

Rain on the Rose Parade

It's Magical" was the theme of this year's internationally televised Rose Parade, but a better theme might have been "It's raining."

For the first time in 51 years, rain fell on the parade, which was held 2 January in normally sunny Pasadena, Calif., USA. But that didn't stop RI Director David Hossler from watching the annual Rotary float go by.

"I was sitting there in the rain with a Rotary ball cap on, my raincoat, my Carl-Wilhelm Stenhammar tie, and wool slacks getting soaked," Hossler says. "But it was worth it. It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience."

Since 1980, Rotary has entered a float in the famous parade as a way to raise awareness and promote the organization. Every year, the float is entirely funded by Rotarian donations and is decorated by volunteers, including Interactors, Rotaractors,

and scholarship recipients.

This year, 1,400 volunteers decorated the float, which featured three enormous teddy bears – one dressed as

overall theme. The day before the parade, the float and others were on public display.

"Hundreds of thousands

something to talk about with everyone." Even those who weren't Rotarians had interest, he says. Some had suffered from polio.

And it wasn't just parade goers who learned about Rotary's service work. This year, an estimated 40 million Americans watched the parade on TV, in addition to millions of international viewers.

"If we had to buy the commercial ad time, there's no way Rotary could afford that," says Rotarian Jim Miceli, chair of the

Rotary Rose Parade Float Committee. "We consider this an enormous PR opportunity."



Rotary wasn't built in a day, and neither was its float. It took about eight months to create "The Magic of Caring."

a doctor, another as a nurse, and the third as a child. Its theme, "The Magic of Caring," was designed to appeal to children and adults, spread awareness of Rotary's commitment to eradicating polio, and match the parade's

of people pay US\$5 to get into the float-building areas, which are great, circus-size tents . . . and we show the people walking by how the float is made," Hossler says. "It seemed to me that I had

You said it

The Board of Directors recently established a disaster relief program to allow Rotarians to contribute to specific disasters through a master account. In a recent poll we asked how you would most like to see Rotary react when disaster strikes. Check out the results:

29%

Establish a fund to aid districts in long-term projects

27%

Partner with organizations to help the disaster area

24%

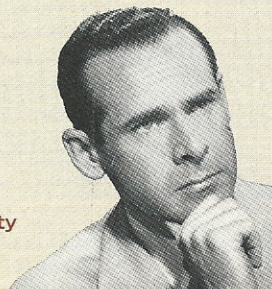
Send money to Rotary clubs or districts in the affected area

11%

Create a Donor Advised Fund through the Foundation

9%

Encourage Rotarians to donate to a charity of their choice



Poll conducted at www.rotary.org during December 2005. Total respondents: 175.