

## Rotary Star - December 23, 2004

It's the time of year that we traditionally count our blessings and say thank you – thank you to all the people throughout the Boothbay Region who have attended our auction and supported our citrus fruit and Vidalia onion fundraisers. We thank those of you who came out for the Best of Boothbay fundraiser at the Spruce Point Inn last September as well as our annual Bowl Dinner at the American Legion hall. We hope you had fun at these events, but even more important, with your financial help, here's what we have accomplished this calendar year:

We've helped keep this community the special place it is through contributions to the capital campaigns of the Opera House, the Boothbay Region Land Trust, and the Memorial Library. We also took part in work parties at the Opera House and for the Land Trust.

We're currently building an outdoor stage at the YMCA's Camp Knickerbocker. We also provided financial support to the Y's annual fund drive and its Halloween Party. We supported the Boothbay Boosters' Club and the Watershed Center for the Ceramic Arts. We celebrated our first responders again this year as the Hometown Heroes we know them to be, and we helped clean up after the Special Olympics golf tourney last fall.

We know that some of our neighbors need a little extra help, and we responded via substantial donations to the Boothbay Region Food Pantry and by both financial support and work parties to help do the work of Rebuilding Together.

We've invested in the future of this community through our support of the BRES Reading is Fundamental program, the Harbor Children's Center, and the Student Aid Fund. We help support the co-ed Basketball Tournament again, and we collected Toys for Tots.

This year, we've also supplied scholarships and camperships to help local youth attend: People-to-People student ambassador and world leadership programs; AFS experience in Costa Rica; Odyssey of the Mind; Boys and Girls State; biology project in Bermuda; Youth Leadership program; Camp Hines overnight camp for four Webelos; and scholarships for five student trips to Washington DC. (It's amazing any kids are left in town!)

We are delighted that the next generation of leaders is learning about "service above self" via Rotary's high school Interact program, and we are grateful for the leadership of Eric Chamberlain and I.J. Pinkham in making it all possible.

Although we concentrate our giving right here in the Boothbay Region, we also recognize our wider obligations throughout Maine. Once again this year we supported Camp Sunshine and the "Take a Swing at Homelessness" program.

We donated money for Rotary International projects throughout the developing world and we continue to sponsor a Haitian child through the Childreach program. We're taking advantage of a Rotary International grant and matching funds opportunities to purchase a van for Safe Passage, an after-school program that supports children who live and work on the Guatemala City dump. We continue to support Friends Forever financially, and we helped host a Friends Forever group

of young Protestants and Catholics from Northern Ireland; we also hosted young professionals from Istanbul through Rotary's Global Study Exchange program.

We couldn't do it without the support of our spouses. You have uncomplainingly (most of the time) allowed us time away from family responsibilities to attend meetings, participate in fundraisers, and get involved in Rotary assemblies and conferences; and you know that, summer or winter, Thursday night is meeting night. Our gratitude goes out to you and to our extended families, business associates, and all our neighbors who have supported our work, helped us host international study groups, and contributed to our projects in myriad ways. Thank you for making our job easier.

Of course, it all boils down to leadership: We have been blessed in particular by our 2003-04 president, Craig Tukey, who was and continues to be an insightful, intelligent presence among us, and by our current 2004-05 president, Mike Thompson, who is perpetually thinking of others and doesn't know the meaning of the word "no." We are also honored this year that our own Bob Jacobson is serving Rotary as district governor, and that Chip Griffin is our assistant governor.

Our Rotary club has been a leader in the Boothbay community for almost 60 years, and we're only getting stronger! Nor does "service above self" stop for the Christmas holiday. If you haven't done so already, turn your fruit money in to Craig Tukey as soon as possible, and don't forget the returnables drive scheduled January 8 at Shaw's in Wiscasset.

All this activity takes organization as well as commitment and participation. On Thursday, Dec. 30, our dinner speaker will be Bob Paskal, who will talk about Adult Ed in the community. The greeter that night will be Vic Taylor, invocation by Bill Kautzmann, and waiters will be Brenda Blackman, Pat Forestell and Debbie Graves.

On January 6, the speaker will be Lisa Martin of the Bath Sunrise Rotary club, and her message will focus on a school that, through her efforts, Rotary is funding in Mexico for Indian children. The greeter that night will be "iron man" Doug Harley; invocation by the Reverend John Heyl, and the waiters will be Peter Gardner, Marty Peak Helman, and Craig Tukey.

January monthly housekeeping assignments are as follows: Steward is Jim Botti; innkeeper is Seth Hedgcock; and the 50/50 will be managed mathematically by Sue Kreamling, while the January programs will be organized by the always-creative Chip Griffin.