



Lend a Hand



Breakfast Rotary—Jefferson City, MO

[www.jeffcityrotary.org](http://www.jeffcityrotary.org)

February, 2004

Every Wednesday 7:00 a.m. Capitol Plaza Hotel 415 W. McCarty St. Jefferson City, MO

## DAN'S DISSERTATION

(WORDS FROM OUR ROTARY CLUB PRESIDENT)



The past few weeks have seen a lot of activity involving our club. January 23<sup>rd</sup> saw another successful chicken dinner fundraiser at the Eagle's

Club. Many thanks to **Ken Fryer** and the many volunteers who helped make the evening go smoothly. Quite a few people have yet to turn in the money they have collected, so we do not yet know how much we will be giving to the Boy's and Girl's Club and to the Senior Nutrition Center. If you have not yet turned in your money, please get in touch with Ken as soon as possible. Based on the preliminary information received the night of the dinner, it sounds like we served nearly the same number of meals as last year and I expect our proceeds to be in line with last year's figures as well.

The Family of Rotary committee, headed by **Jim Jackson** put together an entertaining program on January 28<sup>th</sup>. A large number of spouses and children braved the cold temperatures to join us for breakfast and to be entertained by Ralph Duren of the Conservation Department, who has become nationally known for his large array of bird and animal calls. Ralph provided some further excitement to the proceedings when he picked the Joker from the deck of cards to win the 50-50 drawing and take home more than \$2,500.00. A like amount of money has been raised for the Rotary Foundation, and I thank all of you who have participated in buying tickets and generating that revenue.

Speaking of the Foundation, the matching grant program to buy a delivery truck for a food bank in Monterrey, Mexico

has won approval from RI. The Jefferson City West club has agreed to share in the \$1,000 pledge made by our club, and District 6080 will be providing another \$1,000 in matching funds. **Angie Kinworthy** and **Stephen Stark** are to be commended for bringing this program to the club's attention.

Finally, formation of the Interact club for high school students continues to move forward. The first joint meeting of JC and Helias students took place on January 22<sup>nd</sup> and an organizational meeting to elect officers is planned for Sunday, February 8<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. in the back room at Panera Bread. If you know any high school students who you think might be interested in the Interact program, please let them know. Blair Oaks has also been contacted about the program and we hope to get some participation from there.

This is just a small sampling of what has been going on lately, and I am sorry I cannot mention everyone who has made a positive contribution to the club. Thanks for all the good work you have been doing and will continue to do.

## Meals on Wheels

January "MEALS ON WHEELS" scheduled for the 26th was cancelled due to the wintry blast of freezing rain and snow. Driving conditions were treacherous and there no doubt were places that could not be safely reached by car. It was unfortunate because many of the "MEALS" recipients really look forward to those warm noon meals. Our club will be ready again next month on the fourth Monday with another round of volunteers. This month we give special thanks to our volunteers who were: **Harv Sanders, J.T. Yarnell, Bob Sfredo, Bob Asahl, Jim Jackson, Ryan Burson and Garry Chegwidden**. When you see these folks again give them a special "Thanks" on behalf of our club. They are the ones who help our club meet our "MEALS" obligation.

Al Laffoon

## Interview with 'The Ethicist'

**Who's to blame for the meltdown in corporate ethics? Can Rotary help? We go to *New York Times* ethics columnist Randy Cohen for answers.**

Each week, Randy Cohen faces up to 150 ethical dilemmas, luckily, not his own. They are posed by readers from around the world. Cohen's thoughtful and razor-sharp replies appear in his weekly column "The Ethicist" in the New York Times Magazine and in newspapers across the United States under the title, "Everyday Ethics." Here he talks with Tom Clynes, frequent contributor to *The Rotarian*, about business ethics, civic life, and Rotary's Four-Way Test.

**The modern business culture is commonly perceived as ethically bankrupt. Do you agree that the ethical climate has eroded in recent years?**

I'm not sure if there's more news about ethical lapses these days or just more news in general. Certainly there were other periods known for outrageous greed and excess. Look at the Gilded Age; the things that Andrew Carnegie got away with were pretty impressive. In any case, I don't attribute it to a general moral decline among the populace. I tend to blame government, which is intent on dismantling the institutions that once made this country a great place for honest people to conduct business. For instance, the Securities and Exchange Commission was created during the New Deal not as an obstacle to business but as a way to make business possible, since it's much easier to do business with people if you think that they are not going to cheat you. When the SEC is underfunded, scandals happen. People will only place their faith in the market if they know it's fair. This seems in accord with the ethics of Rotary – that it's better for everybody doing business if everybody's honest.

**Wouldn't there be less need for institutional watchdogs if individuals behaved ethically?**

There's been a real change in my thinking since I've had the column. I now tend to emphasize civic virtue as the essential component of ethics. At the beginning it was all about individual rectitude. But if we rely on individual rectitude to create a just society, I think it's hopeless. Games without referees quickly degenerate into arguing. Similarly, notion of "self-policing" industries is naïve.

## **February Programs**

Feb 4<sup>th</sup> - Mayor John Landwehr  
Update on Events in Jefferson City  
(Introduced by Robert Hess)

Feb 11<sup>th</sup> - Member Panel  
Housing a Rotary Exchange Student  
(Introduced by Stephen Stark)

Feb 18<sup>th</sup> - Bill Tackett  
Cole County Prosecutor's Office  
(Introduced by Robert Hess)

Feb 25<sup>th</sup> - Carla Steck  
Atelier CMS, Inc – Visual Arts  
(Introduced by Robert Hess)

**Let's talk about Rotary's Four-way Test.**

Herbert Taylor set out to do what many philosophers have tried to do: create a concise guide to ethical behavior. There have been many other attempts over the millennia. Some people find the golden rule to be all you need to know. With Thomas Jefferson, it was transparency: You act as though you are legislating for all humanity. All of them are useful, and if a person of goodwill is guided by the Four-Way Test, it could get him or her a long way. But like all moral guides, this one has its limitations.

**In general, then, would you say that the Four-Way Test is useful?**

Yes, very. If a person of goodwill applied the Four-Way Test as a guide to behavior when faced with a difficult decision, I think it would take them a long way. But moral precepts are not meant to be rules so much as tools for thinking, techniques for analyzing the moral implications. If you use it that way, I think there's much to be gained by it.

**You're often guided by the writings of Samuel Johnson. What about his wisdom appeals to you?**

Johnson was austere with himself and much more generous in judging others' behavior. He was very forgiving of the human weaknesses of other people when they were people of goodwill. He was tolerant of human frailty, except his own. His life was a model of generosity of spirit; he had a real understanding of what it is to be a human being.

*From <http://www.rotary.org>*

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*Special Reminder*

If the Jefferson City Public Schools are cancelled due to the weather on a Wednesday morning, then the Rotary meeting for that day will also be cancelled. School cancellations are announced on local area radio and TV stations.