

INDUCTION: **JIM DiPEso**

October 15, 2009



ROTARY'S THREE-LEGGED STOOL

Contrary to popular misconception, Rotary is not an aimless do-gooder society. Rotary has a theory, a social anthropology actually. Rotary's social anthropology has three prongs: friendship leads to service, which leads to personal growth, which leads back to friendship and service and more growth, and so on. This is Rotary's three-legged intellectual stool.

FIRST LEG. The **friendship** Rotary endorses is not that pale wisp of acquaintance that passes for friendship in most of North America. Rotarians become intimates, knowing one another's lives and families and struggles and joys. We meet weekly. We share. Deep human bonds fill out a Rotarian's identity. It makes the Rotarian know what it means to be involved in the lives of others, to care about them. That sets the stage for service. When you care and know, you can act.

SECOND LEG. Rotarian **service** comes in as many flavors as there are relationships. When Rotary clubs know and care about circumstances that beg remedy, we find ways to help. Often we help near our homes. Our own communities needs nurturance, a hot meal, a dry place to sleep, knowledge and the skills to acquire knowledge, a warm word and handshake, and ethical leadership. But Rotarians care abroad as well, far from the hearth. We educate ourselves about other cultures, meet people from distant places, and try to care. Our efforts are sometimes feeble, but we learn. Our results can be underwhelming; but we try nevertheless. Service stretches us to be more than alone, to care about more than ourselves.

THIRD LEG. Stretching causes **growth**. Stretching expands our identities, making room for others and their needs. Personal growth causes skills to emerge we did not know we had. Caring in friendship elicits this growth. While painful, growth is also exhilarating. We feel new potential. We dream what once seemed impossible. We reach beyond our former grasp. We invite new people into our lives, and undertake novel challenges. Which brings us round the corner to friendship and service once again.

Rotary plumbs our humanity. We rest our hearts upon Rotary's three-legged stool.

Welcome to Rotary, Jim DiPeso.

BRAD LANCASTER
Membership Chairperson