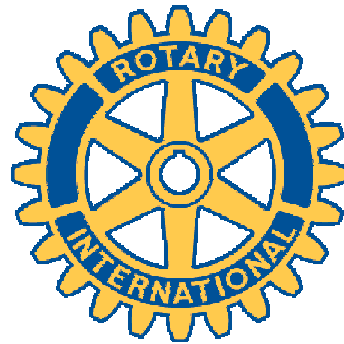


Rotary District 5730 Group Study Exchange 2008—Week One!



Our GSE team arrived safely in Australia a week ago. Team leader Ted Holder and member Akshay Tavkar have reported on the first week. ~ Bill Morris

Ted reports: D-9630 GSE Chairman Peter Maurer and a group of Rotarians met us at the airport and we were soon on our way with our families. The first night there was a Rotary meeting of 10-14 clubs, about 120 people came. We were at a Botanical Gardens and it was a very pretty layout. Our team gave its first presentation and it went very well. The second day we gathered at the Queensland Yacht Club and we were divided into 2 groups. Chris, Ted and two sponsors were together, and Akshay, Cindy and Laura were on another sailing ship. As it turned out, they were having a race of about 35-40 boats and we were racing for over an hour. You can guess how much this group knows about sailing, our job was to go from side to side as the boat changed directions. The only problem with this is that when the Captain said to change, you first had to duck because the sail boom was coming over your head, the boat was turning and the ship was leaning so you had to climb up and over while you were moving along and the water was coming over your shoes. There were 6 of us doing this and it was a lot of fun, but not that easy at times. After the race we went to



the club, had a relaxer and waited to see what prizes were given out.

Each of our boats won prizes in their class. I asked the captain what our job had been and he replied "you were the ballast"; that will look good on my next job application.

Akshay reports: We are having an amazing time here in Australia. We are finishing up our first week in Brisbane today. We are off to

Toowoomba later this afternoon. The Australian hospitality from the Rotary members has been absolutely amazing. The vocational visits have gone really well and are full of information. We have also been able to take in the sights. We visited the Steve Irwin Australia zoo and got to hang out with koalas and kangaroos. We spent yesterday at the Gold Coast and its beautiful beaches.

The District Conference is next weekend, and last year over 600 Rotarians were there. We are prepared to give a presentation to a large crowd. We have multiple vocational visits and cultural experiences lined up this week in Toowoomba. We are also going to get a chance to volunteer at Rotary sponsored events (the rodeo in Roma) and may even participate in a 5K run for charity at the end of the month.

By the way, we have met a couple of the outbound GSE team members and they are very excited about their trip to Texas. They arrive in Odessa on March 29th.

The trip has exceeded all of our expectations in the first 5 days and we are having a blast! I'll keep you updated with our journey in Toowoomba and beyond.