

### AN AMAZING LIFE!

**Murray Dryden**, SCAW's loved and esteemed co-founder, passed away peacefully on February 1, 2004 in his 93rd year. It seems fitting that his granddaughter Debra and her husband Sieg were in India delivering bedkits at the time of his death.

Murray was born on a farm in Domain, Manitoba, in 1911 and knew the meaning of hard work and a loving family. After leaving home during the Depression years, like many others, Murray found it difficult to find work. He became a door-to-door peddler, subsisting on whatever little cash he could make. While travelling East, many nights he slept in train stations as he rode the rails from one small town to another. He learned then what it was to be deprived of a good night's sleep.

In 1932, Murray found work in Hamilton selling plant food, and it was there that he met and married Margaret Campbell in 1938. In 1948, the Drydens moved to Etobicoke when Murray began selling building materials, and here they raised their three children. During the 1950's, Murray pursued a hobby in photography. One night he was particularly taken by the peaceful pose of his sleeping daughter, Judy, and took her photo. This led to a desire to photograph more and more children as they slept. It was his hope to publish a coffee-table book.

One night while travelling in India, Murray tripped over a child sleeping on the street. A man of ideas, he decided



that he must and would do something for children who had no comfortable bed. He couldn't feed the world, or alleviate hunger, but he believed a good night's sleep could make a hungry child's life more comfortable. Murray was a champion for children in developing countries, primarily because they have no welfare systems, no Medicare, and often little or no hope for a future. Thus, with a strong desire to help others and a firm belief that with God nothing is impossible, Sleeping Children Around

the World was begun in 1970, with a distribution of fifty bedkits in Pune, India.

Murray and Margaret devoted their retirement lives to this program, initially hoping to raise \$1,000,000. After this was achieved, Murray set a new goal of 1,000,000 bedkits. To date, 688,600 bedkits have been distributed.

Murray leaves his three children, Dave, Ken and Judy, grandchildren Greg, Debra, Sarah, Michael, Kate and Dana, and great-grandchildren Jeffrey, Chris, Kevin, Jennifer, Theo and Anaka. He was predeceased by wives Margaret (1985) and Theda (2002).

One of Murray's favourite quotes was "There is nothing more peaceful than a sleeping child". May you rest in peace, Murray, knowing that your work will be continued and your dream of 1,000,000 children being put to bed will be realized.

# LONG LIVE SLEEPING CHILDREN AROUND THE WORLD!

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# KOLKATA, INDIA: January 27 to February 2, 2004: 5,000 Bedkits

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**BY PETER NEWTON  
TORONTO, ONTARIO**

Our four person SCAW travelling team of two couples—Claire and Peter Newton; Debra and Sieg Will-Dryden—were greeted at the Kolkata airport by six Rotarians and four of their wives. This was their second trip out to the airport, since the previous day they had waited for hours, only to be notified that we would be arriving one day later. We had missed our flight due to wintry weather at our own Pearson Airport.

We were royally welcomed with the traditional Indian cleansing (good luck) ceremony, including the laying of wonderfully fragrant garlands around our necks.

This was just the beginning of our exciting six days of working with Kolkata Rotarians, their families and friends, to bring, on behalf of you, our generous and caring donors, the gift of a magnificent bedkit to 5,000 needy and appreciative Indian children.

After a quick check-in at the hotel, we embarked for our first distribution site before noon on our day of arrival. Just observing Kolkata's street life as our driver negotiated the busy, noisy and chaotic streets of this teeming city of 11-million is quite a startling experience for people from Ontario.

Unfortunately, we witnessed a very sad sight—a traffic fatality. As the body lay covered on the road waiting for the arrival of the authorities, the assembled mob of people had taken the law in their hands and had started a fire under the truck involved. In the following day's newspaper, we read that the mob had to be broken up by police using batons, but that the driver of the torched truck, who had struck the pedestrian, fortunately had escaped unharmed.

Nowadays, it takes only one non-stop flight to get to India from Toronto, but what a shock it is when you arrive. There is so much poverty. It is everywhere. There are more people living in poverty in India than any other country in the world. We had come to the right place. But, underneath the ubiquitous mess and squalor, there is dignity to life there. The more we tried to understand a little bit about it, however, the more we realized how much hope there is for better human existence

in this country of over one-billion people. Human philanthropy is everywhere in India. Yes, the need is great, but there are a lot of great people lending a hand. SCAW is part of that Herculean effort.

In this report to our SCAW donors, I want to assure you that on this Kolkata distribution [as on all our distributions] our SCAW promise that "100% of every donor dollar goes to a needy child" has been honoured. One of our travelling team's two principal objectives is to ensure that this promise is kept. To do so, we take on the roll of being auditors. We count, and we count again. We count registration logs, labels,



bedkits, tickets, and kids. And we recount them. We check the bedkit components for quality, serviceability, and value. We check the bookkeeping, the banking, the purchase orders, and the purchasing criteria. We check on how each child has been selected. And, we keep a constant eye out for any possible irregularities.

Photography is an important part of the SCAW promise. Receiving your photo of a child, with your name on the label, is our guarantee to you that we not only took the photo ourselves, but also that each and everyone of the 5,000 children received a bedkit. So the photo is more than a picture of a happy child with a bedkit, it is also visual proof of our all-encompassing role as on-site hands-on auditors.

Our other main objective is our role as ambassadors. We are ambassadors for SCAW, for Canada, indeed for the rich countries of the developed west. We are ambassadors to the recipient children and their guardians whether they are the child's family, teachers, friends, or social workers. We are proud ambassadors to our dedicated Rotarian friends and their supportive families. We are ambassadors to India, one of the very oldest civilizations.

There are many touching stories to be told about this Kolkata distribution. The more we dialogued with the children, their guardians, and the Kolkata Rotarians, the more we realized that for each of the 5,000 children, there is at least one interesting

story. Some of the stories are sad: like the mother from a poor Muslim village of Fatehpur, whose two children were crippled from malnourishment, but who are now getting support from the Evergreen Welfare Society under the able direction of volunteer, Doctor Abdul Waris Ali; or, the 250 children of the town of Sundar Bun, who were wakened in the middle of the night, around 3am, to assemble with their parents and Rotarian guardians, before being trucked to the river, to again wait in the dark for a boat, and then had to take a long train ride to arrive in Kolkata for their distribution around noon. Their endurance was rewarded with a bedkit from SCAW donors and a hot lunch from Kolkata Rotarians.

The one story from this Kolkata distribution that I will remember always, was during an open-air wrap-up meeting that was being held on the last day between the four Canadian SCAW travelling volunteers and the dozen Kolkata Rotarian committee chairmen. It was at that time that I announced to our Rotarian partners that Debbie had received a phone call the previous evening from her father Dave Dryden with the sad news that her grandfather, Murray Dryden, had passed away. I observed that Murray would be very happy looking down upon us continuing his good work, and how significant it was that Murray's granddaughter was amongst us continuing his mission of helping needy children. After we all stood in silence to recognize the monumental achievements of our inspirational founder of SCAW, we reminded ourselves, and took comfort, that the baton had been passed to the next generation, and that SCAW would endure. Murray's corny little Alpha-Omega signs had taken on a new meaning. He is very proud of us!

The need is great, and we thank our donors for continued support of Murray and Margaret Dryden's project, to help needy children in developing countries.

**BY CLAIRE NEWTON  
TORONTO, ONTARIO**

*Namaskar* (greetings). Our Kolkata distribution went extremely well as everything had been planned and organized

very efficiently. The Rotatians all showed up every day, along with their wives and children and everyone helped in whatever way they could. I was particularly impressed by their desire to make the children as comfortable as possible. They brought in chairs for the kids to sit while waiting, and provided entertainers (such as clowns, Mickey Mouse, and large robots) to make them smile; they also gave them a *tiffin box* (lunch). The children were amazingly well behaved, and so many shyly said “thank you auntie” as they were given their bedkits.

The Rotarians also took very good care of us – we were even invited to a private wedding reception, taken to an amusement park, and visited local markets, etc. On our last evening, all the families and friends who participated in the distribution joined together at a fellow Rotarian’s terrific garden (who could ever forget those giant dahlias?). They entertained us with music and songs, dance and recitals, and their combined talents were truly impressive. They even shamed the four of us into singing O Canada (thank you Sieg, you made us sound good).

One group of 50 children in particular stayed in my mind. They were the children of sex workers, a profession considered even below that of the so-called lower castes. These women, accustomed to abuse and neglect, have now found the language with which to speak about their own rights. They have joined an organization called Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee (DMSC), an exclusive forum of 60,000 sex workers of West Bengal and their children.

The political objectives of DMSC are decriminalization of adult prostitution, securing social recognition of ‘sex worker’ as a legitimate profession, and establishing sex workers’ right to self-determination. Debbie and I had a chance to talk to them through social workers accompanying them. At first, they were a little shy and reluctant, but at the end, they allowed us to take a photo.

They told us that they have been empowered by uniting together. They have the right to say no, they have the right to use condoms which are distributed free by DMSC. They understand that if they do not take care of their health, no one would take care of their children if they couldn’t work? AIDS is an escalating problem in India, and these women are now aware of the dangers.

On the way home, I read that Melinda Gates visited Kolkata’s red light district

with the DMSC committee, then pledged \$200-million for AIDS prevention in India. Dare we hope?

We also had the opportunity to visit Mother Theresa’s place in the centre of the city. The orphanage was heart-wrenching of course, but her work continues through the Missionaries of Charity sisters, along with volunteers from all over the world. Mother Theresa definitely made a difference here!

While there, we learned about the death of Murray Dryden. It was particularly poignant as we were with Debbie, Murray’s granddaughter, and her husband Sieg. We comforted ourselves by thinking that Murray would be happy knowing that we were there continuing his work. He was also one man who made a difference. Thank you Murray! Thank you to all SCAW donors, you are also making a difference!

### BY DEBBIE WILL-DRYDEN OAKVILLE, ONTARIO

My trip to Kolkata was a bittersweet experience, the distribution overlapping the day my grandfather, Murray Dryden, passed away.

Although sad to receive the news while far away from Canada and from family, it felt very right and good to be handing out bedkits in the place that meant so much to my grandfather. We were working for SCAW; just as he would have wanted. The SCAW Kolkata distribution was successful on many levels, a large number of bedkits were handed out in a relatively short period of time, yet it did not seem overwhelming for either the workers involved or for the kids and their families. At the distribution sites, it was obvious that the organization was enhanced by the Rotarians’ families, the scouts, and the students – a whole community working together with us Canadians, reaching out to others. It was inspiring to see people of all ages and backgrounds working toward a common goal; a goal set for us by my grandfather when, many years ago, he watched his daughter sleeping gently: “there is nothing more peaceful than a sleeping child”.

To make sure that our goal was logical and appropriate, we did an impromptu follow up on the SCAW program by visiting some of the homes of former bedkits recipients. The careful documentation of the children



who received bedkits made it easy to return to their homes. In addition, once we arrived in the neighbourhood, we gathered an entourage of children eager to act as ambassadors and tour guides. Upon arrival at each dwelling, the response was the same: a broad smile and a welcoming sweep of the arm beckoning us into their home. Within each of these homes the bedkit items were clearly being used and the children, as well as their families, were still very appreciative of SCAW’s program.

One visit confirmed, for me, the validity of SCAW, it was the second home we visited. In this small, carefully patched dwelling lived a boy who received a bedkit two years ago. The dwelling was rented to his mother, who worked cleaning people’s homes, and his father, who pulled a rickshaw in order to provide for the young boy and his sister. After stooping through the doorway, we entered a closet sized room containing a few metal pots and kitchen items, and behind, the slightly larger bedroom. The bed, although small by our standards, dominated the room and was used by three people, leaving a narrow space for one family member to sleep on the floor.

With the help of a Rotarian interpreter, we were able to question the family—was the boy attending school regularly? Yes, yes was the response; he is always attending school. What does he want to be when he grows up? “Doctor” he promptly replied. When we asked if the items from the bedkit were being used, the mother quickly reached to the foot of the bed to display the bedkit linens.

Claire inquired as to whether they found the plastic mat included in the bedkit helpful, and the mother nodded vigorously. She stood on the bed and tugged on a shelf lined with a large clear plastic bag – the bag from two-years ago in which the bedkit had been packed. The mother had misinterpreted the question, and in doing so demonstrated to me that what SCAW is doing is tremendously worthwhile, that the whole \$30 contribution is valued and appreciated in a way which seems hard for us to comprehend. Even the plastic bag was saved, was found helpful, and was being appreciated.

SCAW began over 30 years ago, small at first, and has now grown larger. It’s not yet to the one million bedkit mark as dreamed of by my grandfather, but working steadily toward that goal. “It’s always been about the

(continued on page 4)

Kolkata, Debbie Will-Dryden, Oakville, Ontario, continued from page 3)

children,” he said. The children are the start of it all and the ending too, the alpha and the omega, the reason that SCAW continues to do what should be done. The children are the source of inspiration for the whole program. So when we travel to a place like Kolkata, a place where children do not have our same quality of life, it moves us to try to make things better for these and other children around the world, as it clearly inspired my grandfather so many years ago when he first came to India.

## **BY SIEG WILL OAKVILLE, ONTARIO**

The final day of the SCAW distribution in Kolkata has ended, and in total 5,000 needy children have received bedkits to assist them in getting a good night's sleep. The three bedkits used for the donor photographs are repackaged and given to the last three children, the photography equipment is taken down, the label holders are put away and a feeling of satisfaction and accomplishment has set in. Six days of distributing bedkits have come to an end, and tomorrow we fly back to Canada to attend to the rigors of everyday life. Boy this sure was hard work, or was it?



As I reflect on my first bedkit distribution with SCAW, I am impressed with the dedication and commitment of the Rotary Club of Dum Dum who assisted our team in completing a successful distribution. The distribution itself may have taken only six days; however the SCAW bedkit project started for this Rotary club over four months ago.

Nominating a chairperson to oversee the entire project and creating a number of sub committees to assist with the functional areas that needed support such as site selection,

procurement, finance, quality assurance, distribution and medical care were essential. These sub committees needed to be focused and engaged in the project to ensure that their responsibilities were completed on time and that all SCAW guidelines were met.

The extensive planning and co-ordination utilized to ensure the success of the SCAW bedkit distribution was evident during our first day of distribution. Despite being delayed by a snowstorm in Toronto and arriving late in Kolkata, the first distribution site had volunteers readily available, bedkits had been delivered on time, children who were receiving bedkits were changed into their new clothes, and a photograph site had been identified.

After reviewing the bedkit itself, it became quite apparent that great effort had been taken to source reputable suppliers for the production of the items, and to assemble the bedkits. The logistics of procuring the items, inspecting the quality of the products and then to assemble the bedkits accurately were tasks that were not completed till late in the evening on many occasions. The secure storage of 5,000 bedkits and their delivery to the five different distribution sites throughout Kolkata, were tasks that appeared seamless to our team and were completed properly on every day of the distribution.

During our days in Kolkata, these Rotarians assisted with the many tasks that needed to be completed: registration of children, reconciliation of bedkits, movement of bedkits to the various distribution sites, wives helping the needy children get clothed for the photographs, and their children supporting the various tasks of the entire distribution. On any given day, over 60 volunteers actively participated with the distribution of bedkits, and this did not include the additional assistance provided by the scouts and students.

As well, arrangements were made to make the distributions a “fun” day. Clowns, costumed characters and a lunch were provided to ensure that these needy children received a good night's sleep and a memory that would last them a lifetime.

When one thinks of distributing an average of over 800 bedkits daily, the time commitment invested by this Rotary Club over the course of six days was impressive. Balancing the responsibilities of supporting the SCAW distribution, as well as attending

to one's personal affairs, can be difficult, however these Rotarians never displayed or even mentioned these sentiments. Friendly faces and a true sense of welcome greeted us on our first day and continued on throughout the distribution; this in turn encouraged us to exemplify these qualities to the children whose lives would be impacted by your contribution to SCAW.

I have not only completed my first SCAW distribution, I have gained a greater understanding of the word “service”, as it relates to one's community. This can only be accomplished through the GREAT examples that were demonstrated to me on a daily basis by my two co-leaders, Peter and Claire Newton, my wife Debbie, and the Rotarians and their families that participated. It is said that, “A community raises a child”, and the support that you have provided to our global community makes a difference in the future of these children.

## **THANK YOU for your contribution to this Kolkata, India trip**

**Black's Photography** for  
photofinishing

**Champion Photochemistry  
Limited** for continuously  
funding film and photofinishing  
costs since 1986.

**Konica Canada Inc.** for  
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**The Printing House  
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**5120 Dundas Street West  
Etobicoke, Ontario** for the  
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**Kay Kelly,  
Harry Keating and  
Maurice Kowanetz**  
for publishing this newsletter

**Donors and Volunteers!**

## **NEXT SCHEDULED DISTRIBUTION TRIPS**

**APRIL-MAY 2004 -  
PHILIPPINES**