

THE ORACLE

Elias Thomas III, District Governor, 2000-2001



March and April, 2001



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THE ORACLE is a monthly publication of Rotary International District 7780 for the Rotary year 2000-2001. Its purpose is to reinspire Rotarians to the spirit of philosophical idealism and inquiry into service as the key to success and happiness in life.

Articles are welcome and need to be received by the 15th of each month prior to the month of publication.

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Stand Often in the Company of Dreamers

by Elias Thomas III

When I returned home from India and the final National Immunization Day (N.I.D.) against Polio, I had a renewed spirit, not only about myself, but more importantly about Rotary International. By traveling through only a small section of India, I saw first-hand just what Rotary International and Rotarians had accomplished but I also saw what lies ahead.

My contact with my friend Ravi Dayal, the president of the Rotary Club of West Delhi, was truly auspicious. As I have told so many throughout the District, it was on the N.I.D. that he and I spoke of some of the dreams he held for Rotarians in his own Club to accomplish. He spoke passionately about the Calamity Bank or the Rotary Rapid Disaster Relief Bank where he saw a need for collecting items to create "Emergency Kits" and to store them in a warehouse in Delhi. As he put it, "You never know when there may be a need for such things. An armed conflict could begin or we could experience a natural disaster. Does it not make sense to be prepared?" How prophetic he was. Five days later, we all know of the horrific earthquake which savaged the lives of tens of thousands of men, women and children in Gujarat.

The day Ravi and I spoke of the Calamity Bank, he asked if there might be some way in which the

Dreamers (cont from page 1)

Rotarians in our District could lend a hand with the project. I promised him we would try. On the day we left to fly home from India, I again promised that we would do our best.

When I completed the application and supporting documents to The Rotary Foundation for a Matching Grant for this project, I included the names of all of the Rotary Clubs and the Interact Clubs that participated in the project and was pleased to receive assistance from a program director regarding the application.

I had hoped that we could count on each Rotarian in the District to contribute \$10.00 for the Calamity Bank. Realistically, I knew that an average of \$5.00 per Rotarian was closer to an attainable target. Not only did we receive participation from 75% of the Clubs in the District, but we also had contributions from our four Interact Clubs! The total raised was just shy of \$15,000. In addition, I had spoken with one of my fellow District Governors and he agreed to shift \$2,000 of District Designated Funds (DDF) of SHARE money into this project. With matching funds from our DDF account, and hopefully with a dollar-for-dollar match from The Rotary Foundation, we will have had a \$50,000 impact upon the lives of so many in India, whom we will never meet. The last time I remember such an effort was a few years ago when once again our Clubs raised funds for purchasing equipment for orphanages in Romania.

As you know, the theme for this year's District Conference on May 17-20 is **CELEBRATION OF SERVICE**. I have received a number of itemized lists of the accomplishments of each Club throughout the District, for qualifying for the Presidential Citation and the Governor's Trophy. We do not engage in these various programs for the sake of being awarded a piece of paper or receiving another engraved plaque. We do not do this for the headlines in our local newspapers or a few lines in a magazine or a weekly bulletin. We do this because we are Rotarians and we are

different. Something inside calls each one of us to reach out within and beyond our community boundaries to those who are in need of our services.

We deliver Meals-on-Wheel; conduct blood drives, sell Christmas trees; clean up the beaches or the parks in our towns; raise funds for helping kids with cancer or for repairing cleft lips and cleft palates; bring young folds from the strife-torn communities in Northern Ireland or the Middle East so they can learn of peaceful coexistence; send ambassadors to other reaches of the world to learn of different cultures and to teach of our own culture; generously give scholarships to young people going on to trade schools or college; sponsor ice-fishing derbies and paint rooms at day-care centers; we take kids and the elderly to baseball games, raising tens of thousands of dollars and

bringing food to benefit the homeless throughout the District. The list is endless and is only restricted by our imaginations. PolioPlus began as the idea of one Rotarian in

one Club in the Philippines. Today we have immunized over two billion children against this disease.

All these projects and we continue to commit ourselves to supporting The Rotary Foundation. This year it made sense to me to try to encourage each and every Rotarian in District 7780 to individually support The Rotary Foundation. My goal was an average of \$100 per member and to continue this level of participation for the future. Rotary today is an organization of "regular" people, like you and like me. We are working people who have committed to give back something of ourselves to our communities – local and worldwide. Rather than depending upon the few to heavily support The Rotary Foundation with major donations, it is time for each of us to look inward and ask, "Is what we do worth \$2.00 each week?"

We may be "regular" people, but we are NOT common people. We are truly UNCOMMON PEOPLE. It is time to prove that by adding to the dreams of others.

**"Is what we do, worth
\$2.00 each week?"**

LISTEN UP!

By Roger Fagan, M.S.

The **"Listen Up!"** project has been in existence since 1992 and has been sponsored by the Portland, Maine, Rotary Club since 1994. The aim is to collect used hearing aids for use by individuals in India; the program is carried out in conjunction with the Vellore, India Rotary Club. To date, 439 hearing aids have been distributed to hearing-impaired individuals in India.

Roger Fagan, an audiologist and Portland Rotarian, donates his time to refurbish the donated hearing aids. While technological advances in this country may render a hearing aid no longer useful here, that same apparatus can literally change the life of a resident of India. The Vellore Christian Medical Board matches the hearing aid capability with the right patient.

These hearing-impaired recipients are destitute children and adults who would otherwise not be able to hear. Your old hearing aids can mean the world to someone else in need!

As the next stage in the evolution of this project, Roger will travel to India early in 2002 to train personnel there to do the restoration work themselves. Brings to mind the old adage, "....teach a man to fish and he will no longer be hungry." To ensure that his visit reaps the greatest possible rewards, the Portland Rotary Club will raise 333 hearing aids for Roger to use in his training laboratory.



Do you or others you know have hearing aids that they no longer use?

Perhaps they are lost in the back of a closet or buried in a drawer. If you have such equipment, please make them available so individuals in India can enjoy a life-enhancing change.

Send your used hearing aids to: Roger Fagan, M.S., Audiologist
985 Forest Avenue
Portland, ME 04103

Contact him for further information at 207-797-8738.

Dear Friends of Rotaplast.....

report from the team in Cumana, Venezuela

By Berri Kramer, Photojournalist

Friday, March 16, 2001 - Cumana, Venezuela
First Day, Clinic

Four walls are dressed on the inside with salty humidity, a gift from the ocean by Cumana, Venezuela. The small enclosure on the military base held the opening clinic where 177 potential patients rotated through stations and check points. Hopes of being chosen for surgery during the following six days were expressed in the soulful eyes of those having already experienced a lifetime of emotional pain. More than half of them would realize the dream they had prayed for. They appreciated every detail, every attempt to be comforted, every gift. There was an unspoken understanding that we were there to share in the joy of seeing their children bear new smiles in a week's time. The experienced team members guided newcomers through the ropes. A few expected moments of chaos smoothed out as the day flew by.

The ninety selected surgeries begin tomorrow. A confident team walks the sandy shores where small waves crash. Their rhythm soothes any remaining anxieties. The warm breeze hugs bodies, cleanses breath, clears heads. The brilliant sun falls towards the water, silhouetting the mountains that meet the sea. It is a powerful circular beacon on the horizon, but not nearly as powerful as the circle of truth held in the pupils that I saw today. Those eyes are a beacon of promise.

First Day of Surgery

Through the lens, Dr. Bartel's gloves looked like hand-dipped candles, the color of creamy light

butter and luminous golden beeswax. The indentations of his fingernails and the tiny hairs between his second joint and knuckle were not washed out by the brightness of the operating room light above. These gloves held the promise of a new life for five-year old Rosemaris Cedenó. The sparkle in her spirit had caught my camera's eye the very first day at the clinic. Her mother smiled at me from across the room as she waited in line. We connected again in the pre-op where I had the opportunity to verbally express what our faces had exchanged the day before. She told me that she is 23 and the mother of three children. Rosemaris has two younger siblings, ages two and four, who were at home with their father.

The cleft lip repair by Dr. Bartel went beautifully.

As Rosemaris awoke in the recovery room, her mother beamed with joy. She couldn't wait to hold her.

It was one of the last surgeries of the day and we began to tidy stations and organize for the week ahead. Volunteer nurses Heidi Devoe and Sharron Newton were largely responsible for the smooth success of the first fifteen surgeries. They teamed up as the hub of an amazing wheel. They knew where to place the spokes to keep it turning while avoiding the bumps. Their confidence and gentle guidance gave us all strength.

As I packed my camera equipment safely for travel, the recovery room was graced by the beautiful voice of Rosemaris' mother. She held her baby close as she rocked.

Her song of joy touched us all!

Governor-To-Be Training

by DGE Peter Johnson

There is probably not an incoming District Governor on the face of the planet who, when asked to contribute to a newsletter who would not write about the International Assembly (as in Governor-to-be Training Camp).

I must begin by thanking you, my fellow District Rotarians, for the opportunity to represent you at this incredible gathering. A distinct and humbling honor to associate with leaders from around the world each sharing the common elements of "Service Above Self" within the context of the superb organization we happen to call Rotary International. I'm left with several strong impressions I'd like to share with you:

1. The internationality and universality of our institution. No matter the location of the home club, each governor is there because of a wish to be there and to make our local and global communities better. Each one of us leaves the Assembly, whether bound for India, Chile or Maine, to plan and conduct a Presidents-elect Training Seminar, followed by a District Assembly, followed by individual Club visits, all eventually leading up to the District Conference.

2. The power and inspiration of the words delivered by Rotary's International Leadership Team were a joy. Whether past president, current director, or international president-to-be, these individuals care, and care deeply, about the health of our organization, the extraordinary demand for our services and the opportunities we all share to make a difference for ourselves and others along the way.

3. I marveled at the 45-minute session where we met our Group Study Exchange partner for Spring, 2002. We will swap with Quezon City, Philippines. Think about it: over 250 pairings, each side (frequently in need of translation assistance) instantly in agreement that 5 travelers from their

country would be safe and well-hosted in a foreign country, causing over 2500 people to cross the globe next spring, all with the sole intention of, in one small way, trying to make the world a smaller and better place.

4. I marveled at many of the proposals I saw during the Project Fair (largely an opportunity for second and third-world countries to present pet local projects that could use some help from the stronger economies of the world). Not only were many of the projects simple basic human needs (e.g. a water well), but many were handwritten! I'm not talking copies of handwritten proposals, I'm talking about future District Governors - typically from among the upper classes of third-world countries - bringing a few dozen proposals ALL of which were original, handwritten documents. For me, it solidified the absolute responsibility we share to export some of our largesse elsewhere.

5. Most importantly, I left the International Assembly reaffirmed in my belief that my brief twelve-month role as Governor is all about supporting the institution and is even more about supporting the individual club. Without the health and vitality of individual clubs and their individual members, the institution and all of our successes would never exist in the first place.

Your Humble Servant,

**Do YOU know what red wings
attached to a Rotary pin
represent?**



What is Youth Exchange and How Can I Get Involved?

By PP Nancy Hawes

Once upon a time, the Ogunquit Rotary Club needed to find a host family for their Norwegian exchange student. They asked Rotarian Joe Boyle for his help. He agreed and the rest, as they say, is history. Joe fell in love with Norway and with the Rotary Youth Exchange program. He is now chair of our Youth Exchange committee, after being a committee member for many years. Just what does this committee do?

I'm glad you asked.

Our District's exchange students - Gustavo, Misha, Mira, Pinar, Yazmin, Cristina, Eric, Franleska, Vijit and Karoli - arrived here in late August from all corners of the world. Before their arrival the committee had a spaghetti supper for their host parents and counselors to brief them about the program. After the students' arrival, the committee planned an orientation weekend for them at the Sunday River Inn with the assistance of the Bethel Rotary Club. During the weekend the students bonded with each other, learned the rules (e.g. the 4 D's: NO Drinking, Drugs, Driving or Dating), discussed their feelings about being an exchange student and made sure their paperwork (visas, health insurance, etc.) was in order.

After the orientation weekend, the committee tried to plan an activity for the youths about once a month. So far, the students have been to the Fryeburg Fair, made chocolates at Wilbur's Chocolate Factory, traveled to Boston for the day, had a birthday party with the Ogunquit Club and went to the Winter Carnival in Quebec, Canada. They are looking forward to attending the District Conference and sailing with the Camden Club.

These students make up only half of the exchange program. The other half is comprised of the American students who venture overseas for a year. Tom Wilbur of the Freeport Club masterfully coordinates the outbound student exchanges....assisting the students in completing the lengthy applications, conducting interviews, overseeing their applications for travel arrangements and health insurance, helping with visa applications, holding orientation sessions for parents and students, and corresponding with students once they leave to go to their respective countries overseas.

DISTRICT SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

MAY 2001

- 6 Outbound GSE Team returns from Turkey
- 17-20 District Conference - Spruce Point Inn, Boothbay Harbor, ME
- 18 Inbound GSE Team arrives from Turkey
- 18 Inbound GSE Team arrives from Africa
- 28 Outbound GSE Team returns from Africa

JUNE 2001

- 18 Inbound GSE Team returns to Africa
- 19 Inbound GSE Team returns to Turkey
- 24-27 Rotary International Convention - San Antonio, Texas
- 30 Rotary Year ends

In addition to these activities, Joe and Tom attend semi-annual regional youth exchange meetings, troubleshoot when problems arise with students and administer the youth exchange budget. Their large doses of "Service Above Self" are generously rewarded by the energy, enthusiasm and love of the students.

If you or your club would like to become more active with youth exchange, contact Joe Boyle 207-282-4294 or Tom Wilbur 207-865-4071.

District 7780 Attendance and Membership

Club	Members at Start of year	Members This report	Gain/Loss Year-to-date	Percent Attendance
Bath	61	57	-4	79%
Bath Sunrise	20	21	1	94%
Bethel	39	35	-4	84%
Biddeford-Saco	64	N/R		
Boothbay Harbor	56	51	-5	74%
Bridgton-Lake Region	21	20	-1	
Brunswick	121	124	3	77%
Brunswick Coastal	16	13	-3	81%
Casco Bay Sunrise	30	32	2	69%
Damariscotta-New Castle	48	45	-3	70%
Dover	78	83	5	
Durham-Great Bay	57	57	0	64%
Exeter	42	43	1	88%
Freeport	36	41	5	63%
Fryeburg Area	26	24	-2	
Hampton	61	55	-6	
Kennebunk	86	81	-5	73%
Kennebunk Portside	39	34	-5	87%
Kittery	24	23	-1	76%
Newburyport	74	76	2	56%
Ogunquit	36	35	-1	70%
Oxford Hills	63	60	-3	79%
Portland	189	184	-5	74%
Portsmouth	246	255	9	73%
Portsmouth Sunrise	30	29	-1	65%
Rochester	77	74	-3	67%
Rumford	38	35	-3	75%
Saco Bay	66	67	1	80%
Sanford-Springvale	60	52	-8	77%
Scarborough	27	25	-2	77%
Seabrook-Hampton Falls	20	16	-4	60%
Somersworth	24	284		
South Berwick	43	46	3	78%
So. Portland-Cape Eliz.	52	56	4	80%
Wells	53	48	-5	
Westbrook-Gorham	42	38	-4	65%
Windham	39	39	0	98%
Yarmouth	38	41	3	66%
York	63	65	2	
TOTAL	2205	2108		

*N/R indicates no report was submitted



CONFERENCE 2001

"First District Conference of the New Millennium"

May 17 through May 20, 2001

District 7780 Conference 2001

to be held at the

SPRUCE POINT INN

Boothbay Harbor, Maine.

This conference will be the greatest opportunity to mix and mingle,
share ideas and forge friendships!

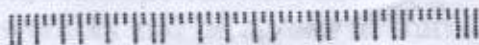
There will be many activities to cause laughter and create memories.

We encourage you to register today!

Your registration fee is ONLY \$45.00 per person.

Contact your club President for complete information and registration forms.

There will be limited seating at the special events we are planning – and they will be available on a first-come, first-served basis.



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