

INDUCTION: DECEMBER 11, 2008  
MARGUERITE KING,  
VALERI MCGREGOR,  
JAMES MCGREGOR



## THE MEANING OF ROTARY

This evening we invite MARGUERITE KING, VALERI MCGREGOR, JAMES MCGREGOR to join our company, to be our friend. It may seem odd that one would induct someone into friendship. But that is what Rotary does. That is, in fact, Rotary's theory. In the landscape of human relationships, friendship is Everest. Friendship is attempted by many, but few reach its summit. Marriage, when healthy, grows into intimate friendship. Parenting, if successful, makes of children persons worthy of adult friendship. Friendship is the fabric from which Rotary is woven. So, we have gotten to know you a bit, and you us. Let's go further. Come be our friend.

About 1.2 million Rotarians meet in more than 32,000 clubs in more than 200 countries and geographical areas. That a lot of folks, but all together Rotarians count for less than two-one hundredths of one percent of the human population.

### PURPOSE

In 1922, Paul Harris asked: "What are we here for? To learn a lesson. What lesson are we here to learn? The only lesson, the lesson **how to wean ourselves from ourselves.**" (13) In Rotary, you nurture what is best in you. Rotary is a field on which to exercise the muscles of your soul. Rotary is not religion; we stay out of metaphysics. Paul Harris said: "When stripped of all formalities and creeds, fellowship flourishes." Believe what you will. But do something good, something constructive, something beneficial. Rotary makes the world your field for ethical exertion. Think about it. When you stretch your ability to care, you find yourself able to care yet more strongly. Rotary offers fulfillment, meaning, purpose, joy, not from the Rotary organization. From within yourself. These experiences leap up within you when you serve others. Service above self. Rotarians act. Rotary teaches you to do things. Don't sit on your hands. Don't moan and complain. Do something. Paul Harris put it simply: "Deeds, not creeds." Action, not words. Paul said: "I am a believer in universal service, not with a sword and bayonet but with a pick and shovel." The better one serves, the better one lives. One hears an echo here, from Judea: He who is the greatest among you makes himself servant of all.

### MEANS

How does Rotary teach service? Rotary has a theory. Service begins with learning friendship. Open yourself to one person. That act makes you better able to receive another person. You get in the habit. You make friends. People in the habit of making friends are less likely to hate, to kill, to steal, to abuse, to sneer. Rotary wields friendship as a sword. Rotary asserts that we can patch up mankind's fragmentation by the good glue of friendship. Learn to befriend one person. It starts you down a path.

**CLUB.** When you can make one friend, make a friend of every Rotarian in your club. Serve them. Bring a program. Find a new member. Greet. Do a vocational talk. Offer some inspiration. Slap these friends on the back, even if Sinclair Lewis might think you corny. Tell them you are glad to see them, even if H. L. Mencken thinks that means you haven't a brain in your puny skull. Go ahead. Let them into your life. Doing so will make you grow. Inside.

**VOCATION.** Rotary believes that you spend most of your days working, so figure out how to serve well when you work. Do your work ethically. Rotary advises you to assess your work by the Four Way Test:

- Is your work based on truth?
- Is the result of your work fair to all whom it touches?
- Does your work build good will?
- Are you becoming a better friend to those you work for and with?
- Does your work benefit all whom it touches?

If you answered no to any of those questions, you have an opportunity to improve yourself, to serve better. Improve your work. Do your work well, truly, fairly, beneficially, with a smile and friendly attitude. If you can't or don't work in this manner, change the way you work. Doing so will make you grow.

**COMMUNITY.** By now, you are getting the hang of it. Building friendships in your club makes you able to befriend your community. Care about Shoreline. Bandage its wounds. Lift its lowly and fallen persons. Uphold the city's virtues. Censure its vices. Serve your community. Serving will make you grow.

**WORLD.** If you can care about Shoreline, your soul may encompass the world. The same step that led you to embrace one friend, leads to holding the world in your heart. I cannot do that yet. But I am a cretin. You will do better than me. So, teach me.

Rotary has a goal for the world. The world should be peaceful. Rotarians are one agent of peace in the world. Paul Harris was eloquent about peace: "War is always a ghastly blunder; even the winners lose." Rotary has a deceptively simple solution to war: friendship. One does not bomb one's friends, or the friends of friends. Make friends of people different from you. Make friends of people from every corner of the planet. Rotary's exhortation is a bit daunting, but critical. Paul Harris was appropriately blunt: "I would rather have the memory of a dead Rotary which had given itself effectively to such a cause than a living Rotary hopeless enough to characterize as impracticable all effort directed to the establishment of 'peace on earth, goodwill toward all men.'" Better dead than hopeless. That's the motto of someone committed to service, committed to personal growth.

So, welcome to Rotary. Be my friend. Be our friend. Be Shoreline's friend. Be the world's friend. Be a Rotarian. You will grow like a weed.

Paul Harris's question rings for all of us at each and every induction:

**What can you do, what are you willing to do, for Rotary?**

BRAD LANCASTER  
Membership Chairperson