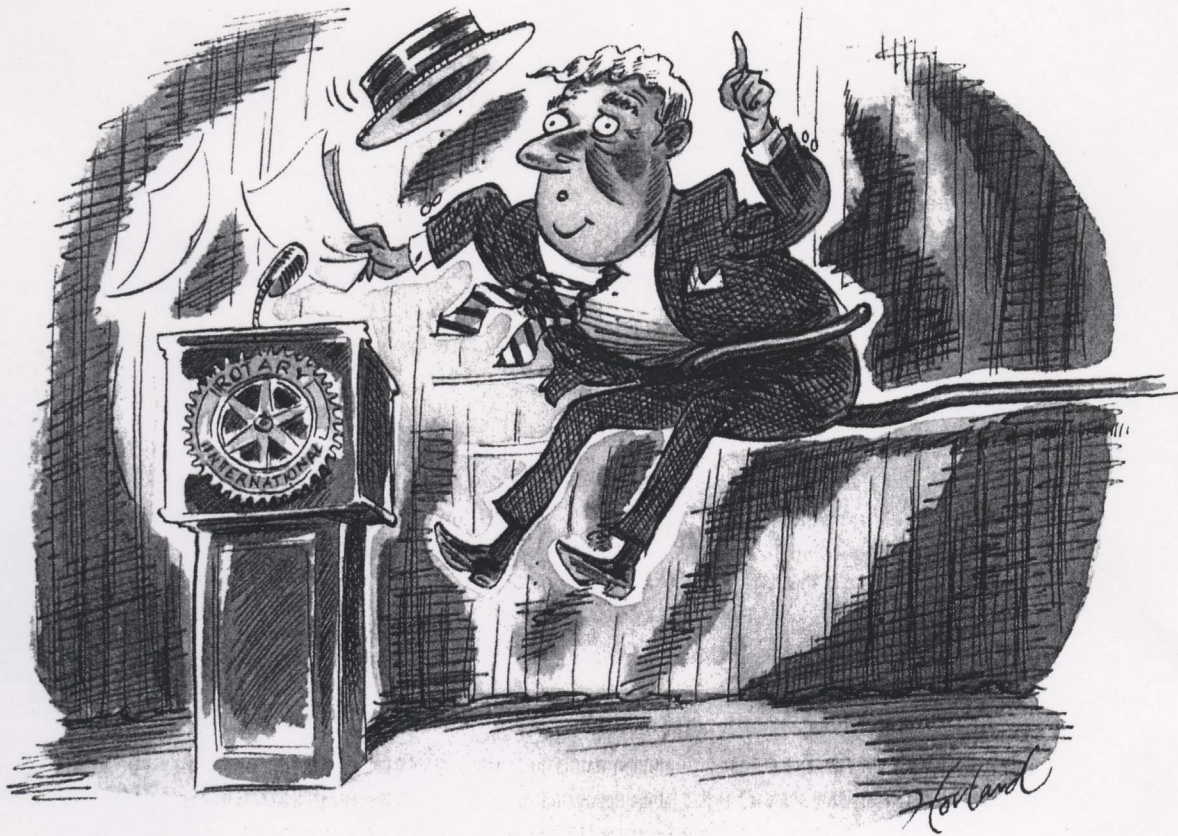


# VIEWPOINTS



## Cast your vote

*Debating whether Rotary and politics mix*

**R**otary International has a policy of staying out of politics. Though RI has representatives at the United Nations, they take careful measures to avoid taking political sides. (Look for an upcoming Viewpoints forum for more on that.) But do you think RI should always remain neutral? Is there ever a place for political discussion in Rotary? We asked five club members to give us their vote. >>

*I'll be the first to admit that it can be very touchy dealing with international politics.*

RON SWEGLES

*I think, for the most part, Rotary International should not take a stand on political issues. Rare exceptions could be made for positions that are universally accepted among Rotarians.*

DIANA TACEY

*RI should be above politics to serve all of humanity, regardless of political affiliation.*

ANTHONY WAIT



**RON SWEGLES** is a member of the Rotary Club of Sunnyvale, Calif., USA, and the mayor of Sunnyvale.

**DIANA TACEY** is a member of the Rotary Club of Mesa Sunrise, Ariz., USA. She's also the founder of the ChildLight Foundation for Afghan Children, a nonprofit organization devoted to caring for and supporting the children of Afghanistan.

**ANTHONY WAIT** is the secretary of the Rotary Club of Helderberg Sunrise, South Africa, which was recently chartered. His club is now establishing rules and guidelines on politics within Rotary. He works in information technology.

**LINDA SMYTHE** is a member of the Rotary Club of Montgomery Village, Md., USA. She originally joined Rotary in Bahrain, where she served Greece's head of mission as an honorary consul for 18 years. She is now a consultant.

**ALFRED GUNTERMANN** is a member of the Rotary Club of New Haven, Conn., USA, though he hasn't attended a meeting lately because of differences with fellow members about the proper place for politics at Rotary meetings.

**Do you believe Rotary International should take a stance on political issues?**

**Alfred Guntermann:** Though taking a political stance can be a worthy pursuit, it may be too great a goal to be realistic. However, I think it was Albert Einstein who said something like, "The danger to democracy is not bad people doing bad things, but that good people remain silent." Perhaps it could be effective to take a political stance on a few international issues, such as genocide, where Rotarians would be in agreement.

**Diana Tacey:** I think, for the most part, Rotary International should not take a stand on political issues. Rare exceptions could be made for positions that are universally accepted among Rotarians, such as support for victims of land mines, the worldwide polio vaccination program, or poverty eradication goals.

**Linda Smythe:** Most emphatically, no! Rotary International should always be first and foremost a service organization dedicated to helping those individuals in the world community who are in need, regardless of their religious or political beliefs.