

Rotary District 7780

Carolyn Johnson, District Governor

December 1, 2013

Who Is the Family of Rotary?

In December we celebrate “The Family of Rotary,” but who is that family? For Peter and me, Rotary is an important part of our family life. For us, the family of Rotary is the friends, the very good friends, we’ve met through our involvement in Rotary.

Over the years, we have had the opportunity to visit small New England towns and travel internationally through a variety of Rotary connections. Sometimes, it would be easy to skip an event, to roll over and go back to sleep or to stay home and do something else. But each time we go to a Rotary event or participate in a project, we meet someone new and interesting or we hear an interesting or an inspiring life story. These opportunities are offered to each one of us, as a Rotarian. The opportunity occurs when attending our own club event or visiting the club in the next town over, visiting a club when on vacation or attending a district event, or volunteering to help at the local food pantry or to be involved with an international project.

One of my favorite Thanksgivings took place in Poland, of all places. Two years ago, Peter and I were in Poland to visit friends made through Group Study Exchange and to visit a Matching Grant project that clubs in our District supported. It was an incredible week, for many reasons, not the least of which was the experience of floating over the Polish countryside in a hot air balloon piloted by our Rotarian host. That evening we feasted, not on turkey and pumpkin pie, but on traditional Polish fare with our host, his wife and three sons. We talked, and laughed, and shared stories—just stories about ourselves and our families, what we do, what is important to us. That night, we expanded and strengthened the circle of our family of Rotary.

That is just one of the very special memories Peter and I have because of Rotary—a special friendship developed because we are involved in Rotary. I often wonder why more couples aren’t Rotarians. It is a marvelous opportunity for a couple: to share experiences, meet new people and make a difference. Who is “the family of Rotary?” For us, it’s each other. For us, it’s the friends we’ve made—friends like you who are members of our club and Rotarians in other clubs in the District. Our Rotary family includes visiting GSE teams we’ve hosted and Rotarians we’ve met when on vacation or traveling for Rotary. The family of Rotary is a wide circle of interesting, engaged, active, caring people—people we would never have met were it not for Rotary. Our family includes Rotarians we are very glad we met and honored to call our friends.

—Carolyn Johnson, District Governor

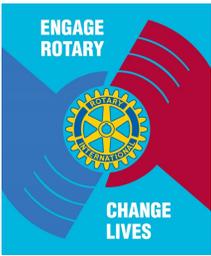


Deadline Nears — Lac Megantic!

Have you fulfilled your pledge? **All checks and gifts for Lac Megantic MUST be received by Saturday December 7!** Make checks out to SPCE Rotary Charitable Fund and mail to:

John LoBosco, Assistant Governor
21 Fessenden Road
Cape Elizabeth, Maine 04107

Are you planning to be part of the December 13-15 road trip to bring Pere Noel to Lac Megantic? **Rsvp by Saturday, December 7**, to Paul Deschambault, phd@maine.rr.com, 207-281-4384.



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District Team Selected for Uganda Cultural Exchange

Congratulations to the six Rotarians/family members who will represent our District on the Rotary Foundation-sponsored music exchange to Uganda in March. They are: Mary Bastoni, sponsored by **Fryeburg**; Curt Combar, sponsored by **Freeport**; Ken Brunsvold and John Dennen, sponsored by **Brunswick Coastal**; Jennifer Davis, sponsored by **Kennebunk**; and Marty Helman, sponsored by **Boothbay Harbor**.

While in Uganda, the team will immerse itself in local culture and music. They will learn -- through first-hand experience -- of the rich culture of Ugandan music, to play and sing Ugandan music, and they will work with local Rotarians to explore opportunities for future service projects and partnerships. They will also meet and work with the inbound team of youth musicians from various tribes (shown in photo) who are part of the Youth Passionate Organization headquartered out of Kampala. The teens will visit our District later in the spring to participate in a Friends Forever conflict resolution program.



The Selection Committee received many applications from qualified applicants and thanks everyone who participated in the project, which is designed to be an expanded version of Group Study Exchange, for Rotarians and Rotary family members.

Rotarians Help Neighbors Prepare for Winter

A Rotary Foundation community grant came in useful when **Sanford-Springvale** built over 100 feet of boardwalk to connect two existing sections of handicap-accessible hiking trails (photo at left). The trails are used by people of all abilities, all year round. During the winter, many groups, public schools, and individuals use the trails for snowshoeing, wildlife habitat studies, and good old general fun!



Meanwhile, **Bethel** members and friends joined with Telstar Interactors for the club's fourth annual wood splitting event (photo at right). Bethel Rotary undertakes to split and deliver the firewood to families in the area, and already, three very full truckloads have been delivered this autumn.



Clubs Honor Thanksgiving with Food and Fun(d)raisers

No time for football: The **Portland Club** provided Thanksgiving dinner the Wednesday before Turkey Day at St. Vincent de Paul again this year, while **Portsmouth** prepared a community Thanksgiving dinner for 325 elders and shut-ins on Thanksgiving Day itself. Meanwhile, **York, Seacoast** and **Kennebunk** organized 5K walk-runs over the long holiday weekend to support their community projects. And earlier in the month **Saco Bay** collected food donations for its Project Thanksgiving.

How is your club celebrating the spirit of giving this Season? Let us know -- send information including a photo of your event to martyrotary@gmail.com.

