



*A journal of the triumphs and despairs, of the philosophies and failings, of the future and the past of Rotary District 7780 in the years two thousand and two thousand and one*



# THE ORACLE

December, 2000

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THE ORACLE is a monthly publication of Rotary International District 7780 for the Rotary year 2000-2001. Its editorial purpose is to reinspire Rotarians to the spirit of philosophical idealism and inquiry into service as the key to success and happiness in life, that were strongly evident in the founding years of Rotary at the start of the last century. Articles contributing to these themes are welcome and need to be received by the 15th of the month prior to the month of publication. Call (603) 679-5443 or write The Oracle, 234 North Road, Fremont, NH 03044

## THERE BUT FOR THE GRACE OF GOD

*by Elias Thomas*

It is just few days before the holidays and I realize how difficult it is sometimes to "get into the spirit". However, this year has been a rather exceptional one in my life for a number of reasons, not the least of which is due to the honor and privilege of serving as District Governor for Rotary District 7780.

As most of you know, and probably all by now, I chose to approach my year of service in a little different manner from my predecessors. For some time, I have had a deep concern for the homeless or the disenfranchised within our District, as well as those who similarly suffer outside our boundaries. With the encouragement of Tony DeAngelis, a past District Governor from California, as well as the support of my Assistant District Governors, I decided to visit most of the Clubs in the District, arriving an hour ahead of the scheduled meeting time, dressed as a homeless person (or in the very first few visits, as a blind person). You can imagine the reactions to this presentation covered all ends of the spectrum.

After several presentations, I was dealt a rather strong blow from one of the Clubs. I

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*Elias Thomas, Governor, Rotary District 7780*

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will never forget the morning. It was pouring rain, and as so many of our homeless people are forced to do, I donned a fifty-five gallon trash bag and sat outside the meeting place, getting soaked for nearly an hour. It was cold and I sat and shivered. Most people simply rushed by me, eager to avoid getting wetter and looking forward to that hot cup of coffee awaiting them inside at the meeting. One man walked by me and sneered, "Nice door-stop!" When I finally entered the room and began to speak, I removed my disguise while talking. I asked the members of the Club to close their eyes for a moment and to think about what they

had seen when they arrived for the meeting that day and what they might have said, which the person sitting outside may have heard. Following that meeting, I received telephone calls and Emails and all sorts of criticisms and the most cutting of all: "We feel that our Club has not been visited by our District Governor."

This all occurred very near the baseball game with the Portland Sea Dogs - ROTARY TAKES A SWING AT HOMELESSNESS. Naturally, I was disturbed and concerned and called a meeting of my Assistant District Governors and the District Trainer, a past District Governor. At great length, we talked over and

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rehashed my presentation and decided to go forward with the presentation, with some minor modification. With the baseball game only a few short days away, I also realized that the sponsorship dollars were not coming in satisfactorily and so, since this project was a new one for the District, I realized it was solely my responsibility to make it work. I took off that entire week from work and set about raising the support we needed to make the project a success. With the help of all those who sold tickets, and gave names of potential sponsors, I put shame aside and marched into one office after another and begged for money and support for this project. In the end, we raised nearly \$27,000 in a single day and since that time, we have distributed nearly all of the funds raised.

We assisted with a Transitional Housing project in the Rochester, New Hampshire area; we purchased twelve complete new bed sets for the Tedford Shelter in Brunswick; we purchased 1,000 gallons of fuel oil for The Free Store in Rumford; we contributed \$3,000 to help with the total renovation of a kitchen and common room at Cross Roads in Portsmouth; we contributed \$5,000 to the Preble Resource Center in Portland; and we were able to help restock the shelves at the Bath Food Pantry with about \$700 worth of food and necessities. We were also successful in collecting nearly fifty cases of food that day in August, which were distributed to the York County Shelter and Bon Appetit Meal Program in Biddeford.

The week immediately prior to Labor Day, Jane and I attended the Leadership Forum and The Rotary Institute in Baltimore. While

we were there, we had a number of outside activities from which we could choose, if we wanted to do something in addition to attending plenary sessions and breakout sessions. We chose to volunteer five hours at a soup kitchen deep within the "projects" in Baltimore. There are many anecdotes I could relate about our experience there, but I must tell you of one of the most humbling. After we had served some 365 guests for lunch that day, we returned to our hotel and the conference. I took a walk down along the inner harbor area of Baltimore and as I was walking along, I recognized a young man who had eaten at the soup kitchen earlier that day. He was walking with two of his friends and was approaching my direction. I deliberately walked over to him and kind of slapped him on the back of the shoulder and said, "Hi pal." All three young men stopped, he stared at me intently and then said, "You served me lunch today, didn't you?" I said that I had and he dropped the bags he was carrying and threw his arms around me and embraced me and then said, "God bless you, man, and thank you. And, God bless Rotary." You can only imagine how stunned I was, first that I had invaded this young man's "space", but more so the way he responded to me.

This is a long way of explaining how we sometimes are able to run into an obstacle and then create an opportunity for a breakthrough. When I met with that Club earlier in the summer, I met with opposition and bitterness and that also shocked me. However, after careful deliberation and prayer, I mustered all of my resolve and plowed forward in what I deeply felt was necessary to Create Awareness and to Take Action.



# THE ORACLE



## FUN FUND RAISING

by Marie Williams

As the District's Annual Giving Chair again this year, it is my responsibility to encourage you to give to Our Rotary Foundation. I think the following excerpt from an e-mail that was sent to Dick Drukker July 30, 1999, about giving to the Rotary Foundation says it better than I ever could. As you may recall Dick was the featured speaker at our District Assembly this spring at Yoken's.

It really makes you think

*As you know, I have been saving my quarters, dimes, nickels and pennies for a little over a year to give to the Rotary Foundation. I have found that this was much more meaningful than I would ever have anticipated. Every time I emptied the change into the jar (and eventually into the Foundation drawer), I thought about what those coins could mean to someone whose name I will never know and whose face I will never see. When a cashier handed me a couple of quarters and a penny or two, I couldn't forget that someone somewhere would consider that a day's wage. The bits and pieces of money that, quite frankly, I haven't missed at all in balancing my budget, would be a treasure to someone else. When I sat down a couple of different times to roll the coins, I envisioned the stack houses which Rotary has built for families who had lived in boxes. Those stacks of penny rolls inched another family closer to shelter. How many dimes or quarters ensure that a community would never have a polio epidemic?*

*We take so much for granted in our society. I*

*take so much for granted. There are thousands upon thousands of children who live on the scraps left behind by others. All piled together, the change (scraps) that most of us would never miss could change an entire community's life.*

*I am conscious of the fact that there are those who can and do give significantly more money than I will ever see in my life. I am not wealthy. I'm not even sure I'm middle class.*

*I just wonder how much money the Rotary Foundation would have to spend if every Rotarian (maybe one out of every four Rotarians) in our District set aside their change for even a month. We could have a coin-rolling party a celebration for the change that we will change lives!*

*In total, I have been able to give \$1,100 to the Foundation since May of last year. \$678.53 of that was loose change. \$412 was made up of \$1 bills which I had been setting aside for only a couple of months.*

Something as simple as saving your pocket change can make such a big difference in our world, please consider doing this in your home and/or your club as you CREATE AWARENESS AND TAKE ACTION!

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## JAPANESE BOWLS

A few weeks ago, Rotarian Rick Ericson of the Durham Great Bay Club won the Club lottery. Like many Clubs, Durham Great Bay does not award the entire pot each week. Instead they let it grow in a suspenseful manner so that the sum can become quite large. In any event, that week lucky Rick took home \$600. At a loss as to what to do

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with this unexpected windfall (it was the first time he had won in ten years), he went to Pier 4 and spent some of it buying their entire stock of Japanese rice bowls, though some of them, according to Rick, look more like large teacups with no handles.

Why such an odd purchase? It turns out Rick had read the message about collecting loose change that Marie asked to be printed (article on opposite page). Realizing that such abstract pleas are made more effective by giving people specific instructions and tools, Rich gave a rice bowl to each member of his Club with a request that they save their loose change, emptying it daily into the rice bowl, for a period of three months. At the end of three months, member Jane Marmontello, who is a bank vice president, will bring a change counting machine to the meeting and each member will empty their Japanese rice bowl of change into the machine to be counted. All of this will be done with some ceremony and will likely take the entire meeting.

This will take place during the week of April. Marie Williams is asking each Club in the district to similarly ask their members to collect their loose change for January, February, and March and during the meeting of the first week in April to have a counting event. All the money collected will go to the Rotary Foundation Annual Giving Fund, of which Marie is fundraising Chairperson for this year.

Now it is important to note that the method works even without Japanese rice bowls. In fact if your Club is near the New Hampshire-Maine border you are unlikely to find any

since Rick Ericson has bought them all out. Thus members in individual clubs will have to use initiative to figure out an appropriate receptacle into which daily to collect their loose change. Mayonnaise jars, tin cans, and flower pots would all work well. Club boards could meet to decide on appropriate change receptacles for the members of their particular Club. In Clubs where members are creative and independent, the Club leadership could even ask each member to come up with their own idea.

Perhaps not everyone knows that money donated to the Rotary Foundation by districts is not spent immediately, but accumulates interest for three years. After that, 60% of the original donation is returned to the District Governor to be used for District Grants, disaster relief, or whatever the District leadership decides is best in that year. Thus Mike McGovern's discretionary budget was actually the money raised during Craig Wellman's term, three years before; Elias Thomas' budget was originally raised by Marie Williams when she was Governor; and so forth. The remainder of funds donated to the Foundation go, after three years earning interest, to the Foundation's many international programs.

To summarize, Marie Williams is asking the leadership of each Club in the District to ask their members to collect all their loose change, daily, into an appropriate receptacle, during the months of January, February, and March. During the week of April 1, an Assistant District Governor or member of the Foundation Committee will be attending the meeting of each and every Club in the District to collect the collected change on behalf of the Rotary Foundation.



# THE ORACLE

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## ETHICS AS ENTICEMENT

by Peter Johnson

One of the great benefits of putting thoughts on paper each month is the chance to sit and reflect about all things Rotary. Rotary, of course, means different things to different people, and adds to each of our lives in different ways, but I've been struck at the regularity of private conversations that include the phrase similar to "It may sound corny, but I really do try to apply the four way test to (fill in the blank)."

How odd that The Four Way Test does, indeed, sound corny. But how true that it does, indeed, work. TRUTH, FAIR, GOODWILL & BETTER FRIENDSHIPS, BENEFICIAL.

The greater challenge, perhaps, and the topic for this month's short column is the challenge to externalize our thought process

when applying the Four Way Test to any particular situation. As many people as I have encourage to join Rotary, I don't think I've ever personally encouraged a potential new member because Rotary's ethical standards are likely to assist that new member with future decisions in life. Further, I can't recall ever prefacing a conclusion with "I've thought about this a lot, but when I apply TRUE, FAIR, GOODWILL, AND BENEFICIAL to this situation, etc., etc. Each and every day I probably have the opportunity to expound upon our ethical standard to help make Rotary more visible to others, and to instill in others one of the core reasons why I am a Rotarian.

Opportunities not taken are opportunities lost. This column has been a personal reminder for me to exploit and externalize part of our core. I hope you will do the same.

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## WORLD COMMUNITY SERVICE

by Sarah Luck

First, I want to check in and be sure everyone has spent some time getting familiar with [www.rotary.org](http://www.rotary.org) and the fantastic job they have done organizing program descriptions, the catalogue of projects and grant applications on the site! It really is fabulous. It will be a great tool for clubs to do more WCS and do it faster and more easily.

SAVE THE DATE: February 10, 2001! Our WORLD PEACE & UNDERSTANDING EVENT will be Saturday, February 10, 2001 in Portland at the Center for Cultural Exchange and the Portland Club, across the street from one another on State Street. A great multicultural

program and speaker are being planned.

Also, upcoming meetings of the WCS Committee will be held at the Panda Garden off of Exit 8 in Portland, starting at 6:00 pm on Feb. 8 and Apr. 12, 2001.

In my travels around the District, I've heard about interesting projects planned or in the works as follows: York – Dominican Republic (educational); Hampton – Dominican Republic (fire truck); Brunswick Coastal – South Africa; Brunswick – Brazil; Oxford Hills – Africa

So you can see, there's a lot going on!! We encourage anyone with an interest in world community service to come to our meetings or be in touch with us or anyone on the committee to learn more, get help, get ideas or just chat about WCS.



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## DISTRICT 7780 ATTENDANCE AND MEMBERSHIP

<i>Club</i>	<i>Members at start of year</i>	<i>Gain/Loss year to date</i>	<i>Members this report</i>	<i>Percent Attendance</i>
<i>Windham</i>	39	-2	37	90%
<i>Oxford Hills</i>	63	-4	59	89%
<i>Saco Bay</i>	66	1	67	89%
<i>Scarborough</i>	27	-3	24	88%
<i>South Berwick</i>	43	3	46	88%
<i>Wells</i>	53	-3	50	86%
<i>Freeport</i>	36	3	39	85%
<i>Kennebunk Portside</i>	39	-1	38	85%
<i>Bath Sunrise</i>	20	-3	17	84%
<i>Somersworth</i>	24	4	28	83%
<i>Rumford</i>	38	-4	34	82%
<i>Biddeford-Saco</i>	64	-3	61	82%
<i>Bethel</i>	39	-1	38	80%
<i>So. Portland-Cape Elizabeth</i>	52	4	56	78%
<i>Exter</i>	42	1	43	77%
<i>Portsmouth</i>	249	3	252	77%
<i>Bath</i>	61	-1	60	76%
<i>Brunswick</i>	121	1	122	75%
<i>Kittery</i>	25	3	28	75%
<i>Westbrook-Gorham</i>	42	-5	37	74%
<i>Boothbay Harbor</i>	56	-5	51	73%
<i>York</i>	63	2	65	73%
<i>Fryeburg Area</i>	26	-4	22	72%
<i>Rochester</i>	77	0	77	70%
<i>Sanford-Springvale</i>	60	-7	53	70%
<i>Brunswick Coastal</i>	16	-3	13	69%
<i>Casco Bay Sunrise</i>	30	2	32	68%
<i>Yarmouth</i>	38	4	42	68%
<i>Dover</i>	78	4	82	65%
<i>Portland</i>	199	-8	191	63%
<i>Newburyport</i>	74	2	76	62%
<i>Seabrook-Hampton Falls</i>	20	-4	16	50%
<i>Bridgton-Lake Region</i>	21	-1	20	
<i>Damariscotta-Newscastle</i>	48	-3	45	
<i>Durham-Greatbay</i>	57	0	57	
<i>Hampton</i>	61	-4	57	
<i>Kennebunk</i>	86	3	89	
<i>Ogunquit</i>	36	-2	34	
<i>Portsmouth Sunrise</i>	30	-1	29	
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>2219</b>	<b>-32</b>	<b>2187</b>	<b>76%</b>

No report -  
membership  
numbers for these  
clubs not up to  
date



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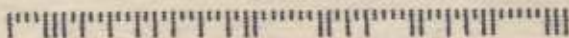


## NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR DISTRICT OFFICERS

**C**lubs are encouraged to submit nominations for District Governor for 2003-2004 and members of the District Budget Committee for 2001-2004 and 2002-2005.

Qualifications for District Governor can be found in the Manual of Procedure and include membership in a Rotary Club for at least seven years prior to taking office, serving a full term as Club President, and being willing and physically able to carry out the duties of District Governor.

The Budget Committee member must be a Past President of a Club in Oxford or York County for the 2001-2004 term and a Past President of a Club in Cumberland, Lincoln or Sagadahoc County for the term 2002-2005. Nominations must be forwarded to DG Elias prior to January 15, 2001. Interested Rotarians are encouraged to call DG Elias for more details.



03905-0142

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