



Australian T.O.S. Links - August 2014

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Co-ordinators report

Welcome everyone to our mid-year report.

As I write this I am reminded of the link between the Theosophical Society and the Theosophical Order of Service. At our AGM held in Sydney last year there was an overwhelming vote for TS and TOS to work more closely. I am pleased to report that several of our national groups have presented or about to present TOS evenings as part of the regular TS programming. Annie Besant's birthday is coming up 01 Oct. This is a golden opportunity for coordinators to approach their respective TS speakers committees and request a TOS talk based on Annie's amazing life and her commitment to a life based on altruism.

New international president for TOS

Tim Boyd from the USA is our new international president - a position that comes ex-officio with his election as the international president of the theosophical society. TOS Australia welcomes Tim. He brings with him a vast amount of knowledge and practical experience. Tim served as president of the TOS in America from 2007-2011. His service work has included working as a volunteer with a team of medical professionals in hospice services. He has worked for twenty-five years with disadvantaged youth in Chicago.

In an article in The Hindu newspaper Tim commented that he would be living in Chennai and travelling extensively to spread the word of theosophy both physically and by digital means. He was instrumental in establishing a matching grant \$ for \$ from the Kern Foundation to assist the Golden Links College in the Philippines.

Report from TOS Philippines Recovering from typhoon Yolanda

Vicente Hao Chin has sent a report on the magnificent work that he and his many volunteers from TOS have undertaken following the devastating typhoon. Vic reports that they have concentrated their efforts by working directly with TOS at local levels and addressing needs as requested. These included purchasing and delivering building materials, such as ply board, hammers, nails, chains saws and tarpaulins. Rice was also repacked into 5-kilo bags and distributed to over one thousand households in Iloilo province, rice being a staple in the Philippines. Handicapped families were also assisted. Many volunteers were involved from TOS packing, shipping, unpacking and distribution. Vic once again extends appreciation for the generous support given from our TOS members worldwide.



Tim Boyd our new international president with Vic Hao Chin Jr from the Philippines



TOS National has launched a Facebook Page. Log on at www.facebook.com/tos.oz

A Sunshine Coast member Naomi Alexander has created the site and will update on a regular basis. Our committee extends sincere thanks to Naomi for her creative and committed service. Please send any quotes, photos or inspirational TOS related pieces to tos.australia@gmail.com or to naomialexander77@gmail.com

Suggestions for Event Days and Fundraisers

I have been asked to list ideas for events to assist with local groups, see under for some successful ideas that our TOS Australia groups have been involved with.

Restaurant fund raiser: Negotiate with the restaurant proprietor for a special group rate and then add an appropriate surcharge to the cost e.g. negotiated rate \$15 per head and sell to your members for \$20 per head. Combine this with poetry reading on a selected theme – love, winter solstice, service, compassion etc. Add a raffle and commence selling tickets approx one month before the nominated date. Social events help build a nucleus of brotherhood. At a recent event at the Sunshine Coast TOS members and their friends were requesting another such day.



Brisbane & Sunshine coast members at recent fundraiser luncheon.

TOS at weekly TS meetings: Approach the TS committee for approval to have a TOS table at their weekly meetings. Display current brochure, posters and flyers of your local TOS events. Have items for sale – spiritual books, (these maybe culled from your local TS library) CD's and DVD's plus any other trash and treasure that members wish to donate.

Community speakers as guests: Invite speakers from local organisations to speak at TOS meetings. Indigenous speakers, animal welfare, (most local councils run animal shelters) vegetarian society (raffle a vegetarian cook book on this evening). Other service clubs such as Zonta Group, Rotary and Lions Service Clubs, R.S.P.C.A animal protection may be willing to speak at our meetings.

Annual trash and treasure sale: This may also include some of the items mentioned above including second hand books.

Reach out into local communities: Our founder Annie Besant proposed that we look to our local communities and to make it known that we are from the theosophical order of service. Our actions and commitments to service will build strong ties.

Organize monthly or bi monthly visits to cinema: Charge a small donation such as gold coin. Participants pay for their own entry. Regular activities build a strong nucleus and also improve mental health for many people. Ask members to bring an elderly friend. This is an extremely worthwhile community service. Check the Perth TOS Village News for ideas.

Jar for collecting 5 & 10-cent pieces:

Place a jar on the TOS table at weekly meetings and request the public to contribute their loose change. Suggest a coin jar at any groups your members belong to. Last year at the Sunshine Coast TOS we raised approximately \$400 from this venture.

Check the United Nations Web Site for their calendar of special days to celebrate e.g. World Refugee Day – Hobart TOS recently organised a speaker based on this theme. .

www.un.org/en/events/observances - click on days

News from Olcott Education Society

Dr Chittaranjan Satapathy the secretary of the Olcott Education Society and international secretary of the TS, sent this brief but heart-warming message since our last publication.

“Let me share the good news with you that the Government’s approval for the upgrading of the Olcott Memorial High School to a Higher Secondary School was finally received. We can now officially call it the Olcott Memorial Higher Secondary School. The school will soon complete 120 years of service.”



Reports from national groups

Sydney - Richard Larkin

We have hosted a year of very interesting monthly talks focusing on comparative spirituality and personal development, as well as practical compassion such as the work of the Exodus Foundation in Australia. The major donations raised this year went to the Exodus Foundation and Sri Narayana Orphanage. Smaller amounts were also given to organisations such as The Guide Dogs Association of NSW/ACT, Amnesty International, Barnardos, Prisoners Aid and the WSPA Bear Sanctuary Fund.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many people who have assisted in the work of the TOS Sydney. Firstly, to the speakers who have supported our work with their fascinating talks each month. Also Wendy Fitzpatrick in Adyar Library for the surplus books she has given us during the year for our monthly book sales. A special thanks to Ana Purumian and to Carol Bowen for their help with the book sales. Their support has made the book sales a great contribution to our work.



Richard Larkin president & Lucille Crocker treasurer

A special thanks to honorary committee members, vice-president Anthony Raymond treasurer Lucille Crocker, assistant treasurer Ly Ngoc Mai, secretary John Spraggon and committee members Lodi Warouw and Betty Oiling.

On a sadder note, two of our staunch supporters passed away during the year, former vice-president Richard Mortensen and committee member felicity Rogers, vale to you both.

Thanks also to Blavatsky Lodge members in particular President Stephen McDonald and Louise Proudman of the lodge office. Finally, I would like to express thanks to everyone that attended our Saturday afternoon meetings. Their interest has made these meetings the success that they are. I hope to bring all of our supporters another year of interesting and thought provoking talks in the future.



Canberra – Janice Scarabottolo

The small Canberra TOS group follows the same lines as previously. We managed to meet four times this year and gained one official member. When we meet, we start with a short meditation.

Some of our TS members have advocated that we socialise a little more. TOS has taken this to heart and organised a lunch in a Chinese restaurant, and two morning teas in two beautiful settings one of which was in the Botanic Gardens and the second in the National Arboretum. By adding \$5 to the cost of each of these social outings, we were able to donate a few dollars to the Pakistan Home Schools project, the Olcott Memorial School, the Women's social welfare project in Adyar and the project in Kenya.

We continued our support of the education of a student in Pakistan. The previous student we sponsored seems to have finished her mandatory schooling and we now have the privilege of sponsoring another girl who is attending the Montessori School in Pakistan.

Barbara has been inspirational in liaising with the *Mission without Borders* which sends new warm clothing, such as scarves, gloves, bed socks, jumpers as well as blankets to countries in need of those for the northern winter.(many of which Barbara purchased herself) We continue to collect used postage stamps for the Red-Cross.

We promote TOS work in the Canberra TS newsletter. Our thanks go to everyone who has contributed to these projects.

Your Stories

A letter this edition from a butterfly.

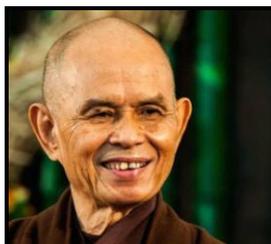
A man found a cocoon of a butterfly, one day a small opening appeared. He sat and watched the butterfly for several hours as it struggled to force its body through the small hole. Then it stopped making any progress, it appeared as if it had gotten as far as it could and go no further.

So the man decided to help the butterfly. He took a pair of scissors and snipped the remaining bit of the cocoon. The butterfly then emerged easily, BUT, it had a swollen body and small-shrivelled wings. He continued to watch the butterfly. He expected that the wings would enlarge and the body would contract. Neither happened. In fact, the butterfly spent the rest of its life crawling around in a swollen body and shrivelled wings. It was never able to fly.



The man acted with well-intentioned kindness, but he did not understand the consequences. The restricting cocoon and the struggle required to get through the tiny opening were nature's way of forcing fluid from the body of the butterfly once it achieved it's freedom from the cocoon. Sometimes struggles are exactly what we need in our life. If nature allowed us to go through life without any obstacles, it could cripple us. We would not be strong as we could have been. And we could not fly.

**My actions are my only true belongings
I cannot escape the consequences of my actions
My actions are the ground on which I stand
Thich Nhat Hanh**



International e-news *in-touch on line*

From our new TOS president Tim Boyd

As time goes by, I become more and more convinced that the power of our service work will not be found in any of the projects or specific activities we undertake, but in the people and the quality of the mind that serves. In Buddhism there is the idea that any work that we do can be 'spiritual' whether it is working in a soup kitchen serving meals, or working at home changing diapers and balancing the family budget. The determining factor is the mind. When we do something with the sense that the task and its outcome are not ours, but originate from and return to the Divine within us all, the work is transformed. It becomes something extraordinary

Meatless' meat: Is it the future?

Many of us avoid the use of animal products and by-products for spiritual, ethical, environmental or health reasons. We enjoy opportunities to introduce friends to food that may interest them in *ahimsa* dietary choices. On the *Today Show* in the United States, NBC's Craig Melvin recently reported on a new product called 'Beyond Meat', and challenged his colleagues to identify it in a taste test. It reminds us of the revolution taking place in the area of vegetable-derived proteins and the fresh possibilities opening up for promoting a lifestyle respectful of animals.

editors footnote: A South African family company from the Sunshine Coast in Queensland has recently introduced a range of foods that look and taste like meat. Their ethical principles based on vegetarianism give people that transition to live a cruelty-free life. We wish them well in their new venture.

Source Sunshine Coast Daily newspaper

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