



## Australian T.O.S. Links - December 2014

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### Co-ordinators report

Welcome everyone to our last report for 2014. As the festive season approaches I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your support not only to me personally but a thank you all for the brotherhood you are establishing by building a *nucleus* between our various groups nationwide. It is encouraging for me as national coordinator to see the emergence of a developing team of networking between each of our groups. Plus the tremendous work of outreaching into your local communities, at the same time being able to support our national projects. Sincere thanks to you all.

### New international secretary for TOS

This year sees another cycle being completed and another beginning. Ms Nancy Secrest (pictured opposite) from the USA has been appointed by our international TS president Mr Tim Boyd as our new international secretary. TOS Australia welcomes Nancy and we look forward to working together. Ms Dianna Dunnigham-Chapotin from France deserves a well-earned retirement after serving TOS for twenty years. Dianna has been an inspirational leader and has been assisted for several years by our treasurer Carolyn Harrod as an editor with our international publications and Geoff Harrod as web-master. Both Geoff and Carolyn are also retiring from these roles in the near future.



**Retiring TOS International Team, Diana Dunnigham-Chapotin, Geoff & Carolyn Harrod**



We thank you Diana, Carolyn and Geoff for your dedicated service to make the world a better place. And to you Nancy best wishes in your new role from us all at TOS Australia.

### National TOS AGM - 2015

Our annual AGM will be held at our National TS Convention at St Mark's College, Adelaide. TOS has two sessions Sunday 25 Jan at 2.00pm, "*Adventures in Service*" followed by our AGM on Thu 29 Jan at 2.00pm. I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible.

### TOS Fundraiser to Cambodia

Following the success last year of our fundraiser tour after the Indo Pacific Conference in Bali, this year we are taking expressions of interest for a departure early Oct 2015 to Siem Reap and Phnom Penh. The focus on this tour will be Spiritual Sights & Selfless Service. We will visit some of the charities and schools that TOS members support as well as day trips to Angkor Wat and to other sacred sites/temples. Then we will travel onwards to the capitol Phnom Penh for a short stopover. Cambodia is one of the world's poorest countries, yet its people are very welcoming and perhaps some of the happiest one could meet. Cambodia is also a relative inexpensive destination for Australians. There is much service work to be done and this tour will inspire you both physically and metaphysically as we travel together with like-minded people. **Full details will be available at our AGM in Adelaide.**

**There is an infinity in each of us to give; we have to discover the mode of giving it. N.Sri Ram**

### **Infinity Within to Give**

Below is an extract from an inspirational article published in the Quest magazine in 2002. It is written by our outgoing international secretary **Diana Dunningham-Chapotin**. I encourage you to read the full version as it illustrates our struggles as we strive for true service, the service of action without ego/self.

“When we are called to the path of service by the suffering around us, we soon discover that a seemingly inexhaustible source of love and energy is required. “Good causes” claim our attention on all sides. The good news, according to Theosophy, is that we have an inexhaustible source of love and energy within us. In fact, according to our literature, we have an infinite source of energy on which to draw.

Our relationship with co-workers in the society who seem to us to be “unbrotherly” may be the very terrain of evolutionary action. I used to think that personality hassles within the society were time-wasting, annoying things, but maybe they are part of the process of growth and development that we should not resist, but look on as an opportunity for learning how to deal with both personality and hassling. Through them we can learn how to transform obstacles into opportunities. So theosophy, through the spiritual perspective it provides, can deepen our giving. But what happens in the nitty gritty situations mentioned above? What is the quality of our giving in such cases? If there is no magical formula to help, are there not at least some special principles, insights, or practises that can release the will, wisdom and love latent within everyone.

Given the limitations we function under until we have tapped that infinity within ourselves and have discovered the mode of giving it, requires turning within, to deep inner resources. Whether we realise it or not our underlying assumptions influence our attitude towards everything. The quality of service to our underlying assumptions influence our attitude towards everything. The quality of service to others, the depth of our giving is directly influenced by our worldview. And the worldview of theosophy sets giving in a very large context.



Because theosophy gives us a vast perspective on life and a deep insight into our own natures, it can revolutionise our motive for giving to others.

Theosophical servers typically hold some convictions that directly affect their capacity to give. One of these is the conviction that every person is perfectible and will inevitably one day be self-actualized or self-realized. This conviction that everyone is perfectible helps to broaden our power to give and to dissolve the selective, judgemental way we sometimes operate in our giving; this conviction stops us from subconsciously writing people off.

Perhaps the bravest and most radical step we can take to release our infinite capacity to give is the willingness to face our own doubts, needs and resistances. We need to own up to our feelings of guilt, anxiety, discomfort, disappointment, and vulnerability. We also have to be willing to look for the deeper fears behind these spontaneous reactions: fear of loss of control, of being overwhelmed, of having our heart broken and ultimately of extinction. This is the core of theosophical service and the surest way to open the heart to its potential of limitless giving.

Service is really a journey of awakening. We know that we have an infinite power within to give and that every human being is perfectible. We can stride boldly and joyfully on the path of service, looking fearlessly at the deeper, darker levels of our own psyche and reaching gently to touch that specific quiet centre within. If the conviction of our Oneness is strong and the vision of it remains clear, it will be with us all times so that only compassion fills the heart” **For full content of this inspiring article simply type in your browser quest books an infinity within to give**

## Reports from national groups

### **Perth - Rhonda Phillips**

The Perth TOS has produced monthly newsletters since December 2012. Our aim is to build a positive community based on friendship and respect. We are now building respectful friendships with other organisations. We are linking up with like-spirited organisations and building an expanding community. We believe that positive community building is the answer and solution to warring communities. It seems the way to peace is respectful friendship. We have linked up with the Liberal Catholic Church for a Friday evening meditation. Reflective Taize chants are played, interleaved with short passages taken from the sacred writings of the great world faiths, together with periods of silence to settle the mind. The emphasis is on SILENCE and REFLECTION.”

We have reached out to Wanslea Grandcare. This organisation supports Grandparents who are caring for their Grandchildren. Apparently, the Department of Child Protection misleads Grandparents into becoming ‘kinship guardians’ rather than ‘foster carers’ of their grandchildren. Foster carers receive \$400 per child per week and in WA Kinship carers receive \$400 once per year. The result is these Grandparent carers are in desperate financial and emotional crisis. We asked Grandcare – what can we do to help? . They have asked us to provide \$1,000 to enable 50 Grandparents to have a silver service meal at a TAFE catering school. We have voted to do this.

We have also developed links with the Pakistanis’ in Australia Association. Dr Zarrin Siddiqui gave a talk for the TOS on “the Refugee experience in Australia”. Through this friendship, Dr Zarrin discovered we are supporting a home school in Pakistan in her city of origin. And we discovered that our discarded glasses can be put to good use in Pakistan. The Pakistan Association invited Anne Bower, and Rhonda Phillips, to the Pakistan Independence Day Celebrations on 19 Aug ’14. It was a celebration of culture, with an opening prayer from the Holy Koran followed by the Australian & Pakistani National Anthems. Awards were given to Pakistani’s who are excelling in Australia, and then surprisingly, the TOS was given a Certificate of Appreciation for our contribution to education in Pakistan and the donated glasses. We will continue building respectful friendship with TOS members and

likeminded organisations. We have growing email friendships with other TOS branches in Australia. We are sharing our ideas and copying each other’s successful events. The way forward is very hopeful.



Anne Bower & Rhonda Phillips

### **Mornington Peninsula – Alice Opper**

We read excerpts of interest and inspiring articles from the TOS Newsletter, which is tabled at our monthly meetings. Our group has signed the Charter of Compassion. We also collect donations for TOS at meetings and have collected \$82.85 which is to go to the Literacy Home Schools in Pakistan.

Since the start of 2013, a new event has been added to our TOS program – a monthly workshop on Mandalas offered to the general public, at the local Mornington library. This is conducted by our enthusiastic committee member, Georgina Fode, who includes theosophical teachings and short meditations related to mandalas. She has attracted participants of varied ages and backgrounds, up to 25 people on Saturday afternoons, who each pay \$5, which goes directly to TOS. In 6 months the total was \$422.

Our committee decided that this amount will be shared between the theosophical Golden Links College in the Philippines, and to the Olcott Memorial School in Chennai, India.

We are all proud of Georgina for her initiative in devising a community educational need.

## Your stories – this month from a cat called Bob. From Vicki Jerome, New Zealand

We hear so many horror stories of cruelty to animals, battery hens, live exports, pig and dog farming etc. all based on man's insensitivity to our younger brethren in the animal kingdom. Here is a feel good story to brighten the holiday season.

Englishman James Bowen had an unsettled upbringing. While in school, he was sniffing glue and eventually was diagnosed with ADHD, schizophrenia and manic depression. After living in Australia for a while, he returned to England in 1997. He was 18 years old and when living with his half-sister didn't work out, he began a life of either living on the street or in shelters. James' life revolved around his heroin addiction and busking on the streets of London.

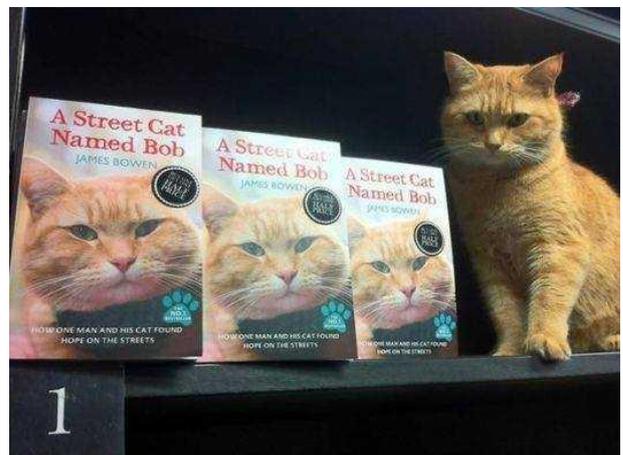
In early 2007, James tried to drag himself up by enrolling in a Methadone programme. He was living in sheltered accommodation and one day returned home to find a ginger tom cat in his building. Figuring it belonged to one of the other residents; he didn't pay too much attention. The next day, the cat was still there. James asked around and found no answers as to the animal's ownership.

On closer inspection, he discovered a wound on the cat's leg and decided to take it to the vet and get it treated. And so James adopted the cat, who he named Bob. Since then Bob has led James into a public life. Together they have become celebrities it began when Bob started following James everywhere. He joined James busking on the street and James' income rapidly increased.



He began to attract more and more attention. Tourists would visit his spot just to see the cat, who was happy to dress up and sit still. They went everywhere together on foot and on public transport.

You Tube videos appeared and newspapers got hold of the story. This led to a publishing agreement and James started writing about his experiences with Bob on the streets of London. Apart from "A Street Cat Named Bob" and "The World according To Bob", a number of books for children have also been written. Sold worldwide, James's life has improved. Together they have become celebrities.



**“Animals are my friends...and I don't eat my friends.”**  
**George Bernard Shaw**

**Merry Christmas Everyone from Travis,  
Carolyn and Jean**

### Your contacts

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