

Governor's Newsletter

Peter C. Johnson, District Governor 2001-2002



January 2002

From Governor Peter

The month of December is clearly a month of Rotary at its finest.

On one level it is the major fundraisers around the District and the camaraderie that results from them. But on another level it is the services provided during December, and this is where Rotary really shines. I had the pleasurable opportunity to attend several such events. Dover put together a family Christmas dinner for Rotarians and their families. Kennebunk held its annual gifts for needy children program. Exeter's Christmas lunch included the honor choir from Exeter High School and the opportunity for the club to give the chorus a new \$1700 professional keyboard for their traveling performances. Bethel hosted over 150 senior citizens for their traditional ham dinner. Yarmouth baked cookies and served hot chocolate at the town tree-lighting ceremony. Countless clubs manned Salvation Army kettles. And on and on and on.

I comment frequently that for one to fully appreciate all that Rotary represents, all one has to do is think of the friends we would never know if not for Rotary, and to think of all the services provided WHICH WOULD BE PROVIDED BY NO ONE ELSE if Rotary was not there to provide it.

This awareness is why I am so keenly interested in the establishment of additional clubs throughout the District. The premise is really quite simple: the greater the number of opportunities to meet and gather, the greater the number of people we attract to become Rotarians, and clearly, the greater the number of Rotarians, the greater the service.

This month I ask the help of all Rotarians to identify places for potential growth, and more importantly, to identify the one person who has the interest in starting a new club. It only takes that one person, and it is easier than many think. In 1996 that one person in Yarmouth, Maine, was me. In all that I've done in Rotary absolutely nothing has been more rewarding than to have an idea brought to life, and I'm looking for others who want to share that same thrill.

Rotary Awareness Month

Rotary Leadership Institute

What is it? Why should I care?

To quote Gov. Peter: "This is really cool stuff."

This is a Rotary opportunity unique to the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast states. The venue may be new to us, but it has been evolving over several years, and our District "at the northern end" has just recently been enabled to offer the experience.

The Rotary Leadership Institute was created out of recognition that it is difficult to learn about the exciting world of Rotary at the club level, and that leadership skills in a voluntary organization are often different from business leadership skills. It was conceived of as a place where potential club leaders — not necessarily future club presidents — could have an opportunity to learn and refine their Rotary and professional skills.

The first Rotary Leadership Institute meeting in our District will take place on Saturday, March 9, at the Sheraton Harborside in Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

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District Governor Elect's Corner

Glad and I had the pleasure of attending the Rotary's Zone 31-32 Institute and Governor Elect Training sessions at the Sagamore on Lake George, New York. Each time we go to these conferences we enjoy seeing old friends and making new ones. It is easy to see why people who become involved in this organization stay with it for a lifetime.

During the session the District Governors Elect were privileged to meet Bhichai Rattakul, the incoming president of Rotary International. I feel that Rotary is going to gain much for this gentleman, for he is truly a gentle man.

He believes Rotary is a grass roots organization and that if Rotary is to continue to succeed all things must begin at the club level, because, in Rotary, success trickles up, not down. As he says: "Bottoms up!" Literacy and vocational ethics hold a high priority with President Elect Rattakul. Our District's Presidents-Elect can look forward to meeting him as he will be speaking at our Northeast P.E.T.S. on March 15.

I attended a breakfast meeting with a great bunch of Yarmouth Rotarians. There was a great deal of laughter as they discussed the finishing touches needed for their Halloween Haunted House project. The proceeds went to the American Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund. As some of you are probably aware, young people are of special interest to me, so I was thrilled to talk to Meg Hickey and find out that their Interact Club has increased to fifty members after only the second meeting. Hats off to you Yarmouth Rotarians!

President Peggy — oops, "Queenie" — Wescott was the belle

of the ball at the fund-raising "Dance of Yesteryear" held at the Eastland Hotel in Portland.. A great band played 40's music, and yes, I danced! It was a gala affair done with the touch of class the Portland Club does so well.

The District Assembly plans are moving right along. There is going to be something for each one of you. It will be held on April 17 at York Technical College. Mark your calendars!

For many years I have felt that the clubs I have belonged to were unique and the best there were. In traveling around the District and around the country I realize now that each club — large or small — is one of a kind. There is great energy, warmth, and enthusiasm evident in each meeting or project or fund-raising event. It has given me a whole new perspective on the work that Rotary does throughout the world.

I would encourage club members who do not do make-ups to set out for other clubs, near or far, and listen to the excitement and caring you will find at each one. Take the experience back to your home club and share *your* new perspective.

Tim Placey

Westbrook-Gorham Club Changes Meetings

Effective January 8, 2002, Westbrook-Gorham Rotary Club will be meeting on Tuesdays at Westbrook High School, Stroudwater Street, in the Culinary Arts Dining Room. The meeting time has been changed to 11:30.

DISTRICT OFFICERS

DISTRICT GOVERNOR

Peter C. Johnson

132 Drinkwater Road
Yarmouth, ME 04096

(W) 800-451-0369 or 207-791-5546

(F) 207-774-9684

(H) 207-846-6526

(E) peteryar@aol.com

DISTRICT GOVERNOR-ELECT

Tim Placey

10 Woodside Drive
Cumberland, ME 04021

(H) 207-829-3456

(F) 207-829-3456

(E) tng1966@aol.com

DISTRICT GOVERNOR

NOMINEE

Trish Hunter

1081 Mere Point Road
Brunswick, ME 04011

(H) 207-725-4457

(W) 207-725-8903 x518

(F) 207-721-0186

(E) thunter@downtime.com

IMMEDIATE PAST DISTRICT GOVERNOR

Elias Thomas III

Ledgewold

Acton, ME 04001

(H) 207-636-1246

(W) 207-636-2222

(F) 207-636-2223

(E) ethomas@gwi.net

DISTRICT SECRETARY

Elizabeth Valliere

48 Lafayette Street, #3
Portland, ME 04101

(H) 207-791-2719

(W) 207-799-8555

(E) evalli6066@aol.com

DISTRICT TREASURER

David Moravick

6 Heather Lane
Biddeford, ME 04005

(H) 207-283-0880

(W) 207-207-967-2000

(F) 207-967-9794

(E) moravick@cybertours.com

ASSISTANT DISTRICT GOVERNORS

John Cogan

(H) 603-743-3961

(W) 603-749-9750

(F) 603-749-1459

(E) john.cogan@citcomm.com

Bob Cook

(H) 603-330-9561

(E) rhcook1@juno.com

Meg Hickey

(W) 207-846-1444

(E) aameg@maine.rr.com

Brenda Knapp

(H) 207-363-8579

(W) 207-363-3588

(E) bknapp@maine.rr.com

Anne Marsh

(H) 207-443-1117

(W) 207-443-3341

(F) 207-443-1070

(E) john.c.marsh@verizon.net

Adrienne Murphy

(H) 207-767-3852

(W) 207-799-5000

(F) 207-799-9226

(E) amurphy@coldwellbankerhb.com

Tim Placey

(H) 207-829-3456

(F) 207-829-3456

(E) tng1966@aol.com

Joe Sirois

(H) 207-364-2659

(W) 207-364-7863

(F) 207-364-2672

(E) joenpat@megalink.net

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Registration is at 7:30 a.m., followed by a breakfast meeting at 8:00. The course, which includes lectures, discussion groups, role playing, problem solving workshops, etc., concludes at 4:30.

You will be seeing more about this opportunity in the form of direct e-mails and correspondence, but please reserve the date. And please think about the two, three, or more people from your club who might logically attend. In the meantime, please take the time to visit www.rotaryleadershipinstitute.org. It is a great site, as is the Institute itself.



Rotarians in the News

CONGRATULATIONS

to Tom Noonan, Past President of the Windham Rotary Club. On January 26, Tom was honored by the Windham Chamber of Commerce as Windham's "Man of the Year."

and to Barbara Hager of the Portland Club who recently received the Governor's Award for Tourism Excellence at the Annual State Travel and Tourism Convention.

and to Warren Simpson, the second President of the South Portland/Cape Elizabeth Club, who celebrated 40 years of perfect attendance at that club's 40th anniversary!

Going to the Winter Olympics?

Rotarians from around the world who are traveling to the 2002 Winter Olympics will have an opportunity to meet and mingle with their colleagues in Park City, Utah, this February. Park City is the venue for 26 medal events and more than 78 competitions. Its two Rotary clubs have decided to host meetings and spotlight the presence of the clubs in some of the most active areas in town.

"Not many Rotarians are aware that this winter resort will play host to the games," said Karen Nielsen, chair of International Service at the Rotary Club of Park City Sunrise. "There will be a lot of activity here, and so we thought it would be a great idea to inform visiting Rotarians that the two Park City Rotary clubs are excited to extend them an enthusiastic and warm welcome." A kiosk staffed by local Rotarians will be located on the main floor at the Main Street Mall in Old Town Park City. Also, a hospitality suite will be available courtesy of the Norwegian Outdoor Club. Members of Park City and Park City Sunrise Rotary clubs will be on hand to answer questions, help with problems, and distribute literature.

On February 17 and 20, members of Park City Sunrise Rotary Club will be selling food at a booth on Main Street under the Vendors' Alliance Hospitality Tent.

In Salt Lake City, venue of the rest of the winter games, local Rotary clubs have in place an Olympic home stay program to foster Rotary friendship. FMI, contact the Rotary Club of Salt Lake City by telephone: 801-363-8415 or visit the project's Web site at <http://www.slrotary.org/oly>.

Welcome to District 7780!

by Nancy Hawes

Nine clubs in our District are sponsoring inbound exchange students this year: Freeport, Kennebunk, Kennebunk Portside, Newburyport, Ogunquit, Somersworth, South Berwick, Yarmouth, and York. In addition, our District is administering the exchange for three clubs in District 7790 — Bar Harbor, Camden, and Unity. The students are from all corners of the globe:

South America: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and Venezuela

Europe: Belgium, Finland, France, and Germany

Middle East: Kyrgyzstan and Turkey

Far East: Japan

Although these students are the ones who are most visible to us right now, our District "family" also includes U.S. students who are overseas right now, U.S. students who have returned from overseas, foreign students who have returned home, and students who are in the process of getting ready to go overseas next year. Here is an email from Miroslava, a Slovakian who was one of our inbound students last year:

"...so here are all the things I have done since some of you last heard from me. I will have to start with my coming back home from USA. First couple of weeks were great. My whole family loved me and they did what I wanted. And it was the same with my friends but after they got used to me — that didn't take a long time, everything was the same as before. But that is ok. I'm happy to be back home. I cried the whole first week and wanted to go back to Maine but now I'm happy to be where I was born.

I want to tell everybody that I'm really sorry for everything that is happening in the world right now. And I'm very scared. I hope we are not going to have a war because that would be terrible. I think all the people everywhere are great but everywhere are a few bad people that are doing all this bad stuff.

On September 24 I started my college. It is university of economics and this college is in Bratislava — my town. So I'm happy that I don't have to travel far away from home. I like my college so far but it is getting harder and harder. We are having so many tests and at the beginning of January we will have semestral exams so I hope I will pass them great. Keep your fingers crossed for me. But there is something better connected with the life at the college. We are split into study groups and my study group is really nice. We hung out once and I guess we will be repeating it more often. And on November 30 we will have a school dance. Which will be great. It will last till 5am! I'm so excited about going there.

I hope the new exchanges are behaving themselves and I hope you are having fun with them. I miss being an exchangee."

And from Beth McEvoy, who is now in Argentina, to Tom Wilbur, member of the Rotary Youth Exchange Committee:

"Sorry that I haven't written to you much but I have been really busy traveling and getting together with friends and family. I must say that I am honestly having the best year of my life. I feel a part of my family and I will admit that I never thought that I would be able to love them the way I do.

I have not had one problem whatsoever. I can speak fluently and I am so happy here. I have great friends that I do everything with, I visit the other exchange students when I can, I am on a field hockey team, and I am starting on a soccer team this week. I have traveled to Brazil with my friends and stayed there for two weeks.

(For) about a week I was feeling...a little homesick, but that has passed. Even on Christmas and New Years it was incredible how much I feel a part of this family and so I have missed nothing and no one from home.

I hope that doesn't sound cold, however my way of thinking is that I am only here for six more months and then I have to go home...I love it here and I may never be able to come back. I am enjoying my exchange year like you wouldn't believe and I tell the other exchange kids when they are missing someone or something that they don't have time to waste in missing the things that they will be able to have when they get back and have for the rest of their lives. This is something we have now and only now. We must enjoy it while we can.

...It is hard to see the struggles occurring here in Argentina and I am worried about my family and about their economic situation. My (host) father was the President of Rotary and he has resigned. So too has my counselor who is awesome, and I am concerned that it is very hard for them to give me the allowance. They have said nothing but you cannot even imagine the economic strife that has overcome the country. Maybe I should talk to my Rotary Club about this.

Thank you for all your help and for making this year possible."

Exchange Students Visit Boston

It was that unbelievable first weekend in December when seven of our District's exchange students set out to Boston. The weather was extraordinary in itself. Seventy-five degrees in December? But the experience of spending a day with these wonderful youth ambassadors was even more rare. Seeing what is in our own back yard through the eyes of a young adult from another culture is an exhilarating experience. Nancy Hawes and the Youth Exchange Committee organized this trip for our student visitors. I was privileged to be invited to join them.

We left by van for Boston early in the morning. As we stopped along I-95 to gather our travelers, I was struck by how close they have become as a group. Despite the brief time they have spent together and the half dozen different native languages, this was a group of old friends enjoying each other's company. The bonds that have developed between each student and host family were also readily apparent.



The bus trip was filled with catching up, sharing photographs of the weekend at Sunday River, comparing notes on their respective

high school experiences. Basketball is quite a challenging new sport for some; others are taking part in school stage productions; American history is hard!

Once in Boston we parked the van and took the "T" into the city. First stop, the Science Museum. We took in the indoor lightning demonstration, checked out the musical stairway, and spent a great time in the computer room. Photographing each other and morphing features into cartoon characters was fascinating, and we could have spent all day there, but lunch and shopping in Quincy Market were ahead.

We split up at the market; everyone wanted to shop. Given the mild weather, the street performers were out in full force: jugglers, singers, and magicians. It was quite a feat to try to gather all of us back into a group to keep going! We had dinner at Durgin Park, which was a great experience even though a few dinners found different diners. There are just too many ways to prepare chicken! The wait staff handled the situation with good humor and patience.

The T-ride back to the van provided Meder the opportunity to prove his talents as the undisputed train surfer

of the group. Can you balance yourself on a moving train without touching or holding on to anything? He had some tough competition — including from Nancy Hawes — but his sense of balance prevailed!

We arrived home tired and happy. This is truly an extraordinary group of young people. They are bright, articulate, and very appreciative of the opportunity they have before them. Their camaraderie, respect, and appreciation for their host families and sponsoring clubs was wonderful to observe. And the host clubs, families, and schools are learning as much from these students as the students are from them. If you haven't had a chance to meet some of them (we have 14 Youth Exchange Students living in our District this year), do seek them out. It will renew your spirit and reinforce that Youth Exchange programs can only serve to improve the prospects for the future of this world.

Carolyn Johnson

Shop Rotary Online

The Rotary International Catalog went online early in January. Organized for easy browsing, it enables Rotarians to shop for eight categories of products: audiovisuals, books and periodicals, club administration and membership, leadership training, public relations, RI programs, RI theme, and The Rotary Foundation. It can be accessed at <http://shop.rotary.org/catalog/>.

Online orders will require prepayment by credit card in order to initiate processing.

News from the PolioPlus Front

Early in January, Rotary International President Richard D. King and other Rotary leaders met in Abuja, Nigeria, for a critical meeting that prepared Rotary for its final push to eliminate polio from the African continent by 2005. More than 400 Rotarians from the region gathered to discuss the status of and next steps to eradicating polio in Nigeria, Africa, and worldwide. Key representatives from the World Health Organization also participated in the meeting.

The meeting coincided with National Immunization Days on January 11-17. President King joined Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo in launching a massive effort to immunize 40 million Nigerian children against polio. During the National Immunization Days, local and international Rotary volunteers helped administer drops of oral polio vaccine to children, delivered the vaccine to immunization posts, transported health workers and recruited fellow volunteers to assist in the effort. Significant progress has been made toward eradicating polio in Nigeria. Last year, 27 cases of polio were recorded, compared with 638 in 2000. Nigeria's 2,611 Rotarians can take credit for much of this success as they have volunteered during NIDs for more than a decade.

Below is a copy of a letter sent to all Rotary Club Presidents from Gro Brundtland, Director General of WHO.

21 December 2001

Dear Rotary Club President,

The year 2001 has marked the United Nations International Year of Volunteers. To acknowledge this important occasion, it is my privilege on behalf of the World Health Organization (WHO) to recognize the contributions of Rotarians around the world to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative. WHO is extremely fortunate to have had the opportunity to work in partnership with Rotary International since 1985. Rotarians have delivered vaccine, raised awareness and vital financial resources, tackling some of the greatest challenges of the Initiative.

When the World Health Assembly resolved to eradicate polio in 1988, it was building on the tremendous humanitarian work started in 1979 when Rotary International first mobilized volunteers and governments to immunize children against polio. Since that time, Rotarians have worked tirelessly, striving to reach every child with vaccine and encouraging donor governments to provide essential financial and political support. The unyielding pursuit of this tremendous goal truly exemplifies Rotary International's motto of *Service Above Self*.

The results have been spectacular: between 1988 and 2000, the number of polio cases worldwide dropped by 99% to fewer than 3000 and the number of polio-infected countries has been reduced from 125 to 20. However, the last 1% of cases will pose our greatest challenge, requiring us to reach all children, even those in the most difficult-to-access places. The importance of Rotary's "team of 1.2 million volunteers" to polio eradication has never been more critical. We shall need to continue, and even heighten our efforts. At the end of this race to reach the last child, we shall all be standing together at the finish line; we shall have so much to celebrate.

The progress toward global polio eradication is a testament to the reality that great feats can be achieved when people are united in a shared purpose. Rotarians around the world have united behind the Global Polio Eradication Initiative since the beginning, nobly working to provide a healthier world for our global community and for providing an example to the world that positive global change through partnership is indeed possible.

Let us continue our work together so that in 2005 we may celebrate the 100th anniversary of Rotary International by delivering a polio-free world to future generations.

Yours sincerely,
Gro Harlem Brundtland, MD, MPH
Director General, World Health Organization

District 7780 Attendance and Membership — December, 2001

	Attendance	Members	Members	Change		Attendance	Members	Members	Change
Bath	69.18	57	51	-6	Newburyport	72	76	79	3
Bath Sunrise	88.42	21	22	1	Ogunquit	87	35	30	-5
Bethel	100	35	39	4	Oxford Hills	75.94	60	53	-7
Biddeford-Saco	85	62	63	1	Portland	63.89	184	168	-16
Boothbay Harbor	67.68	51	47	-4	Portsmouth	91.22	250	251	1
Bridgton-Lake Region	NR	20	NR		Portsmouth Sunrise	50.95	29	29	
Brunswick	75.3	122	120	-2	Rochester	67.9	74	81	7
Brunswick Coastal	88	13	15	2	Rumford	75.13	30	40	10
Casco Bay Sunrise	65.22	32	23	-9	Saco Bay	86.13	62	62	
Damariscotta-New Castle	100	45	51	6	Sanford-Springvale	70.73	52	51	-1
Dover	57.1	83	81	-2	Scarborough	65	25	32	7
Durham-Great Bay	85.1	57	57		Seabrook-Hampton Falls	60	16	NR	
Exeter	92.74	43	45	2	Somersworth	NR	28	NR	
Falmouth	NR	20	26	6	South Berwick	NR	46	NR	
Freeport	65.83	39	40	1	So. Portland-Cape Elizabeth	75	56	53	-3
Fryeburg Area	82.29	24	24		Wells	82	48	45	-3
Hampton	81.6	55	59	4	Westbrook-Gorham	70.3	38	40	2
Kennebunk	74.8	81	80	-1	Windham	NR	39	NR	
Kennebunk Portside	NR	34	NR		Yarmouth	NR	43	40	-3
Kittery	79	23	25	2	York	NR	65	NR	

Rotary's Global Quest Corner

MEMBERSHIP NEWS: Impressive! Damariscotta-Newcastle reports 100% attendance and six new members; Bethel also had 100% and added four members. Falmouth, Hampton, Scarborough, Rochester, and Rumford also posted terrific gains. Portsmouth's figure doesn't reflect that they lost 11 members, but inducted 11 new ones!

TAKE PRIDE IN MEMBERSHIP: DG Peter sends special kudos to the Rotary Club of Scarborough. For those not aware, this venerable 40-year-old club was "on the ropes" just a few short years ago. Recent leadership adopted an attitude of "we can do better than this." Continued programs to keep Rotary visible in the community — as basic as sponsoring a Little League team — are now paying off. Moreover, they do a great job of describing the club and its activities to prospective members, have a terrific welcoming presentation, and eagerly seek the fresh ideas of their newest members. In short, they are doing it right! Make a point of checking them out someday for breakfast at 7:00 on Tuesday at the Black Point Inn (in direct competition with Freeport and Durham-Great Bay for "best of class" breakfast buffet)!

Governor Peter often reminds us to think of what would never happen if Rotary failed to exist in the first place. This is why continued membership growth is so vitally important.

ONE NEW MEMBER EVERY MONTH

Mark Your Calendars!

March 9 — Rotary Leadership Institute in Portsmouth, NH

March 14-16 — Multi-District P.E.T.S. in Nashua, NH

April 17 — District Assembly

May 17 & 18 — District Conference in Portland and Falmouth, ME



Peter C. Johnson
Governor, District 7780
132 Drinkwater Point Road
Yarmouth, ME 04096



Marie A. Williams
P.O. Box 142
Kittery Point, ME 03905