

Rotarians teach business in Eastern Europe

When the communist system began to come apart in the then Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc countries, Dr. David Taylor, a member of the Rotary Club of Space Center (Houston), Texas, U.S.A., saw an opportunity to work for peace.

There would be people—average citizens—in these newly transformed countries who had no idea how to conduct business in a free enterprise system, he reasoned. They would need knowledge, support, and guidance in order to use the new system to their advantage.

Out of Dr. Taylor's concern and subsequent organizational efforts, an ambitious program evolved: It is called Project Free Enterprise. Supported by clubs throughout District 5890, the program allows Rotarians to bring a comprehensive two-day seminar on basic U.S.A. business practices to audiences in Eastern Europe and Russia. A team of eight speakers conducted three seminars in Poland and Hungary last year. In May Dr. Taylor and nine others, mostly Rotarians, will return to Poland for seminars in Warsaw, Wroclaw and Katowice.

Among the topics covered are management, business law, manufacturing, marketing, and bookkeeping. For the first day and a half, speakers present information, playing the role of consultants for a hypothetical U.S.A. company. The rest of the seminar is devoted to question-and-answer workshops.

"We are finding that people ask very fundamental questions about the laws of their country and what they're allowed to do or own as ordinary citizens," said Dr. Taylor. "Also a lot of the principles we teach bump into actual laws or customs that prevent people from practicing free enterprise. Our role is to let them look at a healthy western economic model. If they can recognize where they don't fit the model, they will know what the society or they personally need to work on."

The seminars are conducted with the cooperation of Rotary clubs in the host cities. Clubs publicize the event, arrange for a large (300-seat) hall and simultaneous translation, and provide home stays for the U.S.A. visitors.

The host club is asked to charge participants a nominal fee—and only if necessary—to cover the cost of the hall. "We don't want the seminars to become



Members of the Project Free Enterprise seminar team present a souvenir book and lap blanket to Dr. Witold Wroblewski (left), then president of the Rotary Club of Torun, Poland. Team members, all Rotarians from Texas, U.S.A., include (from left) Wanda Ellis, Jim Thomas, and Dr. David Taylor.

a source of privileged information for local power brokers," Dr. Taylor said.

Dr. Taylor believes that Project Free Enterprise could become a model for similar Rotary-sponsored information programs on a wide variety of topics such as public health, agriculture, social programs, and the environment.

Two districts anywhere in the world could settle on a topic, a target audience, find and train appropriate speakers,

and then agree on a date, Dr. Taylor said. Already there has been a call in Houston for a Rotary-sponsored information team to present a public seminar in Mexico on the environment.

Further information and suggestions on how to start and fund a Rotary information team in your own district are available from Dr. David Taylor, One Professional Park, Webster, Texas 77598, U.S.A. Fax (713) 690-2040.

Rotary honors philanthropist



Edward J. Piszek, philanthropist and founder of Mrs. Paul's Kitchens, will receive the 1992 Rotary Award for World Understanding. The announcement was made

27 February by R. I. President Rajendra K. Saboo, in conjunction with Rotary Day at the United Nations.

The official award presentation will be made during Rotary's 1992 International Convention in Orlando, Florida, U.S.A. on 16 June.

The son of Polish-American parents, Piszek has devoted thousands of hours and millions of dollars to projects

designed to improve the quality of life for people in Poland and Central/Eastern Europe.

Through "Peace Corps Partners in English," a massive educational endeavor, Piszek is helping to make thousands of Central/East European citizens literate in the world's language of business.

"I envision this work as a major step toward achieving world understanding, goodwill and peace," said Piszek.

Each year the Rotary Award for World Understanding honors a person or organization whose uncommonly high quality of work exemplifies Rotary's ideal of service, especially in promoting international understanding, goodwill, and peace.

The award consists of U.S.\$250,000 directed to an R.I. Foundation program selected by the recipient.