



Australian T.O.S. Links

September 2007

My husband, Geoffrey, and I have just returned from the International TOS conference in the USA followed by another month of holidaying. The conference and the preceding TS in America Summer Gathering were inspiring experiences and I'll be sharing some of the highlights in this newsletter. We have a special insert in this newsletter, summarising one of the conference workshops. Another workshop summary will be included with the next newsletter.

Our third newsletter for 2007, in December, will be focusing on the service area of *Healing*. If you or your TOS group are involved in meditations or other activities directed at healing, please consider writing about them and sending me the information so that it can be shared around our TOS network.

International T.O.S. conference, 27 – 30 July, 2007

The International TOS Conference was held at the TS in America's headquarters, 'Olcott', in Wheaton, Illinois. Its theme, *Exploring our potential for service*, followed on perfectly from the TS in America's 121st Summer National Gathering's focus on Col. Olcott's contribution to the Theosophical Society and his life of service to the world. International TOS delegates were invited to give short talks on some aspect of service during the Summer Gathering.

The TOS International Secretary, Diana Dunningham Chapotin opened the TOS International Conference, bringing greetings from Radha Burnier, the International TOS President:

I send loving greetings to the workers and friends of the TOS gathered at 'Olcott' for the second TOS Conference. With the approaching centenary in February 2008, now is a particularly good time to be giving thought to the organisation's future. I look forward to a report on the ideas and suggestions that emerge from your discussions.

I deeply appreciate the long term service carried out in the field by many of you and even if I don't have the

Our focus service area: Animal Welfare

What's in this newsletter

- International T.O.S. conference
- Invitation to contribute to international planning
- TS In Australia Convention 2008
- Donation from Maple-Brown Abbott
- Update on our 2 national projects
- Putting your TOS Group on our Australian TOS web-pages
- Focus days for animal welfare action
- National contact details
- **Special insert article: How to develop a service project**

time to write to you all individually, my affectionate good wishes are with you always. Like you, I look forward to the day when TOS activity is as widespread as the TS work is.

With love, Radha

Betty Bland and Tim Boyd added their welcomes on behalf of the TS and the TOS in America respectively. TOS delegates came from North and South America, Europe and the Indo-Pacific region. After an opportunity for delegates to begin the process of getting to know each other, the opening concluded with a musical performance by two TOS members: singer, Julia Ballesteros de Martinez (Colombia) and pianist, Eneida Carbonell (USA).

A recurring theme in the daily meditations led by Maria Parisen (Krotona, USA), as well as in the talks and discussions, was the ideal that our TOS work was characterised by two intertwined aspects: self-transformation and selfless service. Vicente Hao Chin (Philippines), focused our thinking with an excellent keynote talk that challenged us to look beneath the surface symptoms at which our service activities are often directed. He suggested that we enquire deeply into the issue, peeling back layers of seeming causes until we get to the root cause ... and that is where our energy should be focused in the long term. Diana Dunningham Chapotin is currently looking at ways this talk can be made available to TOS groups as an audio-visual presentation.

Delegates from each represented country gave talks on a successful service project in their country. This highlighted common issues and activities around the world and

illustrated the importance of matching the service approach to the particular social context. Although they were not able to attend, Aman and Fareeda Amir sent a powerpoint presentation of the TOS work in Pakistan. Chaganti V.K. Maithreya (Chennai, India) used a DVD as part of his presentation on the Chennai tsunami rehabilitation work. I will be providing this DVD and the powerpoints on the TOS work in the Philippines and Pakistan to each TOS Group. These are also available to national members by contacting me at the address at the end of the newsletter.





Delegates at the International TOS Conference

Delegates also had opportunities to hone their skills through participating in workshops on harnessing the universal power of compassion for healing action (led by Maria Parisen, USA), building a high performance TOS team (led by our own Dorothy Bell) and choosing and developing a service project (led by Betty & David Bland, USA). A summary of this last workshop is included as an insert to this newsletter.

During the conference we visited the inspiring Humanitarian Service Project run by Karole and Floyd Kettering (USA), which provides food packages to poverty stricken elderly people and birthday and Christmas gifts to children living in poverty.

True to our selfless service ideals, delegates helped with kitchen chores, scrubbed down the kitchen, made mandalas for the relief fund and wrapped gifts for children.



Kitchen helpers

The main work of the conference was to discuss and develop a shared understanding of the potential role of the TOS in the coming years and collectively plan ways of strengthening its service work and profile, both locally and internationally. We began this work by discussing our vision for the TOS into the future, its mission and goals. We then identified priorities and planned actions for achieving these.

The next task is national consultation with TOS workers in each country on the ideas generated at the conference. **Here's where you come in!** We would like your suggestions on a vision statement for the TOS and your comments on the international organisational needs that conference participants identified.

VISION STATEMENTS

What kind of international TOS do we expect to see when it is fully developed, when it is in full bloom? You can respond either individually or collectively from your local TOS group.

Please read the following three vision statements and let us know if they adequately reflect the TOS dream. If you have any changes to suggest, please let us know. Which one - or which sentences amongst any of the three - do you like best? Be sure to add your remarks in such a way that they stand out clearly and are easily spotted.

Sample vision statement 1:

The Theosophical Order of Service is a global organisation made up of individuals united in living the theosophical life that recognises and respects the one Life at all levels of existence. They are committed to serve that Life in altruistic action and to work on the personal transformation required to do so. They work with others locally or internationally, choosing lines of service that reflect their skills and interests. They respect the right of all to be on this planet and to undertake their journeys in whatever way they choose.

Sample vision statement 2:

As the service arm of the Theosophical Society, the Theosophical Order of Service is a shining light, drawing together like-minded people with a single purpose: to better humankind and the planet. Its members assist those in need in hands-on, direct ways at ground level, making a genuine difference in their daily lives. Committed to reaching out to the community at large, the Theosophical Order of Service recognizes no boundaries of generation, religion or culture.

Sample vision statement 3:

The Theosophical Order of Service is a dynamic partner of the Theosophical Society, demonstrating how social action fits into spiritual practice. It is composed of individuals who recognize and respect the One Life in all beings and whose service is rooted in theosophical principles. Members of the Theosophical Society value the Theosophical Order of Service as an avenue for the expression of their commitment to the ideal of universal brotherhood and planetary peace.

NEEDS

Do you agree that the following items require attention at the international TOS level to achieve the vision? Are there other needs at the international level that should be considered? If so, please add them.

1. Guidelines needed

The TOS needs a set of guidelines stating its foundations, purpose, goals, structure, membership, and relationship with the Theosophical Society.

2. Lack of awareness

Many TS members are not aware of the TOS's potential as an outlet for the practical application of Theosophy. They do not see the spiritual dimension of its work and may even assume that the organisation is simply duplicating that of other humanitarian organisations. More needs to be done in the TS to

increase familiarity with the TOS so that its practical work is not regarded as separate from the educational work of the TS, but as two halves of the same whole.

3. Support programmes & materials inadequate

The TOS needs programmes and resource materials on which local and national TOS leaders can draw in their work of facilitating service within the TOS, within the TS and amongst individual Theosophists:

- a. Resource material in a variety of areas of action: (peace, healing, environment, animal protection, theosophical parenting, etc.).
- b. A special resource kit for a worldwide campaign, if one is decided on e.g. on dangers of global warming.
- c. A 'how-to start up' package for those wanting to form a local group.
- d. How-to materials and workshops to enhance management practices e.g. teambuilding skills; models of decision-making, etc.
- e. Resource material supporting the inner transformational process involved in service or action Theosophy.

4. International management lacks personpower

We need increased human resources to support the International Secretary in the management of the TOS in key areas, including:

- Publications: The Service Link, the new electronic newsletter, resource material preparation.
- Communication and networking: Helpers are needed to:
 - a. flesh out the international website; set up a database and on-line resources, blogs, national and local websites, e-groups; some financial processing possibilities such as "Paypal" to transfer donations across countries
 - b. reach out to like-minded organisations
 - c. make known and understood the TOS Guidelines and help establish the TOS where it is not yet in action.
- Administration: subscriptions to *The Service Link* and electronic newsletter, collection of annual reports and photos, correspondence, international disaster relief coordination.

Change Secretary's title to Coordinator and assign her/him an Assistant Coordinator?

5. Other needs?

Please send your feedback and suggestions by Monday 8 October 2007. Our worldwide collective thinking will be compiled for our International President, Radha Burnier's consideration.



Group discussions on vision, needs & plans

TS in Australia Convention 2008

Perennial Philosophy, Past and Present is the topic of the TS in Australia convention from 12 to 19 January 2008 at St Mark's College, Adelaide. We hold our TOS in Australia AGM during the convention. This provides an opportunity to meet other TOS workers, share service ideas and contribute to national planning. I'm looking forward to chatting with all of you who can get to this gathering in beautiful Adelaide.

Generous donation from Maple-Brown Abbott

Once again Maple-Brown Abbott Limited has generously supported the work of the TOS. This company is the investment manager for the Theosophical Society in Australia. We are very grateful that they have been able to make a donation to the International T.O.S. work this year. After consultation with the International Secretary of the TOS they decided that their donation of \$10 000 be distributed for the following work in 2007:

- \$3 000 for Pakistan's Educational Sponsorship Program
- \$3 000 for Untouchables Education at Adyar's Olcott School
- \$1 000 for the Philippine's Educational Peace Studies Program
- \$3 000 for Brazil's Orphanage for street children.

These amounts have been transferred to the recipient TOS groups with the donations from Australian TOS groups and individuals.

Update on our 2 national projects

Many, many thanks for your fundraising efforts and personal donations to our two major national projects in 2007.

- On your behalf I have transferred \$6000 (which includes the donation from Maple-Brown Abbott) to the orphanage for street children in Brazil, to help with its regular expenses.
- \$9000 has been transferred to the TOS in Pakistan for the re-opening or establishment of nine 'literacy home schools' for children and young women who would otherwise not have access to literacy teaching.

Putting your TOS Group on our Australian TOS web-pages: www.austheos.org.au/tos/

If you have visited our national web-pages recently, you will have noticed that many local TOS groups now have their own information page linked from the TOS group directory. This enables them to promote their activities to their communities. The web-pages can be updated on a weekly basis so that information remains current. If your local group hasn't added its own page yet, it is not too late. A proforma for the basic information is available from our web master, Geoffrey

Please send web material directly to Geoffrey: gharrod@cad-assist.com or mail it to my address at the end of this newsletter.

What's new? We've recently added information about new animal welfare advocacy materials to our website.

Focus days for animal welfare action

Two days are coming up soon that provide an excellent opportunity for drawing attention to animal welfare issues:

- World Farm Animal Day – 2 October 2007
- World Animal Day – 4 October 2007



Depending on your TOS group's or your own particular interests, you might consider some of the following ideas to educate people about current animal welfare issues:

- Hold or sponsor a talk or seminar on the issue.
- Make information leaflets about the issue available. These can often be obtained from animal welfare groups, or make your own.
- Publish bookmarks with relevant information and seek approval to provide these with library books, sales in the bookshop and at meetings.
- Promote and gather signatures for a relevant petition.
- Invite members and friends to write letters to relevant government officials.
- Hold a vegetarian cooking class followed by a shared meal, with recipes provided.
- Fundraise to support a local education program on responsible pet ownership.
- Collect food to donate to a local animal shelter.
- Make available lists of manufacturers who do not use animal testing.

The following ideas are some of the animal welfare issues currently in the news.

- Live animal export is still legal in Australia, causing great distress to the animals during transport. Then they are often transported and killed inhumanely in the countries to which they are sold.
- Animal derived food increasingly comes from intensive factory farms that confine animals in unnatural conditions. Constantly keeping the animal standing often causing muscle and bone deterioration and confinement causes behavioural distress.
- Throughout China and other Asian countries, millions of cats and dogs are bred or rounded up, crammed on to trucks and driven for days under hellish conditions to animal markets where they are beaten to death, strangled or boiled alive.
- In Asia, the trade in dog and cat fur continues to grow. These items often masquerade as 'fake fur'

in the West, so buyers need to say NO to all fur to ensure they are not supporting this cruel trade.

- Millions of animals continue to be used annually in testing cosmetics, household products and pharmaceuticals when alternative, effective methods of testing are available.
- Climate change is endangering our wildlife. According to the Australian Conservation Foundation, 20-30% of Australian plants and animals are facing an increased risk of extinction if temperatures rise by 1.5 – 2.5 degrees.

Information on these issues can be found on many animal welfare organisation websites, including:

- www.animalsaustralia.org
- www.rspca.org.au
- www.animalsasia.org
- www.navs.org
- www.acfonline.org.au
- www.hsi.org.au

Donations

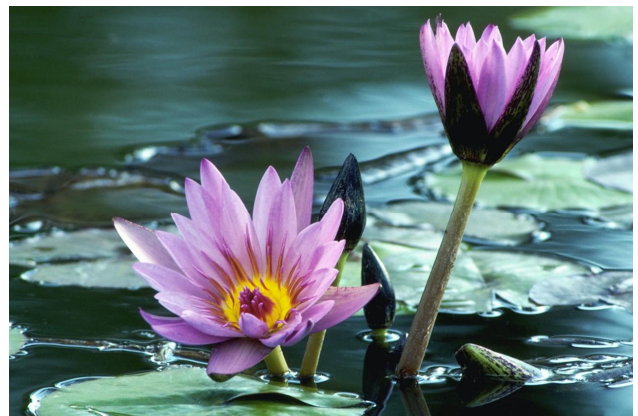
Donations to the National Projects and other activities of international TOS groups can be made through the Theosophical Order of Service in Australia, with cheques sent to my address at the end of the newsletter.

A thought to share

Being Peace

If we are peaceful, if we are happy, we can blossom like a flower, and everyone in our family, in our entire society, will benefit from our peace.

Thich Nhat Hanh



Contact

Please note that my email address has changed to: cdharrod@cad-assist.com

Your suggestions about the International TOS vision statement and needs can be emailed or posted to me.

If you have a friend who would like to receive this newsletter by email, please encourage them to contact me. Email copies are free. If you are sending a donation, my mail address is Ms C Harrod, 26 Lytham Street, Indooroopilly Q4068.

I look forward to hearing from you.

*Yours in service
Carolyn*

How to Choose and Develop a Service Project

Betty and David Bland (summarized by Geoffrey Harrod)

Second TOS International Conference, Wheaton, USA, July 2007

Any project needs good planning. In almost every case there will be various items that need to be arranged well in advance. Most projects will involve services provided by other organizations and those facilities will have some lead time between arranging for that service to be provided and it actually being delivered. The challenge is to organize all suppliers to deliver at the time needed and to have all the various tasks that our own people will do, to come to fruition at the time needed. On a big project organizing all that can be a quite complex job and needs the continuous attention of one person dedicated to keeping on top of it. There are several well established project planning methodologies that businesses use for this, and quite a sub-industry exists for training people in project management. There are also software tools to assist with large complex projects.

Even quite small and simple projects benefit from applying the same principles to the degree that is appropriate. There is no need to get involved with the more complex techniques that are essential in very big industrial projects, such as Critical Path Analysis, but the most basic methods for planning are very useful even on the smallest project. Essentially, we need to plan to determine what needs to be started when, so that all items will be ready at the right time, and to monitor the progress of each item.

When thinking about doing some project, there are four basic elements to consider:

1. VISION – The highest and most general level of consideration.
2. MISSIONS – Specific elements of (1) – The vision can almost always be broken down into missions.
3. OBJECTIVES – For each of the Missions:
 - a. Subject – who
 - b. Verb – does
 - c. Object – what
 - d. Time limit – by when
4. TASKS – and Steps for each Task, with date/time each is needed.

It is important to not under-estimate the time a task will take. It is far easier to adjust to things being completed earlier than if they run late.

It is very helpful to set up a GANTT CHART to plan the various tasks and their time relationships. Once we have figured out how long each task will take, without being too optimistic, we can plot it on a chart of time (usually weeks) so that we can see what is the latest time that particular task can be started to be ready when needed. Each task is named or numbered on its own horizontal row. Columns are labeled with dates or weeks. Each task is marked as an arrow line of the appropriate time length, with a blob at its start point.

The same people can do more than one task, but NOT tasks that have to be done simultaneously!

If a task is dependent for starting upon another task being completed, that introduces an additional complexity in the planning. It can be seen when constructing the Gantt Chart that

the completion time of the first task must be before the follow-on task’s latest start time. This avoids one of the most common problems – critical tasks not being able to be started by the latest time because of prior tasks not being finished.

GANTT CHART

Week	1	2	3	4	5	6
Objective-A						
Task 1	0-----	----->				
Task 2			0-----	----->		
Task 3						
Objective-B						
Task 1						
Task 2						

EXAMPLE

A recent project at the Wheaton TS HQ was called the ‘**Battery recycling program**’. Their planning was as follows:

VISION: The TOS-in-America intends to be an active agent on behalf of our environment in the communities where we live.

MISSION: Through the establishment of a household battery recycling program at our local Lodges and Study Centers to reduce the amount of hazardous waste from batteries being disposed of in land-fills.

OBJECTIVES:

- A. To organize the program and develop nationwide publicity. TASKS: 1, 2, 3...
- B. To get feedback from the Lodges and Study centres about their battery recycling programs. TASKS: 1, 2, 3...
- C. To publicize program results with the intention of expanding the effort to other organizations concerned with the environment. TASKS: 1,2,3...

This has become very widespread and successful. Each location prominently displays a large box where people can dump their expended batteries. People are rostered to monitor the boxes and arrange the contents to be taken to companies that recycle battery materials.

Another example that David Bland mentioned was the planning for the Summer Gathering and TOS Conference that we were all attending. This involved several time-critical tasks including the hiring of limousines to meet delegates at O’Hare airport at their various times of arrival and again for their departures. That was arranged with a hire car company that they have regularly used and found to be extremely reliable. The bookings were made well in advance but part of the planning was to follow up with them to ensure that it would happen as arranged, plus to reschedule as needed for changed flights.

David Bland was involved in a lot of planning for business projects before he came to the TS HQ, and he has found the basic planning methods as outlined above have proved extremely valuable for even simple TS projects.