

February 22, 2010

**This Week's Program**  
*Experiences in Germany – Martin Graefe*  
**Next Week's Program**  
*LARA – Gary Johnson*

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**IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER**

**DISTRICT 5580 CONFERENCE –**

May 13-16, 2010 **Winnipeg, Canada**

**ROTARY INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION –**

June 20-23, 2010 **Montreal, Quebec**

**UPCOMING MAR PROGRAMS**

Mar 8	TBD
Mar 15	GSE Team * Evening Meeting *
Mar 22	Haiti – Abby Nelson
Mar 29	Classification Talk

**DISTRICT 5580 CONFERENCE**

The District 5580 conference held in Winnipeg, Canada on May 13-16 is approaching quickly. The board has earmarked \$770 to encourage more of our members to attend this conference. The cost of the registration and the banquet dinner (\$110) would be reimbursed with receipts turned in to **Dennis Vorgert**. Make your lodging arrangements as soon as possible; if you have questions, contact **Amy Saeland**. Contact **John Reff** for more information on the bus from Brainerd coming through Bemidji to the conference. Remember that U.S. residents will need a valid passport. For more information on the conference, check out our website:

[www.bemidjirotary.com](http://www.bemidjirotary.com).

**WORLD UNDERSTANDING MONTH**

The month of February is special in the Rotary calendar since it is designated World Understanding Month. The month also includes the anniversary of the first meeting of Rotary held on February 23 February 1905, now designated World Understanding and Peace Day.

In designating World Understanding Month, the Rotary International board asks all Rotary clubs to plan programs for their weekly meetings and undertake special activities to emphasize “understanding and goodwill as essential for world peace.”

To observe this designated month, many clubs arrange international speakers, invite Youth Exchange students and international scholars from schools and universities to club meetings, plan programs featuring former Group Student Exchange

team members, arrange discussions on global issues, present entertainment with an international emphasis.

Many clubs take the opportunity to launch an international community service activity or make contact with a Rotary club in another country. It is a good month to initiate a Rotary Friendship Exchange, a 3-H project or encourage support for PolioPlus and other Rotary Foundation programs.

World Understanding Month is a chance for every club to pause, plan and promote the Fourth Avenue of Service – Rotary’s continued quest for goodwill, peace and understanding among people of the world.

**ROTARY AROUND THE WORLD**

*Israel* – More than 100 experts and Rotary club members attended a water symposium in Tel Aviv in May. The conference, part of Agritech 2009, an international agricultural exhibition, focused on practical water solutions and sustainable development. The event, which was sponsored by District 2490, featured 2008-09 RI President Dong Kurn Lee, who spoke about how Rotary clubs are addressing the global water crisis at the grassroots level. The symposium also showcased successful water projects throughout the developing world.

*Italy* – The Rotary Club of Bari Castello worked with UNICEF to open a pediatric clinic at an admission center at the Bari-Palese refugee camp. The club provided all the furniture and tools for the clinic, which was dedicated in May. Doctors will provide preventive care for the children living at the camp; previously, only urgent care was available. Bari, on Italy’s southeastern coast, is a major point of entry into the European Union for immigrants and asylum seekers.

*USA* – A new support center run by Wellspring Family Services provides domestic violence intervention, eviction prevention resources, and parenting support for at-risk and homelessness families. As the lead donor, the Rotary Club of Seattle contributed \$4.3 million to the facility, which opened in June and will help prevent homelessness for an estimated 5,000 families over the next 10 years. The project was chosen from 41 proposals submitted to the club for its centennial project.