



SOUTH WIND

Charter Granted 7 August 1961

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No. 2672
6 October 2017

Today's Topic: "Oktoberfest Celebration"

MEETINGS : EVERY FRIDAY AT NOON

IS THE INTERNET RUINING OUR LIVES?

By Ragil Ratnam

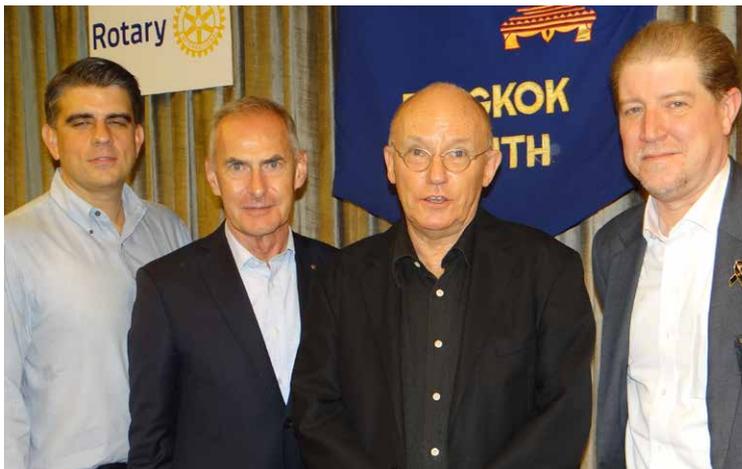
This week was another in our club's series of epic debates, ably hosted by our MC Rtn Rakesh Sodhia, the topic of contention was: "Is the Internet ruining our lives?"

The team affirming the argument was PP John Quarmbly and PP Mike Doyle. PP John kicked off bravely demanding more respect than he actually deserved. The request was duly ignored.

He noted that the issue is bigger than the Internet, as the context has grown from its origins of sending messages between military personnel to include not only computers, but also the smartphones we carry around all the time. He described it as an ICT Monster destroying life, social cohesion, friendships, and, it seems, everything we value.

He did imply it is a problem only seen by old farts complaining about everything across generations for the last 3000 years, noting the kids would be all right. On a more serious note, he highlighted the data collection on all cash and non-cash transactions, the link between various databases, the presence of CCTV cameras everywhere, all working to end privacy. Our only saving grace is that no one has the time to process all this data, but should someone decide to take an interest, it is all there.

This team believes a key danger facing us is the disappearance of truth. He provided an example of a statistics company which provides and analyses data about internet usage noting on one hand that



83% of Indians could not live without the Internet, but on the other hand stating that smartphone penetration in that country is only 32%. No wonder they are all unhappy.

The main reason suggested for the disappearance of truth is "disintermediation". There was a time not very long ago when we use to get our news from the television and newspapers, supported by large organizations who would fact-check everything before it was shared.

While we like the idea of getting news from the original source as we do now, as individuals we rarely have the resources to judge the credibility of the information. In addition, algorithms in our search engines very quickly focus on giving us stuff we seem to like, the facts and opinions we already believe in, and nothing we might disagree with.

This narrowing of perspective, and our unwillingness to be disturbed by uncomfortable truths, has led to a situation

where people never have to face anything they do not want to, true or not, as exemplified by the "safe spaces" created at some universities.

PP Mike added that this turn of events is a recent one, not foreseen in the early days of the Internet where it had a huge positive impact, allowing people to communicate by lightning fast email, and almost free VOIP. In contrast, he suggested the last few years have seen negative consequences increasing at an alarming rate, and asked whether the increasing amount of time we spend online is productive.

He suggested the Internet was the best platform to spread misinformation from both extremes of the political spectrum with the sole purpose of enraging the other, and while it was full of examples of people who seem to have lost any sense they might have once had, as exemplified in the E-Harmony video: "I Love Cats".

The fact that the best and brightest of our young people around the world, engineering and science graduates, are now going to work in Silicon Valley, creating apps rather than trying to cure cancer, is also rather disconcerting.

He ended by reminding us that his opponents are completely full of it and we should not believe anything they say.

Dr Ian Fenwick, standing for the opposition, surprisingly agreed with the previous speakers that the Internet was ruining our lives, and went several steps further with the suggestion this was merely evidence

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humanity is on the road to destruction, but this was a good thing, being as under-evolved as we are as we would just be giving way to the next intelligence.

PE Dean Outerson, using his iPhone's Siri AI, gave us a view of what a Rotary meeting would be like in 2022, not five years away. "Her" response was unexpectedly droll and condescending, and moved rapidly from calling him her Lord and Master, through a rather insulting comparison of PP John to the Star Wars Protocol Droid C3PO, to suggesting humans would only be kept around, because AI's will need pets.

One of the AI's called up by this team described humans as lemmings at a cliff, freely choosing to drown ourselves in our phones, our digital devices, and the Internet. It stated the singularity had already arrived, but this information is generally kept away from us humans in the same way we do not tell our kids Santa doesn't really bring presents.

However, in a final hint things may not be as bad as they suggested, PE Dean's attempt to use the real Siri on his iPhone failed spectacularly in answering the simple question "What is Rotary." We still have hope...

SNAPSHOTS FROM RCBS LUNCH, 29 SEPTEMBER, 2017



The P, a PP and the IPP



The Dutch – RTN Gerard, Joop and PP Marcel having fun with RTN Carol.



RTN Tyrone, this week's Eddie's Memorial Charity Winner and his somewhat bewildered guest, Louis.

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Khun Khob's Club Almanac #2672

6 OCTOBER 2017

Happy Birthdays:

Dana Caron	October 7
PP Nigel Hardy	October 7
Rodolfo Vergara	October 7
PP John Quarmby	October 11
PP Rick Smith	October 11
PP Chumpol Phornprapha	October 12

Wedding Anniversary Greetings:

None

Attendance for 29 September 2017: 61%

Present 38, Make-up 4, Absent 27, Exemption 29, Total 98

Visiting for 29 September 2017

From Local

AG Santi Chatterjee	RC Bangkok
Stefan Sanchez	RC Bangkok

From Abroad:

David Krier	RC Newberg Earlybirds, USA
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Invited Guests:

David Record
Louis N. Booth

Introduced by:

PP Mark Butters
Tyrone Jenkins

Invited Guests:

Markus Kreuty
Scott Ledwell
Steve Wilson
Worrakit Pholsawad
Michael Loeffler

Introduced by:

Dana Caron
Mark Wolf
John Casella
PP Mike Doyle
PP Mike Doyle

Recent Makeups:

RC Bangkok, 21 September 2017: Gerard Garaets

RC E-Club One, 29 September 2017: PP Per Dibber

Makeups:

Inter-Club Delegation to RC Bangkok, 26 September 2017:

Adrian Topham, PP Andrew MacPherson, PE Dean Outerson, P Douglas Riach, Dr M. Chase Schneier, PP Mark Butters, Mark Shaw, PP Narain Suradejvibul, PP Narinder Sachdev, PP Peter-Michael Schuster, Rakesh Sodhia, Tim Cornwall, Van Tang

CLUB CALENDAR

Friday, 13 October 2017 No Meeting – Due to Public Holiday (Anniversary of HM King Bhumipol's Passing)

Friday, 20 October 2017 – DG Visit To hold our board to account and share her Rotary visions with our club, District Governor Marase Skunliw will attend our Club Assembly and then address our club over lunch. Let's not leave our P. to fry alone out there!

Friday, 27 October 2017 No Meeting – Due to Public Holiday (HM King Bhumipol's Royal Cremation)

Friday, 3 November 2017 – Coins on Silom 2017

Thursday, 23 November 2017 Kids Day In – Contact Rtn Mark Shaw if you wish to volunteer to assist

For more information about Bangkok South events contact:
rotarybangkoksouth.org/calendar-of-events

The Crowne Plaza Bangkok Lumpini Park Hotel, 952 Rama IV Road, Bangkok 10500 Thailand
info@rotarybangkoksouth.org | 02632 9160 | www.rotarybangkoksouth.org



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Siam Paragon
991 Rama1 Road
Ground Floor (Opposite MK Gold)
BTS: Siam
Open Daily 10am - 10pm
Tel. 02-610-7714

Empire Tower
Second Floor
Sathorn / Narathiwat
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BTS: Chong Nonsi
Tel. 02-670-1898








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