



Tung Feng

VOL. 48 No.23

20th December 2000



CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

TO ALL MEMBERS
AND THEIR FAMILIES

What Happened Last Week

This being an AGM meeting, it was gratifying to see a very good attendance of members. President Taj, in opening the meeting, thanked members for their efforts in being present and taking part in the election of the office bearers for the following year. He particularly thanked IPP Desmond, Rtn Jason and Rtn Tony for accepting the responsibility for scrutinizing and counting the ballot papers.

PP C.Y. was called on to introduce the visitors:

PP Peter Tse (TST East)

Rtn Joyce Ip (TST East)

He also reported that there were 30 attendees and \$1,300 had been donated.

President Taj then commenced the balloting for 2001-02 positions:

Rtn **Stephen Liu** was confirmed as the incoming President for 2001-02.

Rtn **Chris Howe** was confirmed as the incoming PE for 2001-02.

Rtn **Henry Chan** was confirmed as the incoming VP for 2001-02.



THE ROTARY CLUB OF HONG KONG ISLAND EAST

香港東區扶輪社週報

Club 4350

District 3450

Chartered on 6 April, 1954 by Charter President

PDG (Uncle) John Yuen

As Rtn Kishu Narain withdrew his nomination for Treasurer, Rtn Clark Lu was elected as the incoming Treasurer for 2001-02.

Rtn Eddy Wong was elected unopposed as the incoming Secretary for 2001-02.

The election of Directors then followed. President Taj announced for the benefit of newer members that the function of Directors was to assist the President in ensuring that the constitutional rules and bylaws were carried out as specified in the MOP. As there were more than six nominations for Director, a ballot was held for these positions. The following members were elected as incoming Directors for 2001-02:

Rtn Ates Yucel

Rtn Jason Chiu

PP John Kwok

Rtn Malcolm Phillips

PP Rob Fielding

Rtn Rudy Law

President Taj made the following announcements during the balloting:

- Applications for participation in the next RYLA program are now being called for and Rtn Kishu will look after this for HKIE.
- District 3450, with the sponsorship of the South China Morning Post and Hong Kong University have inaugurated the Work Shadowing Scheme, a program in which Secondary School students are attached to the workplaces of Rotary members in order to learn first-hand about vocations of interest. Rotary members will be invited to participate in this program.
- The District 3450 Conference will be held on 7-8 April, 2001 at the HK Exhibition and Convention Centre.
- The next Walk for One Million event will be held next January or February, and each Rotary club is encouraged to enter at least 4-5 members.
- The next District Golf Tournament will be held on 16 February, 2001.
- The Rotary International Convention will be held on 24-27 June, 2001, in San Antonio, USA. A package of \$10,480 has been offered by Thomas Cook.

Rtn Malcolm reminded members about the Christmas Party for the School for the Deaf; and PP Rob gave a reminder about the Club's own Christmas Party at the next Club meeting on 20 December.

Finally, the annual Club photograph of members was taken for the year 2000-01.

Rotary Information

The Real Santa Claus

December 6th is dedicated to St Nicholas, the original of the 'Santa Claus' so beloved of our shops and Christmas card artists.

Father Christmas is as old as Europe. Once he was Woden, lashing his reindeer through the darkness of northern midwinter. Then he encountered the Church, and She transformed him into a saint, the much-loved Nicholas, Bishop of Myra (in south-west Turkey) in the fourth century. St Nicholas became the patron saint of children, and was given 6th December as his day.

Since the 6th century St Nicholas has been venerated in both East and West, though virtually nothing is known of his life. Some believe he may have been one of the elders at the Council of Nicea (325), imprisoned during the Emperor Diocletian's persecution.



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Pres. Taj making visitors, PP Peter Tse & Rtn Joyce Ip from TSTE, feel very welcome.



This is the new team of officer bearers for 2001-2002.

According to legend, Nicholas was an extremely generous man. He revived three schoolboys murdered by an innkeeper in a tub of pickles. He rescued three young women from prostitution by giving their poverty-stricken father three bags of gold. (Hence the use of three gold balls as the pawnbroker's signs).

Over the centuries many, including children, sailors, unmarried girls, pawnbrokers and moneylenders have claimed him as their patron. (Moneylenders?! Still true today - just think what will be on your Visa card by Christmas!)

Perhaps it was on account of St Nicholas' generosity that in recent centuries children began to write little notes sometimes before 6th December, to tell him about the toys they specially wanted. These notes were then left on the windowsill at night - or else on a ledge in the chimney.

But St Nicholas' Day chanced to lie in the magnetic field of a much more potent festival ... and after awhile his activities was moved towards Christmas. Then in Bavaria the children still left their notes on the window sill, but they addressed them to Liebes Christkind - 'Krishkinkle' as they knew him - and the saint's part in the matter was simply to deliver the letters in heaven.

The most popular results of the cult of St Nicholas have been the institution of Santa Claus. He is based on Nicholas' patronage of children and the custom in the Low Countries of giving presents on his feast. Santa Claus has reached his zenith in America, where the Dutch Protestants of New Amsterdam (New York) combined it with Nordic folklore legends of a magician who both punished naughty children and rewarded good ones with presents.

A wag once described a modern northern European/North American man's life as having three stages: (i) he believes in Santa Claus, (ii) he doesn't believe in Santa Claus, and (iii) he is Santa Claus!

Christmas Trees are relatively recent custom

Traditionally, the day that we put up our Christmas trees is Christmas Eve, 24th December, although most of us nowadays begin long before this Christmas trees began as a German custom.

In 1841 Prince Albert, the husband of Queen Victoria, was one of the earliest to introduce Christmas trees into England, though not the first: German merchants in Manchester had had Christmas trees for several years by this time, for one William Howitt reported in 1840 "it is spreading fast among the English there - pine tops being brought to market for the purpose, which are generally illuminated with tapers...".

With Prince Albert having one the custom grew rapidly in popularity. Two months before Christmas 1841 a Prince of Wales had been born, and Albert in his joy set up the Christmas tree. "This is the dear Christmas Eve," he wrote. "Today I have two children of my own to give presents to ... they are full of happy wonder at the German Christmas-tree and its radiant candles".

Each winter after this, more trees appeared in the castle. Soon there was one of the Queen, one for the Prince, one for the children, and several for other members of the household, and two in the dining room. There were 6 to 8 feet high, all fully decorated and loaded with trinkets, carefully arranged by Mr. Mawditt, the Queen's confectioner.

A charming lithograph of 1848 shows the six royal children with their mother and father grouped around their tree, over six feet high, which stands on a table covered with white damask. About the roots the larger toys are crowded with candles and with sweetmeats, bell and paper toys. On the apex floats an angel with spread wings, holding a wreath in each hand.

In 1850 it was still to Dickens "the new German toy", but by 1854 there were hundreds for sale in Covent Garden Market, and a prodigious glittering fir tree on view at the Crystal Palace.

Incidentally, Christmas stockings were not introduced to England until 1854. This practice also came from Germany, although in certain French and Italian convents, the nuns had long been hanging stockings on the abbess' door, with notes inside asking for St Nicholas' protection; and next morning they would be found to be full of sweets and trinkets. That, at least has not changed.

LAUGH FOR THE WEEK

A note from Santa:

MERRY CHRISTMAS?

I've worked my guts all night long, soot in the chimneys, smelly socks, savage guard dogs, been shot at, mistaken for a stork, driving all nights in the snow, and damn near got killed by a 747; and Mrs. Claus is pissed off because I got home so late.

Donner and Blitzen and Rudolph got the shits over Hong Kong and you should see my suit. The damn elves won't clean the sleigh unless I pay them double time.

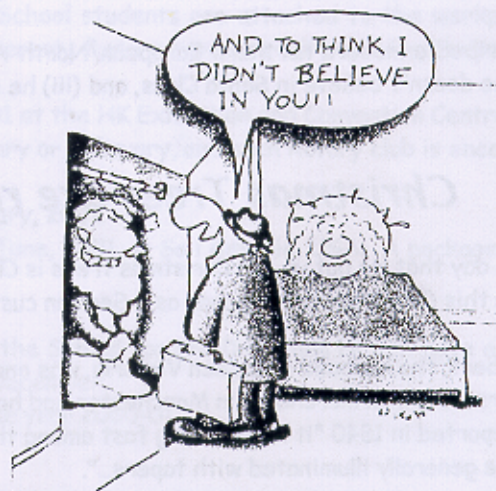
I'm so sick of cookies and milk, I could vomit. The only thrill I had all night was when I slipped getting out of my sleigh.

My prostate is giving me hell: I pee'd my pants at 20,000 feet and froze my ass to the seat. I'm allergic to pine needles: I itch all over and I think my hemorrhoids are back.

HO! HO! HO!

MERRY CHRISTMAS, your ass.

How To Tell You've
Been Really Bad.



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ROTARY CLUB OF HK ISLAND EAST MEETS EVERY WEDNESDAY, 12: 30 p.m. AT
EXCELSIOR HOTEL, CAUSEWAY BAY