

Message From 2018 National President Guy Cox

I AM . . . RURITAN ! WE ARE . . . RURITANS !



And boy do we have a lot to be thankful for, me in particular. I first want to thank God for this opportunity to possibly make some impact with our organization over the next year.

I would also like to thank you for electing me. It is an immense honor to be standing here before you while following in the footsteps of

some of the greatest men and women in Ruritan.

I want to thank all of the Ruritan clubs and districts for all of the invitations they have given Linda and me to share their celebrations during this year.

I am so blessed to have lived long enough to have my hair turn gray and to have my youthful laughs be forever etched into deep grooves on my face.

So many have never laughed, and so many have died before their hair could turn silver.

One of many honors that I had this year was the re-dedication of the West Virginia obelisk at Valley Forge. Past National President Jerome Rodes from Lower West Virginia worked tirelessly to get funding and organize this event.

While attending the Foundation Weekend in Galax this fall, I was able to share Past President Danny's pin with a couple of boys who gave the Boy Scout salute while saying the Pledge of Allegiance with the rest of us. Past Foundation President Pat Davis called later to tell me that they had decided to join Ruritan.

When we say that all you have to do is "Just Ask" in order to increase your membership, we mean that.

Be strong enough to stand alone, smart enough to know when you need help, and brave enough to ask for it.

We must "grow" so Ruritan does not "go" from our communities and we can do that.

During the middle of August, we traveled to the Sutherland Community Ruritan Club in Iowa to celebrate their 50th Anniversary.

A shocking occurrence happened later in the year when we were notified that one of their Ruritan members lost his wife in the shooting that occurred in Las Vegas during the Jason Aldean concert.

That was one of the many occasions when the faithful members of Ruritan were asked for prayers and possible financial assistance for our fellow member.

Another heart breaker during last year was the loss of National Director Betty Moore.

We all want to remember her and one way the Foundation is wanting to honor her is by having your district dedicate a fundraiser toward building a fund to support a scholarship dedicated in her name.

These kinds of activities point Ruritan towards a future of growth by staying true to the goals for which Ruritan stands, things I am especially interested in during my tenure as President.

For instance, this year we are trying something new for Ruritan.

We want the new National Directors to have an understanding of what their part of the Ruritan experience is going to be like from the very beginning.

So, we had training for all of the candidates here at the convention rather than waiting until later in the spring.

New National Directors will now be able to better represent Ruritan National at their assigned districts during the first part of the year.

We will also bring these first-year National Directors into the National Office for additional training in March.

Additionally, our first National Board meeting will be held during Founders' Day in Holland this year to celebrate the 90th year of Ruritan.

We want to thank the Holland Ruritan Club and the Holland District for all of the special plans that they are making to allow this new meeting at our founders' location.

Special provisions are being made at the hotel and the Holland clubhouse for this meeting.

I also want to thank those Ruritan clubs and districts who contributed toward the Summer Leadership Conference to make it a special learning experience. This was an outstanding conference and much was learned about Ruritan and ourselves.

We learned that we could start a new club with as few as three or four citizens attending the first meeting.

When the second meeting occurs, if they have brought a friend or two with them, that will give you eight to ten individuals that are interested in starting a

continued on page 4

Magazine of and published by Ruritan National, Vol. 83, Spring Issue, Ruritan (ISSN: 0036-0147) is published four times a year. Ruritan National is a non-profit, incorporated association of Ruritan Clubs in the United States of America. Ruritan National assumes no responsibility for opinions expressed by authors of articles or claims by advertisers. Subscription price for one year is \$8. Single issues are \$2 each.

Periodicals postage paid at Dublin, VA and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:
RURITAN NATIONAL, P.O. BOX 487, (UPS) 5451 LYONS ROAD, DUBLIN, VA 24084.

Ruritan club in their community.

It also means that you have enough people to fill the offices of a new Ruritan club. O.H. Bobbitt and Betty Moore started a new club, the Brookneal 21th Century Club, by thinking outside the book.

We need that kind of leadership to continue growing Ruritan and doing what is right for our communities. I commend them for that action. We could and have also used skype for committee meetings, foundation meetings, and even Board meetings where appropriate.

You may now open the small envelope located in front of you at your table. This is the pin that I want to present to you. This pin was designed by Norman O'Dell, our friend from Tennessee.

You will notice that the pin is dominated in the center with the monument that is located in Holland, Virginia, and is dedicated to our beginning in 1928. Below it is the number 90 which is to represent this coming year being the 90th year of Ruritan and will be celebrated in Hampton, VA.

Around the monument and above it are the words "Return To Our Roots." Many of us feel that Ruritan has lost something along these 90 years and we need to return to the original roots that our organization was based on. We will strive to do that this year.

Many clubs do not report all of the wonderful things that they are doing for their communities through our community service projects.

We are to report these services each quarter to our district governor who will report those services to Ruritan National.

Many of our clubs are not doing this.

They are still doing the work but do not want to spend the time to report their work.

We, as an individual and as a club, need to advertise all of the great things that we are doing for our communities.

It is not a brag, it is just a fact: a fact that will help with recruitment.

You may not want an extra pat on the back, but people need to know what it is that your group is doing because your activities advertise not only your club, but also Ruritan as a whole.

The olive leaves located on the sides of the pin are to represent the peace that we should be sharing with the world.

We hear of the many criminal acts that are occurring everyday within our world.

We must learn to share the peace we find with our Ruritan friends with other individuals we have contact with while sharing the love of Ruritan with others.

The ribbon near the bottom says "Sharing Is Caring," that is what all Ruritan clubs do.

We share the funds that we earn from a fundraiser with members of our communities that have a need for assistance.

We share our funds with the fire department, police department, hospitals, and other organizations.

We share by providing Rudy Bears to these organizations to give to young children and sometimes to the elderly in nursing homes.

Please continue doing that again this year.

We share our time working with youth groups such as scouts and 4-H, giving of our time while helping to instruct and educate them.

We share our funds by giving scholarships to local students that are hard working and well deserving.

The assistance that they receive from us enables these students to further their education.

We share our time to assist veterans and senior citizens, reading for students at schools, recycling projectsthe list is endless.

If you want God to bless you and your Ruritan club, give of yourself, your time, your finances, and all that you have.

We share our finances every year with the Ruritan National Foundation through the Birthday Fund, Tom Downing Fellow Awards, Build Your Dollar Scholarships, Operation We Care, etc.

How many of us give of ourselves through blood donations?

By sharing our blood through these donations, we give of our life to save others.

There are so many more ways that we share with others and give of ourselves, our time, and our finances to assist others less fortunate than ourselves.

We do not need a reason to help people. You just need a caring heart. Ruritan's will always care for their fellow man and share with others.

We do make a difference with our communities and we should be proud of all of this service.

(I now want to introduce your new First Lady Linda who is going to speak about her project and how we can continue to give to others, this time our youth.)

Thank you, Linda, helping these homeless children will be a large community service project which will help your club when you report these hours and funds that your club has donated.

We are interested in how many hours and dollars you have donated for this cause. We are asking you to report those hours to Ruritan National and we will report to you at next year's convention.

What Linda is suggesting is definitely something that we can accomplish because we are Ruritans,

Ruritans are local friends, neighbors, business people, and students all working together to make their community a better place in which to live, work,

continued on page 5

and raise their families.

But more important, Ruritans are people helping people. Whether they are ten years old or ninety years old, we're all together in the same community and helping just one community member helps us all.

Ruritans want YOU to be the best that you can possibly be, and share the many good opportunities in life.

That's the goal of having a Ruritan club in your community.

YOU make a difference, because you care! You ARE important! You became a RURITAN!

It is hard work and time consuming when someone volunteers as a Ruritan, however, working side-by-side with other Ruritan members builds relationships that enrich our lives.

These moments of fellowship and service benefit all individuals that are involved.

Remember, Ruritan clubs are made up of volunteers.

When we take up our cross, it is a volunteer thing, a deliberate cross that we decide to do.

When we fail to follow through on our expectations, we lose the interest of those new members and soon their membership.

Most clubs will say that their clubs do not earn money to keep or horde it for the club.

If that is truly the case, why do many of our clubs have thousands of dollars in our treasury? Why are we not spending this money to grow Ruritan?

It is clear that much of the activity in our world is for monetary profit or applause or recognition, but here is the difference.

People filled with God's spirit seek to be agents of love, hope, and redemption. As we do so, the Holy Spirit is able to glorify Christ through us.

I know that the efforts of your Ruritan club have not gone unnoticed. I have personally seen many Ruritans doing great things and always giving their best to improve life in their communities.

Ruritan needs hope, the hope of growth for the future. I want to work with individuals who are willing to give of themselves to grow this organization.

I want to serve people and that is the initiative that I want to make tonight, to serve and walk among the people of Ruritan.

Not higher than you but right beside you. You may see me serving food at a Ruritan dinner or clearing the table after you have eaten your dinner. That is what a good Ruritan does.

We are not afraid to get our hands dirty. Let me stand beside the person who makes things happen. I am perfectly willing to do that.

As an officer of Ruritan National, we need to be willing to give of ourselves as the members of this great

organization gave of themselves every day working to help others.

We have got to let people know that we care about them and that starts with us, the officers of Ruritan National. We need to lead by example.

The position that we hold as elected officials in this organization is because of the faith others have in us. Let's make those individuals proud of what we are doing for the good of all Ruritans.

We need to show our support and that we do care for others and are willing to work for them and with them. Please, remember one thing, "People do not care how much you know, until they know how much you care."

We have been told by a "wise old man" (O. H. Bobbitt) to "Think outside the book," and "To be the change...Not the conversation!" What was good for Ruritan yesterday is not necessarily good for Ruritan today !!!

The club meeting format in the handbook is a guideline for us, but clubs can conduct their meetings in a way to make their clubs successful. We need to focus on the club's community involvement and projects that they do. Clubs need to do a self-evaluation within their community to make sure they know what is needed by that community. We should be asking, "What can Ruritan do for your community?" In the terms of leadership, we need to encourage members to take a leadership role in everything that they do in Ruritan. Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision.

It is the ability to direct individual accomplishment toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results. Teamwork makes the dream work.

Henry Ford once said, "Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress, and working together is success." We are all involved in this journey called life. We must keep an eye out for one another and make an extra effort to encourage one another. Each of us is a vital thread in another person's tapestry. Our lives are woven together for a reason. One of the best things to hold onto in this world is a FRIEND. Wise words from National Director Susan Greisz's dad --- "The tender loving care of human beings will never become obsolete. As you grow older you will discover that you have two hands.....one for helping yourself and the other for helping others." A note on the wall of the Willoway Complex where we stayed in Sutherland, Iowa reads "Vision without action is merely a dream, action without vision just passes the time, and vision with action can change the world." You hold a wealth of people sharing; this is Ruritan . . . people caring!

Let's change the world!!!!!!