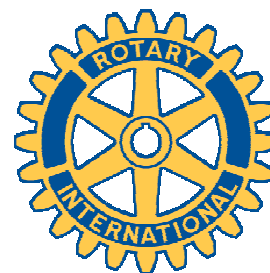


District 5730 Group Study Exchange



Week Two in Brazil

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Your GSE team has had a busy and exciting week. When the last newsletter was published, we were in Sinop. We finished our visit there on Monday and left with great anticipation for Alta Floresta. We flew to the city because of the length of the trip and condition of the roads. Alta Floresta is the north-most Rotary city in this district and like Lucas and Sinop, is young city. In the 70s and 80s, Brazil made a decision to populate the Amazonia forest. Cities sprang up from nowhere and have had tremendous growth since.

We're finding that each city and Rotary club has a distinctive personality. Alta Floresta is a "working class" town that lacks the business development that has occurred in the other towns. That is reflected in the membership of the club. Nonetheless, Alta Floresta's Rotarians opened their businesses and homes to us with great enthusiasm. We visited a hardwood operation, coffee processing plant and Zebu cattle operation early in the week. We were able to see their service project to poor children that is funded by a Rotary Foundation grant originated by an Italian Rotary club. At various times,

we also visited the classrooms of public schools and were able to have question-and-answer sessions with the children. As it's said, they ask the darndest questions.

On Wednesday and Thursday, we spent much of the two days on a houseboat owned by one of the members. The houseboat is moored to an island in the Teles Pires River, a tributary of the Amazon River. The Teles Pires is the major river in Mato Grosso and impressive in its own right. We fished, visited, ate great food and relaxed. Upon returning to Alta Floresta, there was a joint meeting of the two clubs that evening in which we had a chance to speak. Because we had spoken in the Monday night joint meeting about ourselves, we took the opportunity to personally thank the club officers, host families and the individuals who had gone out of their way to make our time there special. With part of the stash of District 5730 pins, we made a number of people "Honorary Texans" on Thursday night.

Sorriso awaited us after Alta Floresta. There is no airline service from there to Sorriso, so we flew to Sinop and were picked up there for the hour's drive south. We met a few members at a dinner that night and they are a delightfully fun group of Rotarians. We've had two interpreters; a young resident and a Rotary Youth Exchange student from Australia. It's especially great to have the Exchange student because it teaches the GSE team members about one more aspect of the Foundation. To this point, the stay in Sorriso is the highlight of

the trip.

The trip to Tangara de Serra was a tough one. Sorriso rented a small commercial bus to take us there. The trip was about 300 miles on rough road. Twice, we had to detour through sugar cane fields to avoid the farmer's blockades. There is a scheduled government announcement on the 25th, so we'll like encounter them until then and possibly beyond that if no satisfactory program is announced. The farmer's are protesting the lack of price supports for soybeans. The market price has plummeted in 2006 and the effects are being felt throughout the economy. The protests apparently started in Mato Grosso, but have spread through Brazil. The farmers we've talked to are not optimistic at all.

We're in Tangara de Serro now and will tell you about it next time. Until then:

Tchau, todubem.



The mighty pirahna!