

International Colloquium on Voluntary Blood Donors

Rotarian Bill Bailey (Rotary Club of Bailey's Crossroads) was invited to speak at the 11th International Colloquium on the Recruitment of Voluntary Non-Remunerated Blood Donors. The colloquium was held in Cairo, Egypt, on January 12-18, and was a high visibility event, opened by Suzan Mubarak, the Egyptian Red Crescent and wife of Egypt's President. Nearly 250 participants from 74 countries and eight International health organizations participated. Bill described the potential contributions of Rotarians throughout the world, and what three Rotary districts were doing in Latin America and Africa to promote safe blood projects — including Districts 7610 and 7620. There were only two Americans registered, and Bill was the only one to give a presentation.

He spoke on the second day, sandwiched between an Ethiopian Red Cross speaker, a French Canadian, an Iranian and an Egyptian from their respective blood transfusion organizations. The response was excellent, and several national health officials, including the Minister of Health



from Lebanon, sought Bill out after the question and answer period, seeking copies of his presentation and slides. Bill made it clear that "... though he could not speak for Rotary International, he shared the ideals of Rotarians throughout the world." He concluded his presentation

He concluded his presentation with the following statement: "Rotarians represent a multitude of trades and professions; many members are government officials and doctors, including employees of local hospitals and health ministries. Such Rotarians can prove to be invaluable in coordinating efforts with local ministries and officials. Working through Rotary clubs may alleviate some of the problems endemic with bureaucracy. Rotary International worldwide remains focused on Polio eradication; but local districts and clubs remain free to pursue their own course beyond this arena. Utilizing only a portion of the world-wide resources of more than 1.2 million Rotarians in 32,000 clubs in over 200 countries, a safe blood program can and will work to expand Programs in committed countries and to encourage other regions to commit to a comprehensive Safe Blood program." As if on cue, several Rotarians among the various delegations sought Bill out and echoed support. Since his return, he has received messages from delegates of countries as diverse as Slovenia and India. Of course, while in Egypt, Bill visited Rotary clubs in both Cairo and Alexandria.