

ROTARY GOLDEN ROUND TABLE

"The Active Citizen"

(Good Citizenship)

ANNCR: The Rotary Club of (Name City), in cooperation with Radio Station _____ brings you a projection of the drama you have just heard--a discussion by local community leaders of the community problem dramatized in Rotary Golden Theatre. We all do a good amount of talking about good citizenship, without ever really defining the subject. Does good citizenship apply most to our part in national, state or community affairs? What is a good citizen and how does he differ from an indifferent citizen?

Rotary Golden Round Table, a local contribution to the world-wide observance of Rotary International's Fiftieth Anniversary, feels that discussion is the start toward accomplishment. So, for the next 15 minutes, we are going to look at good citizenship from the standpoint of our own city.

Rotarians who join our Golden Round Table today to discuss good citizenship are:

Mr. A _____, _____ (Identification) _____;
Mr. B _____, _____ (Identification) _____;
and Mr. C _____, _____ (Identification) _____.

As communities go, my own feeling is that our city has better-than-average citizens. Would anyone disagree?

VOICE: (OFF) What percentage of qualified voters actually went to the polls here for the last school-board election?

ANNCR: Why--I really don't know.

VOICE: (OFF) Well, I'll tell you. Exactly ____ percent.

ANNCR: But--there wasn't much of a contest in that election, after all.

VOICE: (OFF) A good citizen votes, contest or not. He doesn't let anything short of a major disaster keep him away from the polls.

ANNCR: Well--possibly. And we already have the basis for some controversy. Exactly what does qualify a person as a good citizen? Mr. A, can you give us an answer?

MR. A: We could very well devote the whole 15 minutes at our disposal to a definition of good citizenship. As you know, there are Rotary Clubs in

MR. A: (CONT.) 89 different countries, and Rotarians everywhere are constantly working toward better citizenship. The Ideal of Service, Rotary's basic foundation, is as good a starting point for good citizenship as anything I've ever found. But because of its vital interest in good citizenship, Rotary International has prepared a score card for Rotarians and others to use in rating their citizenship. This score card enables an individual to determine how he measures up to his citizenship obligations. The score card includes ten marks of good citizenship, and you rate yourself on each of the ten points.

ANNCR: Ten points. How do the points compare in value?

MR. A: You give yourself from one to ten percentage points on each of the ten marks of a good citizen.

ANNCR: How were these points of good citizenship determined?

MR. A: The score card is a composite of opinion from leading Rotarians who are especially interested in the subject of good citizenship. It wouldn't be possible to give any one person complete credit for authorship.

ANNCR: Do you think the score card really tells you anything about your rating as a citizen?

MR. A: I certainly do. Most of us are inclined to be somewhat smug about our standing as citizens. We don't think of ourselves as having any shortcomings in citizenship. It's always the other fellow. But I know that any person who questions himself honestly about the ten statements on our Good Citizens' score card will find himself facing the unpleasant fact that he could improve himself a great deal in some departments.

ANNCR: This sounds like an interesting game of self-analysis. What is the first of the ten points on which you grade yourself?

MR. A: I think Mr. B is better qualified to discuss Point One than I am, because it's in his field.

MR. B: Well, the first mark of good citizenship is this--a good citizen is well-informed on local and world affairs. You can't possibly be a good citizen and an indifferent one. Nobody can take intelligent action without knowing what's going on in the world and in his own community. It's my opinion that the greatest reason for public disagreement on any country's foreign policy is that so few people are well-informed on foreign affairs. They will tell you that they don't have the time to keep up with world

MR. B: (CONT.) developments. After all, they say, I'm of no importance in world affairs. I have nothing to say about world policies. And they're wrong, of course. But pin them down on local affairs, where they do have a loud voice, and a good many times you'll find them just as poorly informed of what's going on.

MR. C: Why is it so important to be well-informed on local affairs, B?

MR. B: Show me a community that is indifferent to its city government--that doesn't know what's happening in city affairs--and I'll show you a poorly run city. If citizens don't care what's going on in their city, you can't blame city officials for doing a careless job. A good city government keeps right up on its toes--and one of the big reasons it keeps alert is because its performance is being watched. People show that they care what kind of government they have. Crime Commission executives say that corruption in city government is always due to indifferent citizenship. When the population of a community becomes aware that its government is corrupt, that government is cleaned up in a hurry. When a majority of voters know and care, public officials do a good job. If they don't, they cease to be public officials.

ANNCR: Then you think that being well-informed is a vital part of good citizenship?

MR. B: I certainly do. Nobody can vote well without knowing what his vote means.

ANNCR: Nobody can argue against that. Well, I'm not quite sure how many percentage points I should give myself on this first statement--a good citizen is well-informed on local and world affairs.

MR. A: Give yourself what you think is a fair mark. I think Mr. C should discuss the second and third marks of a good citizen.

MR. C: Mark Two of a good citizen is this: he is courteous, unselfish, friendly--gets along well with others--is a good neighbor. And being friendly and courteous doesn't mean being that way with our old friends--it means being friendly and courteous with everyone who comes in contact with us. I don't think anybody could possibly rate ten percentage points as a good neighbor. I know that I, myself, can think of a good many ways in which I could be a better neighbor than I am. As a community grows, neighborliness becomes more difficult--and more important. A good citizen gets along well with others. He makes himself a desirable part of the community. Rotary International, itself, has carried the good neighbor idea to world-wide lengths. Each of us can bring the good neighbor idea right to our own doorstep. I think (Name Town) does well on neighborliness. This is a

MR. C: (CONT.) friendly community, and we pride ourselves on the way we make newcomers welcome. But I think we can do even more than we do now.

ANNCR: I agree-but I also think that most of the people I know in (Name City) deserve high ratings on this classification. Pretty close to ten points. Now, what's the third mark of a good citizen?

MR. C: The third mark on our Rotary good citizens' score card is--a good citizen is sincere, dependable, and takes an active part in the church or religious community of his choice. No man who fails to recognize and fill out the spiritual side of his life is a well balanced person. I think nearly everybody acknowledges the need for good churches in a community. And yet, some of us won't recognize that a church is made healthy not by its pastor but by its membership. I've seen fine churches whose pastors were only average in ability. They were fine churches because they had wonderful congregations. But no matter how fine the church edifice may be--no matter how brilliant the pastor may be--you can't have a good church with a lackadaisical, unenthusiastic membership. A healthy community needs good churches, and good citizens make their churches good. You'll notice, too, that the third mark of good citizenship doesn't call for spiritual activity one day a week. It says, "The good citizen is sincere and dependable." In other words, his religion goes with him to his business establishment, to his home and to his social appointments. He is a seven-day-a-week good citizen from a spiritual standpoint.

ANNCR: Being a good citizen is a big job, isn't it? Well, we've had three marks of good citizenship. What's the fourth?

MR. A: A good citizen appreciates what others have done for him and accepts responsibility for the future betterment of his community. He realizes that he enjoys advantages that others before him have created and paid for. He knows that he owes his community and his country a debt. In other words, he doesn't vote against bonds for a new school simply because his children have graduated from the school system and won't be using it. The good citizen is willing to work for and pay his share to get anything that will make his community better.

MR. B: I don't suppose there's a taxpayer in the world who wouldn't enjoy lower taxes--and yet, it's a wonderful commentary on good citizenship that people whose taxes are already high will vote, time after time, to increase their taxes for something they feel will be good for their community.

ANNCR: I've noticed that. I happen to know a retired farmer who has made our school system almost a hobby, simply because he thinks better schools means a better future generation. I think he deserves a full ten points on the fourth mark of good citizenship.

MR. A: (Name Town) has a good many people who deserve ten points on that one. And I think we're blessed with a great number who deserve ten points on the fifth mark of good citizenship.

ANNCR: Which is--?

MR. B: A good citizen is fair and just in his relations with others. Rotary International has worked for codes of fair practices in all lines of human endeavour. Every Rotary Club has a Buyer-Seller Relations Committee and an Employer-Employee Relations Committee. A good citizen doesn't try to take advantage of his fellow citizens. I looked at a pair of shoes in a local store a few weeks ago, and the price was pleasingly low. I said to the proprietor of the store, "You know--you could charge four or five dollars more for that pair of shoes and they'd still be a bargain." He answered, "B, I have never asked myself, 'How much can I get for this item?' The right question to ask yourself is, 'How little can I sell it for and still make a fair profit?'" That man is fair and just in his relations with others.

MR. C: The sixth mark of good citizenship is this. A good citizen obeys the laws of his community and nation.

ANNCR: That is probably the most obvious of the ten, isn't it?

MR. C: Not at all. In the first place, it's apparent that it isn't universally accepted. If it were, we wouldn't need police and we wouldn't need jails.

ANNCR: But jails are for people who are definitely bad citizens.

MR. C: Well, let's consider the people you and I regard as good citizens. Do you believe the traffic laws are necessary? Do you think they are designed for the public good?

ANNCR: Certainly. With the number of automobile accidents there are, we need even stricter traffic laws.

MR. C: All right. Have you ever violated the traffic laws? You don't need to answer that question. It's just something to think about. Most of us are inclined to be annoyed by laws when they interfere with our own conduct. Too many of us, I'm afraid, let such laws apply to the other fellow. A

MR. C: (CONT.) good citizen obeys the law, whether it annoys him or not. If he thinks a law is unsound or unwarranted, he works for its repeal--but as long as it is on the books, he respects it.

ANNCR: I can hear a good many people saying "Ouch" as they grade themselves on that one.

MR. A: And there may be a few additional "ouches" on the seventh mark of good citizenship. Here it is. A good citizen votes regularly and intelligently at election time. I pride myself on voting regularly--but much as I hate to admit it, I have to acknowledge that there have been times when I didn't vote intelligently.

ANNCR: I'd like to know how you can vote intelligently for every office. And sometimes when I've gone to the polls, I've had ballots handed to me that might as well have been printed in some foreign language for all they meant to me--ballots asking me to vote on some bond issue or change in legal procedure that I'd never even heard about.

MR. A: I think most of us have had similar experiences. And yet, every part of a ballot is always publicized, if we'd just take the time and trouble to find out about it. And as for the men who are running for minor offices, we can find out about them, too. Their lives can't be complete secrets or they couldn't get their names on the ballots.

MR. B: I particularly like the eighth mark of good citizenship. A good citizen is interested in the freedom and welfare of all of the world's peoples and does his part to secure them. Nearly everyone in the free world must be interested in the freedom and welfare of the world's peoples--but how many of us do anything about it? We have to do our part if we are going to be good citizens--and unless we do help to make freedom a reality all over the world, our citizenship may be endangered.

MR. C: Mark Nine of good citizenship is another basic ideal of Rotary. It is this--a good citizen is productive. He renders a worthwhile service to his fellow man. This is the Ideal of Service, without which human endeavour loses its point. It means that a good citizen makes himself a necessary part of his community, a person who has a contribution to make to humanity. What he does may seem small in the general scheme of things, but it is worth-while.

MR. A: I think (Name City) rates high on productivity. And a part of our productive work comes in the tenth mark of good citizenship.

ANNCR: What is the tenth one, A?

- MR. A: It's insurance, it's the way in which a good citizen plans and builds for the future growth and improvement of his community and his country. The tenth mark of good citizenship is setting a good example to the youth of your community. The future of (Name City) depends on today's youngsters, and the future of our nation and the whole world are equally dependent on boys and girls who are now in their impressionable years. We are their examples.
- ANNCR: You know, Mr. A, I never realized there was so much to good citizenship. It doesn't mean merely waving a flag and rising when the national anthem is played.
- MR. B: No, good citizenship goes far beyond loyalty or patriotism. It is a real challenge to the best in every person.
- ANNCR: Well, I know this. If every citizen in (Name Town) would try hard to fulfill all the qualifications of good citizenship laid down in your Rotary International Good Citizens' Score Card, what is already a fine community would soon become a much better city. Everybody who heard about it would want to live here. And I think we can make (Name City) a better community. I know that this discussion has made me do some serious thinking and I'm sure it's had the same effect on all our listeners. I'd like to continue the discussion, but it's time to wind up today's session of Rotary Golden Round Table. Thanks to all three of you gentlemen for your contributions. Next week, Rotary Golden Round Table will present a discussion of another problem as it applies to (Name City.) Our panel will consist of: (NAMES AND IDENTIFICATIONS OF LOCAL PANEL MEMBERS)--all well qualified to discuss the subject to be presented. Be sure to be with us next week at this same time for another program presented by the Rotary Club of (Name City) and Station _____ as a public service.