

Having President Tanaka in town for a day was a blessing, but having him here for TWO DAYS was an awesome opportunity, and we took full advantage of that time to have our All Club Meeting, and give him a tour on Friday of some of the clubs' projects around the area. His trip started on Thursday with lunch with The College of the Governors downtown at The Grove. The President and the College of Governors were provided an update of all the happenings within the District.

Next was a spectacular evening with over 600 of the District's Rotarians, family and friends at the Bayou City Event Center, for the District 5890 All Club Meeting. President Tanaka enjoyed a reception with Major Donors and VIP Guests before touring the over 30 exhibits of the clubs' projects. He spent time looking at all the great projects our clubs are working on and asked many questions. President Tanaka was extremely impressed at the wide array of project the clubs are undertaking to serve their communities.

The All Club Meeting was opened by the Youth Exchange students with their flag ceremony. The event, hosted by Art Rascon, was a celebration of 100 years of service, highlighted by the Rotary Club of Houston's 100th Anniversary and the 50th Anniversary of the Robert E. Lee High School Interact Club in Baytown. The evening also our new honored Arch Klumph Society Members, John and Rose Moon. President Tanaka spoke about the meaning of his theme, "Peace Through Service". Dr. Jack Christie, Houston City Council Member At-Large, presented President Tanaka a proclamation proclaiming September 27, 2012 as President Tanaka Day in Houston. Rotary Club of Houston President Angie Jimenez presented President Tanaka with a plaque with two 1912 silver half-dollars, the Rotary wheels of 1912 and 2012, and the 2012-13 theme logo. The silver half-dollars were in honor of the cost of lunch at the Houston Club's first meetings, which was 35 cents. A 100-year pin from the Rotary Club of Chicago was presented to Angie by David Vilbig, Past President of the Rotary Club of Dallas, and brother of Linda Boggess, member of the Rotary Club of Houston. This pin was created by the Rotary Club of Chicago in honor of Rotary's 100th Anniversary. The zeros for the "100" are the first Rotary wheel and the current Rotary wheel; only 100 of these pins were made. This was also one of the few times in his life that Angie Jimenez was speechless!

The event was a remarkable celebration of 100 Years of Rotary in Houston. With a remarkable turnout of Rotarians, family and guests the evening was a showcase for more than 100 years of service to the communities, not only at the local level, but also on the international level. The clubs of District 5890 have truly demonstrated the impact that they make on the world by living the Rotary motto of "Service Above Self".

The next day, President Tanaka had a short breakfast meeting to discuss the upcoming day's activities. Then, he met with PDG Sunny Sharma, Vicki Brentin and John Collier to see a presentation about the Haiti Bio-Medical Equipment Repair Project that is underway, and how key partnerships are able to bridge politics and beliefs to bring real relief and education to a country that has been torn by natural disasters.

Then after a slight hiccup with the limousine breaking down, President Tanaka went to see the Rotary Club of the University Area's Fire Truck Project, and met with the City of Houston Fire Chief. He then went to Rotary House International to have lunch, meet with several doctors, see some of the Rotary Club of Houston projects, and have pictures taken with the Rotary Lombardi Award.

Next, he was off in a party bus to North Shore Elementary, where he participated in an Early Act/First Knight program. He knighted one of the children, and was knighted himself. He thoroughly enjoyed helping in the ceremony, and loved the two-foot tall suit of armor statue he received. After that, he was whisked off to the Verne Cox Multi-purpose Center in Pasadena to visit the handicapped-accessible park that the Rotary Club of Pasadena helped build. He was excited to see how the park can be enjoyed by all, and even sat in a swing and had Club President Paul Covell push him. Mayor Johnny Isbell presented President Tanaka the Keys to the City of Pasadena, and a city proclamation, making September 28th President Tanaka day in Pasadena.

Then, President Tanaka headed off to La Porte for a Books of the World Tour, given by Charlie and Barbara Clemmons. He was very impressed by all the work that is being done by the Books of the World and their partnership with Excel that stores and containerizes the books. He toured the warehouse and saw how a forklift takes the pallets of books down from the highest shelves in the warehouse.

The two-day tour ended with a dinner at the Hilton Hotel. Entertainment was provided by the Harbor Light Choir, and then some karaoke. The Harbor Light Choir is a group of men from the Salvation Army, who entertain around town and even at Rotary House on the first Monday of every month. There they entertain the patients and the Rotarians to give them a break from the treatments. At the dinner on the 24th floor of the Hilton, the Harbor Light Choir had the room dancing and singing with them, as they brought down the house! Then the karaoke began, with President Tanaka entertaining the crowd with several of his favorite Japanese songs. DGE Bob Gebhard, Angie Jimenez and Lindsey Kroll even sang the first Rotary song, "Let Me Call You Sweetheart".

Saturday morning, bright and early, President Tanaka departed with a smile on his face, having thoroughly enjoyed his stay in Houston. Thank you to all the Rotarians that came out to greet the President and make his visit a blast. Special thanks go to Michelle Bohreer, Sharlene Barris, Charlie and Barbara Clemmons, Miguel Ottaviano, Linda Boggess, and the entire All Club Committee that made this a successful and memorable event.

Yours in Service,

Chris Schneider
2012-13 Governor, District 5890