



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

September, 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

## THE FAMILY PLEDGE OF NONVIOLENCE

TO RESPECT SELF AND OTHERS. To respect myself; to affirm others; and to avoid uncaring criticism, hateful words, physical attacks, and self-destructive behavior.

TO COMMUNICATE BETTER. To share my feelings honestly, to look for safe ways to express my anger, and to work at solving problems peacefully.

TO LISTEN. To listen carefully to others, especially those who disagree with me, and to consider others' feelings and needs rather than insist on having my own way.

TO FORGIVE. To apologize and make amends when I have hurt another, to forgive others, and to keep from holding grudges.

TO RESPECT NATURE. To treat the environment and all living things, including our pets, with respect and care.

TO PLAY CREATIVELY. To select entertainment and toys that support our family's values and to avoid entertainment that makes violence look exciting, funny, or acceptable.

TO BE COURAGEOUS. To challenge violence in all its forms whenever I encounter it, whether at home, at school, at work, or in the community, and to stand with others who are treated unfairly.

see *A Pledge Worth Taking*, page III



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## DISTRICT 7780 ATTENDANCE AND MEMBERSHIP

Club	Members last report	Gain/Loss	Members this report	Percentage attendance
Windham	39	-3	36	92%
Saco Bay	66	-3	66	89%
Kennebunk Portside	39	-2	37	83%
Wells	53	-2	51	83%
Oxford Hills	63		63	82%
Bath Sunrise	17	1	18	81%
Ogunquit	36	-2	34	81%
South Berwick	43	1	44	81%
Bethel	39	-1	38	80%
Sanford-Springvale	60	-7	53	80%
Brunswick	121	-1	120	79%
Damariscotta-Newcastle	48	-3	45	78%
Portsmouth	258	-8	250	78%
Brunswick Coastal	16	-3	13	77%
Scarborough	25	1	26	77%
So. Portland-Cape Elizabeth	53		53	76%
Kittery	25	-1	24	75%
Boothbay Harbor	56	-3	53	74%
Fryeburg Area	28	-3	25	74%
Kennebunk	86	3	89	73%
Somersworth	24	3	27	73%
Bath	61	-1	60	72%
Exter	42	3	45	72%
Dover	78	3	81	71%
Durham-Greatbay	57	3	56	70%
Westbrook-Gorham	42	-3	39	70%
York	63	2	65	70%
Portland	199	-9	190	68%
Rochester	77	-1	76	68%
Bridgton-Lake Region	21		21	63%
Newburyport	74	-6	68	63%
Casco Bay Sunrise	30	1	31	62%
Seabrook-Hampton Falls	20	-3	17	60%
Biddeford-Saco	64			
Freeport	36			
Hampton	61			
Portsmouth Sunrise	30			
Rumford	38			
Yarmouth	38			
Totals	2226	-44		

no report



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## A PLEDGE WORTH

### TAKING *by Reverend Peter Kelley*

*Editors note: We recently met Reverend Kelley and were struck by the pledge (see page 1) that his Church and other organizations are asking people to consider. What a wonderful project for our district, to invite our members to take this pledge, to invent the future by personal example.*

Legend has it that an indigenous culture on a coastline developed a peculiar response to bad weather. It seems that whenever the leaders surmised that a hurricane was coming, they started wildfires deep in the mainland, drawing the rest of the tribe away from the coast to fight the threat, thereby saving them from the danger coming from the sea. To second millennial inhabitants of the West, it may seem a peculiar illustration; in fact it is a pretty good example of an instance where a solution seems completely unrelated to the problem it is meant to solve.

A few years ago some folks got together to try and make a difference in responding to the growing social problem of violence. Rather than join the list of sincerely inspired but nevertheless predictable and often sensationally bombastic exhortations echoing from pulpits and halls of justice, they sought another way. And the Family Pledge of Non-violence was born, consisting of seven simple statements meant to re-order the willing participants' worldview for a better, healthy, more peaceful tomorrow. At first glance the pledge seems simple, almost trite. Yet a little reflection on the logical ends of some of the propositions can lead one to some rather provocative ideas. In fact, the decision to move in their direction can lead

to some surprising and potentially uncomfortable dilemmas.

You see, to be immersed in today's American culture is to risk becoming desensitized to the many ways the widespread use of violence and forceful means is unconditionally accepted - from the all too familiar plot lines of blockbuster films, Saturday morning cartoons and their concomitant merchandise, to the enormous popularity of World Wrestling Federation events (perhaps not coincidentally one of the year's hottest initial public stock offerings), to the all too common knee-jerk reactions to daily frustrations at home and at work. In fact it takes very little effort to begin to see ramifications all the way to world of geopolitics, where conflict is almost always solved by the nation in possession of the greater number of bombs, bullets and bodies to throw at the battle. Given the fact that in our post-cold war world the U.S. largesse lies almost exclusively in the realm of its military, some disturbing questions could be raised indeed. Violence and the use of forceful means to solve problems is an extremely popular way of life for many in our society, and its cost is becoming apparent in human lives lost and diminished quality of life for all of those affected.

Rather than add our names to the list of those who bemoan society's ills and seek either through oppressive legislation or the use of bully tactics to solve the problem, those who commit to "The Pledge" choose to be about the difficult work of analyzing their own lifestyle and choices. This can mean becoming more aware of what our children are experiencing when the television or computer is on, what we buy and do for our entertainment, how we invest, what our possessions are really intended for, and what our

*to Pledge, page V* ■



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## SMALL DIFFERENCES

by Peter Johnson

In this month's column I'd like to take the space to state the obvious.

It's been said that each and every Rotary Club exists to provide opportunity. Opportunity to grow as individuals. Opportunity to help others. Opportunity to become a more meaningful component of our community. Opportunity to socialize with like-minded, ethical professionals. And, perhaps most inspiring to me, the opportunity to touch the lives of countless individuals, the vast majority of whom we will never know.

Rotarians who have gone before us have changed the future for literally millions of people. Sure, we are justifiably proud of our accomplishments with Polio Plus. But our impact is far greater. Most of us know firsthand a person who participated on a Group Study Exchange, Ambassadorial scholarship, Youth Exchange whose life was forever changed. As but one small example, did you know that Peter Goffin, Portland Club President, met his future wife in England while she was there as a Rotary Scholar? I suspect most of us are aware of Club participation in many international projects, from Rotaplast to IMEC to Haiti and Honduras and Brazil and Rumania, and more, each improving the lives of individuals for generations to come.

Take some time, however, to remember to celebrate the countless little things we do locally to make the future a better future for our local residents. Every time you take the time to read a book to a child or encourage an adult to enroll in a literacy program you change and mold that individual's future. Every time you support a local soup kitchen

or outreach program you provide stability and hope for those most in need. Every time you participate in a middle or high school career day you have the opportunity to affect the future, not only in opening opportunities for young adults, but also creating awareness of ethics in business along with the concept of Service to Others. The giving of blood, the painting of a community asset, the cleaning of a highway roadside, the assistance of a scholarship, the planting of a tree, the personal support of a fellow Rotarian in need, and more and more and more. Each act, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant leaves the world a better place than we found it, and improves the future of someone else.

Perhaps that is one of the great beauties of Rotary: we serve others without thought of personal gain, accepting that the vast majority of the individuals we assist may not even know that it was Rotary that helped, and that we'll never really know just which life we touched.

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☛ from Pledge, page III

lives' work really means, just to mention a few. This could truly become a challenging exercise.

One of the really intriguing aspects of the Family Pledge of Nonviolence is its emphasis on the transformation of the heart. Implicit in its statements is the supposition that each of us - as family members, as co-workers, as neighbors and citizens - each of us has the power to affect change, as subtly and as profoundly as by the way we behave toward and function with one another.

From a strictly pragmatic point of view, one

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## INVENTING THE FUTURE *by Elias Thomas*

Over these past six or seven weeks, Jane and I have traveled throughout the District and visited with many Rotarians and non-Rotarians. On a recent Sunday, we saw so many of you who attended the ROTARY TAKES A SWING AT HOMELESSNESS game with the Portland Sea Dogs. One Club sent its contingent in an old-fashioned trolley car. Another Club gave its tickets to a group of youngsters who play baseball on various Little League teams. Another Club donated its tickets to a nursing home so that a number of senior citizens that are otherwise confined would be able to enjoy an outing on a Sunday afternoon. Little by little, the stands at Hadlock Field began to fill and little by little, the containers for food collection began to fill. This was not only a "fun" day to spend with family and friends, but it was also a very productive day - we were able to come together and MAKE A DIFFERENCE in the lives of many people in our District who are presently without a home.

A few days before the game, I was visiting with a number of potential corporate sponsors, explaining our purpose and our desire to raise funds to contribute to other non-profit agencies involved with "homeless projects" in the three states that make up the District. One afternoon, however, I came to realize just what it was all about. I met with a gentleman who was familiar with Rotary, but who was not a member of any Rotary Club. We visited in his office for nearly an hour, talking about Rotary and what Rotarians do. When I was ready to leave, he handed me a small book and said

that in reading it, my life would never be the same.

It actually took only a few minutes before I was back in my car and I parked beneath a shade maple and began to devour the contents of this little book. After all, how could this tiny book change my life? It was only after reading the first eight pages that I understood what my new friend had meant. I was to discover that as Rotarians, we have tremendous power.

For the past number of years, we have joined together with the World Health Organization of the United Nations and set our sites on eradicating Polio from the face of the earth. We have built shelters for those left homeless by one disaster or another. We have sent youngsters to study abroad and exchanged teams of professionals between countries throughout the world, in an effort for world understanding and peace. We have restored dignity to the lives of many born with cleft palate and cleft lip. We have brought hope to those needing heart transplants. We have fed the hungry and clothed the naked. We have brought poinsettia plants to the lonely at Christmas time and painted a homeless shelter and a day-care center, and we have helped to lighten the burden of families who have children dying of cancer, and to lighten the spirit of those children who are dying of cancer or AIDS.

Take a few moments to reflect upon what you and your fellow Rotarians have done in the past and what you hope to do in the future. Then STOP and realize that as Rotarians, we have the power to INVENT THE FUTURE for ourselves and our fellow human beings throughout the world. Please join me and accept the challenge.



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## HOW TO BE A ROTARY LEADER

If you are reading this, you are probably a Rotary officer of the Club or of the District. What is the most effective way to comport yourself? Here we speak not of the specific duties of your office, but of the example you set to others by the way you behave.

Rotary is an old organization and, naturally, many customs and traditions have grown up over the decades. And, as with many older organizations, some of these are strikingly at variance with the fundamental principles of the organization itself. Thus as Rotarians we are committed to service above self. Yet our behavior, at the District and International levels, and sometimes in our clubs occasionally gives quite a different message – aggrandizement of self.

Look through district bulletins, national publications, or attend assemblies and conferences and ask yourself this question: Do the titles, the photographs, the pins, the awards, the lists of offices held, the head tables, the special blazers, and so on telegraph service above self or aggrandizement of self?

To be a District Dignitary (or Past District Dignitary, or District Dignitary Designate) is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it is great to have a title, to be somebody. On the other hand, it draws a status differential between you and everybody who is not a District Dignitary. While such a status differential may make you feel important, it produces mostly negative reactions from everyone else.

The best, most successful modern corporations shed the trappings and ceremonial

pomp of office long ago. The best managers do not use designated parking spaces, nor do they have offices larger than everyone else's. They do not seek glory for themselves. Instead they seek what is best for the organization, the people in it, and its customers. Yes, they have decision-making authority and use it. But that authority is not an end in itself, not a statement about personal power and magnificence. Instead they see it as a tool, in much the same way the machinist sees her lathe as a tool, or the salesman his book of leads.

At its core, this organization is about fellowship, friendship. It was started by lonely men in Chicago who found they took pleasure in each other's company. Later, they discovered they needed a purpose to supplement and nurture their relationship. That purpose became service and led to the philosophy that placing service above self was the key to happiness and success in life. As the organization grew it became necessary to have officers to keep everything running. But alas, somewhere along the way, for some, the trappings, the lengthy Rotary resume, and the seat at the head table became primary and simple fellowship secondary.

Furthermore, the trend towards egalitarianism is especially strong amongst the baby boom generation that is now coming into their late forties and fifties. This generation was profoundly disillusioned by the failures of leadership in the Vietnam War. Today, many are wealthy, retiring, and looking for meaningful ways to invest their considerable resources and energies. Rotary is a natural for such people. But they will not stand for pompous hierarchies.

As a leader in this new age, then, what is the best way to comport yourself? First is to remember, because of your title, that you are



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on stage all the time. But people are not listening to your words. They are listening to who you are. They are listening to your values and your weaknesses. And because of your title, these things are as obvious to others as if you were wearing them on a sandwich board. Thus before you give a speech, have your picture taken, or have yourself referred to five times as Distinguished Dignitary So and So when you are introduced, ask yourself. *What personal values and beliefs am I demonstrating by presenting myself in this way?* There are times, indeed, when you need the credibility of a fine title. Approaching a corporation for a large donation is one of them. But probably not when meeting members in your district who simply want to be your friend.

Second, remember that as a leader in the new age, your job is not to advance your agenda. It is to empower the members to advance theirs. To put this into practical terms, the district could raise ten times the money for Rotary than it does today if the membership truly believed that the money meaningfully advanced their own most precious dreams and hopes for a better world.

As a wise saying has it:

*There is no limit to what you can achieve as long as you are willing to forego the credit.*

A corollary is that it is far more powerful to acknowledge and praise people for what they are doing right, or even what they might do, than to criticize them for what they are doing wrong or not doing at all.

Third and last, but most important, is, as a leader, do a lot of listening. Remember, the leader is a servant. It is about their agenda, not yours. To find out what that agenda is, listen to people, openly, genuinely, and with-

out preconception or hidden motives.

In the ancient words of Lao Tse

*A Leader is best  
When people barely know he exists.  
Not so good  
When people obey and acclaim him.  
Worse when they despise him.  
But of a good leader  
Who talks little  
When his work is done  
His aim fulfilled  
They will say  
We did it ourselves*

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from Pledge, p IV

learns fairly quickly that it is ultimately less costly to choose the way of peace than it is to take a violent course of action, whether the costs are measured in dollars or psychic energy. This approach to change is reflected in the affirmations of all major religions of the world, as it seeks to lift up and empower one the most unique characteristics of our worldly existence: our human spirits becoming enthralled by ultimate goodness. As a member of the human race who happens to be a U.S. citizen, as a father, a husband, and a member of the clergy it seems to me it is more than worth a try!

*(Reverend Peter J. Kelley is the Minister of the First Presbyterian Church of Southold, New York)*

*More information about The Family Pledge of Nonviolence is available from Families Against Violence Advocacy Network, c/o Parenting for Peace and Justice Network (PPJN), The Institute for Peace and Justice, 4414 Lindell Boulevard, #408, St. Louis, Missouri 63108, Telephone 314.533.4445, Email ppjn@aol.com*



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## GROUP STUDY EX- CHANGE OPPORTUNITY

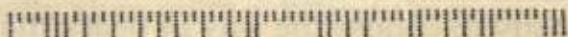
Please take a few minutes to read through this important letter concerning Group Study Exchange. Group Study Exchange (GSE) is one of several programs that our District participates in each year that calls for a small contribution from many clubs. This year's program will represent the District's first multi-country exchange, in which we will need participation from all district clubs. Our task will be twofold. The first part of our mission is to assemble two teams of business/professional people to travel to **Turkey or the African countries of Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Eritrea**. The second task is to prepare an itinerary for two incoming teams and secure host families for all incoming team members.

Our initial request from you is to help identify potential candidates that are able to travel for one month to either **Turkey from April 5 to May 5 or Africa from April 20 to May 26**. Team members must be non-

Rotarians (or close relatives), age 25-40, employed full-time in their present profession/vocation, and be U.S. citizens. The team leader must be a Rotarian (no age restrictions) capable of leading the group for an intense itinerary.

**The deadline to have both team leader and team member applications to the committee with club endorsements is October 20, 2000.** We will accept all applications postmarked by that date. District interviews for team leader will be on the weekend of October 28 and team members, November 11. Our goal is to have a candidate pool that is representative of the strength of the business and professional sectors in District 7780. Past team participants consistently report that the GSE experience has had a significant impact on their lives. For further information, please contact me or other committee members listed on page 43 of the District Directory.

John C. Anderson, Chairman, GSE Committee  
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