



## GSE Team Prepares for India Trip

Champaign West's own Woody Chenault, as Team Leader for this year's District 6490 Group Study Exchange Team visit to India, is looking forward to a December 28 departure. The team will visit District 3050 which includes the states of Rajasthan and Gujarat in Northern India. The team will return January 26<sup>th</sup>.

Right off the bat, the team will attend the District 3050 Conference, scheduled for January 3-4 in Jaipur. Woody says he's gotten immunized for malaria, Hepatitis A, and polio, which still lurks in India. He has also purchased a travel water purifier to help ensure he stays healthy.

The photo at right was copied from the team's blogsite, where we will be able



to keep up with the team's adventures as the trip progresses – go to [www.indiagse2009.blogspot.com](http://www.indiagse2009.blogspot.com) for all the latest news.

Also at the blogspot you can learn more about the team members. From left to right they are: John Bierbaum, a high school history teacher in Normal; Aaron Copley, who is Assistant Director of Residence Life at Millikin University; Nick Stafford, who is an employment benefit advisor with Alliance Benefit Group of IL; and Deanne Holste, who works with 4-H through the U of I Extension office. And, of course, Woody at the far right.

Woody says that the areas the team will visit are not involved in the recent unrest. Still, let's wish Woody and the team safe travels.

## Mark Your Calendar:

December 13 – Bell Ringing at County Market for Salvation Army

December 24 and December 31 – NO MEETINGS

January 16-19 – Rotary Trip to San Juan, PR

January 10 and July 18, 2009 – Rotary Leadership Training

January 29 – happy hour at Rocks' bar to watch Illini Basketball

February 6 – Euchre tournament at Broerens'

February 20 – Cosmic Mini-golf at Arrowhead Lanes

## Your Tin Cup Dollars – December, 2008



### ShelterBox USA

ShelterBox, USA is a non-profit organization connected with the Rotary club of Lakewood Ranch, Florida, but originating from a club in England. The organization provides shelter for persons affected by disaster around the world. Each box includes a tent and bedding, cooking supplies and other necessary equipment to support up to ten people.

According to the website, ShelterBox is currently stretched to its limits with, for the

first time ever, four teams simultaneously responding to disasters around the world: the earthquake in Pakistan, conflict in the Congo, AIDs orphans in Swaziland, and flooding in Honduras. Give generously to this month's Tin Cup.

For more info, go to [www.shelterboxusa.org](http://www.shelterboxusa.org)



## At the Board Meeting Nov. 25, 2008 . . .

The board noted that three prospective new members had been approved after the October meeting, subject to the 7-day notice (Rich Bengtson, EJ. Donaghey, and Andy Wilsey). The board approved a proposal for Scott Keeble, submitted by Jon Rector and Dave Seiler.

Treasurer Hope Wheeler reported that our finances appear in good shape, as usual.

Bill Muirheid, aka Conan the Rotarian, requested to be assigned Senior Attendance Excused status, and after verifying that his age plus years in Rotary do in fact meet or exceed 85, the board so approved.

The international committee (Mike Hirschi) reported that it is working on plans for a trip to Honduras with some members of the STM Interact Club.

The PR committee (Jody Littleton) reported that the club's PR plan has been posted to our website and will be looking for requests for publicity of club projects and events.

President Eric discussed the upcoming kickoff of Pennies for Polio, formally planned for March. Our club may begin our efforts earlier.

Next month's meeting will be held Tuesday, Dec. 23 at noon at the Champaign Public Library. All club members are welcome to attend.



On November 19, Champaign West Rotarians **Dave Seiler**, **Linda Hamilton**, and **Aaron Buckley** were awarded Paul Harris Fellowships, signifying that they have contributed \$1,000 to the Rotary Foundation of Rotary International. **Tony Ackerman** was awarded a Paul Harris pin with a sapphire, for a second \$1,000 of aggregate gifts to the Foundation.

Our club boasts a large number of Paul Harris Fellows, which is a testament to our belief in the value of the Foundation's efforts.

Our donations are used to fund all of the good works of Rotary worldwide, including in our own district. Each donation to the Rotary Foundation is held for three years, while the earnings are used to pay for the cost of administering the Foundation. Then the entire amount is disbursed in grants to be used directly in Rotary projects. So we get a lot of bang for our charitable dollar. Our club has utilized grant money for projects such as Learning for Life and our efforts in Honduras.

Congratulations and thanks to our newest PHF's.

## An Update on Ethan Stone

**Isak Griffiths** has been keeping tabs on our area's outbound exchange student, **Ethan Stone**, during his stay in Belgium, at Ethan's blogsite (<http://ethandanbe.livejournal.com/>). Here are some highlights.

We last met Ethan Stone as he was en route to Belgium, virtually no French under his belt, and 9 months to go. He just moved in with his second host family, which is across town. At this point he's using about 80% French in conversations. So far he has been on a short trip to Germany for a Rotary event, and an impromptu weekend in London with friends, touring the Underground, Windsor Castle, the London Eye (ferris wheel), Big Ben, Beauchamp's tower, Buckingham Palace, and Starbucks and Hard Rock Café.

The three-month mark (end of November) was the hardest. This is a typical post:

*We got a handout about how ethnically diverse England was, at 5.1 percent... I'm sorry, but that's not diverse. Wikipedia says the US is 26 percent minority, or 34 percent counting White Hispanic and Latino Americans as minorities. Europe is extremely whitewashed - the complete lack of diversity has been one of the hardest things for me to adapt to... all throughout the week various exchange students were crashing and burning and nobody was very happy. (NOTE: I've learned my happiness has a direct effect on my French. It can be really hard to be a world away from everything you've ever known, even when you are basically having a good time.)*

Cultural differences?

*There are pedestrians and bicycles EVERYWHERE. This disaster-waiting-to-happen is held off by complete subservience of cars to pedestrians and bicycles. Bicycles and pedestrians get along fine, with all cyclists moving at low rates of speed and usually staying on the road.*

Going for a 55 km bike ride several times a week is not uncommon place weekend activity. And Belgium is \*not\* flat.

*Belgian locks are pretty fascinating. The locks are circular, with a keyhole and an old-fashioned key that goes in it. The key just stays on one side of the door, and that's how they lock it. You can actually peep at the keyhole of these doors - something I have yet to try (and have little reason to do so) but the prospect at least is interesting.*

*Handball [in PE] here is not the same game as it is in America. Rather, it is a bizarre game fairly unique to Belgium. Think of it as a basketball game on a basketball court with soccer goals and a goalie.*

*Breakfasts in Belgium are on cutting boards, not plates. Seriously. Don't get it at all.*

Ethan has been introduced to erotic chocolates, really cool cars (including a Maybach 57S, CL65AMG, a Le Mans car and several F1s), and mushroom hunting parties. In summary, Ethan is having an amazing time and most people have been incredibly gracious. In some ways, his life is largely wandering around not quite sure where his is or where he's going, missing trains, and learning how to really enjoy not doing much at all - especially with good friends.

The photo at right shows that Ethan may be a Champaign West Rotarian in the making. This was taken at a Rotary event.

Look for more updates as the year progresses, or go to Ethan's Blogspot.

