

Issue 21 – May 2012

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Dear fellow-members of the TS and TOS around the world,

This issue is packed with news from members and groups around the world, sharing reminiscences as well as ideas about dynamic service projects in their communities. You'll also find some articles and references that could be useful in your work.

Thank you for being part of our 'in-touch' community. Together we can make a real difference to every person, animal and plant whose lives we touch with joy and compassion.

Remember that the newsletter is designed to be read while you are connected to the internet.

Please also consider sending photographs of your TOS activities and news items that might be of interest to fellow TOS members. We would welcome your contributions by email to the editors at carolyn.tosinternational@gmail.com.

With best wishes,

Carolyn, Diana and Geoffrey



(L. to R.) Carolyn Harrod is the past National Coordinator of the TOS in Australia, Geoffrey Harrod is the International TOS Webmaster and Diana Dunningham Chapotin is the International Secretary of the TOS.

One finds love not by being loved, but by loving.

We can never know love if we try to draw others to ourselves; nor can we find it by centring our love in them. For love is infinite; it is never ours to create. We can only channel it from its source in Infinity to all whom we meet.

- J. Donald Walters



Invitation and programme outline for the International TOS Conference in 2013

We are happy to remind you that the TS and TOS in America have kindly agreed to host a three-day international TOS Workers' Conference from the evening of Tuesday 23 July to Friday 26 July, 2013 at Olcott, its national centre in Wheaton, Illinois. A five-day Summer National Gathering of the TS in America will take place immediately preceding the Conference, from 19 July to 23 July. All are invited to attend this event as well.

For more information and a registration form, please contact our International Secretary, Diana, at tosinternational@wanadoo.fr.

A broad outline of the Conference programme [is available here](#).



Personal memories of Rukmini Devi

In our last issue of the newsletter we featured Rukmini Devi as our 'Inspirational person'. The article prompted long-time member of the TOS and TS in America, Miles Standish, to write and share his memory of Rukmini.

Miles writes, "I can't help wanting to share my own memories of this truly inspiring Theosophist.

"I first met Rukmini at the HQ of the TS in the USA in 1947. It was my first visit to 'Olcott'. I drove there from Florida on an Indian Chief motorcycle. John and Betsan Coats were there too. (John Coats was the 4th International President of the TS. –Ed.) Betsan put on an 'India Night' down in the basement cafeteria, with hand-painted designs on the floor. Rukmini danced! It was magical..." [Read more....](#)

Thank you, Miles!



Inspirational people – Barbro Melander

To Theosophists, Barbro was chiefly a dynamic force in the Swedish Theosophical Society and a well-loved chairperson of the European Federation of the TS. Within her homeland, however, she was widely known as a front line social activist, a role in which she remained vigorous until close to her death in 2000 at the age of 84.

At her memorial service, close TS associates Curt Berg and Ing-Britt Wiklund said:

"Barbro was a bundle of energy and she was active to the very end. Her energy was catching. Many of us received phone calls from her starting, 'Hello, it's Barbro here. Can you imagine...?' ending with, 'What do we do?' not 'Shall we do something?' That was how she was, our Barbro – she not only ascertained that something was wrong, she did something to change it."

As founding member, general secretary and then chairperson of the South Sweden Environmental Action Group (Aktiv Skåne-Miljö), Barbro appeared on television in Scandinavia, France, Germany and England. She received several awards for her action in defence of the environment, including the environment prize for the city of Malmö in 1992.

Theosophy was a major influence in her work as an environmental activist as can be seen in her interview with the TOS. She believed that: "To be able to be of some use in social and environmental work, one has to know oneself and one's limits, and one must be able to love co-workers – and understand one's antagonists. All this is perhaps an expression of the deeper understanding of life and of the task of transformation that Theosophy gives us."

Barbro had been a member of the Theosophical Society for 63 years when she passed away from liver cancer in 2000. [Read more....](#)



An award for a courageous animal rights activist

Readers may remember the Austrian animal rights advocate Martin Balluch, one of 13 activists charged in 2009 with forming a criminal network responsible for damage to property, arson, gas attacks and bomb threats. After a brutal arrest and three months in remand custody for ten of the activists, and a court case lasting nearly 14 months, the 13 were exonerated on all counts in March 2011 and the police department castigated for its behaviour in gathering 'evidence'.

Martin's animal advocacy work has now been recognised. He has recently been awarded the Myschkine Prize, an international award for ethical work in progress. The award recognises the achievements in animal welfare in Austria and is in stark contrast to the unfounded criminal procedures pursued against the group of activists. [Read more....](#)

Young Tanzanians bring energy to theosophical service work



A little over a year ago, Deepa Kapur, Coordinator of the TOS in Tanzania, reported that a second generation was becoming involved in service work in Dar Es Salaam. Deepa's daughter, Malaika, and fellow TOS member, Harsukh Dubal's daughter, Khyati, along with 13 committed and enthusiastic youngsters, started in Tanzania, the first African branch of World Care Way (WCW), a charitable organisation for youth, whose international base is in Chennai, India. The group is dedicated to various social causes and environmental issues.

They have been focusing their energies on a range of activities:

- supporting the Heart Babies Project by presenting teddies (knitted by Italian TOS members) to the young children and money for incidental expenses to their mothers
- promoting the use of cloth bags
- presenting teddies to children with disabilities and in orphanages
- raising awareness about how the use of plastic is a significant factor in global warming and contributes to other environmental problems.

Malaika Kapur attended the East and Central African TS Convention in Zambia and delivered a speech on the projects that she and her teenage friends have carried out. Many of the members came forward to compliment Malaika on her ability to show the relevance of theosophical ideals to World Care Way's service activities. [Read more....](#)



TOS news from around the world

In this issue you'll find news from the TOS in **Canada**, about welcoming New Canadians and you'll read about the TOS in **Hungary**'s activity to provide Christmas gifts to the families in their 'adopted' village. There's also news about a recent seminar day held by the TOS in Brisbane, **Australia**, to raise funds for the home-schools in Pakistan and at the same time, educate participants about the importance of forests to our health and wellbeing on many levels. Finally, the **New Zealand** TOS shares news about a successful Open Day promoting the TOS. [Read more....](#)



Linda Jo Pym



The Hungarian TOS camping team

What's new on the International TOS website?

The new [Featured Article](#) is an interview with Linda Jo Pym, who for 36 years was a social worker in the state of Washington, USA. In the course of her career, she held positions in a variety of environments, working with diverse populations and issues: in juvenile correctional facilities, family service agencies, childcare programmes, a university mental health clinic and private practice. Issues handled include family violence, intergenerational conflict, grief, loss, death, dying. Throughout, Linda Jo has been active in the TS, holding positions in the Seattle branch of the TS and working as resident manager at the Theosophical Camp Indralaya and chairperson of the Board, as assistant to the President at the national HQ of the TS in Wheaton, Illinois and director of fieldwork there. This interview took place just before Linda Jo retired. In it, she talks about how theosophical principles and the theosophical worldview have influenced her work.

In our [Featured Project](#) we bring more news on the activities of the TOS in Hungary. Their first long term project was the 'adoption' of a flood-affected village with the blessing and support of the town's municipal officers. While they have so far provided emergency relief and offered gifts at Christmas, the group's long term goal is to help the villagers build their own active self-help community. To this end, the group camped in the town for three days last August to get to know the villagers better and deepen already established bonds. The team relates the experience here and updates us on what has happened since.

You'll also find additions to the TOS photo gallery and the Inspiration section.

Go to <http://international.theoservice.org>

Service at Adyar

We have received a message from Maria Rosa Martínez and her husband,



Ernesto García, of Argentina mentioning some extra-curricular activities engaged in by some of the students attending Ravi Ravindra's class on the Rig Veda at the School of the Wisdom at Adyar in January. Maria Rosa and Ernesto describe Ravi's class enthusiastically and then say:

"During our second week, Ravi's associate, Priscilla Murray, drew our attention to the debris-strewn state of the Adyar beach in front of the Theosophical Society estate. She suggested that we help to clean up the huge amount of waste matter accumulated there.

In addition, one of our classmates, Lucille Crocker from Australia, organised the collection of donations for the purchase of mattresses, pillows, sheets and pillow covers for the boys at the HPB Hostel. With the help of Sunita and C.V.K. Maithreya of the TOS in Chennai, they were purchased and delivered before the School of the Wisdom course was ended." [Read more....](#)



Insights through service

In our last issue, our International Secretary, Diana Dunningham Chapotin shared an insight that has influenced her service work.

Now Cynthia Trasi, Secretary of the TOS in England, shares her insight into the small experiences in her childhood that sowed the seeds of compassion and their importance to her in putting theosophy into action. [Read more....](#)



Translations of the brochure documenting TS support for the United Nations

We now have translations into French and Spanish of our brochure documenting the history of support that the TS has given to the United Nations. The brochure was published by our TOS United Nations Committee, chaired by Lorraine Christensen, the Coordinator of the TOS in Canada. It is available in English on the Members section of our website.

Maria Rosa Martínez of the TOS in Argentina translated it into Spanish and Gérard Marc of the TOS in Canada translated it into French. In addition, the National Director of the TOS in India, Mr Birendra L. Bhattacharyya, has arranged for its translation into Bengali, Assamese, Hindi and Gujarati and has requested the regional secretaries of Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu & Chennai to get it translated into their local language.

We are very encouraged that this brochure has attracted so much support and greatly appreciate the contribution of our translators. The translated brochures are available here in [French](#) and [Spanish](#)



A theosophical perspective on schizophrenia and alcoholism

We draw your attention to a series of articles started jointly on two Theosophical websites,

International Theosophy Conferences (www.theosconf.org) and **Theosophy Forward** (<http://www.theosophyforward.com/>).

The articles look at thorny social problems in the light of theosophical teachings. They are intended to help us deal with some of the traumas with which we can be faced in the course of our lives.

The first two articles examine the issues of [schizophrenia](#) and [alcoholism](#). You can find them through the linked words. The issues to be dealt with in the edition of Theosophy Forward appearing in late June will be suicide and marijuana

addiction. Other subjects lined up include Alzheimer's disease, abortion, physical disability and the effects of psychic practices. Authors Sally and James Colbert draw on their knowledge of Theosophy and their background in clinical psychology in their attempt to focus attention on issues relevant to all engaged in service.

We congratulate International Theosophy Conferences and Theosophy Forward on this initiative.



Eyes for the blind: letter 2 from Roscoe

In the last issue of the newsletter we shared a letter from Roscoe, the Guide Dog who lived with Ann Davis, a member of Pretoria Lodge, and her family.

In this issue we share a second letter from Roscoe, originally published in the South African Theosophist in 2007 and 2009. In it, he tells us about his life after puppy training, and how he eventually became the 'eyes' for Annemie, a student at Cape Town University.

"Annemie has now started lecturing at the university," writes Roscoe. "I listen enthralled. If students do not listen I go and give them a nuzzle to wake them up, because Annemie cannot see." [Read more](#)



Baby lion hugs

This heart-warming video reminds us of how readily young animals connect with other species. To them, we are all One. [Watch the video](#) (YouTube)

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- a. To sign up, you only have to send a message telling us which country you live in to tos.intouch@gmail.com with 'Subscribe TOS e-newsletter' in the subject line.
- b. If you do not want to receive future newsletters you can easily unsubscribe. All that is needed is a blank message to tos.intouch@gmail.com with 'Unsubscribe TOS e-newsletter' in the subject line.

Personal memories of Rukmini Devi

Long-time member of the TOS and TS in America, Miles Standish, writes: "After reading the article about Rukmini Devi Arundale in the February issue of TOS in-touch.online, I can't help wanting to share my own memories of this truly inspiring Theosophist."

I first met Rukmini at the HQ of the TS in the USA in 1947. It was my first visit to 'Olcott'. I drove there from Florida on an Indian Chief motorcycle. John and Betsan Coats were there too. (John Coats was the 4th International President of the TS. –Ed.) Betsan put on an "India Night" down in the basement cafeteria, with hand-painted designs on the floor. Rukmini danced! It was magical...

John and Betsan also put on a night programme outside with special displays, and we used the headlight of my motorcycle to illuminate one part. For many years thereafter, my life criss-crossed on a personal level with John and Betsan Coats.

Going home from that session, I drove the motorcycle non-stop from Chicago to Pensacola, Florida (stopping only for refuelling and restrooms). I did not do that for show, but because I didn't have the money for motels. I floated on air the whole way after such a wonderful TS gathering.

The next time I met Rukmini – some 24 years later – was the day after completing a five-day session of chemotherapy following major surgery for cancer. I wanted very much to obtain some Laetrile, an 'alternative' supplementary treatment popular at the time, but in the Navy hospital where I had been a patient, all the doors were closed for getting help or even information. I was in a terrible physical state at the time.



When Rukmini learned of my situation, she went out of her way to help me. She had heard of Laetrile therapy and even knew a lady in California who had some Laetrile. Rukmini put me in touch with the lady and it was sent by fast post. She also "'magnetized' a star sapphire ring for me. She included a most kind personal note saying that she had attempted to link it to higher forces. I think 'higher forces' did come into play immediately, because I was soon led to contact a doctor in Canada, and that doctor knew another in my local area. From then on, I had the best of care. The Navy doctor who did the surgery told me the plan was that I would come back every three months for chemotherapy for two years. No one from the hospital ever contacted me to remind me or ask, "Why haven't you come in?" and so it simply was never administered.

As you can imagine, whenever Rukmini's name is mentioned, it evokes gratitude in me – and here I am still alive at the age of 86 and still free of cancer.



Barbro Melander – inspiring Theosophist and environmentalist



“People probably think it is funny that an old woman like me is busy campaigning, instead of knitting pullovers for her grandchildren.” Thus Barbro Melander wryly commented during an interview about her activities in defence of the environment in Sweden.

To Theosophists, Barbro was chiefly a dynamic force in the Swedish Theosophical Society and a well-loved chairperson of the European Federation of the TS. Within her homeland, however, she was widely known as a front line social activist, a role in which she remained vigorous until close to her death in 2000 at the age of 84.

At her memorial service, close TS associates Curt Berg and Ing-Britt Wiklund said:

“Barbro was a bundle of energy and she was active to the very end. Her energy was catching. Many of us received phone calls from her starting, ‘Hello, it’s Barbro here. Can you imagine...?’ ending with, ‘What do we do?’ not ‘Shall we do something?’ That was how she was, our Barbro – she not only ascertained that something was wrong, she did something to change it.”

As founding member, general secretary and then chairperson of the South Sweden Environmental Action Group (Aktiv Skåne-Miljö), Barbro appeared on television in Scandinavia, France, Germany and England. She received several awards for her action in defence of the environment, including the environment prize for the city of Malmö in 1992.

Here are extracts from an interview that appeared in a TOS publication, *The Service Link*, in 1996.

Question: *Many people, Theosophists or not, feel powerless to influence world events. They look at the wars going on all over the planet, at international drug trafficking, religious persecution, famine in developing countries and wonder what they can possibly do to help. In the face of huge world problems, do you think that the best contribution a Theosophist can make is to concentrate on theosophical education? In other words, would we do better to apply ourselves to spirituality and self-transformation than to struggle in community projects and national campaigns?*

Answer: Self-transformation as a goal in itself is fine, but shouldn’t it be ‘used’ in relation to others, in connection with, for instance, our physical environment? I think that the two good things are not mutually exclusive. To be able to be of some use in social and environmental work, one has to know oneself and one’s limits, and one must be able to love co-workers – and understand one’s antagonists. All this is perhaps an expression of the deeper understanding of life and of the task of transformation that Theosophy gives us.

Q: *If self- and social transformation have an equal place in our lives, what advice can you give to those of us who don't know where to start in the domain of social activism, who feel overwhelmed? What can we possibly do about, say, poverty in developing countries? Is that something that is always going to be with us? Denmark was recently host to an international conference on world poverty, as you know, and it proposed that each participating country increase the percentage of its Gross National Product devoted to overseas aid to 20%. Denmark publicly committed itself to doing this, hoping to inspire others. Not one country followed suit!*



A: That international conference took place in Copenhagen close to my home, actually. Delegates and prime ministers from nearly every country of the globe discussed for several days, and the results were, as you imply, meagre. But it is always good when people come together and get to know each other. There is no 'collective brain', only a lot of brains, and new ideas start in one individual brain. Many individual brains can, however, influence one another. I recall how at the end of the sixties here in Sweden we managed to increase the percentage of our country's GNP donated to the United Nations, a move inspired by some of our scientists. Through books, letters and use of the media, they informed us of the problems of the world and showed how closely we were connected to everything else on the planet through our relationship with Nature. Once this had been achieved, I contacted people with the same outlook as myself and since then I have learned a lot about ecology and politics i.e. how our country functions. And about how, as an idealist, independent of political parties, one can influence things.

Q: *What about getting involved in local projects, close to home? Have you ever done this?*

A: 'Putting one's own house in order' is indeed important. Because of my love of nature, I have always felt close to the land in the south of Sweden here where I live. Our rich soil is precious. Depletion through intensive agricultural exploitation is a tremendous threat. Back in the early 1970s, I got in touch with people who shared my concerns and we started a conservation organisation. To be in a strong position to defend the land, however, I had to take some science classes. My natural aptitude was for languages and the arts, so it was quite a challenge to take university courses in environmental management, law, agriculture (traditional versus ecological), town-planning, etc. Lots of things to study!

[...] In the happy sixties in Scandinavia we did not know that our planet, our Gaia, is not a balloon that we can blow up bigger and bigger, but is restricted in size and capacities. We are now frightened of the philosophy of the European Community where money seems to be the central thing, the hub around which everything turns. The European Community is a colossus on weak legs, and will probably collapse, or change its philosophy, just because of this.

Schumacher's book, *Small is Beautiful*, gives us some wonderful lessons and so does his second work, *A Guide for the Perplexed*, which contains some rather theosophical chapters. Another important book is Jeremy Rifkin's *Entropy* (1980) and then there are the writings of Ilya Prigogine.

Plans to build motorways all over Europe to meet European Community transport goals are unacceptable to many average citizens. Our large South Sweden Environmental Action Group is lobbying politicians, ministers and government departments all the time. Some say that road and bridge building provides work (mainly for machines, in my opinion!), and that with the many unemployed we have in Europe we need work opportunities; but we cannot do this at the expense of soil, landscape, water, recreation grounds, etc. We must stick to the Agenda 21 document which Sweden signed at the Rio Conference and to our promise to reduce carbon dioxide levels.



In social action, we must first know, then find ways, find the right people to approach, find new ways, and not give up. You cannot work with these problems if you have no inner balance between thought and feeling. You must also have a supportive family. Many marriages have broken up because of the intense involvement of one partner.

Q: *Is it worth it?*

A: My social involvement has meant a lot of work for me, but also the joy of learning. Not the least are the wonderful people you meet – real altruists. And I have even met with respect from politicians! Without Theosophy I could never have worked this way. You have to try to understand all the people one is in contact with, without condemning them, even while fighting their ideas and projects. There are so many setbacks in work of this nature. You have to rely a lot on your inner strength. You have to focus on both the short term dangers to the environment and long term planning. Much of what we are struggling for is part of a vision, something for our grandchildren.



Q: *You may not knit pullovers, Barbro, but you and your fellow workers are perhaps weaving cloth of a different, durable nature! In what way would you say that Theosophy has helped sustain you throughout your social action? How does it affect your perception of issues?*

A: Since we are all one, when dealing with your fellow creatures you see a glimpse of the blue heaven in them. Even if many clouds cover it, you know it is there. And you know that we are pilgrims on our way to the same goal. Some know this, some don't; some are old, some young; some are old friends of yours, others new. All of them are different, so you have to show patience with your fellow travellers – and with yourself. The pieces of the puzzle do not always fit.

Some of our theosophical literature and poetry is an inspiration to me. And the Theosophical Society itself can be a comfort at times. I remember an occasion when I had to travel to Basel in Switzerland for a meeting of the Executive Committee of the European Federation. I had just been out on a protest action in a forest not far from my home. Our goal was to prevent local government workers from felling a group of wonderful trees for an unnecessary highway. We call this a 'tree-hugging action' and it is stressful! Well, I found myself in Basel in front of a wonderful table full of fresh green salads and the unpleasant pain I had been feeling for weeks in my solar plexus suddenly disappeared.

I have participated in many 'illegal' actions, though it would be more accurate to call them simple acts of passive resistance. The idea is that such spontaneous initiatives by citizens must sooner or later influence law-making and turn it in favour of the environment. But it takes time.

When people say we are seldom successful, my usual answer is that idealistic action casts a shadow in front of itself. Perhaps this Swedish expression isn't very clear in English. What I mean is that actions can shape the future even if they are not successful. The Latin phrase says about the same: *Gutta cata lapidem* – meaning that the drop of water wears away stone not by force but by persistence.

[...] But I have strayed from your question. Where were we?! Oh yes, the role of Theosophy in all this. We have, as you know, a timeless wisdom and it is terribly important, to my mind, that we discover it in its contemporary forms in this modern world. I rejoice that we can now almost put behind us the old mechanistic view of the human being and cosmos. I catch a glimpse of blue heaven every day in some form or another!



Q: *We thank you for sharing your experiences and insights with us and wish you and your Environmental Action Group the very best of luck.*

Barbro had been a member of the Theosophical Society for 63 years when she passed away from liver cancer in 2000. Her son Hugo writes, "During the last year of her life, she often told us that she would have loved to live longer as there was so much to do in this world to make it a better place. At the same time she was anxious not to give us the impression that she was bitter or sad. She continued her public service right to the end. During her very last days, when she was in hospital, she asked me for help in proof-reading a document she had written to encourage the city of Malmö in the creation and development of a proper sanitation authority. She was very much inspired by former International President of the Theosophical Society, John Coates, his work and attitude."

An award for a courageous animal rights activist

Readers may remember the Austrian animal rights advocate Martin Balluch, one of 13 activists charged in 2009 with forming a criminal network responsible for damage to property, arson, gas attacks and bomb threats. After a brutal arrest and three months in remand custody for ten of the activists, and a court case lasting nearly 14 months, the 13 were exonerated on all counts in March 2011 and the police department castigated for its behaviour in gathering 'evidence'.

We have received some splendid news from Martin:

Dear All,

I am delighted to inform you that the international committee of the Myschkine Prize, an international award for ethical work in progress, has chosen to recognise animal advocacy work by awarding me the prize for this year! The award recognises our achievements in animal welfare in Austria and is in stark contrast to the criminal procedures pursued against us.

This international recognition means a great deal to me, especially after our ordeal with the Austrian authorities. The award comes with 50,000 euros and a sculpture. Stéphane Hessel, human rights advocate, co-writer of the UN human rights charter and anti-Nazi resistance fighter during World War II in France, received an award for his long life's achievements.

The award ceremony was held on January 30 in the Theatre de l'Odeon in Paris.

All the best to you and thank you for your support.

- *Martin Balluch*



Martin with his Myschkine Prize sculpture

Young Tanzanians bring energy to theosophical service work

A little over a year ago, Deepa Kapur, Coordinator of the TOS in Tanzania, reported that a second generation was becoming involved in service work in Dar Es Salaam. Deepa's daughter, Malaika, and fellow TOS member, Harsukh Dubal's daughter, Khyati, along with 13 committed and enthusiastic youngsters, started in Tanzania, the first African branch of World Care Way (WCW), a charitable organisation for youth, whose international base is in Chennai, India. The group is dedicated to various social causes and environmental issues. What have they been up to since our last report?

Starting from the most recent, exciting news of 2012, let's rewind into 2011.



On 26 February 2012, 21 children left for open heart surgery in India, including a seven-month-old baby with two holes in her heart. Nishtha Arora, Malaika Kapur and Chandni Mehta, along with Harsukh Dubal and Runjiv Kapur, went for the send-off and gave US \$1,050 (US \$50 each) to the children for incidental expenses. The gift was much appreciated by Dr Kanabar, pioneer of the Tanzania Heart Babies Project, the Lions Club of Dar Es Salaam and the chief guest, Regional Commissioner of Dar Es Salaam, all of whom thanked World Care Way in their speeches. The girls were seen in the local news on two TV channels. All the Theosophical Society members in Tanzania send warm thanks to the TOS in England, Italy, Australia and New Zealand who made possible this support for the Heart Babies Project.



The World Care Way group has been promoting the use of cloth bags. The Indian High Commissioner, His Excellency Mr Bhagirath, invited the WCW teen group to hold a stall at the cultural fair that took place in Dar Es Salaam during the festival of Diwali. We see him here holding up a sample of a cloth bag that the group was selling. WCW President, Malaika Kapur, is showing a T-shirt with the message "Avoid Plastic". One hundred T-shirts were donated by the Tata business group to boost the efforts of WCW. Also seen are WCW teens, Krunalika Mutha, Nishtha Arora and Vidushi Yadav.

It was a moving moment when the young children at the Kind Heart Orphanage, on the outskirts of Dar Es Salaam, received the teddy bears knitted by TOS members in Italy as a part of the 'TEDDIES FOR TRAGEDY' project. Seen in the photo is the Vice-President of WCW, Khyati Dubal (in a dark blue T-shirt), along with Nishtha Arora and Vidushi Yadav.



When Mary Anderson visited East Africa to give a series of lectures for the Theosophical Society, the WCW group made a presentation about their work at one of her public lectures. Many in the audience were touched by the sincerity of the teenagers. One of these was Mr Kiran Shah, a stalwart member of the East African Section. He spontaneously donated 150,000 Tanzanian shillings (US\$100) – a sum that goes a long way within Tanzania.

From left to right (standing): Mr Kiran Shah, Mr Harsukh Dubal (Secretary/Treasurer TS Dar Es Salaam), Malaika Kapur, Nishtha Arora, Tejas Tambe, Vidushi Yadav and Chandni Mehta. Seated is Mrs Lili Chohan, Head of Dar Es Salaam Lodge of the TS, who also made a contribution of 100,000 Tanzanian Shillings (US \$66).

Mary Anderson accompanied the WCW teens and TS officers on a visit to the Mtoni School for the Mentally Challenged. There, they presented 50 kilos of rice, 27 classroom curtains, biscuits, footballs, toys and the teddy bears from the Italian TOS's TEDDIES FOR TRAGEDY effort to the eager young children. (A big thank you to the Italian knitting team!)



At Easter last year, a group of Tanzanians attended the East and Central African TS Convention in Zambia. The youngest delegate, Malaika Kapur, made an impact on the crowd when she delivered a speech on the projects that she and her teenage friends have carried out. Many of the members came forward to compliment Malaika on her ability to show the relevance of theosophical ideals to World Care Way's service activities.

Front: Mrs Ranjan Patel and Mrs Lili Chohan. Back row (left to right): Mrs Deepa Kapur, Mr Jaysukh Patel, Malaika Kapur, Mr Jayant Chohan, Mr Jayu Sampat (head of TS Zambia) and Mr Harsukh Dubal.

On her 17th birthday, WCW President, Malaika Kapur, climbed the highest mountain in Africa, Mt Kilimanjaro (19,540 feet). Malaika was accompanied by her father, Runjiv, and a professional guide for the six-day ascent. Malaika also had the privilege of being monitored by a female guide who had scaled Mount Everest.

When Runjiv developed a medical problem three-quarters of the way up, Malaika had to make the midnight ascent alone with the guide. She said she drew strength from women like Annie Besant who never let obstacles hinder them.



Most importantly:

1) She received a corporate donation as she had declared that she wanted no award for herself but would appreciate a donation to World Care Way.

2) When she finally reached Uhuru Peak, Malaika was exhilarated but also dismayed to see that most of the snow atop Mt Kilimanjaro had melted – an effect of global warming. Later, Malaika talked at a large meeting of the TS in Dar Es Salaam about strengthening our commitment to a healthy environment. She pointed out that the use of plastic is a significant factor in global warming.

Bravo to the action-packed, dynamic team of World Care Way!!!

Issue 21 - May 2012

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TOS news from around the world

The TOS in Calgary: a miniature United Nations

The TOS in Calgary, Canada held a successful TOS meeting recently with a PowerPoint presentation on the subject, "Welcoming New Canadians".

What does welcoming new Canadians have to do with the TOS, though? "Everything," replies National Director, Lorraine Christensen. "Many immigrants arrive in their country of adoption and receive no help in learning new customs and ways of doing things. They find themselves quite isolated. This is surely a golden opportunity for TOS members who wish to serve?"

The group's guest speaker was Promila Sharma, who joined the TS in India in the mid-1980's and is a strong advocate of the TS's principal object of promoting universal brotherhood and sisterhood. Promila, who recently joined the TOS in Canada, seeks to carry that message through her work with newcomer clients in Calgary.



TOS National Director, Lorraine Christensen

Through her absorbing one-hour presentation, members learned about Promila's endeavours in promoting social and cultural awareness among immigrants and in helping to facilitate their settlement and integration into the Calgary community. "Promila's talk," reports Lorraine, "helped us stand in the shoes of an ever-growing segment of humanity and to realise how much those of us in the cultural, racial and religious majority can take for granted. I am sure our meeting made us more sensitive to the problems immigrants face."

As a matter of fact, out of the 16 members the TOS has in Calgary, nine have come to Canada from other countries. In addition to the new Canadians shown in these photos, Denmark, Burma, Germany, Iran and the United States are represented. A veritable miniature United Nations!



Seated next to guest speaker, Promila Sharma, we see new arrival to Canada – Olimi Shirinbek, a medical doctor from Moscow who is on a visiting permit.

At the TOS meeting, we were very happy to see him join the TOS in Canada. Three other new Canadians can also be seen in this photo. Seated on the left is Svetlana Borovko from Russia who is a member of the Veritas Study Centre of the TS. Seated together in the left back corner is guest Ayesha Hyder from Pakistan and Pearl Sztain from Israel. Pearl is also a member of Veritas Study Centre and serves on the Administrative Committee of the TOS in Canada.



TOS member Elaine Pederzolli (left) presents Promila with a gift to thank her for her presentation.

Christmas gifts for a village adopted by the TOS in Hungary

The TOS in Hungary has 'adopted' a flood-affected village with the blessing and support of the town's municipal officers. They began by offering emergency relief and then, at Christmas, they put together collections of gifts for families. You'll find more about their continuing support for the village in the *Featured Project* on our website.



Raising awareness of the environment in Brisbane, Australia

Recently the Brisbane TOS group conducted a successful one-day seminar to raise awareness of the importance of our forests. Participants also donated to the Qandeel schools in Pakistan, supported by Australian TOS groups.

Guest presenters spoke about:

- Using essential oils and herbs from the forest
- Restoring the world's tropical forests
- Our spiritual connection with nature

Following a relaxed and social lunch, participants enjoyed creating baskets from natural and recycled materials under the leadership of artist and TOS member, Karen Cipressi.



A successful Open Day promoting the TOS in New Zealand

The TOS was invited to participate in a very successful Open Day held at the HPB Lodge of the TS in Auckland, New Zealand in March.

To the right we see Renée Sell, TOS Coordinator for New Zealand. She reports: "We were graced with a lovely sunny day for the first ever Open Day at HPB Lodge. There were a number of new faces who got to see what the TOS was about. We raffled a quilted bag with small gifts in it and a donated book. The delighted winner was a long- time HPB Lodge member and our TS HQ's postal librarian, Sharn Laurie. We also set up our usual stand of donated items for sale."



Here we see Renée and her husband Richard in front of some of the TOS's display items providing information on the TOS around the world, on the specific projects overseas that NZ members support (such as the Golden Link College) and on the Geoffrey Hodson Scholarship Fund. Renée made a small presentation on the work of the TOS during the day.



Much to the delight of the TOS, the NZ Vegetarian Society also had a display stand. TOS members around the world do a great deal toward the improvement of human health, for animal welfare and for the protection of the environment so the Vegetarian Society's table was considered particularly welcome.

Service at Adyar



We have received a message from Maria Rosa Martínez and her husband, Ernesto García, of Argentina mentioning some extra-curricular activities engaged in by some of the students attending Ravi Ravindra's class on the Rig Veda at the School of the Wisdom at Adyar in January. Maria Rosa and Ernesto describe Ravi's class enthusiastically and then say:

During our second week, Ravi's associate, Priscilla Murray, drew our attention to the debris-strewn state of the Adyar beach in front of the Theosophical Society estate. She suggested that we help to clean up the huge amount of waste matter accumulated there.

Most of us agreed to meet the following Saturday morning in front of Leadbeater Chambers where rubber gloves and big bags were distributed, along with five rakes from the Garden Department.

Priscilla was the first to arrive and Ravi was beside her ready to join in the task. We worked for about two hours and the result was spectacular. Although we were hot, sweaty and dirty, we were really happy at the difference in the look of the beach. We met again the following Saturday.

A little service to balance our study was salutary for us all! We were all reminded of the urgent need to reduce the use of plastic which ends up as garbage.



Ravi Ravindra and Priscilla Murray

Commented Maria Rosa: It is a universal truth that sharing work brings you closer to other human beings. There we all were – members from India, USA, Canada, Finland, England, Argentina, Australia, New Zealand and so on – not talking, just bending down and filling bags, bending down and filling bags, resting, then bending down and filling bags....





One of our classmates, Lucille Crocker from Australia, organised the collection of donations for the purchase of mattresses, pillows, sheets and pillow covers for the boys at the HPB Hostel. With the help of Sunita and C.V.K. Maithreya of the TOS in Chennai, they were purchased and delivered before the School of the Wisdom course was ended.





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Insights through service

In our last issue, our International Secretary, Diana Dunningham Chapotin shared an insight that has influenced her service work.

Now Cynthia Trasi, Secretary of the TOS in England, shares her insight into the small experiences in her childhood that sowed the seeds of compassion and their importance to her in putting theosophy into action.

I had my first memorable lesson about the importance of the small things in life when I was very young. My mother told me that some elderly ladies had said how much it cheered them when I smiled at them in the village. To this day, I don't know if I really was smiling at them, because I am blessed with a mouth that naturally smiles almost irrespective of my mood. However, after that I made a point of smiling at people, not realising of course that it was an act of giving.

Later, whilst in Junior School, my sister, a friend and I must have expressed a wish to do something kind, because my mother suggested we save some pennies and take something to someone in need. We bought a small spray of freesias and went to the little bungalow Mum told us about. The door was opened by a small, frail, elderly lady who had part of her arm missing. We gave her the flowers and she cried. We left and were so upset that we didn't carry on with our scheme. But the seed of compassion was sown within me, although I cannot claim to have always been the sort of person who knows when someone needs help.



It seemed to me as I grew up that the people I found interesting, even fascinating, were those I would be told were 'eccentric'. I decided that I would like to be eccentric one day. An eccentric is usually someone who does not conform to the norm. Now, years later I am a Vegan, teetotal (how can I possibly enjoy life?) and what's more a Theosophist! At choir I seem to have a certain reputation amongst friends as someone who always tries to find something good in everybody. If I fail and say something critical, I hear, "Cynthia, that's not like you." – a good put down; must try harder!

A couple of years ago I did jury service. At the end of the case I said to a fellow juror, who had been adamant from the start that the defendant was guilty, that I felt compassion for the man we found guilty. I found it difficult to put my feelings into words my fellow juror might understand. Eventually, he astounded me by saying, "You mean because he is a fellow human?" "Yes," I said. "...A fellow pilgrim," I thought.

There are so many little ways of helping others – humans, animals, plants and even minerals – and it is worth being thought a little odd, eccentric even, when we do.

Eyes for the blind: a second letter from Roscoe

In the last issue of the newsletter we shared a letter from Roscoe, the Guide Dog who lived with Ann Davis, a member of Pretoria Lodge, and her family. In this issue we share a second letter from Roscoe, originally published in the South African Theosophist in 2007 and 2009.

The Highest Ideal in Life is to Serve

Greetings, Friends. I am Roscoe the Guide Dog, the black Labrador who wrote to you. I told you all about my puppyhood.

Well, I have good news and bad news! It was with a very sad heart I left home and moved to H.Q. I missed home and school so much, but gradually all the mates I knew as pups started arriving. We had so much to catch up on, share and discuss. No-one had heard about Theosophy, so I became very popular.

This was High School: proper harness work, new places to see and explore, new commands to learn. It was hard work and very exciting. I was now taught to LEAD. ("To be a good leader one has to be a good follower first.") I have a good memory and I began to stretch it in all directions. I remember Auntie Ann quoting one of Einstein's sayings at last year's prize-giving: "A mind stretched never goes back to the same place." It is TRUE.

The day came when H.Q. told me that I had passed everything and my posting was going to be in Cape Town. Auntie Ann was invited to H.Q. I was so pleased to see her. A blind-fold was put on her, then my harness was put on and I TOOK the lead around the shops and streets using robots, steps, escalators and lifts. I was so proud to be in charge. My trainer walked behind and I passed my test perfectly. Auntie Ann now knows what it feels like to be blind and she was so tired!

She took me home to Pretoria so that I could say goodbye to the family, the T.S. and to all the children at school. They had a Civvies Day and raised money for my air fare to Cape Town. On Sunday the T.S. members made a collection to pay for my specially made harness. Normally dogs are crated to travel. But I travelled as a proper Guide Dog inside the plane with my trainer. It was WONDERFUL!



In Cape Town I was introduced to blind Annemie (Ann and me !). Now is that a coincidence or destiny? I was so excited to start my new job. Remember I went to Primary School at Loreto and High School at H.Q. Now I was going to go to Cape Town University where Annemie was a student. This was REAL stuff!! I was back in classrooms and attending lectures and there is so much to learn. The students are just grown up kids. Annemie had another guide dog called Liesel.

The working life of a guide dog is about ten years. She is also a black lab just like me. At first we both went to the University.

My trainer gave me tips about where to cross and Liesel showed me what smells to recognise and many other doggy tips. It is a long walk to the university but I try to remember everything so I can recall the day when I get home and I tell Liesel all the day's news. Then she does not miss out on anything. I tell her all the "hatched, matched and dispatched".

I am like her newspaper!

So the good news is, I passed. I am a very busy guide dog. I have a good home and live life to the full with lots of love, work, play, companionship and sharing. I am living the TRUTH of Theosophy and life. Remember the four gifts of experience – relationships, work, illness and loss. They are all part of life and learning.

One of the Truths is that not all dogs trained graduate to be guide dogs. Do not be sad as it was simply not their destiny. Some go for further training and are used for police tracking, for finding drugs and people; some are used for the deaf or disabled for picking up dropped things. Career opportunities are many. The truth is to find the right path for each dog individually. The trainers know. All this specialised training and discipline prepares us for now and the next life. I keep reminding Liesel that it is important, even though she is retired, to live each moment to the full and be ready so that on the point of death she can stay focused and follow the LIGHT. She is more psychic than I am and can see angels and nature spirits. I am sensing things more now that I know the job and I am beginning to know and observe people's thoughts and intentions. I have to keep Annemie safe. I must deepen my meditations but I am so tired after a long day of working I tend to drop off to sleep at the moment. This will improve as my legs get stronger and I have more stamina.

Annemie wrote to Auntie Ann and told her how wonderful I am and how I have given Liesel new life since I bounced into the family. Annemie has now started lecturing at the university – just like Auntie Ann! I listen enthralled. If students do not listen I go and give them a nuzzle to wake them up, because Annemie cannot see.

I hear all about the news from the Lodge and the wonderful lectures that have been going on. I heard all about Uncle Tom going to the T.S. Conference in Finland. There are Guide dogs all over the world. Did you know that dogs were used a lot during the World Wars in the field and on the ships? There are records of how animals saved lives and warned about bombs and torpedoes. Most ships had mascots. It was never planned; it was as though the animals chose the ships or a soldier and it happened on both sides. The animal kingdom is very special.

Auntie Ann is now thinking of having a new puppy to train. I am glad I was in the right place at the right time. It is all planned. HEY!

Look out for the animals and birds around you and try to understand what they are doing and what they are trying to tell you. There is communication going on all the time, so use your inner eyes and ears to be aware. Do stop and say hello if you see a guide dog and tell them you know me – they might be one of my mates!

WOOF! WOOF! WOOF!

Roscoe, the South African Theosophical Guide Dog
Dictated to Auntie Ann Davis by Roscoe

