

## What is Rotary?

The answer often depends on who's answering the question.

FOR MANY grassroots members, their impressions of Rotary are likely based on the activities and interests of the clubs they join. Thus, they may be unaware of the true depth and scope of the organization: its wide range of opportunities for service and fellowship, its internationality, and the breadth of the humanitarian and educational programs supported by The Rotary Foundation of RI. Even many long-term members may not fully grasp the total Rotary experience.

The following special section, suggested for Membership and Extension Month by the 2001-02 RI Communications Committee, is intended to bridge the knowledge gap by providing an overview of the mission, principles, programs, structure, and history of Rotary International and The Rotary Foundation.

The compilation of descriptions, facts, figures, dates, testimonials, and other educational information about Rotary, presented on pages 29-36, is also available as a separate publication printed in nine languages (*Rotary Basics*, publication number 595-EN, lots of 10/US\$5 each). Club presidents are urged to use this booklet, which replaces several discontinued publications, as an orientation tool for new members and a refresher course for all.

To complement this material, our special report also includes several articles about noteworthy Rotarians and Rotary projects in North America, where the bulk of our readership resides. Over the course of this year, many of Rotary's official regional magazines also will publish versions of the educational material, augmented by articles about Rotary activities in their part of world.

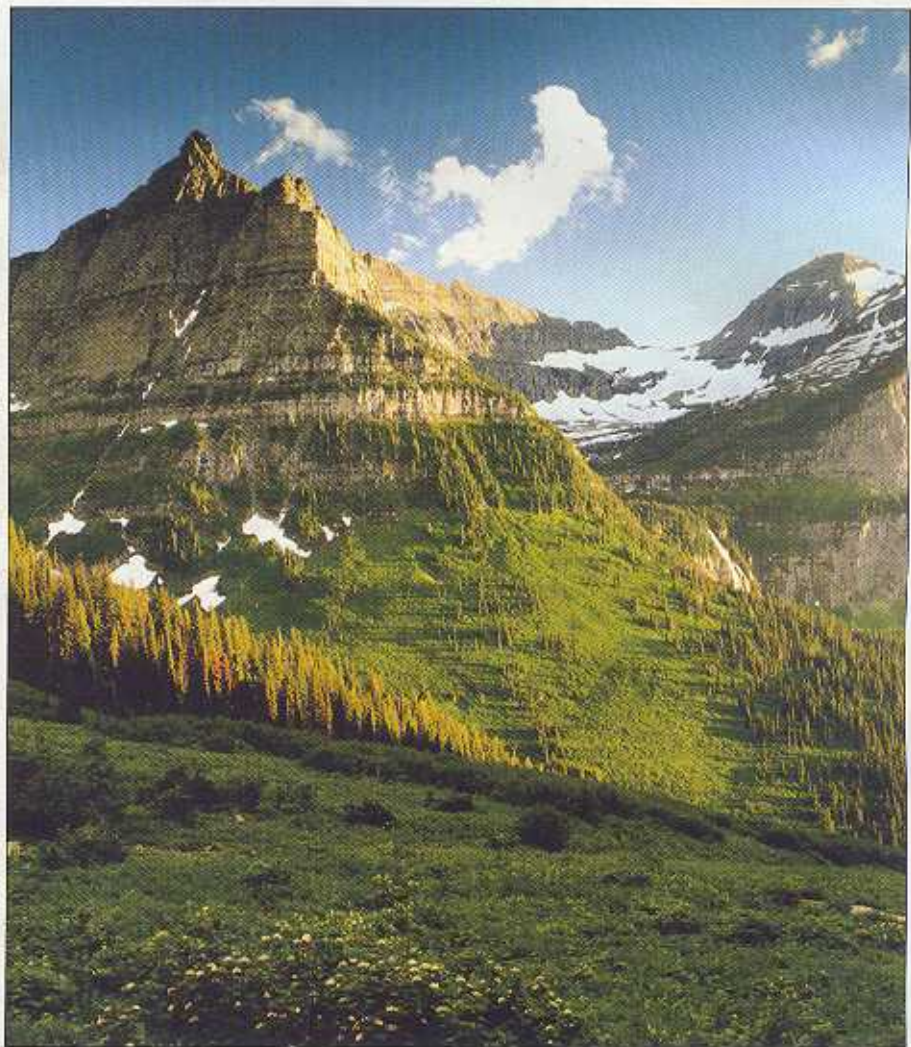
The goal in all of this is to help club members get the most out of their Rotary experience and, in doing so, improve the quality of their clubs and the entire organization.

— WAYNE HEARN  
FOR THE EDITORS



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— DR. GLENN COULTER



Top: Montana Rotarian Phillip Iversen (with microphone), flanked by members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Montana Highway Patrol, presides over the annual Hands across the Border ceremony at Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park. Bottom: The park’s majestic vistas pay fitting tribute to the lofty goal of international peace.

## Rotary-supported Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park symbolizes friendship.

# Good neighbors preserve nature's riches by Anne Stein

SEVENTY YEARS AGO in June, a group of Rotarians from Alberta, Canada, and Montana, USA, made history when they convinced their respective national governments to create the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park, an enduring symbol of friendship and the model for peace parks worldwide.

Authorized by the U.S. Congress and Canada's Parliament, the peace park designation combines the 203-square-mile Waterton Lakes National Park in Canada with the 1,600-square-mile Glacier National Park in the United States. The arrangement allows both national parks to operate as separate entities under the peace park mantle.

The idea of combining the parks had been advanced earlier in the century by park rangers on both sides of the border. After all, the mountains, lakes, and rivers spanned the national boundary, the rangers said, and the indigenous mountain goats, bighorn sheep, grizzly bears, birds, elk, and other creatures were certainly unaware that a border existed.

"It's a wonderful example of international cooperation. It's the kind of thing that doesn't happen very often," says Dr. Glenn Coulter, past president of the Rotary-governed International Peace Park Association (IPPA) and a member of the Rotary Club of Lethbridge East, Alta. Rotary districts 5360 and 5370 in Canada and District 5390 in the United States are closely involved with the peace park and its governing body.

Each September, IPPA hosts a goodwill gathering at the peace park. In even years, Rotarians from nearly 150 clubs within the three districts meet on the U.S. side, in odd years on the Canadian side. This year's gathering is set for 20-22 September at the East Glacier Park Lodge. For most participants, the highlight is the Hands across the Border ceremony on the final day, when Rotarians recite a "pledge of peace" as they join hands across a white ribbon representing the border.

"We swear an oath never to take up arms against each other," says incoming IPPA president Mike Demaniuk, a member of the Rotary Club of Nisku-Leduc, Alta. "Every time I've done it, I get a tear in my eye - and it's a nice tear."

Canadians and Americans are equally represented on the 18-member IPPA board, and the presidency alternates between Canadian and U.S. Rotarians.

Phillip Iversen, a member of the Rotary Club of Kalispell, Mont., is the association's current president. Iversen started as a park ranger some 30 years ago and worked his way up through the ranks of the U.S. National Park Service, finishing his career as superintendent of Glacier National Park. "When I first came to Glacier, I'd see a site and think, 'This is the most beautiful thing I've ever seen,'" he recalls. "And then I'd turn a corner and see something that surpassed it."

The area's physical beauty is perfectly complemented by the spirit of binational friendship the peace park symbolizes, Iversen says. "It's comforting to know that we have good friends next door. It's a real privilege to live next to a great country that we get along with."

The association is currently backing a proposal that would significantly increase the size of the peace park by extending Waterton Lakes National Park westward into British Columbia. The proposal would nearly double Waterton's size and would align Waterton's western boundary with Glacier's. The plan is currently under review by the Canadian federal and provincial governments.

Rotarians are also involved in the ongoing debate over a 20-foot-wide, clear-cut swath that runs between the two parks. The border swath is mandated by a 1925 treaty that requires an open vista along the boundary line. "It's the opinion of both

national parks that the swath shouldn't be cleared anymore," explains Iversen. "It's really an intrusion of the natural setting of the two parks and identifies their separateness, contrary to the unity we're trying to establish." However, both national governments appear reluctant to waive the requirement because the language of the original treaty would have to be amended.

**Rotarians recite a "pledge of peace" as they join hands across a white ribbon representing the border.**

Rotarian Demaniuk also hopes that one day an International Peace Park Institute will be established at Waterton-Glacier to help promote the burgeoning peace park movement worldwide.

Several IPPA members are currently helping to establish the Big Bend International Peace Park where Big Bend National Park in western Texas borders northern Mexico. Establishing a peace park in the Himalayas has been proposed as a means to help defuse the tension between India and Pakistan over control of Kashmir. And Steve Thompson, a staff member in the Montana office of the National Parks Conservation Association, notes that several new transboundary "parks for peace" have been established in southern Africa and South America.

In December 2001, former South African President Nelson Mandela spoke on the occasion of the reintroduction of elephants to the new Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park, which includes portions of Mozambique, South Africa, and Zimbabwe.

"In a world beset by conflict and division, peace is one of the cornerstones of the future," the Nobel Peace Prize laureate said. "Peace parks are a building block in this process, not only in our region, but potentially in the entire world."

◆ Anne Stein is a freelance writer based in Evanston, Ill., USA.