



# 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

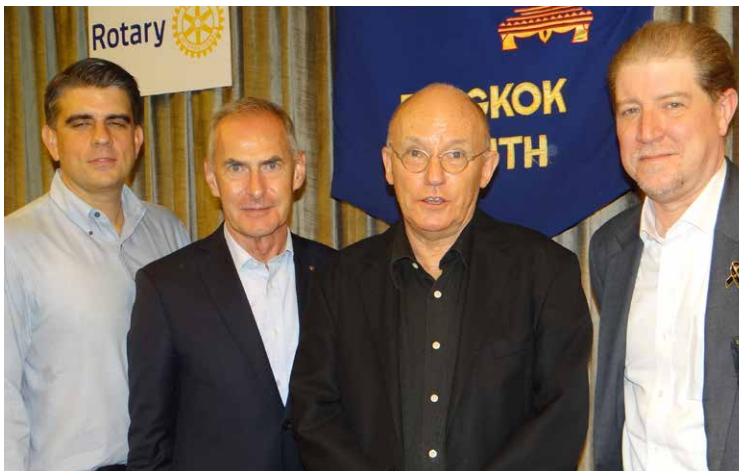
This week was another in our club's series of epic debates, ably hosted by our MC Rtn Rakesh Sodhia, the topic of contention was: "Is the Internet ruining our lives?"

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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# ROTARY HELPS DISASTER VICTIMS

By Per Dibber

In the last couple of weeks, the international media have continuously reported on 'Harvey', 'Irma' and Maria, three major hurricanes that almost totally devastated some small Caribbean islands and wreaked havoc on other islands and the US South East. Up to 95% of all buildings in Barbuda were destroyed with St. Maarten and the British Virgin Islands also hit very hard.

It was reported that some 6.5 million people had no electricity in Florida. Rotary districts along the Gulf Coast of Texas and Louisiana are collecting funds to provide immediate emergency relief to flood victims.

The Rotary Foundation has set up two dedicated accounts to accept donations for disaster relief and recovery in response to Hurricanes 'Harvey' and 'Irma'. Please see: <https://www.rotary.org/en/rotary-helps-disaster-victims>.

RI's partner ShelterBox has so far provided 300 ShelterKits to Antigua and Barbuda, 200 to St Kitts and Nevis, and they expect to ship 500 ShelterKits to the Dominican Republic. A ShelterBox team is currently assessing the situation in the BVI.

Other recent major natural disasters were covered much less intensely by the international media: Two powerful earthquakes hit Mexico, one of them measuring 8.1, destroying buildings and highways and killing hundreds of people.



Rotarians have set up a fund to help reconstruct schools, housing and medical facilities. In Sierra Leone, torrential rains and a mudslide in August killed more than 500 people and destroyed nearly 2,000 homes. More than 600 people are still missing.

A typhoon passed across Hong Kong and Macau, and even worse, massive floods occurred in parts of India, Nepal and Bangladesh affecting an estimated 40 million people. UNICEF estimates that 31 million people in India have lost their homes, 8 million in Bangladesh and 1.7 million in Nepal. ShelterBox is working with Rotarians to assess damage and provide emergency supplies and temporary housing in Bangladesh and Nepal\*.

If you would like to support the efforts by ShelterBox, please look at their website: <https://www.shelterbox.org>.

The RCBS Foundation Committee has not received any direct and formal requests for help regarding these disasters, but we have reached out to our twin club RC Macau and to RC Hong Kong Island East, whose current President Stacy Ho is the daughter of a former member of RCBS, to inquire if they have any projects to help victims of typhoon 'Hato'.

\* Source: <https://www.rotary.org/en/rotary-helps-disaster-victims>





ROTARY:  
MAKING A  
DIFFERENCE

# 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](http://rotarybangkoksouth.org/calendar-of-events)

The Crowne Plaza Bangkok Lumpini Park Hotel, 952 Rama IV Road, Bangkok 10500 Thailand  
[info@rotarybangkoksouth.org](mailto:info@rotarybangkoksouth.org) | 02632 9160 | [www.rotarybangkoksouth.org](http://www.rotarybangkoksouth.org)



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