



Australian T.O.S. Links

March 2006

Welcome to another year of service to all life. As well as providing updates on T.O.S. activities, this newsletter continues the *Peace* theme from our national T.S. Convention.

Convention 2006

The theme of this year's T.S. Convention was *Universal Responsibility, Non-violence and Peace*, a subject that strongly reflects the purpose of the T.O.S. The topic chosen for the session organised by the T.O.S. was *The contribution of service to world peace*. Four T.O.S. members – Jean Carroll (Sunshine Coast), Celia Novy (Sydney), Philippa Rooke (Brisbane) and Edward Sinclair (Melbourne) – presented excellent short talks on the topic and the session concluded with an open discussion.

The Annual General Meeting of the T.O.S. in Australia was well attended and provided an ideal opportunity for sharing ideas through the reports from T.O.S. groups throughout the country. My annual report is attached.

The T.O.S. collected donations to the Pakistan earthquake appeal from convention attendees. The Sydney T.O.S. group has since made a further donation, enabling A\$1580 to be transferred to the Pakistan T.O.S. account.

Focus of national activities in 2006

At the AGM a number of projects were discussed and agreed to.

- The T.S. Orphanage in Brazil will be the major (but not exclusive) focus for donations in 2006. The Theosophical Society has run the orphanage for about ten years on its premises on the outskirts of Brasilia but it is currently in desperate need of funds to continue its operation. Mrs Zeneida Cereja da Silva and her team of supporters are doing a marvellous job of taking care of 20 children from very poor backgrounds. Children come by referral from the Children's Court as a result of having been abandoned or removed from their parents because of abuse. The orphanage is run by volunteers and paid staff.



Orphanage vegetable garden

If your group or individuals decide to support this or any other international welfare activities, cheques can be sent to the TOS in Australia so that bank charges are minimised by sending an aggregated cheque or funds transfer. All sources of donations are acknowledged in the covering letter to the relevant international TOS group.

Alternatively, if you prefer to send donations directly, cheques made out to Lar da Crianca Nossa Senhora das Gracas can be sent to:
Zeneida Cereja da Silva
President, Lar da Crianca Nossa Senhora das Gracas
SGAS Quadro 603, Conj. E s/no
Brasilia DF 70200-630
BRAZIL



One of the orphanage houses

- A national T.O.S. website will be developed to promote T.O.S. work across Australia.
- Images will be gathered and compiled to promote international T.O.S. welfare projects that groups can support.
- The national newsletter will continue to be used as a major vehicle for sharing ideas between T.O.S. groups. It will be available by email to T.O.S. members across Australia. You can register to receive your email copy by contacting Carolyn Harrod on cdharrod@bigpond.net.au

International TOS Convention in 2007

Our International Secretary, Diana Dunningham Chapotin, has announced the following details for an exciting opportunity to get together with fellow workers.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE THEOSOPHICAL ORDER OF SERVICE THEME: EXPLORING OUR POTENTIAL FOR SERVICE

27 to 30 July, 2007

Following the international conference held at Adyar on 1 & 2 January, 2005, the TS in America is happy to announce that it will host a second conference at its national centre in Wheaton, Illinois. Members committed to the TOS, active in a local TOS group and others seriously interested in becoming involved are warmly invited to attend. TS General Secretaries and Presidents are especially welcome.

All are cordially invited to participate in the Summer School and Convention of the TS in America immediately preceding the Conference, from 20 to 27 July. The Summer School theme will centre around Col. Olcott's 100th death anniversary and his contributions to the world.

Would you like to:

- Learn more about the TOS's functioning and activities around the world?
- Learn of service opportunities open to you?
- Display and distribute information on service projects in which you are already involved?
- Choose and develop a new project?
- Explore and practise skills and attitudes helpful in service work?
- Meet key workers and others with extensive experience in the field?

If so, consider joining us. To apply to stay at 'Olcott' in Wheaton, you must be a member of the TS and have a letter of recommendation from the General Secretary or President of your Section. Nearby accommodations are available at a Holiday Inn with free shuttle service back and forth. For more information about the Conference programme, write to the T.O.S. International Secretary:

Diana Dunningham Chapotin
Résidence Isabelle
18 avenue Berlioz
93270 Sevran

France

or email tosinternational@wanadoo.fr

For information about costs of accommodation and practical arrangements, write to:
Registrar
Theosophical Society in America
P.O. Box 270
Wheaton, IL 60189-0270
USA or email registrar@theosophical.org.

As more details become available they will also be provided in our national newsletter.

Sharing ideas for peace building

World peace is one of the service areas of the T.O.S. and many groups include it as a focus for some of their activities. If your group or individual members use meditations for peace or are involved in peace building activities, please tell me about them so that I can share them around the national network. My contact details for mail and email are at the end of the newsletter.

International T.O.S. Peace Network

Denni Gross is Director of the T.O.S. Peace department in the USA and has established an international network called *Circles for Peace*. Membership is free and is open to all interested people. A quarterly network newsletter and website share members' ideas, viewpoints and activities. Contributions to the peace mandala art project are on display at the TS Headquarters in Wheaton, Illinois in March and April 2006. They include work from members in Australia. A few of these peace mandalas are featured on the American T.O.S. website: www.theoservice.org

Many T.O.S. members see the work of peace building as central to T.O.S. activities. Denni highlights this view in the current edition of the *Circles for Peace* newsletter when she writes:

If we were to ask the average person for a definition of "peace", the most common response would most likely be "the absence of war". We (in the T.O.S.) know that peace is much more than this. Like the air we breathe, peace seems to weave its way in and out of our lives, touching various and seemingly unrelated aspects of our existence.

Take, for instance, the T.O.S. which is composed of seven distinct departments (of service). The work and aims of the Peace department permeate all other department disciplines, influencing them while also including them as important components in the peace process. We cannot, for example, expect people to act peacefully towards other human beings when cruelty to animals and exploitation of the environment are acceptable, even encouraged, practices. We cannot expect to heal others if we are not first completely at peace within our own natures. We cannot expect people to understand that the cultural development of the human race is intrinsically related to peace, when music and the arts are not even emphasised in our children's educational systems. We cannot expect our global citizens to cooperatively co-exist when so many still suffer from a lack of even the most basic necessities and social services.

When we step outside the T.O.S., we recognise anew the interdependent nature of all social issues and peace. As peacemakers, we are called upon to be knowledgeable in many different disciplines in order to be effective in this inclusive task we have chosen. Peacemaking skills and love of peace relate to every conceivable situation we might encounter.

What do you think? Please send your comments.

Peace ideas – a publication from the Philippines

This quarterly publication from the Peace Center of the Theosophical Society in the Philippines is a compilation of information on a wide range of topics connected with peaceful living. A recent edition contains excerpts from authors ranging from Steven Covey to Annie Besant and Ernest Wood and with topics covering global peace, inner peace, overcoming fear, communicating effectively, peace in the workplace, health and effective parenting.

Subscriptions cost US\$6.00 foreign airmail and bulk copies can be ordered at very low prices. The contact is: The Peace Centre, 1 Iba St., Quezon City, Philippines.

Update on the Chennai Tsunami Relief Work

In February 2006 the International Secretary, Diana Dunningham Chapotin, Mr B.L. Bhattacharya, National Director of the T.O.S. in India, Mr C.V.K. Maithreya, President of the T.O.S. Chennai Region, and visiting T.O.S. and T.S. members visited tsunami-hit districts and various rehabilitation projects. The following report comes from the *Adyar Newsletter*, February 2006.

“Tools and implements were distributed to craftsmen affected by the tsunami , including masons, plumbers and electricians. Mrs Chapotin inaugurated a reverse osmosis plant at the Ramakrishna Mission Boys’ Home in Mylapore, Chennai, which has begun housing tsunami orphans and hopes to house more in the future. The group visited a tailoring unit managed by the Unorganised Workers’ Federation in the outskirts of Pondicherry, which is one of eleven training centres to which sewing machines have been donated by the T.O.S. and the Thirumalai Charity Trust.

The group also visited Cuddalore, where Diana inaugurated an eco-friendly paper recycling unit, for which equipment was donated by the T.O.S. This unit is managed by a women’s self-help group called Annie Besant Ammaiyar Coastal Women’s Federation, and a similar group called the Annai Theresa Coastal Women’s Federation will also receive equipment from the T.O.S.

Additional visits were made to other places, including Nagore Pattinanchery, where the fourth of five reverse osmosis plants was inaugurated, and a play was organised by the youth of the village on ‘drinking water in our daily life’. On all occasions the important work of Dr Annie Besant, founder of the T.O.S., was mentioned by the speakers. The press gave a detailed account of some of its current projects.”

Australians have generously supported this project in 2005. If you are in a position to contribute to this ongoing work, please send your cheque, made out to the T.O.S. in Australia, to the National Director.

Other international TOS appeals

The Theosophical Order of Service in Pakistan is collecting donations for the victims of the horrific earthquake that devastated the northern areas of Pakistan and Kashmir. Their fund is being monitored by their government so that the money can be used for both immediate and long-term rehabilitation. Building housing and providing drinking water and food continue to be major priorities. Donations can be made through the T.O.S. in Australia or directly to the President’s



Earthquake Relief Fund, account number 05-7412231-90, Standard Chartered Bank,
Garden Road Branch, Karachi, Pakistan, (SWIFT CODE: SCBLU533).

A thought to share

Happiness and peace of mind come from the realisation that we are one with all others, as expressions of the One Life, the One Self, and from the practical application of that realisation in a life of service by action and thought.

John Algeo & Shirley Nicholson, *The Power of Thought*

Contact

Please contact me by email at cdharrod@bigpond.net.au
or by mail at Ms C Harrod, 26 Lytham Street, Indooroopilly Q4068.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours in service

Carolyn