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HERE'S WHAT THEY'VE BEEN UP TO

FIELD REPORTS



“Rotarians were like the third person on this swim.”

– MIMI HUGHES



EUROPE

Down the Danube

Rotarians became Mimi Hughes' flotation device as the 50-year-old environmental activist and high school reading specialist swam the 1,770-mile Danube to rally people to work together for clean drinking water.

Accompanied by her daughter Kelsey, 20, who paddled a kayak packed with supplies, Hughes waded into the river, which flows through or borders 10 countries, in Germany on 7 May.

Hughes takes a breather in front of a castle in Austria. “I wanted so desperately to see the castle, but there was never time at the end of a day to take a tour,” Hughes says.

“Rotarians were like the third person on this swim,” says Hughes, who has swum the Bering Strait and the Tennessee River and lives near Fayetteville, Tenn., USA.

In this case, three was not a crowd. Despite whirlpools, hail storms, nearly freezing water, angry swans, and heavy boat traffic, she stroked up to 30 miles a day, reaching the Black Sea near Sulina, Romania, on 4 August.

Mimi Hughes started her swim on the Danube in Germany on 7 May and finished at the Black Sea on 4 August.

KELSEY HUGHES

FIELD REPORTS

DISPATCHES



**INDIA
BIKER GIRLS**

After the December 2004 tsunami destroyed schools in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu, many students realized they would have to walk long distances to the schools that remained. They normally could have used their bikes, but the tsunami had washed those away too. The long trip by foot meant the students would arrive home at night.

For girls, walking wasn't an acceptable option because of concerns about their safety. "Families would not allow girls to go to school if they had to walk through remote areas after dark," says Rekha Shetty, a past governor of District 3230 and a member of the Rotary Club of Madras Temple City.

Shetty and Peter Patel, of the Rotary Club of Birmingham, England, discovered this problem while assessing tsunami damage in January 2005. They met three girls in need of bikes to replace those they'd lost in the disaster.

Patel agreed to buy bikes for the girls, but he and Shetty learned that 765 more schoolgirls in tsunami-stricken areas needed bikes. The two Rotarians launched the Education on Wheels project to raise money to buy them, and a year later, they met the demand.

Donors included the Rotary clubs of Birmingham; Jerusalem; Kathmandu Mid-Town, Nepal; and Pune Central, India. Tamil Nadu clubs distributed the bikes.

"A bicycle changes a girl's whole life and determines her future," Shetty says.

Hughes' quest captured the imagination of Europeans. Hundreds waved from bridges. Schoolchildren decorated posters. Mayors welcomed her. Hughes, a mother of four, used her time in the spotlight to tell people that it takes cooperation across borders and cultures to protect the world's drinking water from pollution. She believes that people must first get along if they're going to protect the environment. Hughes picked the Danube because it's an international river that flows through countries such as Croatia and Serbia that have been recently devastated by war.

Although Hughes, who served three years in the U.S. Army, is not a Rotarian, she tied a flag featuring the Rotary emblem to the kayak's bow. "The Rotarian flag is an international symbol of peace," Hughes says, "and Rotarians care about drinking water."

Harry Fields, a past governor of District 6780 (Tennessee), gave Hughes the flag when she spoke to his district's club presidents about her swim on the Tennessee River, which she completed in 2003. Hughes swam the Tenn-



Kelsey Hughes (rear of kayak) and Victor Gibson accompany Hughes.

essee to show that one individual can get people to think about the importance of water purity.

Fields suggested that Hughes contact European Rotarians for logistical advice about the Danube. She got much more.

"It was like having friends all the way down the river," says Hughes, who was also assisted by World Wildlife Fund staffers. A grant from the Balance Bar Food Company helped with expenses.

The Rotary Club of Tuttlingen, Germany,



Residents of Tuttlingen, Germany, greet Hughes.

had towels embroidered with Hughes' name and the dates of the swim. Club members sold them to raise money for Romanians still recovering after floods from the spring of 2006. In Hungary, Livia Kránitz, the wife of a member of the Rotary Club of Budapest-Margitsziget, successfully negotiated with Hungarian government officials when they declared they would hold Hughes to a no-swim rule of the Danube in their country. In Romania, a Rotarian paddled out to Hughes to see if he could help in any way.

Other Rotarians opened their homes and helped out when Hughes had to camp alongside the river in areas inaccessible to vehicles. A club member in Romania contacted police when Hughes called at midnight to say some rowdy fishermen were pestering her and her daughter as they camped on an isolated bank.

Hughes is writing a book about her days on the Danube. What amazes her most is the outpouring of help from Rotarians and others.

"If people from 10 countries can work together for this swim to be successful, we can work together as social and environmental caretakers of the earth," Hughes says. "It was just unbelievable how everybody worked together so generously."

On the Web
www.danubeswim.com

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OHIO

A pressing project

Once a year, usually in early October, members of the Rotary Club of Newburg, W.Va., USA, excuse themselves from their normal 6:15 p.m. meeting at the United Methodist Church. There's no sense in having a meeting: Everyone is too tired by then.

That's the day they use an antique press to put the squeeze on 100 bushels of apples to make cider. Bottled in milk jugs club members save throughout the year, the cider is sold along Route 92 in Preston County the same day it's squeezed. Last year, their efforts yielded 152

Newburg Rotarian Ralph Pyles, 77, pours apples into the chopper of his club's antique cider press.

gallons, which they sold for \$4 each. After paying for the apples, they cleared \$425. Club members planned to use the money to help maintain a cemetery, sponsor a health fair and Boy Scouts troop, and buy holiday candy for children.

The club started making cider in the mid-1970s. "One of our members had a lot of apples and a grinder, and we've been using it ever since," says club member Charles Fortney, 91.

Newburg Rotarians don't know the age of the device, but it's probably at least as old as Fortney. Fortney and Howard Dugan, 93, carry

DISPATCHES



ARIZONA

SMALL BUT MIGHTY

The seven members of the Rotaract Club of Phoenix delivered 7,700 bottles of water to a local soup kitchen on 12 August so homeless diners could take the water with them and stay hydrated on the streets during their city's scorching summer.

They dropped off the 4 tons of water at the Society of St. Vincent de Paul's Henry Unger Memorial Dining Room.

"I was truly amazed at the amount of water they delivered," says Jerry Castro, dining rooms manager at St. Vincent de Paul.

The water delivered by the Rotaractors helped supply the dining room for the rest of the month. There was even some left to spare for a women's shelter.

In June, the Rotaractors found out that the dining room would need bottled water over the summer. During the next two months, they collected bottled water and cash contributions from family, friends, co-workers, and local Rotary clubs. "It was an awesome project, and we had lots of fun doing it," says Priscilla Provencio, who helped coordinate it. "The benefit of starting out small is that we're extremely efficient."

WORLD ROTARACT WEEK

This year, World Rotaract Week takes place 12-18 March. It commemorates the date the first Rotaract club was officially chartered by Rotary International: 13 March 1968.

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From left: Dwaine McKinney, of Masontown, W.Va., Dugan, and Fortney fill buckets with apples.

the apples and supervise the operation. Fortney is the club's only surviving charter member, and Dugan joined shortly after it was formed in 1941.

Younger members, like club president Richard Cornwell, 58, a Preston County business owner, do the grunt work of pressing the apples. "Younger" is relative in this club of 11. Donald Brewer, a member for nearly 50 years, spent his 74th birthday on the pressing wheel.

The antique grinder was originally hand cranked, but a cider buyer took pity on the club several years ago and donated an electric motor to run it. Once

ground, the apples are collected in a wooden container, which is then placed under the rustic press. A plate on the end of a threaded metal shaft is screwed down by hand, using a wheel on top of the shaft.

Thomas Willis, a past club president, says although selling cider is a relatively small fundraiser, club members look forward to and enjoy every part of this fall ritual – except the aftermath.

"I got a little problem with my knees, and I'll probably rub them with some horse liniment tonight," says Brewer, taking a break from the press.

Below: Gears on the grinder. At bottom: Jugs of cider ready for sale.



CARL FEATHER

FIELD REPORTS

NORTH CAROLINA

Pep talk

When high school basketball coach Ken Carter (at right) learned that members of his undefeated California team were underperforming in the classroom in 1999, he locked the team out of the gym and forced players to hit the books.

So when Rotary clubs in North Carolina, USA, learned that two local high schools were underperforming academically, they called in coach Carter.

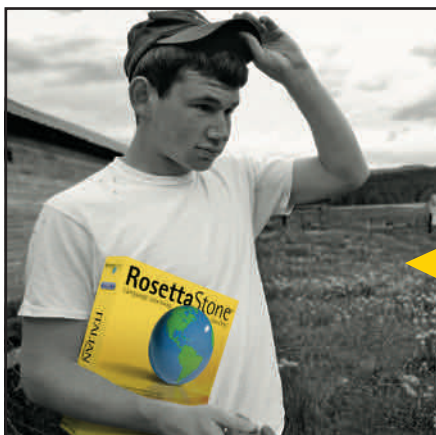
Eight Rotary clubs in the Greensboro area asked Carter, the subject of a 2005 movie named after him, to speak to students at the James B. Dudley and Ben L. Smith high schools about accountability, integrity, teamwork, and leadership.

"In coach Carter, we have someone who delivers a powerful message regarding values that certainly mirror the values



of Rotary," says Jay Harris, president of the Rotary Club of Crescent (Greensboro). "We are thrilled to facilitate the delivery of that message to the students. We believe that

he will impact and change lives." Carter didn't disappoint. "Why shouldn't great things happen to you?" he asked the student body at Dudley in October. The answer to that question, he stressed, had everything to do with a



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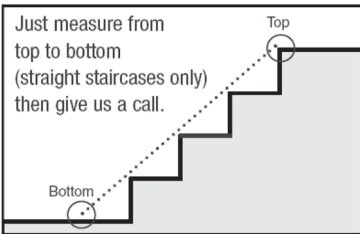


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winning attitude and hard work.

He crumpled a \$20 bill to illustrate that money has value even when it's crushed. Carter quickly pointed out that the young people in the audience would keep on being valuable in spite of failure if they got serious about their education and used their knowledge to open opportunities.

"Successful people will go from one failure to the next enthusiastically," he told the Dudley audience. He emphasized that success is earned, adding that "the only people who make money work at the U.S. Mint. Everyone else has to earn it."

Carter's presentations at the high schools, which took place on the same day, featured all the animation of a coach fired up to win. Some of his motivational techniques involved getting a member of Dudley's faculty to sprint up and down the court and moving a student to do push-ups in front of the whole school. The audience's willingness to follow Carter's lead might be explained by his charismatic style, self-confidence, or the pressure of being in front of so many, but the energy he brought to the schools was a central part of his message. "It takes more than motivation for our young people," he said. "They need to be inspired."

Carter encouraged the students to think about how they'll use their time once they're in the workforce, especially if they hope to earn a lot of money. "You will not get paid by the hour," he said. "You will get paid by the value you bring to the hour." He said that having a "pleasing personality" and a willingness to arrive early or stay late would make all the difference in how others perceived their value.

On the day of his presentations, Harris presented Carter with a medallion recognizing him as a Paul Harris Fellow.

Field Reports is edited by Tiffany Woods. Reporting by Kay Campbell, Carl Feather, Pete Lindsay, Vukoni Lupa-Lasaga, and Tonya Weger.