

THE HARD NUT TO CRACK FELLOWSHIP

*We Live in extraordinary times;
times, as such, that ask of us extra-ordinary efforts.*

If, that is, we are to be up to them, to creating, together, a future worth envisioning for our children, grandchildren, and for the generations to come:

~ ~ ~

To Whom Much Is Given, Much Is Expected.

The Fellowship has been fashioned out of the Guiding Principles that have inspired our most All-American institutions: 4-H, the Scouts, Masons and 12 Step Fellowships and Rotary. What each share in common, explicitly or otherwise, is the striving for balance.

Our working hypothesis is that, if one were to trace back to their root those problems that most concern each and every one of us both individually and as a society (e.g. the environment, health care, education, war and peace), one arrives at the im-balance noted in the relationship between the three spheres or sectors of society: economic, political and cultural. If this is the case, once recognized, balance can be achieved. Problems become *challenges* and, above all, **opportunities**.

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The Preamble to Our United States Constitution

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

WHAT: The fellowship involves **no** membership, **no** dues; **no** required attendance. *Nothing*, apart from a genuine interest in lending a hand, making a difference, lightening the load.

HOW: We convene via Zoom for 90 minutes at 9:59 am EST on the 2nd & 4th Saturday of each month. All participants are invited to give a brief up-

date of the “nut” they are at work crackin’; with extended presentations on 2 “nuts” that fellows freely offer for consideration.

The first extended presentation *opens* the gathering/call. The second concludes it. The timing of those offering and the shorter intervening updates will be determined at the outset of each call, when the number of participants is confirmed.

Both the opening and closing nut-crackers are asked to introduce and conclude their offerings with a verse, quotation, or related passage/reflection. All participants are requested to RSVP and to arrive a minute or two early. Thank you for your attention to this matter; time is precious.

WHO: The fellows are gentlemen and -women, et al, who either embody the 5 qualities noted, or are committed to doing what they are able to more fully acquire them. Toward such an end, the **12 Step Fellowships** speak of making a thoughtful “**inventory**”.

1) Service Before Self: In the spirit of **Rotary**, our life and labors are *not* in service to any narrower racial, religious, ethnic, political or socio-economic background. Rather, our service is to our shared humanity.

2) Team-Work: In the spirit of the **Boy & Girl Scouts**, our labors require *physical fortitude, mental awareness, and moral rectitude*. We are committed to working together to address the **problems-challenges-opportunities** that confront us.

3) Balance: In the spirit of **4-H**, we strive to both carry out and fulfill our labors in a balanced manner, both individually (with respect to balancing our thinking/head ~ feeling/heart ~ and willing/hands), as well as in and for society: the body-social. This latter societal balance is achieved via the orderly working together of the head/cultural sphere, the heart/political sphere, and the hands/economic sphere). Such a **balanced** approach replaces our black/white thinking with the revelation that others, including we ourselves, are not so much wrong as not right *enough*, or *too* right.

4) An Open Heart & Mind: In the spirit of the **Masons**, we are working toward the re-union of *wisdom, strength* and *beauty*. Toward that end, we have no prevailing orthodoxies, confessions, partisan leanings, existential fears/presumed villains, or related strictures that define/confine us — including “political correctness”. Simply expressed, our labors aspire to be labors of **love**.

5) Top-Line: In the spirit of **Concord’s Transcendentalists/Authors**, we are not driven by fame or fortunes, the “Almighty Buck.” Rather, we understand the wisdom not only of working inconspicuously (largely invisibly), but of Thoreau’s related words: “*A man is rich in proportion to the number of*

things he can [afford to] *do without.*” Simply expressed, our distractions are few.

Schopenhauer’s words guide us along such an extra-ordinary way:

“All truth passes through 3 stages:

First, it is ridiculed.

Second, it is violently [or otherwise] opposed.

Third, it is accepted as being self-evident.”

Amen

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