



Report on Integrated Solar Cooking Program in Brazil



Here we are back home after eleven weeks of “Teaching the Teachers” in Brazil. It certainly was no vacation but a very hard working time!

Instead of the originally-planned 4 workshops we held 12, in addition to the 8 slide show presentations for different organizations reaching roughly 600 people who presently know about the method, which of course will not make them all avid solar cookers!

We have now 5 teams of “multiplicators” perfectly able to teach the use and making of the Solar Cookers, the Rocket Stoves and the Hay Baskets. We gave them all the information needed to acquire the local material to make the devices. For example we had the good luck to find adhesive aluminum foil, which made the manufacturing of Solar Cookers much quicker and easier than if we had to glue aluminum foil to the cardboard. It also makes the final product better finished and sturdier than the glued version.

On several occasions we had the opportunity to observe how well prepared our star students are to continue this important program. They made us very proud! Since they have no access to high-quality tools in Brazil (most are imported and thus far too expensive for modest incomes), Michael ordered 17 sets of aviation-style tin snips in the U.S.A. and had them sent to Brasília. Unfortunately, the first batch of tin snips arrived just after we left! They will be distributed by our partner Rotary Club.

I also made 11 visits to local Rotary Clubs, not only to

have the necessary make-ups, but mostly in order to publicize our program and workshops.

Governor Ronaldo Carneiro invited me to accompany him on several of his official visits. He wanted to make all the Rotary Clubs of his district aware of the existence of our Program. Of course I couldn't do all the visits, but Gov. Carneiro and his wife have been our very best PR persons.

Our workshops mostly took place in the far-away satellite townships around Brasilia, where there is still a lot of poverty and lack of access to the most elementary facilities. (We also put more than 4,000 kilometers – about 2,500 miles – on our rented Fiat in getting to these places!)

We gave workshops for several very important and active environmental groups and university students, who were very interested in the water pasteurization part of the classes.

Prof. Bob Metcalf's Portable Microbiology Laboratory is now in the hands of Dr. Sonia Terra Ferraz, employee at the Ministry of Public Health and teacher at the University of Brasília. She has an impressive resumé. She is considering coming to the United States in order to meet Prof. Metcalf.

One Chilean lady, Ery Fredes, a local representative of Greenpeace, came to our workshop at the Planetary Union. After consulting her headquarters in São Paulo, they asked for a solar cooker package, which we gladly handed to her.

In order to assure the continuity of this program, we are in the process of establishing partnership with two Rotary Clubs in Brasilia: one with RC Brasília Lago Norte for Matching Grants (they have already reserved US\$

3,000,- for the project), and another with RC Brasília Peninsula Norte for a *Voluntary Service Grant* (VSG). After we were done with the workshop, we stored the remaining program material at the facilities of the Cooperating Organization, *Solidarity Program for Increasing Family Income*, our partner for the Matching Grants with the RC Brasília Lago Norte. I hope any other RC of our own region will join us in this very important humanitarian program.

Even after we left Brasília, Governador Carneiro continues to give attention to the project and Mrs. Fernanda Curado, spouse of the President Elect of RC Peninsula Norte, and Cecilia Gabriel President of RC Samambaia are organizing more workshops. They have also gotten in touch with all our students in order to find out who is using the Solar Cooker on a daily basis.

All my gratitude for the Rotary Club of Jackson, of which I am a proud member, for all the support, financial as well as moral they gave me for this exploratory program. I also thank my fellow Rotarians in Brazil who helped us to spread the available money, indicating where to buy cheaper material and did not hesitate to become our partners in order to continue the good work. Also my heartfelt thank to our dear friends who provided us with lodging, food and encouragement.

And last, but not least, my husband Michael without whom I never could have done this. He was of great help, he is an excellent teacher and knew how to communicate with the students without speaking their language! He even designed an alternative model of Rocket Stove, entirely made of scrap material, easily available in Brazil. He is not a Rotarian, but certainly knows the meaning of “**Service Above Self**”

Irene Perbal

