly what to do next time!).

Sincerely,

Dave