



# Breakfast Chatter

Rotary Club of Kathmandu Mid-Town  
District 3292, Club 26776, Chartered 08 Nov. 1989



November 25<sup>th</sup> 2009 Weekly Bulletin Vol. 21 of '09/'10

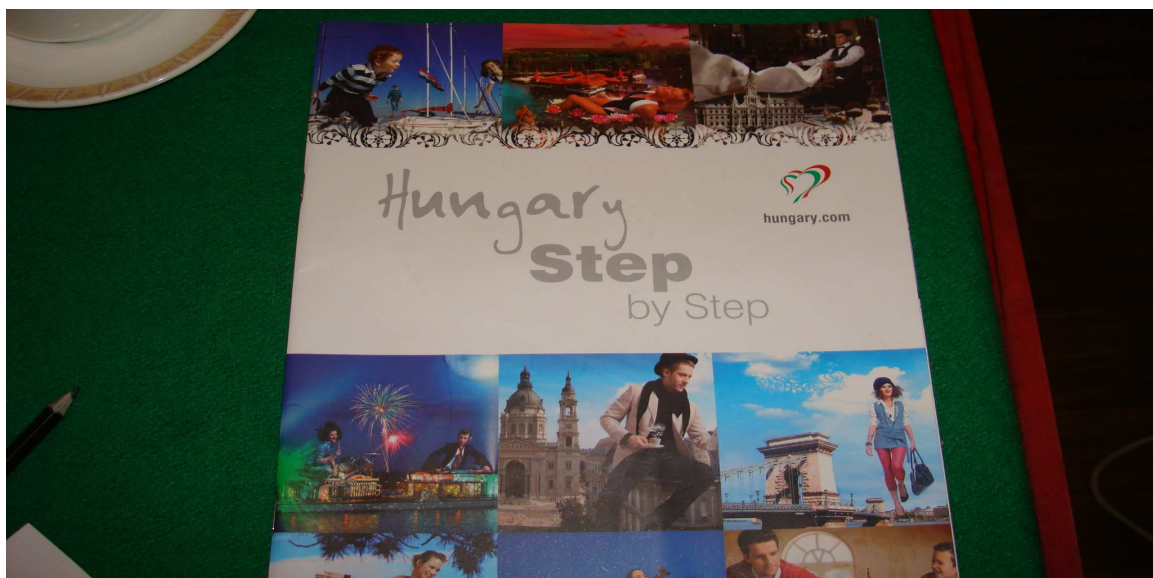
*This week's speaker*



**Ms. Brigitta Kalmar**  
Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar

## Calendar

Date	Theme
November 25 <sup>th</sup>	International day for the Elimination of all forms of violence against women Night,
December 1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>World Aids Day</b>
December 4 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Mr. Ian McFarlane</b> , UNFPA Representative to Nepal
December 5 <sup>th</sup>	<b>AWON Christmas Bazaar</b> – "A Great Event for the whole Family"



## **Working for peace through theater**

By Arnold R. Grahl

Rotary International News -- 23 November 2009



**Rotary Peace Fellow Russell Vandenbroucke, with a child in Thailand, uses theater and arts to help achieve peace. Photo courtesy of Vandenbroucke**

[Rotary Peace Fellow](#) Russell Vandenbroucke uses the stage to convey his desire for peace.

"The consequences of violence are always negative," says the author of *Soldier Circle*, a play that humanizes the effects of the war in Afghanistan and Iraq on the individual soldier, and *Atomic Bombers*, which was turned into a public radio program for the 50th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima, Japan.

"To say my plays send a message is too simple. I don't write about things that are simple -- or at least I make them more complicated," he adds. "Most humanitarian problems resist simple solutions."

Vandenbroucke, a professor of theater arts and department chair at the University of Louisville in Kentucky, USA, decided to apply for Rotary's peace and conflict studies certificate program at [Chulalongkorn University](#) while he was co-teaching a course on war and conscience in the spring of 2006. In putting together a list of resources for his students, he came upon materials for the program. "I thought, my students do not qualify, but I think I do," he recalls. With the support of his dean and the university, he took a sabbatical to attend in 2007.

One defining moment during the program occurred as he visited a refugee camp near the border of Myanmar and Thailand. "Our presence among the 48,000 refugees made a big impact on them," he remembers. "When the refugees spotted the diversity of our group, they said, 'The world knows we are here; the world is paying attention to us.'"

"It was one of many moments that reminded me that Rotary International is an organization to be very proud of."

Vandenbroucke says issues of peace and justice have long been a fundamental part of who he is. He became a conscientious objector in 1969 when, as an ROTC (Reserve Officers' Training Corps) student, he listened to discussions of biological and chemical agents. He secured permission from his draft board during the Vietnam War to serve two years of alternative service.

Later, he turned to plays because of their ability to tackle complicated problems in an emotionally gripping manner.

"The appeal of theater is ultimately very simple: telling stories about human beings," he says. "We understand stories of individuals far better and more viscerally than any concept. I am usually attracted to stories that have a broad social dimension to them."

He counts his three months at Chulalongkorn as one of the richest experiences of his life. Since the program, he has written a couple of pieces, including *Soldier Circle*, and has contributed to the *Oxford International Encyclopedia of Peace*.

"I believe the problems of this world are created by men and women and can be fixed by men and women," he says. "This program appeals to people who have that understanding. And then it arms them with skills, expertise, and tools that can help them do this work more effectively.

"If, at the end of the day, I can say I have contributed a few drops to the collective fountain that sustains all of us, I will feel content," he says.

## **Mid-Town Reflection**

### ***The Sculptor's Attitude***

I woke up early today, excited over all I get to do before the clock strikes midnight. I have responsibilities to fulfill today. I am important. My job is to choose what kind of day I am going to have.

Today I can complain because the weather is rainy or ... I can be thankful that the grass is getting watered for free.

Today I can feel sad that I don't have more money or ... I can be glad that my finances encourage me to plan my purchases wisely and guide me away from waste.

Today I can grumble about my health or ... I can rejoice that I am alive.

Today I can lament over all that my parents didn't give me when I was growing up or ... I can feel grateful that they allowed me to be born.

Today I can cry because roses have thorns or ... I can celebrate that thorns have roses.

Today I can mourn my lack of friends or ... I can excitedly embark upon a quest to discover new relationships.

Today I can whine because I have to go to work or ... I can shout for joy because I have a job to do.

Today I can complain because I have to go to school or ... eagerly open my mind and fill it with rich new tidbits of knowledge.

Today I can murmur dejectedly because I have to do housework or I can feel honored because the Lord has provided shelter for my mind, body and soul.

Today stretches ahead of me, waiting to be shaped. And here I am, the sculptor who gets to do the shaping.

What today will be like is up to me. I get to choose what kind of day I will have!

Have a GREAT DAY ... unless you have other plans.

***submitted by Al Kalter, YE Chair, Eastwood Club***

**Please send information/suggestions/photos for the next volume to:  
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