

He Says 'If It's That Important,' Let Henry and Edmondson Present Their Bill to A Special Session

Representative Renegar Finds Interest in His Water



Brian Renegar

New Rep. Brian Renegar, A Rotarian, has had a lot of attention given to his "water bill," which would delay the sale of Southeastern Oklahoma water to Texas until 2011, when a state Comprehensive Water Study is to be completed.

Brian spoke at our Rotary Club meeting last week, giving a report on the recent legislative session.

The bill Brian was referring to, originally was introduced to deal with environmental factors for the Oklahoma Water Resources Board. Renegar amended it to

extend the time that the state board could not sell state water from 2009 to 2011. Present law has a time limit of 2009.

After it got through the Senate, it dealt only with Renegar's time limit on selling state water.

The legislator said OG&E and PSO wanted 10,000 acre feet a year and the State Chamber of Commerce said the State Water Board needed to be able to sell an unlimited amount of water, for industrial prospects.

Renegar said he told them he would take his name off, at co-author of the bill, if it had no "limit cap."

He told Rotary Club members, "If it is that important" to let Gov. Brad Henry and State Attorney General Drew Edmondson draft a bill and call a Special Session to consider it.

The Pittsburg County legislator said he found that most instances in the House of Representatives have urban legislators versus rural legislators, rather than Democrats versus Republicans.

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Brock Installed As 96th Rotary President

Steve Brock was installed last Tuesday as 96th president of the McAlester Rotary Club.

Retiring President Ann Owen thanked the committee chairmen and "everyone" who helped the club the past year.

Installing officer Bruce Hall also installed Brett Smith as President-Elect, and Mike Lowber as vice-president.

"We've got a great club...and we've got great people in the club," Bruce said. He challenged each officer and the new directors to "be guided by the Four-Way Test" in leading the club the coming year. He also reminded members of the club that the officers "are only as good as you make them."

Three men and three women were installed as directors. They are Karl Scifres, Gary Boyd, Betty Talley, Shayne Javersak, Loise Washington, and Ann Owens.

President Steve told club members that Ann had done "a wonderful job" as president.

"I'm looking forward to working with you," he said.

The club's "number one project is the Flag Project," he reminded. It raises funds for the \$5,000 in scholarships the club gives each year.

Assistant Governor Tom Cobb recalled recently the importance of the Rotary Foundation, he said. An emphasis on Rotary Fellowships would help the foundation and provide endowments for the scholarships, he added.

A short program of entertainment was given by Michael "Ginsburg and Kathy Brod. Ginsburg played the violin, and Ms. Brod accompanied him on the piano.

Ginsburg said he will perform as concert on Friday, July 6, or violin "standards and showtunes."

Tom Cobb Tells Club About Rotary Foundation Programs

In many poor villages around the world, children are abandoned because they have eye cataracts, or cleft palates that \$30 from a Rotary Club in the United States can cure.

Assistant Governor Tom Cobb told us June 5 about work of the Rotary Foundation, and showed slides of the villages visited by Oklahoma Rotarians.

Cobb said he and other Rotarians in the Tulsa Club sign a "Direct Deposit" for \$25 a quarter. Then they draw a name and name a Paul Harris Fellow when \$1,000 is collected.

There are 32,000 clubs and 1.2 million Rotarians, and an eye operation for \$30 can "change someone's life," Cobb said.

It takes only \$30 to remove a cataract and replace a lens in an eye, and \$50 will do the same for both eyes, he explained.

A new mother can see her baby for the first time, because of a \$30 donation, he recalled.

The "rainy season" in many villages washes dirt and filth into a town's wells. But there are "matching funds" for each donation for many of the Rotary programs. Drilling wells is one of them, he said. Building low-cost homes is another.

He showed pictures of a water tower in one village.

We can look in the Rotary Magazine and see where the money goes, he related.

"We need to support the Rotary Foundation each year, he said. "If we

can't give \$100, we may have someone who can give \$200."

Many of these people work for \$1 a day, and they cannot afford such projects.

The lives of 20 children were saved by heart operations that cost \$1,000, he said.

He showed pictures of wells which the Tulsa Club drilled in Nicaragua. Nine or 10 wells were drilled at as time.

"It means so much to have water there in their villages," he reported.

He showed pictures of children with cleft palates, who were "outcasts" in their villagers. "It doesn't cost much and it changes the lives of people," the Assistant Governor said.

A Rotary Foundation program has provided thousands and thousands" of wheelchairs around the world, he stated. He showed a photograph of a small boy with club feet who could attend school because he got one of the wheelchairs.

"The world took note of the Polio Plus Program by Rotary, Cobb remembered. .

A Group Study Exchange brings "world understanding," he said.

He told about "Ambassador Scholarships" and a "Medical Network" in this Rotary District.

"The Rotary Foundation is a powerful tool, he concluded.,

Volunteer Coordinator Urges Being Hospice Volunteers



Mel Robertson

Mel Robertson of the Heartland Hospice Services told us June 12 that “volunteerism is what makes the world go around.”

Robertson is the Volunteer Coordinator for the Heartland Hospice at 210 East Comanche.

There are 61,000,000

volunteers every year in the

U.S., he said. But each charity has its own volunteers,” he added.

The most volunteers are between 35 and 54 years of age, are parents, and are promoting two organizations, he said.

“You are who we are talking about,” he commented as he looked around the Rotary membership. “You have an opportunity to work with a lot of volunteers.”

To be a volunteer takes a lot of time and energy, he noted.

“But they can make a difference.....We make the world a better

place to live.”

Robertson quoted Mother Teresa as saying, “Money is not enough.”

Little League baseball couldn’t go on, without volunteers. Each team has two coaches, “and sometimes three or four,” he said.

Churches couldn’t do what they do without volunteers, he pointed out.

“Some of us just want to be needed,” he observed. “We are giving back to our community.”

Robertson told about the man who dumped ice shavings on the playground, and for the next three hours, kids played in the melting ice. Sometimes we need to “think outside the box a little bit,” he said.

He also told about a 300-poud man who laid down on the ground near a school and yelled, “Dog Pile.”

As a volunteer, “we get as much back as we give,” he stated.

People in a Hospice have less than six months to live, he related. Hospice volunteers “do things a staff doesn’t do.” Often they do “little tings,” but they mean a lot to the Hospice patients, he said.

He urged us to “check into being a Hospice volunteer.”

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Brian said one thing he learned is that a legislator’s most important vote may be against a bad bill. He said a bill concerning the State Penitentiary would have resulted in keeping inmates in prison longer, at a time when most state prisons are overcrowded.

He where he sits in the House is called the “Bull Pen” and there are 12 legislators there. Eight were for the prison bill and four were against it. He said he “got all 12 to vote against it.”

Brian also voted against Bill 1485, which would have taken oil and gas equipment off the state tax rolls. He said that vote made everyone mad at him.

He reported that the Legislature changed recent tax credits for Education, to two years, instead of three. Legislators gave “Stay-At-Home-Moms” a \$10,000 tax credit.

He said that an issue the Legislature needs to deal with in the future, is school students who drop out but say they are being “home schooled.” They usually get parents to back up their story, he said.

Franchise fees were cut and legislators approved tax cuts on clothing and “footwear” for special “No Sales Tax Sales” in August.

Brian said that under state law, “Charter Schools” do not have the “accountability” which other schools must have.

He said he felt the Legislature would “move this direction.”

The Legislature approved \$4 million for the Forensic Lab at NCO in Edmond; \$4 ½ million for Rural Firefighters, plus \$2 ½ million for equipment.

The legislators okayed \$1 million for the Police Training School at Ada, and required 160 more hours of police training.

Renegar also said 7th to 12th graders in school will be required to have a course in finance, to inform them about balancing check books and about credit card debt. The average student has a credit card debt of \$3,000, he said he read.

The Department of Corrections is “underfunded,” the local legislator

said. The situation will require supplemental appropriations next year.

Also funded by the recent Legislature is an “Energy Center,” which may be in Durant, although he favors Tulsa as a location.

Also approved was \$4 ½ million for Oklahoma lakes and river navigation. Most of the state’s lakes were built to last 50 years and they are 51 years old, he said. They need some work, he added.

Renegar said Oklahoma uses 292,000 acre feet of water a year. Texas wants the right to 300,000 acre feet, most for irrigation.

If Texas is sold Oklahoma water, most of the money will go to the attorneys, the legislator added.

He said “Water will be one of the biggest challenges” for future legislatures, “and paying off Sardis Lake.”

Brian said several fellow House members call him “The Fax Man,” because he faxes so many bills to voters in his district that he thinks would be interested.

He also told of inviting his son, Cory, to the final day of the House session. Brian had told him it might last until 4:30 or 5, but that they would be “out by 5:30.”

The session dragged on to 8 p.m. and he approached the Speaker’s podium and told how long his son had been waiting. He asked if he could introduce him.

The Speaker thought it might be time for a break in their business. So he introduced Brian, who had a guest.

Brian said his son was hearing impaired, and he had to “sign” to him in the gallery

He made a large “O” with his arms, and the boy stood and raised his arms to make an “O”.

Quickly Brian moved his arms to form an “S” and a “U,” and his son did the same.

The action brought a humorous break to the House business.

Attendance, Visitors and Fashions?

Are we turning into a fashion club, due to the women members? If so, your newsletter writers are in a lot of trouble.

Bruce Hall described what Steve Brock and Brett Smith had on. He even asked Jim Henley how many orange shirts he has.

“Not enough” probably was the answer, since he didn’t have one on.

But he stopped the Fashion Show when he got to Mike Lowber, thank goodness.

Now the Attendance.

Last week there were 47 present. Michael Ginsburg and Kathy Brod were guests.

Attendance the previous week was 42. Bob Springer was a guest of Jim Henley and Bob Thornton was a guest of Noble Miller.

June 12 we had 55 and former President Ann Owens complimented members on the turnout. Dorothy Chatenay was a guest of Jack, and Larry Cole was a guest of Cliff House.

On June 5, there were 38 present. Ryan Martin was a guest of Yvette Martin and Lavon Williams was a visiting Rotarian.

HANDSHAKERS-Mayor Don Lewis had the dollar last week, and he gave it to one of the women, Chamber Executive Helen Wheeler. Don Harris, departing Salvation Army representative, won the dollar two weeks. Don has been an active Rotary member all the time he was in McAlester.

On June 5, Shayne Javersak gave it to Brian Renegar. Brian deserved the dollar for his OSU story.