

# THE ROTARY BANNER

LIFESAVING EDITION

EAST ALTON ROTARY CLUB [WWW.EASTALTONROTARY.ORG](http://WWW.EASTALTONROTARY.ORG) CHARTERED OCT. 28, 1971 DISTRICT 6460

## HELP WANTED

THE CLUB IS IN NEED OF A PRESIDENT-ELECT TO BE CLUB PRESIDENT DURING THE 2010-2011 ROTARY YEAR. THIS IS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO RING THE BELL AND HERD THE CATS ON A WEEK TO WEEK BASIS. ONLY QUALITY INDIVIDUALS NEED APPLY (THAT WOULD BE YOU.) PREVIOUS OFFICE HOLDERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO RE-UP. SEE ROGER FOR THE DETAILS. THE SUCCESSFUL APPLICANT WILL BE ON KEVIN'S CHRISTMAS LIST.

## Own a piece of Rotary history

Antique Indian Kangra paintings. A wristwatch commemorating Rotary's 75th anniversary. A shirt from Nigeria with the RI theme Lend a Hand printed in four languages around the border. These are just a few of the items that will be auctioned off online from Past RI President Charles C. Keller's collection, gathered during his year as president 1987-88. Rotarians anywhere in the world can bid on the items, with the proceeds going to the Rotary Centers for International Studies in peace and conflict resolution. "In many parts of the world, people don't shake hands, they give a gift," notes Keller. "You can't imagine the extent of it. Art objects, handicrafts -- there's an unbelievable variety of things people would give." Keller turned part of his home into a museum, complete with lighted shelves, to display the items. After moving to a smaller home, he is parting with some of his treasures. Two hundred lots from his collection will be sold through the online auction, which closes midnight 23 February. "I was a bomber pilot in World War II, and I've been shot at, and that makes an impression on you," he says. "My passion is the search for world peace. The Rotary Centers program is the most direct effort that Rotary has ever made at peace-building, so that's where I want my money to go." Three Rivers Auction Company has volunteered to organize the auction. Auctioneer Tripp Kline, a member of the Rotary Club of Washington, Pennsylvania, USA, hopes the auction will get Rotarians' competitive juices flowing. "Somebody might bid \$2,000 on a \$5 coffee mug," Kline says, "not because they think it's worth \$2,000, but because they want to support the Foundation." "Some of the items have significant intrinsic value," Keller says, "but all have the enduring value of warm friendships and happy memories from every corner of the world." Before consigning his collection for auction, Keller consulted with Rotary History and Archives to find out which items should become part of RI's permanent collection. If you have items you think might be of historical value, contact the archivists at [history@rotary.org](mailto:history@rotary.org).

JAN.8, 2009

OFFICERS  
PRESIDENT  
ROGER WERTS  
PRESIDENT-ELECT  
KEVIN STUBY  
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DAVE MILLER  
SERGEANT AT ARMS  
RICK HOOKS  
EDITOR  
RICK HOOKS

## BIRTHDAYS



## THE SKINNY

--THE COMMENTATORS DESCRIBING THE ROTARY FLOAT IN THE TOURNAMENT OF ROSES PARADE SHARED THIS NUGGET. 2009 MARKS THE 20TH YEAR THAT WOMEN HAVE BEEN OFFICIAL MEMBERS OF ROTARY. THAT CHANGE WAS HUGE FOR RI AND ONE THAT WAS WAY OVERDUE. OUR FEMALE MEMBERS HAVE CERTAINLY MADE OUR CLUB A BETTER ONE.

## OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

YOUR EDITOR IS GOING TO BE OUT OF SERVICE FOR A FEW WEEKS AS I RECOVER FROM ANKLE SURGERY. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN PICKING UP THE SLACK AND PRODUCING THE *BANNER*, I'M HERE TO HELP. GIVE ME A CALL OR SEND ME AN EMAIL. HOPE TO BE BACK SOON.

## BASKETBALL

SATURDAY FEB. 7TH IS THE DATE FOR OUR BASKETBALL TOURNEY. DUE TO THE SPLIT VENUES (EASTWOOD AND THE REC CENTER) WE WILL NEED PLENTY OF HELP THIS YEAR. JOE IS COORDINATING THE EVENT AND IS WORKING UNDER THE ASSUMPTION THAT IF YOU WERE A PREVIOUS T-SHIRT SPONSOR, YOU WILL GLADLY CONTINUE TO DO SO. NEW SPONSORS ARE CERTAINLY WELCOME. PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR AT LEAST ONE SHIFT THAT DAY. EVERYTHING SHOULD BE FINISHED BY 6PM.

## PROJECTLINK SUBMISSION FORM

ROTARY CLUBS AND DISTRICTS SPONSORING PROJECTS THAT NEED FUNDING, VOLUNTEERS, DONATED GOODS, OR PARTNERS FOR A ROTARY FOUNDATION MATCHING GRANT CAN NOW USE THE PROJECTLINK SUBMISSION FORM: PROJECT SEEKING SUPPORT TO PUBLICIZE THEIR EFFORTS ON THE PROJECTLINK DATABASE. THE FORM IS AVAILABLE AS A WORD DOCUMENT AT [WWW.ROTARY.ORG/PROJECTLINK](http://WWW.ROTARY.ORG/PROJECTLINK). (SEE "RELATED INFORMATION.") THE NEW FORM REPLACES BOTH THE WORLD COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT FORM (784) AND THE ROTARY VOLUNTEERS PROJECT REGISTRATION FORM (285).

## NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS

...PARK THE PRIVATE JETS.-BIG 3 AUTO EXECUTIVES  
...TAKE A VOW OF POVERTY.-NEW YORK YANKEES  
...OBSERVE A MOMENT OF SILENCE.-JOE BIDEN  
...GET A GRIP ON REALITY. THEN RESIGN.-GOV. BLOGO  
...BLEEP BARK BLEEP BARK.-GOV. BLOGO'S DOG  
...LEARN SOMETHING ABOUT BUBBLES FROM MY MORNING BATH.-ALLEN GREENSPAN  
...GET THE CHOPPERS READY.-FED CHAIRMAN BEN BERNAKE, WHO SAID A MONEY DROP COULD STAVE OFF DEFLATION

### Book review- "Surviving Hell" by Loe Thorsness

Reviewed By C. Wyly Watson

Two hundred and forty-six Americans received the Medal of Honor for valorous service in the Vietnam War. One hundred and fifty-four of the medals -- more than 60% -- were awarded posthumously. Of the servicemen who lived to accept their medals, Lt. Col. Loe Thorsness, U.S. Air Force, experienced an unusual delay: He had to wait for more than six years as a "guest" of the North Vietnamese before he finally received his. He describes that interlude in "Surviving Hell: A POW's Journey." In 1966, he was sent to Southeast Asia to fly an F-105F "Thud" -- a fighter with a two-man crew -- in support of the American bombing campaign in North Vietnam. Operating from Takhli in Thailand, he and his "backseater," Harry Johnson, carried out "Wild Weasel" missions to identify and destroy hostile radar, flak and surface-to-air missile installations, clearing the way for fighter-bombers to attack vital targets in the communist homeland. On one such mission, on April 17, 1967, they took part in the action for which Mr. Thorsness was recommended for the Medal of Honor. While escorting a flight of attack bombers, they were jumped by several Russian-built MiG-17 fighters. Though his F-105 was not designed for aerial dogfighting, its great speed, the formidable gatling gun that it carried and Lt. Col. Thorsness's superb airmanship proved more than a match for the North Vietnamese. When the scrap was over, he was credited with downing two MiGs against nearly impossible odds. Just 11 days later, on their second mission of the day -- their 88th over North Vietnam -- Lt. Col. Thorsness and "backseater" Johnson were attacked by an enemy MiG fighter, which scored a direct hit on their plane with an air-to-air missile. They ejected at 10,000 feet at a speed of nearly 690 miles per hour, far faster than the maximum safe velocity. Both men suffered extensive injuries in the ejection but survived to land safely in the jungle about 70 miles west of Hanoi -- where they were taken prisoner. At that point, as Mr. Thorsness observes in "Surviving Hell," he was about to embark on "an ordeal that would brutalize me . . . and also allow me to become a better and fuller person." A strong religious faith and a love of country and family helped him to survive the next six years of torture, isolation and neglect. Mr. Thorsness says of the Vietnamese that "they hadn't improved much on the devices of the Spanish Inquisition" and that after he finally broke under torture and gave more than name, rank, service number and date of birth, "it was the lowest point in all my six years of captivity." Only later, did he find comfort in the assurance of another POW pilot that "everyone who goes through that type of interrogation . . . either they broke or died -- some did both." Ironically, he notes, torture wasn't really intended to get useful military information so much as to elicit propaganda statements from American officers. During much of his first three years in captivity Lt. Col. Thorsness was in solitary confinement or in a cell with one or two other prisoners. When Lt. Col. Thorsness was eventually put into one cell with a large group of fellow airmen, he and his fellow POWs began holding rudimentary classes, church services and even pre-commissioning training for the three Air Force enlisted men who were in the group. The three had been shot down in a helicopter in 1965 and, as Mr. Thorsness says, had been "tortured just like the officer pilots and kept the faith." Their fellow prisoners decided that they should be commissioned second lieutenants, and they were taught military and leadership subjects to prepare them. When all were released in 1973, the commissions were ratified by President Nixon. It is stories like the commissioning of the enlisted POWs that make "Surviving Hell" such an enriching appendix to the chronicle of the American experience in Vietnam. Or take the case of Mark Christian, one of the author's cellmates: He made a small American flag out of scraps of cloth, which he laboriously dyed and sewed together, only to have it discovered by the guards, who then beat him mercilessly. As soon as he recovered from the beating, he began to make another flag. Such was the character of the men who served their country by being true to its principles while in the hands of a cruel enemy. Men who in many cases were held captive longer than any other prisoners of war in our history. And it is their story, even more than his own, that Loe Thorsness tells so engagingly.

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## RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

online make-up-[www.rotaryclubone.org/](http://www.rotaryclubone.org/)

Want to add something to the banner?  
email [Rick-jrh415@hotmail.com](mailto:Rick-jrh415@hotmail.com)

### CLUB ARCHIVES

"A lie told often enough  
becomes the truth."-  
Lenin

### MAKE-UP OPPORTUNITIES

MON. NOON-WOOD RIVER  
ST. JOHN'S UCC  
NOON-JERSEYVILLE  
REACE UNITED CHURCH  
6PM-ALTON-GODFREY  
CASTELLI'S @ 255  
TUE. NOON-COLLINSVILLE  
HOLIDAY INN  
NOON-GRANITE CITY  
NIEDRINGHAUS  
METHODIST  
NOON-HIGHLAND  
MICHAEL'S  
RESTAURANT  
WED. 6:30AM-BETHALTO  
AIRPORT  
NOON-GOSHEN-LCCC  
CENTER-EDWARDSVILLE  
THU. NOON-EDWARDSVILLE  
FIRST CHRISTIAN

### FOUR WAY TEST

IS IT THE TRUTH?

IS IT FAIR TO ALL  
CONCERNED?

WILL IT BUILD  
GOODWILL AND  
BETTER  
FRIENDSHIPS?

WILL IT BE  
BENEFICIAL TO ALL  
CONCERNED?