



A Christmas message from President Martin

As I will be donating £50 to Rotary Foundation in lieu of sending Christmas cards could I take this opportunity to wish you all the very best of the Season's Greetings for a peaceful Christmas and a prosperous New Year!

National Flood Appeal Update

At the Flood Appeal Committee meeting on 15th November District Governor Tony managed to secure agreement for support for three further projects within D1090:

i) £5,000 for the Witney Amateur Boxing Club who lost their venue and all of their equipment in the floods. This is a long-established club and all of the local agencies, including the police, believe that they do a great job for mainly disadvantaged youngsters. The money will help the boxing club to purchase new equipment including a training ring and this is in addition to the £500 that Witney Rotary Club have already given them.

ii) £5,000 for the Aldermaston C of E Primary School. This school suffered severe flooding on 20th July and the children had to be evacuated through the windows. The flood water rose so quickly that most of the staff cars were written off as the welfare of the children was the first priority of the staff. The school is still being refurbished and the money will allow them to install new shelving in the library and to replace the books that were lost and damaged.

iii) £1,800 for the Falcon Rowing and Canoe Club in Oxford. This is a trust and works to widen the social range of children rowing, canoeing and kayaking on the Thames in Oxford. They cater particularly for young people from the most socially deprived areas of Oxford.

Floods in Bangladesh

Devastating though the floods were in the UK in the Summer, the recent floods in Bangladesh following the cyclone were catastrophic.

Rotary Shelter Boxes and Aquaboxes have already been distributed in the flood affected area but more are needed and the stock will then need to be replenished.

DG Tony has asked that everyone consider allocating some of the funds from recent events or from your impending Christmas collections to this worthy cause.

For further information please contact the District Disaster Response Coordinator Fred King of the Rotary Club of Burnham on f.b.king@talk21.com

The Rotary Foundation (TRF)

November is Rotary Foundation month and, as you are all aware, support for The Rotary Foundation is one of the key goals for this year.

In the light of the current very favourable exchange rate of US\$2.06 to the £, DG Tony is urging all clubs

to send off to TRF any monies that they are currently holding but have earmarked for Foundation as soon as possible.

He is keen that we do not wait to send it all as a lump sum near to the end of the Rotary year by which time the rate may be worse. The balance can then be sent off later.

Last month there was a press conference to announce that the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has awarded a Challenge Grant of \$100 million to the Rotary Foundation to help to finally eradicate polio.

Rotary will need to match this grant with a further \$100 million over the next 3 years. This is one of the largest Challenge Grants given by the Gates Foundation and is the largest grant received by Rotary in its history. The eradication of polio is within sight as there have only been 707 cases reported worldwide so far in 2007 compared to nearly 2000 cases in 2006. But we must keep up the pressure and the immunization campaigns especially in the 4 remaining polio endemic countries of Nigeria, India (Utar Pradesh), Pakistan and Afghanistan.

In the spirit of supporting TRF please note that DG Tony and Sarah will be sending Christmas Greetings to all of their Rotary colleagues and friends electronically this year. They will be donating the amount that they would have spent on cards and postage to Foundation and with Gift Aid this will amount to well over £100.

My Twelve Days of Christmas



On the first day of Christmas my true love said to me
I'm glad we brought fresh turkey and a proper
Christmas tree.

On the second day of Christmas much laughter could
be heard
As we tucked in to our turkey a most delicious bird.

On the third day we entertained the people from next
door,
The turkey tasted just as good as on the day before.

Day four relations came to stay, poor gran is looking
old
We finished up the Christmas pud and ate the turkey
cold.

On the fifth day of Christmas, outside snowflakes
flurried
But we were nice and warm inside for we had turkey
curried.

On the sixth day I must admit, the Christmas spirit
died
The children fought and bickered, and we ate the
turkey fried.

On the seventh day of Christmas, my true love he did
wince
When he sat down at the table and was offered turkey
mince.

Day eight, nerves were getting frayed and the dog had
run for shelter
I served up turkey pancakes with a glass of alka-
seltzer.

On day nine our cat left home – by lunchtime Dad was
blotto
He said he had to have a drink to face turkey risotto.

By the tenth day of Christmas all our booze had gone
except for our home brew
And if that wasn't bad enough we suffered turkey
stew.

On the eleventh day of Christmas, the Christmas tree
was moulting
The mince pies were as hard as rock and the turkey
was revolting.

On the twelfth day my true love had a smile upon his
lips
The guest had all gone home and we ate fish and chips

Many thanks to Bryan Doe for the above.



ROTARY MISSION CHALLENGE

“spend 11 days in Sierra Leone & make a real difference”

Update from Alan Wolstencroft - December 2007

Since my latest trip to Sierra Leone (my fifth trip in 2 years), I have been back in the UK for 6 weeks. In the run up to Christmas I am spending a lot of time reflecting on our busy and materialistic lifestyle and thinking about the little that the people in Freetown actually have. I know this is the same for many of my fellow Rotarians who have spent time in Sierra Leone and although I know we cannot change the world I would like to think that our efforts are at least helping to improve the quality of life for some of the people that we have been working with and supporting.

MOHAMMED –Susu shanty, Freetown



Mohammed is an 18 year old who lives in Susu shanty 100 metres from the Hotel we stay in when we visit Freetown. I got to know him in May 2006 and gave him & his family an Aquaroll to help with the daily chore of fetching water from a standpipe about half a mile from the shanty. He has become a really good friend and I visit him in the shanty every time I go to

Freetown and we take sweets, pens & pencils, notebooks, balloons and other small gifts for him and the other children in the shanty.

I asked him how his schooling was going and he told me his uncle could not afford to send him as he had been laid off from his carpentry job. After talking to Mohammed & his uncle I learned that he had lost both his parents in the civil war. He lives in a room 8 x 5 feet, sleeps on a mat on the floor, has a chair & a table and hangs most of his clothes on a string line in the room, which is not totally watertight. He is always immaculate, smiling and very polite and has never asked me for anything. I have given him T-shirts & a jacket BUT this time I felt I wanted to do more for him. I asked him if he had his latest school reports which he duly presented, he was doing well with his schooling and was desperate to return to school. With the help of a fellow Rotarian & the hotel owner we have managed to get him into a local school. I am paying his school fees, funding the cost of his uniform, books & transport all for £200 a year.

He recently sent me a letter thanking me for my help & signed it “Mohammed, your African son”.

Aquarolls & Susu shanty

Susu shanty currently has 6 Aquarolls & on this trip Mohammed gave me a list of 28 people/families in the shanty that needed an Aquaroll. A few days later we saw some mains plastic water pipes being laid but were told that it was not planned to extend them to the shanty. We had a talk with our hotelier, who is a member of Freetown Rotary, and asked if it would be possible to extend the water pipes to the shanty. The cost was £300 (paid for by Rotarians from the UK) - 10 days later the official opening of the Susu shanty tap took place – what a result!! Cheaper than 28 Aquarolls and only 50 metres to walk to the tap!!!!



**It's only a tap BUT 30+ families are better off
CHRISTIAN HOPE SCHOOL, KISSY**

If you have read my previous Newsletters you will know I have undertaken to fund the building of a 6 classroom extension to the school so that pupils on the waiting list can have classroom accommodation.
 Pastor Joseph (headteacher) at the site in January 2007



Banbury Rotary Club “kick started” the appeal in January 2007 with £500 and since then I have sent or taken £5,000 to the school and in October Rotary Mission Challenge Team 12 (I was a team member) donated £2,500 for the project. Since arriving back in the UK 6 weeks ago I have received donations & pledges for a further **£2,550**. Both these sums are a major boost to the project and will make a significant difference to the progress of the building.

Thank you to the following for their recent donations:

- Banbury Cross Round Table,
- Cooper Construction, Witney,
- Susan Taylor Dancing Academy,
- Area 50 Round Table Past Area Chairman’s Dinner,
- Banbury Townswomens Guild,
- Southam Inner Wheel, Marlborough Road
- Methodist Church, Banbury
- 7th Banbury Cub group
- Barford St Michael Womens Institute
- Fashion Fabric’s customers
- & several individual donors.

October 2007 – progress at the school



The building programme is going really well – the majority of the foundations & footings for all 6 classrooms are completed and 3 of the classrooms are at the stage shown in the photograph below.



BISHOP CARPENTER UNIFORM APPEAL

Children & parents from Bishop Carpenter School, North Newington have been collecting unwanted items of uniform for me to take to Christian Hope School & more than 40 Christian Hope children now wear donated items from Bishop Carpenter – some of these children didn’t go to school previously as IF you can’t afford uniform you cannot go to school.



Kings Sutton primary school & Sew Sublime, Church Walk, Banbury are collecting items of Kings Sutton uniform for me to take to Christian Hope as well. I have also received items of children’s clothing from Bishop Carpenter which have been distributed to children in the Aberdeen shanty community.

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking ALL those individuals, organizations & companies who

over the last 2 year's have supported me either financially or with donated items which have helped me "make a real difference" for some of the poorest people in the world -THANK YOU - Alan Wolstencroft

A Thought for a Christmas Card



Just a line to say I'm living, I'm not amongst the dead
Though I'm getting more forgetful and mixed up in my head.

I've got used to my arthritis, to my dentures I'm resigned
I can manage my bifocals, but Oh God I miss my mind.

At times I can't remember when I'm standing by the stair
If I'm going up for something, or I've just come down from there
And beside the fridge so often, my mind is filled with doubt
Now did I put some food away or come to take it out.

And sometimes when it's night-time with my night cap on my head
I'm not sure if I'm retiring or just got out of bed.
If it's my turn now to write Dear, I hope you won't get sore
I may think that I have written but don't want to be a bore.

So remember, I do miss you and wish that you lived near
But now it's time to post this and say "Goodbye" my dear.

.....**Blast**.....

I stand beside the post box, my face is really red
Instead of posting this to you I've opened it instead!

Thanks also to Bryan Doe for the above!



The best of Christmas greetings to all in the Rotary Club of Banbury from the following members who have made a charitable donation rather than send Christmas Cards to other club members

Anker. R.G, Anthistle I, Banks M, Barnett R.J, Bennett J, Blakey D.H, Brace A.M, Braisby H.J, Budd M.K, Calderbank I Cooke J.G, Cornley B.N, Dix R.J, Doe B.J, Douglas M, Fairburn A, Donaldson J.A, George R.A, Goodchild B.S, Haine A, Halfpenny N.A, Kipping R.A, Kyffin O J, Manning K.W, Maxwell S.A, McLean R.J, Meeres J.W, Meridith J.C, Nurden R.J.C, Nutt M, Phillips J.B, Phillips M F B, Randall N, Riches F, Roderick I.W, Sharpe R, Shea P, Sullivan D.J, Taylor T.G, Watts R.D.B, Watkins R, Wolstencroft A, Woodruff E, Worrall R.W, Yeadon N.J.

The Rotary Clubs of Banbury & Banbury Cherwell Young Chef Competition



The Background to the local round of the National Competition

"Promoting Healthy Eating and Life Skills"

The Rotary Young Chef Competition was created to give young people the chance to show off their creative culinary talents, to promote healthy eating and to learn important life skills.

With the support of Filippo Berrio Olive Oil and Fifteen Restaurant (founded by Jamie Oliver), Rotary Young Chef is a prestigious national competition with

valuable prizes, including a trip for two to the Italian Olive Groves (courtesy of Berrio), a day in the kitchens at Fifteen Restaurant plus other prizes.

About the local competition

The Banbury Rotary Young Chef competition, in line with the national one, was intended for any young person who enjoyed cooking and was under 17 years old on 31st August 2007.

Locally students attending any of the Secondary Schools in the Banbury area: Banbury School, Drayton School, The Warriner, Blessed George Napier, Sibford School, Tudor Hall, Bloxham School and Oxford & Cherwell Valley College were invited to take part.

The competition aimed to encourage young people to:

- Develop their cookery skills
- Develop food presentation skills
- Consider Healthy eating options
- Prove their organisational and planning skills
- Prove their ability to cope in a demanding situation

Competitors were to be asked to prepare, cook and serve a two course healthy meal, (main course and dessert), suitable for two people, to cost no more than £10.

The first stage of the Banbury round was to be by submission of a written menu from all participants. The applicant's menus were then to be judged by Rotarian committee members drawn from both local clubs who would carefully select 8 finalists to be invited to prepare and cook their chosen meal for a panel of judges in the kitchens at Oxford & Cherwell Valley College in November 2007. All of the Banbury finalists would receive a certificate and a chef's jacket, hat & apron paid for by the Rotary Clubs and the winner would then be automatically entered in the District competition.

The Final

On November 12th the 8 finalists, parents, friends and supporters gathered at the Oxford & Cherwell Valley College, Broughton Road, Banbury. Members from the two clubs greeted the finalists and students from the College assisted them to familiarise themselves with the kitchens where the competition was to take place.

An hour and a half was provided for each finalist to prepare their meals with the three judges (Jim Cunningham, Catering Curriculum Manager at the College, Mike Bonnick, Cherwell Rotarian and the Town Mayor Kieron Mallon) watching on whilst supporters waited anxiously in the restaurant area.

All of the finalist worked very hard to prepare impressive meals, staying remarkably calm and paying great attention to all the detail that they were asked to consider regarding presentation. One meal from the two prepared by each individual was laid out in the restaurant area for all those attending to see and admire.

After a lengthy debate Ben Hayden a young man from Banbury School was adjudged the winner - The Rotary Clubs of Banbury Young Chef of the Year 2007. When confirming their decision the judges mentioned the very high standards achieved and the closeness of the marks – there were only one and a half marks between Ben and the runner up Rebecca Fowler.

Ben now moves on to take part in the District competition in February and hopefully will then progress to the Regional Final. The two Rotary Clubs are to be responsible for organising both of these subsequent events in Banbury during 2008.

All of those involved in this local competition agreed that this had been a very successful project for the local clubs to undertake and that the competition should be organised regularly in the years ahead.

Bernard Goodchild

Speaker Report for Friday 16th November Speakers Sue & Tony Melia Subject – Bwengu Village Projects Malawi, Update June to September 2007



Sue and Tony visited the club as speakers in February 2007 and as a result of their presentation a sum of £500 was donated to assist them with their good works in Malawi. The purpose of their revisit was to update Rotarians generally and to show where the funds had been invested.

Bwengu is in the north of Malawi. It is isolated and remote, there are only two satisfactory roads in the country and it takes some 5 hours to travel to the village by road from the country's airport.

Projects organised and carried out by Sue and Tony in the period

Bwengu - Orphan Care food.

- A food supply was located.
- The problem! It was a 1000k round trip to collect.
- The couple managed to bring back 1.5 tons. This will last until end Feb 2008.
- All village children under 5 now have a hot meal each day.

Bwengu - Secondary School books:

- 1400 new textbooks have been purchased.
- The library block has been completely restored and new bookshelves made.
- The future has just changed for these 250 children.
- The true effects will last for a generation of school children

Secondary School buildings

- All classrooms have been renovated.
- The staff rooms' staff room has been renovated.
- The library has been renovated.
- A dormitory for 30 girls has been completed.

Bwengu winter food purchase

- 12.5 tons of surplus maize were purchased
- The Women's Development Centre will sell the food at a sensible price in January when traders inflate the price beyond their reach.

Bwengu Schools furniture

- 600 pieces of furniture were made for 3 schools.
- 16 classrooms now have furniture.
- All teachers in 3 schools now have class furniture.
- 2 staff rooms have been furnished
- 1 head teacher's office furnished
- 1 library block furnished

Church renovation

- 2 churches were completed: - St Dominic's in Bwengu and St Augustine's in Thumbi
- The transformation of these churches is a testament to the faith of these village people.

Bwengu Full Primary School building

- The school sign was completed.
- 3 classrooms were renovated and just await roof tiles.

St Dominic's Primary School building

- The teacher's house now just needs concrete roof tiles.
- The 2-block classroom has reached ceiling height

Bwengu Medical Centre renovation

A transformation has taken place with: -

- New sterilization equipment
- New doors, locks furniture
- Running water installed.
- Replacement windows fly screens.
- New bedding
- New lighting

The couple expresses their personal gratitude and the thanks of all those in Malawi for the funds provided by the Rotary Club of Banbury. They have been asked to return to the country in 2008 and their plan is to undertake the following new projects at that time:

To complete Bwengu Women's Development Centre

Enlarge chicken unit and stock it

Set up the work shop with machines/fabric

Stock the shop

Co-ordinate maize buying for winter 2009

Create a central food store for 14 villages Orphan Care.

Thumbi Secondary School Book/Classroom Project

They provided a broad outline of their plans and how these will be completed provided that they can raise £10,500 to fund their work!

Sue and Tony provided an excellent PowerPoint presentation outlining their work and including photographs of the developments as they progressed.

The couple's effort, energy and commitment to their cause is quite outstanding and the value to the Malawians is clear for all to see.

Bernard Goodchild



TO INFINITY AND BEYOND



Thanks to the input from other Rotarians, for which I am most grateful, the dragon boats event planned for 20th April 2008 at Broughton Castle is beginning to take shape.

Of the 21 teams needed, we have 14 who have stated they will take part, there is serious interest from 6 others and there are currently 18 outstanding invitations.

The opportunity is going to be raised at the Banbury Business Breakfast Club in early January and it looks encouraging that a full complement of teams will enter. In addition we have one corporate sponsor and I am hoping that we will be getting a second.

We have already contacted a number of parties to run concessions in order that there will be plenty of other entertainment for competitors, their friends, families and all other visitors on the day.

It is anticipated that our Club will run the liquid refreshment tent so what with that, organising parking and a myriad of other tasks, there will be plenty for our members to do on the day. Many thanks in anticipation of your support of what will hopefully be an entertaining and new addition to the North Oxfordshire calendar.

With that coming together, albeit there remains plenty to do and we cannot afford to take our foot off the pedal, it is time to look forward. You will be aware that the amount of money in the unallocated General Funds limits the ability of the Club to help as much with deserving causes as we would all like to do. Hence, our committee has put their heads together and we are planning a fund raising event for June 2009.

All you grandparents (no ageism intended, I am one too) will surely have watched Toy Story with your grandchildren (a film with humour for adults and

children if there ever was one) and will recall the astronaut Buzz Lightyear's rallying call 'To infinity and beyond.' Well we are not intending to go that far.



However, those of you who are conversant with the Lands end to John O'Groats challenge will know that successful participants are known as 'End to Enders'. Well, in a slightly amended version of Buzz's words, we want to go 'To the ends and beyond' or per Captain Kirk, 'To go where no man (or woman) has gone before' (we think).

That is, from the Scilly Isles to The Shetland Islands incorporating canoeing sections island hopping between the Scilly's and Lands End, John O'Groats and the Orkneys, North Ronaldsay and Fair Isle and Fair Isle to the Shetlands. In other words, a slightly elongated version of Lands End to John O'Groats.

It is hoped that by its originality, calling in on Rotary Clubs en route, advertising through radio stations and other media outlets and by keeping and publishing a diary, that this could generate substantial funds for Rotary Charities. What do we need from you? Well, try the following:

We have access to a sea kayak but does anyone know where we can borrow a good quality bike/bikes free of charge?

Back up requirements en route will be minimal as it is intended to travel light and rely on the goodwill and hospitality of other Rotary Clubs. Nevertheless, help will be needed to transport the kayak from Lands End to John O'Groats;

Personal contacts with other Clubs' members -

It is always useful to be able to approach people by name in the first instance rather than just writing/telephoning to other Clubs on an impersonal basis;

Ideas - Should we raise the profile of the event by adopting a major charity with 50% of the funds to them and 50% of the funds to Rotary Charities? This could help with advertising and the amount of funds that could be raised?

Fellowship - It would be much more pleasant and fun if members would like to join in on part or parts of the route, either during the day, in the evenings or both. Any volunteers?; and

Any other thoughts that you may have - Well there it is, an idea to help remedy the funding gap and our committee looks forward to receiving constructive ideas and support.

Andrew Fairbairn on behalf of the Community and Vocational Services Committee

RIBI International Bangladesh Cyclone Disaster update

No doubt you will have been viewing and reading of the devastating Cyclone and flooding which has swept through Southern Bangladesh. This area is often hit by severe cyclones, but there are many reports indicating that this latest, Cyclone Sidr, is a category four storm, and the worst to hit the region for several years. The storm triggered 16ft tidal surges in most of the affected districts, and rivers flowing into the Bay of Bengal are reported to be swollen, and rising, causing severe flooding. The aftermath of this horrendous natural disaster has left many thousands homeless. Almost 3,500 victims died, and children and vulnerable adults could be affected by disease. Those who have been fortunate to survive the worst of this storm are in need of Shelter, Water, Food, and Clothing, along with domestic items, and tools to provide makeshift temporary homes, and cooking facilities. (See reports in the attachments with this E-mail.

ShelterBox have so far despatched some 630 ShelterBoxes, which are being distributed now by their ShelterBox Response Team, and assisted also by a US Navy team from the USS Kearsarge.

Aquabox have despatched some 200 boxes, mixed between Standard, Aquabox 30's, and the new Aquabox Gold. These are being distributed by the aid agency Humanity First, from their field hospital and medical centre, in South Bangladesh.

Water-Survival Box have despatched 100 Water-Survival Boxes to displaced families on the island of Rangabali, in the Bay of Bengal, one of the worst

affected areas of the storm. Here again Humanity First UK have been responsible for coordinating, and distributing these boxes.

As yet there is no news from LifeBox, on whether they have been called on for supplies. More supplies are required, and all Rotary Clubs are being urged to support Box Projects, who are now in the forefront of the relief operation. As more boxes are required, so funds are required to keep stocks sufficiently buoyant to meet the need when this arises.

Other initiatives which are ongoing as follows:

Impact - As you already know, Impact was one of our Preferred Projects last Rotary year, and we gave them huge support. With the policy of continuity in place, this International project continues to be listed, and promoted through Opportunities to Serve, our Project Library.

Impact Foundation Bangladesh are doing a fantastic job in response to this disaster in their country, working tirelessly to source supplies, which they are packing into Survival Kits for people who have been rendered homeless, and dispossessed. They have also arranged for a water purification plant to provide safe drinking water. Those who have survived with very little in the way of clothing and support, have become so desperate that they are drinking the flood waters which will spread disease rapidly.

Impact indicate that many have responded generously to their appeal for donations, but there are so many victims in urgent need of help. They can put to good use, all donations which they receive, by purchasing items for the Survival Kits in Dhaka, at a cost of £21.44 per Kit.

Additionally the Rotary Club of Tower Hamlets has launched a Matching Grant Livelihood Project for the Bangladesh Cyclone Disaster Victims. You may recall that the last severe disaster in Bangladesh this club also launched an initiative to build houses, which received good support from RIBI clubs. For this current initiative, the Tower Hamlets club project will try to reinstate some of the survivors losses, by providing chickens, milking cows, goats, replacement Rickshaws, and fishing nets. By replacing these items, this will provide a livelihood for those who are victims of this terrible disaster, and give them their lives back.

To support and donate to those projects mentioned above, make contact through the following sources:

SHELTERBOX - www.shelterbox.org
AQUABOX - www.Aquabox@plusnet.com
LIFEBOX - www.life-box.org.uk
WATER-SURVIVAL BOX -
www.worldwaterworks.org
IMPACT - 151 Western Road, Haywards heath,
West Sussex RH16 3LH
Tel: 01444 457080 Fax: 01444 457877
Website: www.impact.org.uk
RC of TOWER HAMLETS - Contact: PDG Colin
Bryant preferably by E-mail:

colin@bryant174.freemove.co.uk Tel: 020 8677 2949
Address for cheques: 174 Sunnyhill Road, London,
SW16 2UN

Best Wishes
Peter Jones District 1090 WCS Chairman.

Children Singing for Children

Last month saw another hugely successful running of our now annual "Children Singing for Children" event, and an enormous thank you needs to be sent to Fred Riches, Phil Cavill and his committee, all those club members who helped over the three nights, our sponsors, Bloxham School, and finally Liz Stock, Val Scarff & Tony Keen (conductor, accompanist & percussionist respectively

The three concerts once again surpassed all our expectations, with that annual spine-tingling finale being matched this year by the individual school performances, which were better than ever.

This year 22 schools took part, a record for recent times. There were 467 children in the choirs and we sold 949 tickets. Including teachers, Rotarians and invited guests there were 1078 people in the audience over the three nights.

You will be pleased to hear that the final total raised for the three causes was £3,714 which the Rotary Club of Banbury is rounding up to £3,800. Banbury Young Carers and Helen House Hospice will receive £950 and Hope & Homes for Children £1,900.

Fred and Phil are in the process of setting up cheque presentations for Jan 18th, when they hope representatives from the three charities will join us at Rotary & Rick Foulsham from Hope & Homes will be the speaker.

Remember it takes a college degree to fly a plane, but only a high school diploma to fix one. Reassurance for those of us who fly routinely in our jobs.

After every flight, UPS pilots fill out a form, called a "gripe-sheet," which tells mechanics about problems with the aircraft. The mechanics correct the problems, document their repairs on the form, and then pilots review the gripe sheets before the next flight.

Never let it be said that ground crews lack a sense of humor - Here are some actual maintenance complaints submitted pilots (marked with a P) and the solutions recorded (marked with an S) by maintenance engineers.

P: Left inside main tire almost needs replacement.
S: Almost replaced left inside main tire.

P: Test flight OK, except auto-land very rough.
S: Auto-land not installed on this aircraft.

P: Something loose in cockpit
S: Something tightened in cockpit

P: Autopilot in altitude-hold mode produces a 200 feet per minute descent.
S: Cannot reproduce problem on ground.

P: Evidence of leak on right main landing gear.
S: Evidence removed.

P: Friction locks cause throttle levers to stick.
S: That's what friction locks are for.

P: Suspected crack in windshield.
S: Suspect you're right.

P: Number 3 engine missing.
S: Engine found on right wing after brief search.
P: Aircraft handles funny. (I love this one!)

S: Aircraft warned to: straighten up, fly right, and be serious.
And the best one for last.....

P: Noise coming from under instrument panel. Sounds like a midget pounding on something with a hammer.
S: Took hammer away from midget