Dear Eyecare Fellowship members:

As we approach the end of our Centennial year and look forward to our Centennial Convention in Chicago, I want to take this opportunity to extend my deepest appreciation to our retiring IECFR Chairman, Dr. O. Doyle Dannenberg. Since 2000 Doyle has served as the Chair and Vice Chair of the Avoidable Blindness Task Force and then as the Chair of the new IECFR Fellowship. He is a committed, dedicated Rotarian who has continually exhibited “Service Above Self” in all that he does. He has been tireless in his work in the area of Avoidable Blindness and through his efforts our Task Force and our Fellowship have grown and been highly successful.

Doyle joined Rotary in 1948, and has not missed a Rotary meeting somewhere in the world every week since . . . that’s more than 56 years of perfect attendance! He served his club as President in 1957-58, and as Governor of District 534 in 1973-74.

During the Chicago Convention, Doyle will celebrate his 80th birthday and as he reaches this milestone, he will now “retire” from active Rotary service and devote more time to his family and friends. On behalf of the entire membership of the IECFR and the many Rotarians and individuals Dr. Dannenburg has helped during his 56 years of Rotary service, we wish Doyle and June a “retirement” filled with the joy and happiness they so richly deserve.

With deepest gratitude,

PRIP Frank J. Devlyn
Honorary Chair, IECFR

A Life of Service Enters Retirement

Rotary’s Centennial Initiatives on Avoidable Blindness

By Gabriel Minder, PhD

Abstract: To celebrate its Centennial in 2005, Rotary has enhanced its contribution toward preventing blindness worldwide, not only locally through the efforts of more than 31,000 Rotary Clubs, but also on a broader scale: namely, by increased usage of The Rotary Foundation’s powerful Matching Grant mechanisms, by constant consultation with WHO in Geneva, and by close cooperation with experienced IAPB member organizations.
During my Governorship, I told Frank Devlyn that I would like to become more involved in the Avoidable Blindness field and thus I and Rotary colleague Sam Das, a past President of the Rotary club of Guildford, an ophthalmic surgeon in his own right, set up a four year plan, to add to the work already carried out by the Guildford club, by building and equipping four more optical clinics in the surrounding villages near Calcutta and having done so, provide finance through the Foundation matching grant system, for 10,000 Cataract and lens replacement operations to restore sight to celebrate our centennial year.

We also planned to invite young Indian ophthalmic surgeons to come to the U.K. for further experience in the ophthalmic surgical field, as part of the Rotary Group Study Exchange scheme and for a team organized by my colleague Sam Das to return a visiting U.K. team to Calcutta.

During the last four years, four more village hospitals have been built by Indian Rotary clubs, which have been fully equipped by matching grants set up by clubs in my District 1250. Two G.S.E. training visits by Indian ophthalmic surgeons coming to the U.K. have taken place and my colleague Sam Das has, as part of his annual leave to see his family, has visited and worked in, all four of these new clinics.

One problem we do not have is an adequate supply of customers. There are thousands upon thousands in the Calcutta area.

The Rotary club of Guildford have produced a poster (right) for me to show in Chicago, which I will show with pride.

As we approach Rotary’s Centennial Convention next month in Chicago and I enter my 9th decade, I am thankful for how Rotary has enriched my life and kept me “young at heart”. In this final message for our IECFF Newsletter, I’d like to share with you an article on Staying Young.

“The art of staying young depends upon staying youthful on the inside, in mind, heart and spirit, in defiance of wrinkles and gray hairs on the outside. The Fountain of Youth is within you!

Staying young is an inside matter. Your body grows old, but your body is not you. “We do not count a man’s years,” wrote Emerson, “until he has nothing else to count.”

Stay young by continuing to grow. You do not grow old, you become old by not growing.

Stay young by hanging on to your dreams. A philosopher writes: “There is not much to do but bury a man when the last of his dreams is dead.”

Stay young by maintaining a cheerful attitude. Keep this verse from Proverbs in mind: “A merry heart doeth good like medicine, but a broken spirit drieth up the bones.”

Stay young by keeping your mind alive and alert. Scientists have found that the ability to think does not decline with advancing age; the only difference may be a slight decrease in the speed of thinking.

Stay young by forcing your mind out of old ruts. Remember that beaten paths are for beaten men. See new places, read new books, try new hobbies. Increase the depth of your life.

Stay young by remaining flexible, adaptable and open-minded. Do not permit your mental arteries to harden.

Stay young by taking inspiration from the young in spirit who remained creatively active all their lives: Goethe completed Faust at 80; Titian painting masterpieces at 98; Toscanini conducting at 85; Justice Holmes writing Supreme Court decisions at 90; Edison busy in his laboratory at 84; Benjamin Franklin helping to frame the constitution at 80.

Stay young by doing good work.

Work for worthy causes in your city, nation and world.

Stay young by keeping your heart young. “If it can be done,” wrote the poet Carl Sandburg, “it is not a bad practice for a man of many years to die with a boy heart.”

Stay young by knowing that “they who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary, and they shall walk, and not faint.”

(Adapted from The Art of Living by Wilferd A. Peterson)

Rotarians, I believe we keep young as we “CELEBRATE ROTARY” and we do that by continuing to be involved in eye care, preventing blindness, restoring sight, hopes and dreams. As we care for the visual needs of our fellow man, we give new life and enable those we touch to realize their aspirations and enjoy God’s creation—our world, their community, their family, and to share the wonder and miracle of life itself.”

O. Doyle Dannenberg, O.D.
Chairman IECFR 2004-2005

An Excerpt from ‘Trev’s Topics’

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What’s Happening in Chicago?

Annual Business Meeting of the Fellowship

Monday, June 20 at 5:00 PM - Room N230—McCormick Place

Election of Officers and Vote on Fellowship By Laws

Avoidable Blindness Workshop

Monday, June 20, 3:00 PM - 4:30 PM;
Room N230—McCormick Place

For agenda, list of speakers and complete details visit our web site
http://www.rotarianseyecarefellowship.org
on IECFR, the International Eye-Care Fellowship of Rotarians, headed by the
incoming Chairman of the Rotary Foundation, past RI President, Frank J. Devlyn.

Founded in Chicago in 1905, Rotary was the world’s first organization of Service
Clubs: it now consists of 1.2 million persons in 169 countries.

1. Introduction

Before retiring as an engineer and management consultant, my interest in vision and eye-care was
already aroused 20 years ago by a brief encounter with the late Sir
Francis Crick, the 1953 co-discoverer of DNA. After a lecture
he had given in Geneva, he was asked by my young son what he was
working on now in California: “Vision!” answered the Nobel Prize-
winner, “The process of vision is so complex and admirable that I guess
exploring it will easily fill the rest of my life!” It did indeed, in conjunc-
tion with a number of related do-

2. An opportunity for Rotary

About 5 years ago, while serving as a Rotary representative to the UN in Geneva, I was made a
member of the new Rotary Task Force on Avoidable Blindness by Frank J. Devlyn, then President of
Rotary International and owner, CEO of the Devlyn Optical Group, a large
chain of optical stores throughout Mexico and Latin America. This
made me realise that Rotary, founded in 1905, was entering Cen-
tury 21 in a pole position for ad-

3. Synergies

These four factors have pro-
duced considerable synergy in the
last four years Thus, as a Board
member of the new International EyeCare Fellowship of Rotarians (IECFR), I find I can, although not a
physician, contribute effectively as follows:

- Learn “from the horse’s mouth”, namely from the Prevention of

Blindness section of WHO, about
the major eye-care problems and about the most cost-
effective solutions

- Develop fund-raising credibil-
ity, both in Southern and in Western countries

- Thus obtain high leverage in
funds granted by Rotary and non-Rotary sources and using
Rotary’s powerful Matching Grants mechanisms which com-
bine the interests of many par-
ties

- Use the means and experience
of numerous dedicated, benevo-

4. International projects

This synergy can be exemplified
by projects which we help to coordi-
nate from the Geneva area:

4.1 At the end of 2004, Indian
and Western Rotarians jointly
announced their intention to
fund 100’000 IOL eye sur-
geries in India. This large-
scale exercise is now gather-
ing momentum as Rotary ap-
aches its June 2005 Cen-
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camps. These address both low-
vision and blindness by helping
local health authorities to
screen entire urban and rural
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(Continued from page 1)

launched in 1999 by Dr Para,
then President of IAPB, the
International Agency for the
Prevention of Blindness, who
is now an honorary member
of my Rotary Club. This
worldwide Plan is indeed an
example second to none of
efficient cooperation of all
parties concerned towards a
well-defined humanitarian
goal;

2.3 The powerful new network-
ing effectiveness offered by the
Internet and enhanced by
the Web invented in 1990 at
CERN, Geneva by Tim Bern-
ers-Lee, a young Oxford sci-
entist;

2.4 Last, not least, the fact that
at present Rotarians head the
major Institutions driving
Vision 2020, namely IAPB
(non-governmental), WHO/IB

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(intergovernmental) and
IFOS, the ophthalmologists’
International Federation.
4.2 In Africa, namely in Ghana and Tanzania, the funding of surgeries is based on bilateral agreements between African and Swiss Clubs supported by local NGOs (about US $140’000), the Rotary Foundation, institutional donors like Raiffeisen Bank and experienced partners like CBM.

4.3 In India, Mexico and Nepal, surgery equipment and mobile ophthalmologic units for Rotary and non-Rotary eye-hospitals are supplied by Belgian, French and Swiss Clubs through Matching Grants with the Rotary Foundation and the Red Cross (about US $300’000).

4.4 In Cambodia, Sri Lanka and in Southeast India, eye-camps take place or are planned with the help of French, Indian, Singaporean and US eye specialists, supported by Rotary- and non-Rotary sources, as IRIS (UK) and the Indian ARAVIND Eye System (about US $60’000).

4.5 By cooperating with the ICO/IFOS Zurich Office for ophthalmologic Fellowships, Rotary wants to support the postgraduate training of young physicians from developing countries, not only in Western Hospitals, but increasingly also at Centres of Excellence in Southern countries.

5. Holistic approach

The benefits of above holistic approach can be outlined as follows:

5.1 All Rotary actions entail a strong involvement of local health authorities, the aim being to gradually transfer to them most responsibilities, in the framework of Vision 2020. Thus, several States in India and Mexico, each with a population as large as a European country’s but many more health problems to solve, have now decided to become cataract-free by 2010, since curable cataracts are responsible for well over half the cases of impaired vision and blindness. Afterwards, further objectives will be defined.

5.2 Impressive networks for eye-care are being set up around the major Eye Hospitals, mainly in Southern India. Thus, medical questions such as the correlation existing between cataract and macula-deterioration, can also be addressed by large-scale schemes monitoring entire populations.

5.3 Hospital quality is being enhanced, e.g. by Operation Eyesight, of Canada, which insists on matching the costs only for those surgeries taking place at hospitals willing to undergo qualification by an internationally recognized authority, such as the LV Prasad Eye Institute in Hyderabad, India.

6. Acknowledgements

As it is the case for Rotary’s much larger Initiative to eradicate Polio, dozens of Clubs and hundreds of Rotarians deserve to be thanked for the time and money they spend against low-vision and blindness of poor people.

I am particularly indebted for the progress of the mentioned projects in the last few months to: Rotarians R. Paul (Canada), S. Brown and T. Lindley (USA), F. Devlyn (Mexico), P. Dalton, S. Das and T. Powell (UK), Ph. Caron (Belgium), J. Villeval and J. Viste (France), F. Naumann (Germany), J. Amaral and D. Gomes (Portugal), J. Peyer, K. Tritten and H. Wiederkehr (Switzerland), and J. Tan (Singapore).

As for India, which population-wise largely exceeds all above countries combined, I acknowledge the valuable help of: Rotarians P. Raval, R. Kumar and A. Suresh (Bangalore), M. Sawhney (Delhi), A.V. Acharr (Hyderabad), S. Jose (Kerala), R. Guru (Mysore) and S. Movva (Vayjayawada).

7. Conclusion

Rotary’s current involvement in Avoidable Blindness and Low-Vision is confirming at a large international scale the effectiveness of combining

- qualitative approaches such as the careful selection of hospitals, eye-surgeons and up-to-date but not too complex equipment with highly leveraged fund-raising
- and the strong involvement of local health authorities and NGOs (both local and international).

Thus, well-organised eye-camps allow to identify the needs of hitherto often neglected populations (mainly rural), followed by thousands of IOL cataract eye-surgeries, which bring mankind closer to its aim to gradually eliminate blindness.

Learn more about this and other Eye Care projects and presentations at the Avoidable Blindness Workshop during the Chicago Convention. See Page 2 for Details.
by Mohammad Usman Khan

The adjacent photographs was taken at an eye camp that was finished approximately one year ago. The length of the Pakistan/Afghanistan border is approximately 1500 kilometers. The weather conditions in these areas are dusty and dry which creates a lot of eye diseases. Many refugee camps on the border are living in a drastic conditions.

Approximately 2500 patients in different Camps were diagnosed by a team of ophthalmologists, providing free medicine along with low vision glasses. Cataract patients were transferred to a hospital for surgery. Approximately 1000 cataract patients were provided surgery services.

Dr. Dannenburg to retire as Chairman of the IECFR

Dear IECFR Fellowship Members:

As we travel down the Road of Life, God gives us many blessings. Among the many He has given to me include a love for Rotary and the privilege of serving our wonderful organization for over 56 years. As we Celebrate Rotary at our Centennial Convention in Chicago, I will celebrate my 80th birthday and have decided that it is now time for me to devote more time to my family and friends. Therefore, I shall be stepping down as Chairman of the ICEFR effective July 1, 2005.

As our honorary Chairman, PRIP Frank J. Devlyn assumes the Chairmanship of The Rotary Foundation, I am reminded that my first Rotary International assignment was in 1966-67 when then President Richard Evans appointed me to an Advisory Committee to The Rotary Foundation. Since then, it has been my privilege to serve nearly every RI President in some capacity. For this amazing opportunity I shall always be grateful.

In leading the Avoidable Blindness Task Force as well as this fellowship, I have not done it alone and I have many people to thank. First of all, I would like to express my deep appreciation to our Honorary Chair, Frank Devlyn and our Vice Chair, Dr. Ken D. Tuck for all of their help, support and encouragement during the past five years. Our Task Force and our Fellowship have benefited greatly from their knowledge and experience. Our Treasurer, Lori Bende, has spent countless hours setting up our fellowship as a non-profit organization and maintaining our finances. Her service has been invaluable and I am grateful for her diligence and her professionalism in insuring that we met all of our requirements. Our fellowship Secretary, Harriett Schloer, has been a long time friend and most valuable supporter of the Task Force and the IECFR. She is always there to do whatever is needed: from producing hand out materials for meetings, to staffing our IECFR booth at RI Conventions, Zone meetings, and district conferences; to handling all of our membership details to designing and maintaining our IECFR website. She is a priceless gem! Her daughter Kelly Schloer, editor of this Newsletter, has very capably assisted our Eye Care Fellowship with these newsletters, always efficiently and superbly done. In paying tribute to her and her Mother, I would describe her as "A chip off a valuable block". My deepest gratitude and thanks to each and every one of these dedicated Rotarians. I say “thank you” for what you have done for Rotary, for me and the IECFR.

To all of our fellowship members, I also say “thank you” and ask each of you to continue to “Create Awareness and Take Action” in the work of Avoidable Blindness, as we "Celebrate Rotary” and begin our second century of “Service Above Self”. Always remember that “Next to life itself, God’s most precious gift is sight . . . Protect it, Save it, Restore it”. God bless you all.

Yours in Rotary Service,
O. Doyle Dannenberg, O.D.