

INDUCTION: **RITA STURM**
March 19, 2009



ROTARY AND MONEY

Rotary is 105 years old. Rotary has 35,000 clubs all over the world in 200 different nations and geographical regions. Rotary has 1.2 million members. Rotary is a values fellowship, one value of which concerns money, a topic which, in this time of severe economic distress, may be pertinent. In February 1914, Paul Harris published "The Distance Sense" in The Rotarian magazine about Rotary values. What follows is an excerpt:¹

"It is time to kick off some of the traditions of the past and get down to the point of really thinking for ourselves. We need a philosophy of life, one that enters its unceasing protest against the all too prevalent belief that happiness is to be found in the mere accumulation of dollars or in the acquisition of power, a philosophy that teaches us that the seat of most of our troubles is just beneath our hats; that the really satisfying things in life are within the reach of most of us right now, and that they would be within the reach of all of us were it not for the fact that some of us have more than we can ever possibly use; that there is more net pleasure in reading "Little Dorrit"² than there is in a joy ride, and that a joy ride may hurt while "Little Dorrit" never knew how to do anything in the world except help folks; that riches, as such, are almost certain to be a curse, almost never a blessing; that intemperance doesn't always mean drunkenness, that it may mean intensive acquisitiveness, and that one is about as dangerous as the other; that no man can stand more than about so much prosperity at any one time without being the worse for it; that adversity has made as many great men as abundance has ruined; that our sons are not materially different from other men's sons and that they are not immune from nature's laws; - that improvidence is a sin against infancy, old age, and society in general; that the effects of intensive acquisitiveness are often much worse than the effects of prodigality; that the tenor of legislation ought to be toward the elimination of both; that it will be if public sentiment favors such course; that public sentiment will favor such course as soon as men will take time to stop and think; that it is our duty to jog our respective memories on the subject; that when we succeed in our effort to gain an understanding of ourselves, we shall have little further need of penal institutions; that a rational philosophy of life would enable the American people to declare larger dividends of peace and contentment than would the ownership of U.S. Steel and Standard Oil; that while our brothers across the sea may be able to benefit themselves to some extent by ideas gained through us, we on the other hand should gain more from them as they are more philosophical, less temperamental than we are; that philosophy is the science of cause and effect, the very science of science, and its scope is exceeded only by that of religion itself."

Welcome to Rotary, Rita Sturm.

BRAD LANCASTER
Membership Chairperson

¹ Please note that this entire passage is one sentence. Styles change, eh?

² *Little Dorrit* is a nineteenth century serial novel in nineteen installments by Charles Dickens. The character "Little Dorrit" is Amy Dorrit, young daughter of the novel's protagonist.