



Last year an Indigenous welcome was introduced and this was followed by greetings from the Rotary Centre Director, Richard Devetak.

Host Area Coordinator Judy Magub also spoke and updated the fellows and Rotarians on the program and recognised the excellent contributions of the University of Queensland staff, the Rotarian Counsellors and the Rotarians involved in selection of candidates.

The Fellows produced a video for the seminar giving us a glimpse of their life at UQ. They also interviewed lecturers who gave very warm praise for the Rotary Peace Fellowship program.

The Seminar was followed by a Farewell function hosted by the Rotary Club of Brisbane Planetarium. This was held in the Rotary International Presidents' Park adjoining the university. Here 10 olive trees have been planted to signify the 10 Peace Fellows who commence the course each year and a path has been constructed with a brick naming each of the Fellows who have graduated from the program at UQ.

What a wonderful program this is! It brings great credit to Rotary, and it just goes on getting better as more pass through the Program. As Past RI Director Barry Thompson said in his closing remarks at the Farewell function: 'There will be a time in the not too distant future where the high calibre of these graduates is so well known that they will not have to seek jobs on graduation – there will be institutions queuing up to hire them!'

**Janet Lawrence and Judy Magub**  
**Rotary Club of Brisbane Planetarium, Qld**

## Exchange of a lifetime

I am writing in reply to the article, *Wish You Were Here*, in *The Sun-Herald* (Sydney, NSW) on July 1, 2007.

My mum sent it to me here in the States. You see, I was a Rotary Exchange student in Wollongong in 1977. And although it's been 30 years, I still keep in touch with my mum, other host families, "Aussie sisters", classmates and friends. Mum has always been good about sending me news articles from my home Down Under and she knew that this one would be especially interesting to me.

It is not an exaggeration to say that my year abroad, made possible by Rotary, was the best year of my life. Like many young people travelling far from home in those formative years, my eyes were opened to many things. I got a wonderful first-hand look at what life is like inside a family, school and country not my own.

My impressions and viewpoints, habits and tastes were refined to a great deal. To me, there is nothing like Aussie hospitality; although it may exist in other far-reaching spots, my ties and loyalties are firmly attached to Australia.

Rotary was very wise in the choice of my four host families. My parents were good role models, honest, hardworking folk who treated me with the same kind of care that my US parents did.

They also expected the same high standards as my US parents in my school work, social circles and family responsibilities. The older I get, the more I appreciate all my Aussie hosts provided for me. I have thanked them numerous times, by voice and by letters.

Most recently, last week actually, my husband and I were privileged to host my 4th host parents (Uncle Brian and Auntie Joan) here in the States. I cannot tell you how very grateful I was to reciprocate in some small way for all that they did for me thirty years ago, although truly I will always be in their debt.

I am grateful to Rotary International for the opportunities it provides for students to be exchangees. I hope that this valuable program will be continued in the future. I am a better person today because of my exchange student experience.

**Tricia Bloomberg**  
*(For details on the 50th anniversary of youth exchange contact Stuart McDonald at myrotaryexchange@yahoo.com.au) ■*

## The benefits of Rotary

I was pleased to read of the successful induction of women into the Rotary Club of Altona City, Vic, and also of President Jan taking on the role of President.

It caused me to reflect on our family's association with Rotary and how quickly the years have gone since my eldest son was a member of Rotaract at Lilydale. We held a Rotaract function in our home and, as a result, my husband was asked to join the Yarra Junction Rotary Club.

We moved to Sunraysia and he joined the Rotary Club of Merbein and became president in 1989 to 1990 and I joined the club in 1989 (very early days in D9520 to have women members) becoming president in 1994/95 and the following year being a District Governor Representative (only part of the year due to ill health).

Our eldest son was a charter member of Irymple Rotaract, one of our daughters was a member of Merbein/Wentworth Rotaract, a LTYE student to Japan, a RYLarian and a participant in RYPEN.

I am currently past Secretary at the Rotary Club of Mildura Deakin. Our family has gained so much from its association with Rotary and I trust that all members will gain as much as we have.

**Eileen Pica**  
**Rotary Club of Mildura Deakin, Vic ■**

## Waist Disposal Challenge

Rotarians from District 9460 in Western Australia are taking part in a ground-breaking campaign that offers to improve the health of participants and enhance knowledge of how to tackle one of the most intransigent health issues facing the community.

The Rotary Waist Disposal Challenge, now under way in 23 clubs, is a formal health intervention project being undertaken under the approval of the Ethics Committee of Edith Cowan University.

But at the same time it is a fun challenge for Rotarians to lose weight, with clubs competing against each other to achieve the greatest reduction in the body mass index of their members.

BMI, measured as the individual's weight divided by his or her height squared, is widely recognised as an indicator of a person's liability to chronic lifestyle conditions.

The Rotary Waist Disposal Challenge is brought to us by a dedicated team led by Dr Samar Aoun, the public health specialist who famously had delegates to this year's District