

## **I COULD HAVE BEEN BETTER.**

How often do we take the time to step back and analyze how we have done? When I served as District Governor I thought I was doing the best job possible. I was full of energy and new ideas. I shot around the district and tried to stir up the energy level of our Rotarians and to focus on what was truly important. From the Rotary Foundation perspective I told the stories that are Our Foundation.

But in hindsight I know I made two mistakes:

1. I failed to ask. I thought if I told the stories of The Rotary Foundation people would just give and give generously: The stories are simply that good! In reality when each of us hears the stories we nod our head and agree that we want and need to give. Then we head right back to our daily routines, our busy lives; we never get around to doing what we wanted to do and need to do. Since serving as Governor, I have learned that asking is so very, very critical in serving those in need.
2. I never saw the need before I served. I first visited a developing country four years after I served as governor. I know in hindsight that I would have been so much better at communicating the need, if I have visited a developing country prior to my year of service.

To the future governors I can only hope to pass on the lessons I have learned from my failings as governor.

I am pleased that during the second week of November four District Governors-elect from zones 28 and 29 traveled with me to Haiti. We met local Rotarians, attended a new club charter night, enjoyed home hospitality and most importantly we saw those that need our help. We met students that sit 70 to a classroom in a public school that needs so much more than a new coat of paint. We held the hands of elderly men and women, many polio victims. They are all but abandoned in a badly run down nursing home, where dignity and self-respect are in very short supply.

**We took in the odor that is poverty: a smell that once inhaled is never forgotten: a distasteful mixture of sweat, dirt, excrement, heat and decay.**

I applaud the following DGEs for joining me on this short trip to reality: Janet McPeak District 6380, Cindy Sakala District 7330, Bruce Baumberger District 6440 and Stew Buchanan District 6650. They are a step ahead of where I was when I was in their shoes. May they serve well next year and have the sense to ask others to give.