



# ROTARY INTERNATIONAL

*Service Above Self - He Profits Most Who Serves Best / Servir d'abord - Celui qui sert le mieux profite le plus*

JOSEPH L. HAHN  
R.I. District 779  
District Governor (1986-87)

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August 17, 1986

TO: All Rotary Club Presidents, District 779

SUBJECT: Redistricting of District 779

During his recent visit, President M.A.T. Caparas urged us to reconsider redistricting. This subject has been studied and restudied in recent years and a decision was made in June to allow the district to remain as it is, the largest in the world in land-mass and one of the largest in numbers of clubs and membership.

After discussing the issue with President MATT and some others, I am of the opinion that our June decision is not in the best interests of Rotary International or the clubs in our district for the following reasons:

1. Although it might be possible to effectively manage 67 clubs, it will not be possible to manage 80 clubs — and that's what I predict for the near future.

2. "Effectively managing" 67 clubs is a dream that will not come totally true. Any professional manager knows that there is a limit to his span of control and it is far below 67. Two of our clubs are now on probation and several others could use the immediate personal touch of an on-sight district governor; but this is impossible prior to the end of 1986 when I will complete my visitations and have time to return—and that may be too late. Distances to some clubs preclude my return, no matter how dire the circumstances.

3. The use of Governor's Representatives is somewhat helpful, but there is really no substitute for a District Governor.

4. Generally speaking, District Governor's visits in our district should not start prior to mid-August. Those in the north country are on holiday and those in the southern clubs are busy entertaining them! Rotarians are either not home, or they are in the busy season of their business.

5. A lot of mail received from Rotary International and other governors from around the world goes unanswered — simply because I am not available to answer it during my visitation months.

6. It is virtually impossible to attract young men to the job of District Governor. Because of the size of our district, and the commitment necessary, a man must have either a steady income even if he doesn't work, or be wealthy enough to do without a salary for six to nine months or more. These conditions virtually dictate an older man for the position — and this brings up a subject discussed by President MATT.

7. If our governors are older men, they will never have an opportunity to go on to be a Rotary International Director — and that is a prerequisite to being Rotary International President. I think there are many men in our district who are highly qualified to someday be both Director and President who could not take the time now to manage district 779.

In my opinion, the optimum size of a district is 40 clubs — Rotary International starts talking about redistricting when one reaches 60 clubs — and district 779 is now fast approaching 80 clubs. There have been several proposals provided by redistricting committees in recent years; submitted as follows for your consideration.

1. Split at the Canadian border. This proposal has NO supporters to my knowledge. Clubs on both sides of the border are very much opposed to it.

2. Split North to South creating two international districts. Although the concept of two international districts is appealing, the distances involved in both would mean that we really haven't solved one of the major problems — distance.

districts out of 2 or 4 out of 3, etc. This would be a temporary measure at best. Three of the four neighboring districts have over 40 clubs and the fourth is not far from it. The clubs in the lower St. Lawrence, those which are geographically the most logical to join in another district, do not want that option. Their culture and language are totally different from the rest of District 781 and to join them there would be a great disservice.

4. Split the district along county lines in Maine with the coastal counties of York, Cumberland, Sagadahoc, Lincoln, Knox and Hancock joining with our current New Hampshire and Massachusetts clubs in one district -- and the inland Maine counties of Franklin, Somerset, Penobscot (except the town of Paten and surrounding areas), Waldo, Oxford, Kennebec and Androscoggin joining with the Canadian clubs in another district.

This fourth alternative is more attractive than others for several reasons:

1. The southern district would be about 250 miles long, contain 31 clubs with 2213 Rotarians. There is an immediate potential for extension clubs in York, Dover/Durham and Biddeford/Saco and near-future clubs in several other areas.

2. The northern district would be about 600 miles long plus Frobisher Bay in the Northwest Territories. The internationality of that district would be preserved. There would be 36 clubs with 1603 Rotarians and immediate potential for extension in Bangor, Quebec and Jonquiere and future prospective clubs in several other areas.

3. The mix of clubs in the northern district would provide a Canadian governor at least every other year (20 of the 36 clubs would be Canadian) and maybe more often (It's up to them).

I have informally polled many members of the redistricting committee. Most agree that the fourth alternative is the most viable. Up to this point I have not heard any strong disagreement that redistricting is inevitable. Redistricting will result in two stronger districts both with the probability of growing to 40 clubs in the near future and growing in strength of service with the more local governor.

The Manual of Procedure requires a majority of clubs to disapprove before this proposal will be defeated; it is imperative that you respond to me prior to October 1st if your club objects to this action. If you do not approve of this action, I hope you have a better idea and will submit it.

If you approve, or do not object, I'd be delighted to receive your vote of confidence prior to October 1st. Either way your club decides, I'd like to hear just so I know you received this letter.

I've been led to believe that if approved, this split will occur as early as July 1, 1988. If that is true, we'll be looking to select two governors for the northern district this year (1988-89 and 1989-90) and one for the southern district (1989-90)--Ron Drouin has already been elected for 1988-89 in the southern district.

Thank you for your continuing support in a very difficult job.  
WITHOUT YOUR HELP, I CANNOT DO ANYTHING.

Sincerely,

Joseph L. Hahn

Copies to:  
Rotary International (Bill Egli)  
All Past District Governors, District 779