



MAGNA *news* GRAECIA



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From the Honorary Chairman

Dear Rotarian Friends,

after a long holiday to celebrate my ninetieth birthday – and 45 years of Rotary! – with my usual enthusiasm I have recommitted myself to relaunching our Fellowship, and I expect you to do likewise if we want to keep it going. And so I am asking you to let us know if you are still interested in the Magna Graecia Fellowship, as many of you have already done, from Vice-President Scherer to our friends Hal and Carmela Moeller, who were amongst the first to contact us.

During my holiday I re-examined the activities of the Fellowship's first 15 years, and I was able to recognise that the strategy chosen to achieve our aims – the tour-meetings in Magna Graecia – is a valid one.

Bearing in mind, however, the extreme difficulty of preserving the memory of the past in a society that is more inclined to think about the present, I am of the opinion that we should now update and broaden our strategy in order to explore the past more efficiently, to understand it in the present and to project it in the future.

Updating implies an urgent discussion on the methods to be adopted and the forms that understanding the past should take so as not to remain excluded from the transmission mechanisms which the global communication system has developed. I have reached this conclusion because, over the years, we have been able to improve the definition both of our aims

(these are summarised on our website) and of the ways of achieving them.

Today when we refer to “a journey to these shores” we can offer something very different from the mere tour-meeting. As well as our cultural heritage, we can show visitors our ancient traditions of tolerance and dialogue which led to the pacific coexistence with people from other civilisations, as was the case with the Phoenicians, the Etruscans and the Greeks, giving rise to that ancient Tyrrhenian civilisation which transformed Southern Italy into wonderful “*Magna Graecia*”.

Ever since that era, the western world has always drawn on Italian culture and bears its indelible imprint, mainly because of that culture and dialogue that stems from way back in ancient times. Nowadays, however, thousands of cruise passengers disembark in the Bay of Naples every day without knowing anything about this imprint. We have the opportunity to transform this flow of tourists into a new modern Grand Tour in the footsteps of Goethe. We shall ensure that they leave our region with at least the sensation of the world they have merely touched upon, and that our regional authorities will take responsibility to this end.

After having closely examined our persuasive ability to reach these aims, we have identified some new ways of operating. These should:

achieve our primary aim, the spreading of the culture of Magna Graecia, by means of the international meetings which promote friendship and reciprocal understanding

among peoples: this is the specific task of the International Service of Rotary, hence, for a Fellowship, is in itself something we ought to do;

bear in mind both the specific choices already proposed in the projects we have devised and implemented over the years (*“Operation Youth”* - see MG news n.7, *“Peaceful Coexistence in the Mediterranean”* - see MG news n.10), and the experience gained with the Tour-meetings in Magna Graecia and the first *“Mediterranean Youth Meeting”*;

try and involve Rotaractors in our ventures, possibly in ventures for young people: this too is part of Rotary’s mission - to prepare the new generations. For us, this is important because, although the Fellowship has achieved remarkable success (250 members outside Italy and 250 resident in Italy, with a total of 600 participants in our various tour-meetings), we have not reached the level of expansion we would have wished for, on account of the Rotarian participants being, on average, elderly. The success of the first *“Mediterranean Youth Meeting”* confirmed the validity of our decision; enable us to become adequately equipped, starting with our Internet site which is already being reorganised: this is in keeping with Rotary’s computerisation plan which is forced upon us by the whirlwind development in communications that has enormously increased the possibilities of long-distance dialogue. One of the greatest opportunities is offered by the Messenger system which allows members of the Magna Graecia Fellowship to contact us, giving us the sensation of sitting together in a café. The achievement of our aim will thus be greatly facilitated;

e) prepare our own basic documentation concerning Magna Graecia culture which can be obtained only by links with libraries, film libraries and collections of virtual reproductions which would otherwise be

destined to disappear because of the standardisation of modern culture and the globalisation of the means of information. This process, which began with the monopoly of the television giants, will now be accelerated with the arrival of new revolutionary means of communication from the USA, such as the 3G (already available in Great Britain) e-books, and the latest development in palmtops. Several of our members have already offered their assistance in the documentation sector;

f) further our collaboration with the *“Grand Tour Foundation”* in order to put into practice all the above. Details will follow as soon as possible, and will be decided after a series of contacts with our Regional Coordinators and with some institutions interested in the Foundation’s aims have been completed.

By following this way forward which we reckon on finalising after an in-depth examination by a special committee, and with the collaboration of all those who wish to contribute their experiences in this field, the new Chairman, Angelandrea Casale, is beginning the overall relaunching of the Magna Graecia Fellowship with commitment, we hope, on the part of you all.

Giovanni Lazzàra

Visit our new Fellowship’s web site:

Visita il nuovo sito della ns. Fellowship:

www.ifrmg.org