



## March 12 meeting

Number 35: 2007-08

**PRESIDING:** RICHARD CROWE

**LED PLEDGE:** RICH WLOSINSKI

**INSPIRATION:** YU YOK PEARRING

**MR. MIKE:** JON MIYATA

**SCRIBE:** PATTY SUE SALVADOR

**GUESTS:**

**ROTARY CLUB OF HILO:** CHRIS TAMM, MARCIA SAKAI, JERRY WATANABE, DR. CRAIG SHIKUMA, DIRK YOSHINA.

**ROTARY CLUB OF SOUTH HILO:** HELEN SHIROTA-BENEVIDES.

**ROTARY CLUB OF VOLCANO:** ALBERT JEYTE.

**ROTARY CLUB OF EAST HONOLULU:** LAURA STEELQUIST.

**OTHERS:** DR. RONALD QUADE (HOST: WALTER MOE),

JUDGE GREG NAKAMURA (HOST: CAROL VAN CAMP),

WARREN KITAOKA (HOST: CAROL VAN CAMP),

DR. RON WAGNER-WRIGHT (GUEST SPEAKER),

DONALD TRIPP, CASSANDRA CABAONG.

Service  
Above  
Self



## EYES OF THE PHILIPPINES: SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

This week, the guest speaker was **Dr. Ron Wagner-Wright**, who works in the Philippines with blind and homeless children through a school he is establishing called Eyes of the Philippines in Muntinlupa City, in southern Manila. His adopted daughter **Cassandra Cabaong** and her boyfriend **Don Tripp**, both UH Hilo students, assisted with the presentation. **Dr. Ron** was born and educated in England, majoring in medieval literature and language. There he met his wife **Sandra**, who teaches history at UH Hilo. She disliked the snow, so she said to him, "If you love me, you will come to Hawai'i." So he did. **Dr. Ron** was vision-impaired from birth by a defective gene and went totally blind several years ago. He attended graduate school in Florida and Minnesota, and schools for the blind in Honolulu, Illinois, and Australia. Currently he volunteers for the National Federation of the Blind, the Episcopal Catholic Church, and serves as the Mayor's representative on the Disability Committee. **Dr. Ron** said that blindness is



the most prevalent disease in our society today. It can be caused by accidents, looking at the sun, poverty, poor nutrition, diabetes, drug abuse, and alcohol. Eyes of the Philippines provides education, independent living skills, vocational training, as well as moral and religious training. Of the children in The Philippines, 95.2% receive little or no appropriate education. **Dr. Ron** wants to give blind children the same opportunities as sighted ones. He has many new tools to provide aid at the school (for

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example, a Braille compass and a talking Braille computer without a screen). **Dr. Ron** brought some of these fascinating tools to demonstrate. Of course, he also brought his seeing-eye dog, **Spencer McGarrett Wagner-Wright**, a fully-trained service animal that goes everywhere with him. Such an animal costs \$30,000, has a passport, and is not subject to quarantine. Unfortunately, there is no guide-dog training area in the State of Hawai'i. **Dr. Ron** has recently been given land by the church's community foundation to build a new school. "Even though education is free in the Philippines, families can't afford uniforms and supplies," he says. "And Filipino children who are blind suffer the most because blindness is highly stigmatized there. Parents of blind children abandon them or hide them in shame. Many are orphans. It is very sad. This is why I am establishing a school for them. It is the only school for the blind headed by a blind person. The students will receive training from about 35 sighted teachers who possess good blindness skills and believe in the abilities of blind people." In addition to core courses in language, math, science, art, music, accounting, economics, and social sciences, the curriculum will consist of specialty courses for the blind students. "These include the history of Braille, independent mobility skills, cane travel, street navigation, domestic skills, and Braille I and II reading and writing," he says. "These courses build a foundation for literacy and independence." Headmaster **Dr. Ron** will be designing, writing, and printing all the lesson plans and pedagogical material in Braille. "Our goal is to one day have the school be a certified, registered school by the Department of Education", he says. Contact him at 896-6611 or [doctorron@hawaii.rr.com](mailto:doctorron@hawaii.rr.com).

## CALENDAR:

- MAR. 19 – REGULAR MEETING:** **Laura Steelquist**,  
District 5000 Membership Chair
- MAR. 26 – REGULAR MEETING:** **Karolyn Lundkvist**,  
District 5000 Group Study Exchange Team Leader
- MAR. 27 – Club Social, 6:00-9:00 p.m.** (at Crowe home on 26  
Olena Street, Hilo), with pianist **Boris Konovalov**
- APR. 2 – REGULAR MEETING:** **Mike Kaleikini**, Puna Geothermal
- APR. 5 – District 5000 Assembly for Hawai'i Island,**  
8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m., Waimea Middle School

**MAHALO** to **YU YOK PEARRING**, who donated a UH Hilo gift basket with a sweatshirt, tote bag, and CD holder, won by **RICHARD CROWE**.

**QUOTE FOR THE DAY:** "Even if you are on the right track, you will get run over if you just sit there." – Will Rogers

**4-WAY TEST:** **CAROL VAN CAMP**

**PHOTOS:** **SCOTT CARROTHERS AND DONALD TRIPP**

**PRE-MEETING MUSIC:** **BORIS KONOVALOV – PIANO WORKS BY RACHMANINOFF, CHOPIN, LISZT**

## Announcements:

1. **President Richard Crowe** announced that this year, the District 5000 Assembly will be held on Saturday, April 5, at Waimea Middle School, from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Board members from next year and this year are especially encouraged to attend, but all members are welcome! **Richard** also reminded us that there will be a Rotary Foundation Gala on April 12, 5:30 p.m., at the Hawai'i Convention Center. This will be a sold-out event and will feature past RI President *Jonathan Majiyagbe* and some beneficiaries of our RF donations. The event is \$75 a person.
2. **Gary Young** announced that we will be having a special club social event on Thursday, March 27, 6:00-9:00 p.m., at the home of **Richard Crowe**. Those who attend will be treated to a 1-hour concert of piano music (at 7:00 p.m.) by classical Russian pianist *Boris Konovalov*. Tickets are \$20 a head. *Only* 20 tickets (for Rotarians and their guests) will be available; otherwise, **Richard** will have to tear down a wall in his living room! The club is providing the pupus and refreshments.
3. **Allen Novak** informed us that we are having a special presentation at our March 12 meeting to the Friends of the Big Island Drug Court (this year's District Simplified Grant project), and that we will present a \$10,000 check from the Weinberg Foundation to a representative of the Kilohana Girl Scouts Camp at our March 19 meeting. On April 9, we will be making a presentation to *Kawika Mattos* of the Boys and Girls Club. **Allen** also announced that Saturday, April 26 has been declared by RI as Rotarians at Work Day. The other East Hawai'i clubs are joining forces to renovate the interior of the Hilo Central Fire Station on that Saturday, and at least two weekends before that. He circulated a sign-up sheet among members to assist with this project if they so wish.
4. **Richard Cunningham** continued the spring campaign for the Hawai'i Rotary Youth Foundation (HRYF). A framed mirror will be the drawing prize, and a survey was taken at the meeting to choose the frame design (Kobe, round, beveled) and preferred wood (koa, mango, others). Members who contribute \$50 or more to HRYF can participate in the drawing for the mirror, to be fabricated by **Richard** before mid-April.
5. The 2008 Rotary District Conference will be held May 23-26 at the Wailea Beach Marriott Resort (special rate of \$229 per night) on Maui. Registration is \$35 per couple. So far, **Mary Begier, Pete Muller, Karolyn Lundkvist, Richard Crowe** (plus 3 spouses) have registered.
6. The 2008 Rotary International Convention will be held June 15-18 in Los Angeles, California (*See the Stars!*). If you register by March 31, the cost is \$305; thereafter, the registration cost will increase to \$345.



### HAPPY DOLLARS:

**TED HONG \$3, FOR SEEING**

**HELEN SHIROTA-BENEVIDES AT THE MEETING.**

**HELEN SHIROTA-BENEVIDES \$3, TO MATCH TED**

**AND TO SEE OLD FRIENDS.**

**WALTER MOE \$20, FOR JUDGE GREG NAKAMURA'S HELP WITH GETTING HAWAIIAN PARADISE PARK OFF TO THE RIGHT START.**

**RICHARD CUNNINGHAM \$1, FOR HRYF DONATIONS BY ALAN OKINAKA AND RUTH LARKIN AT THE MEETING.**

**JANE GIBSON \$5, FOR ATTENDING HER MOTHER'S 89<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY PARTY.**



## SPECIAL PRESENTATION:

*At Wednesday's meeting, the club made a special presentation to the Friends of the Big Island Drug Court (FBIDC). The State of Hawai'i Drug Court program, implemented five years ago, allows certain individuals who have been arrested for drug violations, to start their lives over by being placed in the Drug Court system. These individuals cannot have committed a violent crime, are generally not repeat offenders, and show a serious interest in improving their lives. Assisting individuals to re-enter the mainstream of community life, to become gainfully employed and to be worthwhile members of our community, is an area of community need for drug offenders, whose numbers are on the increase. Once an individual is convicted of a drug-related crime, the judge may decide to allow them to enter the Drug Court program instead of giving them a prison sentence. The court program provides clinical and psychological assistance (including drug addiction treatment and counseling) while requiring them to get a job and pay restitution. Successful graduation from the program means they are gainfully employed, have paid restitution to all their victims, have stayed clean for several months/years and have met all requirements imposed by the judge. Graduation also means their prison sentence has been commuted, and their arrest record wiped clean. There are currently over 100 clients in the Drug Court system on the Big Island, and over 50 who have graduated. The clients are released from jail when they enter this program, and therefore often have very little to their name. Through a Rotary District 5000 Simplified Grant of \$922 (plus \$78 from the club), this project will provide personal hygiene kits to help the clients initially take care of themselves as they begin to look for employment and receive counseling. Twenty kits will be used over the course of a year or longer. This project will also provide thirty-seven gift certificates as incentives for these clients to reach certain goals in the program. These are the little enjoyments in life that most of us have, and thus these incentives will help them further their goals. The incentives will be gift certificates from Prince Kuhio Plaza, grocery stores, and theaters. In the photo are, left to right, Ruth Larkin (who did the shopping), Paula Uusitalo (who prepared the grant), Carol Van Camp (who proposed the idea, and who is with FBIDC), and Allen Novak (Hilo Bay Community Service Chair).*





**CLUB ANNIVERSARIES:**

**PAULA UUSITALO (3/8), 2 YEARS (SPONSOR: RUTH LARKIN).**

**WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES: DALE AND SANDRA TOKUJKE (3/11), 30 YEARS.**



**BIRTHDAYS: FRANK ANNIN (3/9), LEFT; NADIA RANNE (3/9).**



**RECOGNITIONS: BARRY TANIGUCHI AND MIKE GLEASON WERE PICTURED IN THE HAWAII TRIBUNE-HERALD ON 3/9, AS KTA MADE A \$50,000 GIFT TO THE ARC OF HILO TO LAUNCH THE ARC'S FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN. DAVE DELUZ JR. (LEFT) AND SCOTT FLEMING WERE ALSO MENTIONED.**

**RICHARD CROWE WAS MENTIONED IN A HAWAII TRIBUNE-HERALD ARTICLE ON 3/8 ABOUT UH HILO'S NEW MAUNAKEA TELESCOPE (HÖKŪ KE'A), TO BE COMPLETED THIS SUMMER. BOTH DAVE AND RICHARD CONTRIBUTED \$5.**



President Richard Crowe with Dr. Ron Wagner-Wright and Spencer McGarrett Wagner-Wright. (left)

Map of the Philippines. (right)

