

## The Correlation between Rotary Public Relations and Membership Recruitment

On 17 June 2004, the Rotary Clubs of Rochester, NY, USA and Toronto, ON, Canada co-sponsored gala charity fundraisers to commemorate the inaugural voyage of the *Spirit of Ontario*, the first high-speed passenger and vehicle ferry on the Great Lakes. The Rotary clubs' role in the historic event garnered significant coverage from local media for several months before the first ferry passage. From **1 January – 30 June**, a total of **31** articles highlighting the clubs' involvement in the venture appeared in a local newspaper, *The Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*.

During the same six-month period, the Membership Development Division observed a dramatic increase in Prospective Member Forms submitted from the Rochester area (part of District 7120). A supplemental recruitment tool administered by RI, the Prospective Member Form ([www.rotary.org/membership/prospective/form.html](http://www.rotary.org/membership/prospective/form.html)) is designed for qualified individuals to express interest in joining a local Rotary club. From **1 January – 30 June**, **9** Prospective Member Forms were submitted from District 7120.

In contrast, only **2** individuals in District 7120 had submitted Prospective Member Forms in the previous six months (**1 July – 31 December 2003**). No articles appeared in the Rochester newspaper regarding the clubs and the ferry passage during these six months.

The difference in the number of D7120 submissions during the first half of the Rotary year (2) compared to the second half (9) represents a **450%** increase in Prospective Member Forms submitted during the period of heightened media coverage.

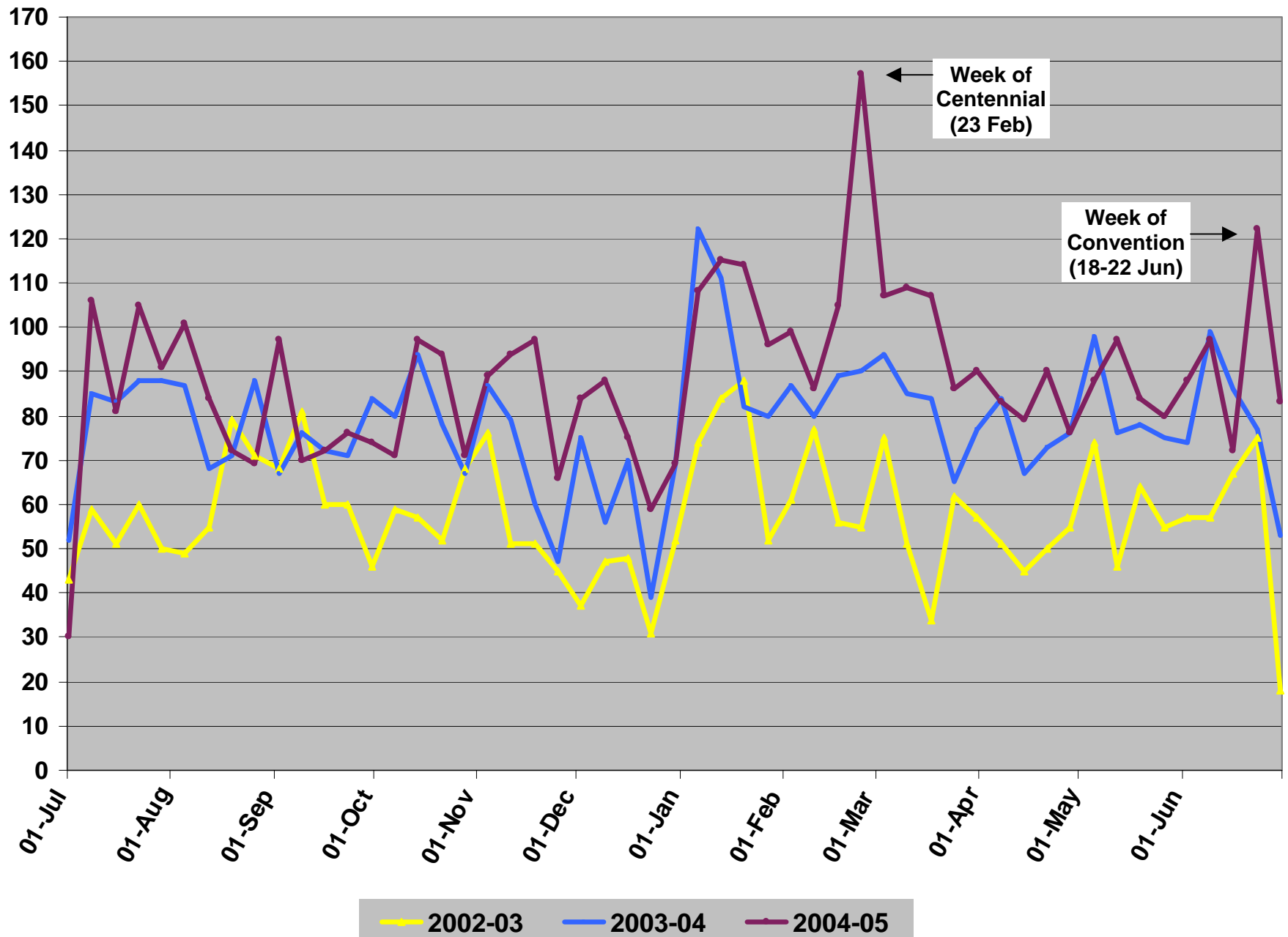
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The example from District 7120 is not unique. Since 2002-03, examples of the correlation between publicity and increased interest in Rotary have emerged from Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Mexico, Nicaragua, Nigeria, United Kingdom, United States, and Venezuela. In addition to a statistical increase in membership inquiries from these areas following heightened publicity, many of these prospective members included specific comments on their form, explaining that their interest in Rotary was piqued by recent newspaper, magazine, billboard, television, or radio coverage.

On the following pages are written descriptions and charts of Prospective Member Forms submitted worldwide during the Rotary Centennial and RI Conventions, as well as submissions from specific countries before, during, and after local media coverage. These five examples further demonstrate the relationship between PR and membership.

The first graph shows the total Prospective Member Forms submitted to RI during 2002-03, 2003-04, and 2004-05. The two highest peaks, both in 2005, represent the weeks of the Centennial and the RI Convention.

# Prospective Member Forms Worldwide: 2002-05



## I. 2005 RI CONVENTION

On 18-22 June 2005, nearly 42,000 Rotarians from 161 countries gathered in Chicago to attend the annual RI Convention. As the culmination of the centennial year, it was the largest RI Convention ever held in North America.

Throughout 2004-05, clubs and districts worldwide coordinated publicity efforts to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Rotary in their communities and local media, including:

- Newspaper articles, ads, photographs, and supplements
- Programs and advertisements on radio and television
- Billboard advertisements and signs
- Community events (sports, arts, civic)

Supplemental PR materials provided to clubs and districts from RI are described in the next section (Rotary Centennial).

In addition, RI organized a wide variety of publicity focused on the centennial before and during the convention, including:

- Public Service Announcements (PSAs) throughout the Chicago area on radio, television, public transportation, billboards, dirigibles (blimps), and streetlamp banners
- Newspaper supplements in major Chicago-area newspapers
- PSAs appearing at Loew's theatres and on United Airlines' in-flight programming

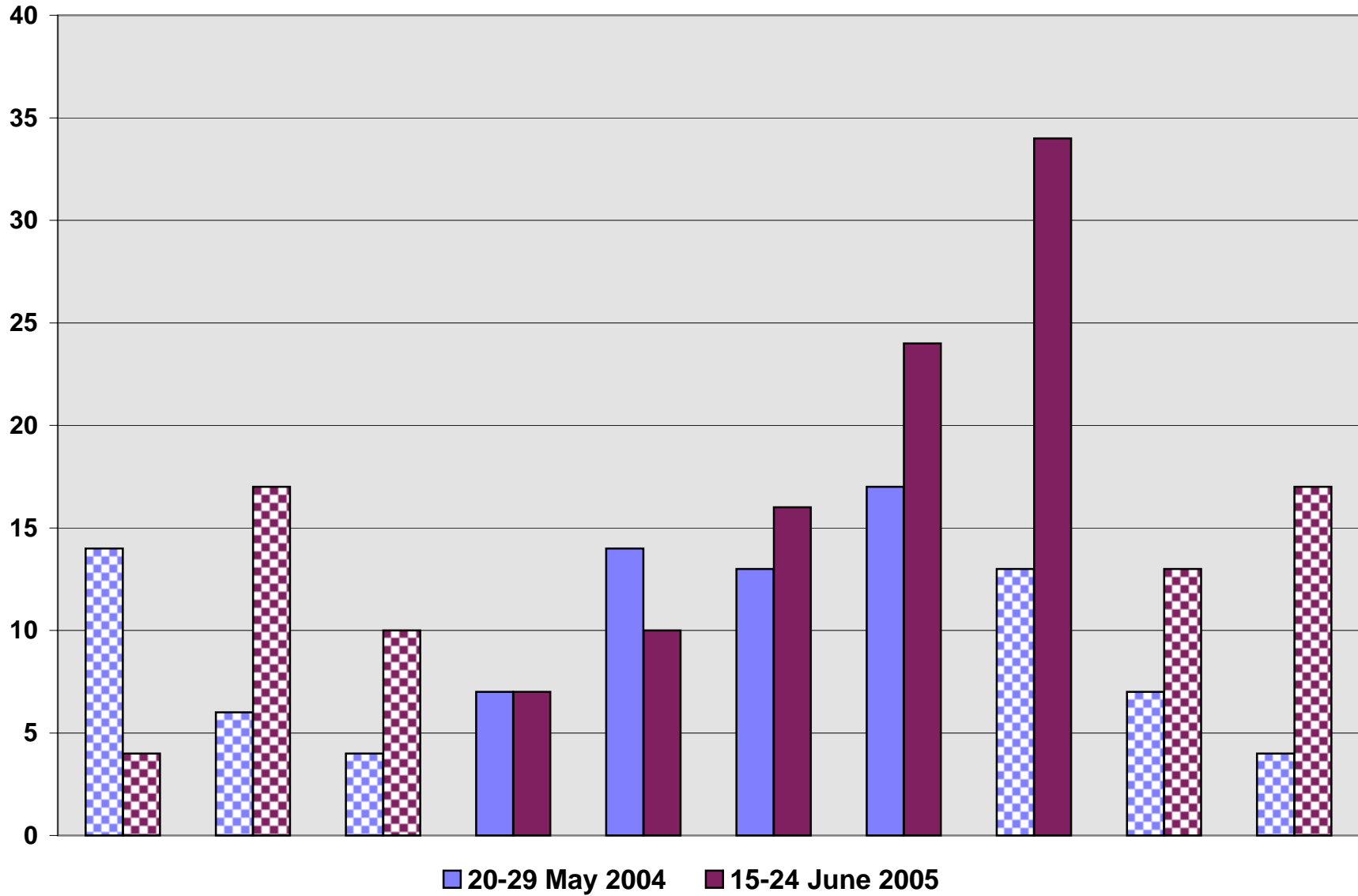
### Period of Media Exposure

- A total of **91** Prospective Member Forms were submitted on **18-22 June 2005**, which represents a daily average of **18.2** during the 5-day period. In contrast, the daily average during **2004-05** was **12.8** Prospective Member Forms.
- On the last day of the convention (22 June), **34** Prospective Member Forms were submitted, which is the highest number ever submitted in a single day.
- RI received **78%** more Prospective Member Forms during the 2005 Convention (**91**) than the 2004 Convention (**51**).

In June, several prospective members in the Chicago area reported they had seen Rotary publicity on the train, radio, and at Loew's theatres. Worldwide, there was a similar trend: Prospective Member Forms submitted in May and June from Australia, Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, Cote d'Ivoire, Egypt, Germany, Greece, India, Nigeria, and USA all mentioned Rotary publicity on billboards, radio, newspaper, and other local media.

The graph on the following page shows Prospective Member Forms submitted during a 10-day period before, during, and after the RI Conventions in 2004 and 2005. The solid colors represent Prospective Member Forms submitted on the days of the convention (23-26 May 2004 and 18-22 June 2005). The shaded colors represent Prospective Member Forms submitted on the days directly before and after the convention (20-22, 27-29 May 2004 and 15-17, 23-24 June 2005).

**Prospective Member Forms Worldwide:  
10-Day Period During 2004 and 2005 RI Conventions**



*Solid colors represent the dates of the RI Convention;  
shaded colors represent the dates before and after the RI Convention*

## II. ROTARY CENTENNIAL

On 23 February 2005, Rotary clubs worldwide celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the first Rotary club. Beginning in 2002, all club presidents and district governors received PR materials from RI designed to promote Rotary within their community and to local media, including:

- Centennial Promotional Kit I (2002): Included a planning calendar, examples of outstanding club projects, historical photos, poster, centennial logo, and a CD to customize publicity
- Centennial Promotional Kit II (2003): Included informational items, order forms, and a CD of centennial billboard/ PSA (Public Service Announcement) designs
- Global Public Image Campaign CD-ROM (January 2005): Included print, television, radio, Internet, and outdoor publicity materials focused on polio eradication, designed for gratis or low-cost placements in local media

### Period of Media Exposure

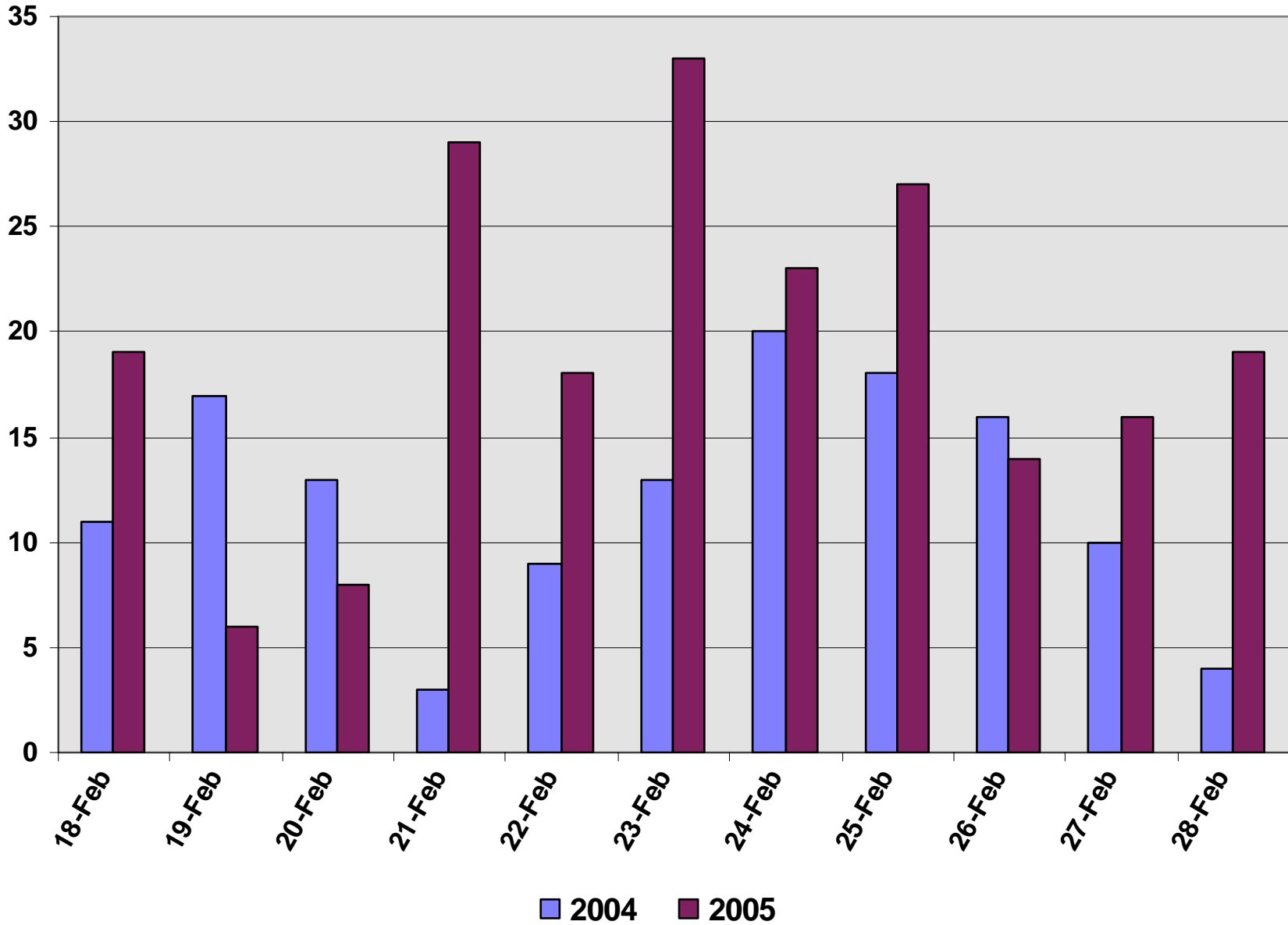
- **33** Prospective Member Forms were submitted on 23 February, which represent a **158%** increase in the daily average during 2004-05 of **12.8**.
- More than twice as many as Prospective Member Forms were submitted on 23 February 2005 than 23 February 2004 (**13**).
- From 18-28 February 2005, the daily average of submissions was **19**, in comparison to a daily average of **12** during the same period in 2004.

Furthermore, several Prospective Member Forms included specific comments about the Centennial-focused media coverage, such as:

- “Rotary has been doing a lot of advertising in my community recently surrounding the centennial celebrations. Hearing the radio advertisements piqued my interest and I went looking for more information about Rotary. I am very interested in becoming a member of a local Rotary club.” ~ 23 February, Canada
- “I heard about Rotary from the local newspaper’s coverage during Rotary’s 100 year celebrations.” ~ 24 February, South Africa

The graph on the following page shows Prospective Member Forms submitted during a 10-day period in February 2004 and 2005. The highest peak in the center represents 23 February 2005.

**Prospective Member Forms Worldwide:  
18-28 February 2004 and 2005**



### III. LATIN AMERICA (Zone 21)

On 13 January 2003, RI Past President Luis Giay was interviewed on the CNN En Español program “Tu Carrera” (“Your Career”). The 10-minute interview highlighted Rotary’s educational programs and was broadcast three times on 13-14 January. Based on the submission dates of Prospective Member Forms that specifically cited the interview, it appears that the program was also re-broadcast after 14 January.

During the 2002-03 Rotary year, RI received a total of **73** Prospective Member Forms from Bolivia, Colombia, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Venezuela.

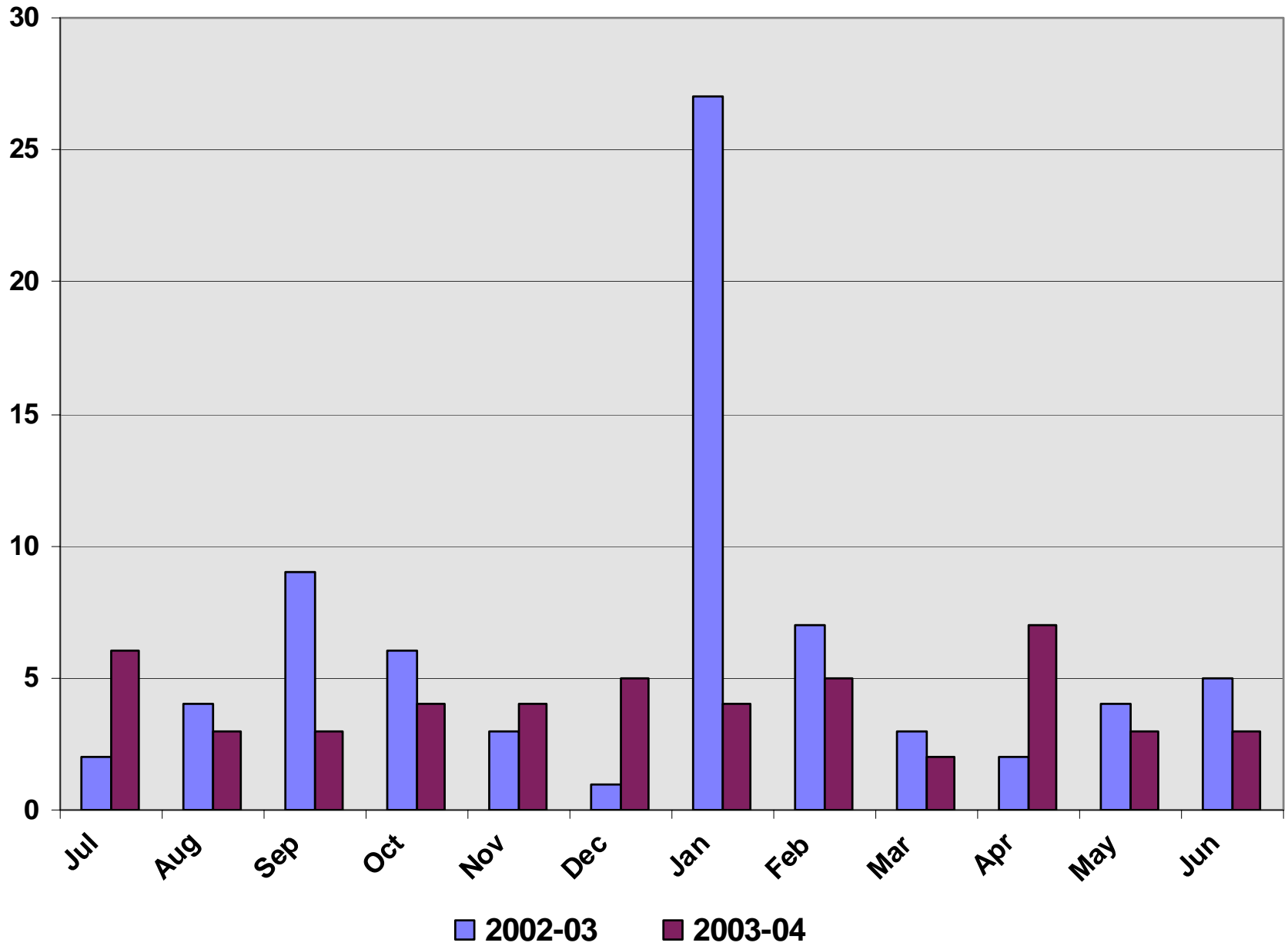
#### Period of Media Exposure

- **28 of the 73** Prospective Member Forms were submitted from **13 January -13 February**, which corresponds directly to the dates of the CNN broadcasts.
- The upsurge in Prospective Member Forms submitted from **13 January -13 February** represents a **683% increase** compared to the average during other months in 2002-03.
- **25 of the 28** prospective members specifically stated that they had seen a television program about Rotary. **14** of the prospective members cited CNN.

During the same period of the following year (13 January –13 February 2004), only **2** Prospective Member Forms were submitted from Bolivia, Colombia, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Venezuela.

The following page shows a graph of total Prospective Member Forms submitted from Bolivia, Colombia, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Venezuela in 2002-03 and 2003-04. The significant peak in the center represents the period of heightened media exposure in 2002-03.

### Prospective Member Forms in Latin America: 2002-03 and 2003-04



#### **IV. UNITED KINGDOM (Zones 17 and 18)**

On 5 July 2004, the Times (London) published two articles about Rotary clubs in the UK. The articles focused on clubs' efforts to change stereotypes by promoting more diverse membership (particularly by including younger professionals and women), scheduling more convenient club meeting times, and organizing new types of service projects. The articles quoted 2004-05 RIBI President Gordon McNally, and emphasized that, at age 46, he is the youngest person to hold the position. A similar article appeared in the 6 July edition of the Herald (Glasgow) and an open letter from a Rotarian to McNally appeared in the 11 July edition of the Times.

In addition to the articles in the Times, there was also an overall increase in Rotary media coverage during July in UK newspapers. From January to June 2004, an average of 306 articles mentioning Rotary clubs appeared in UK newspapers each month. However, in July, 387 Rotary-related articles appeared, including the aforementioned articles in two prominent papers.

Furthermore, on 16 July, the BBC Radio 4 Program "You and Yours" aired an 8-minute segment about the Rotary clubs in England, focusing on their membership, activities, and stereotypes. The piece featured commentary by Rotarians, McNally, a professional consultant, and local residents.

During the 2003-04 Rotary year, RI received **81** Prospective Member Forms from the UK.

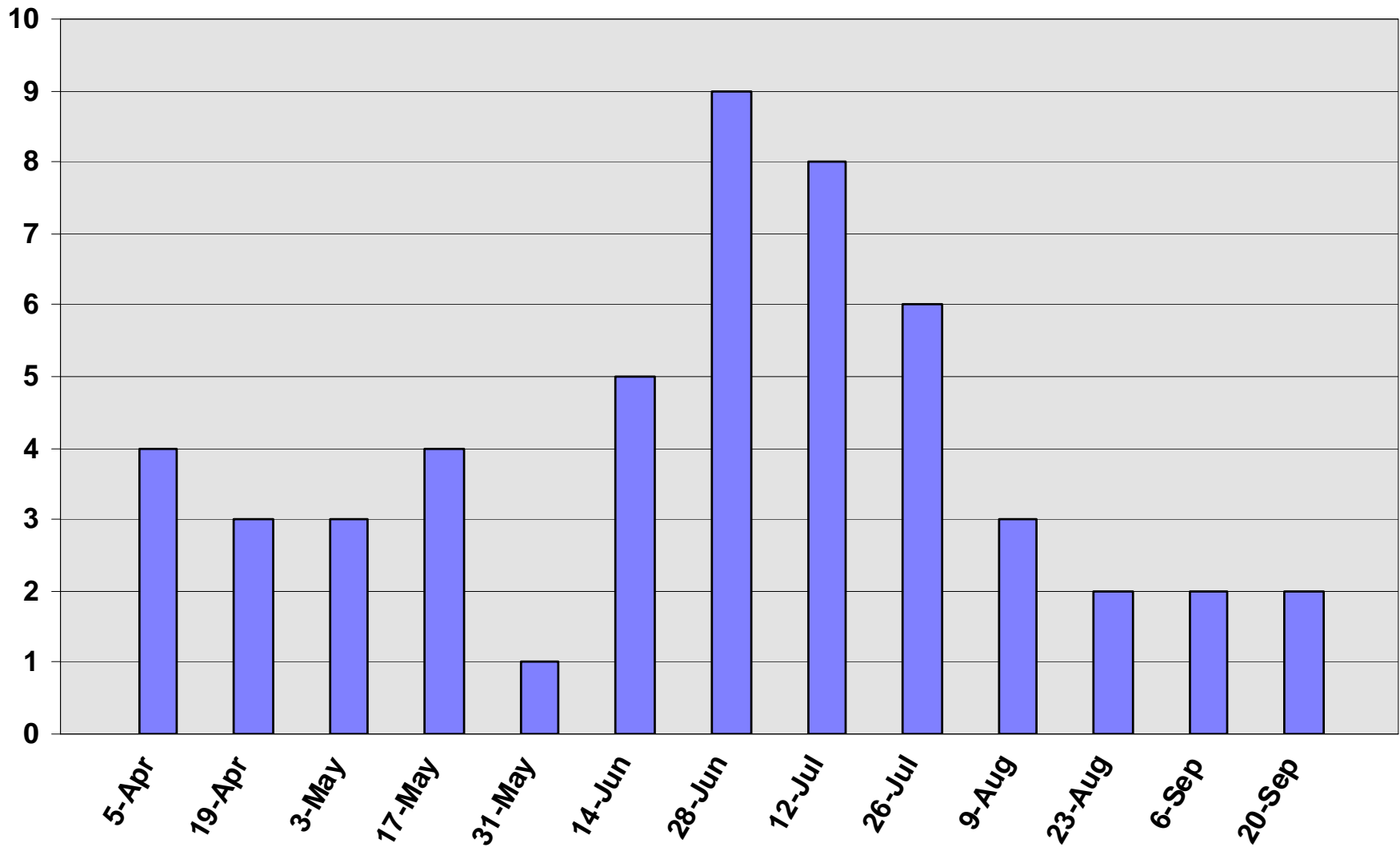
##### **Period of Media Exposure**

- **18** Prospective Member Forms were submitted from **5 July – 5 August 2004**, which corresponds to the period of heightened media exposure plus a 3-week lagtime.
- Nearly **3 times** more Prospective Member Forms were submitted from the UK from 5 July – 5 August than during the typical month in 2003-04 (a **267% increase** in this 30-day period compared to the 2003-04 monthly average).

During the same period of the previous year (5 July – 5 August 2003), only **10** Prospective Member Forms were submitted from the UK.

The graph on the following page shows Prospective Member Forms submitted from the UK during a 26-week period spanning the 2003-04 and 2004-05 Rotary years. Beginning on the first Monday of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter in 2003-04, the graph shows the number of Prospective Member Forms submitted from the UK in two-week increments. The significant peaks in the center of the graph correspond to the period of heightened media exposure (5 July – 5 August).

**Prospective Member Forms in United Kingdom:  
5 April - 3 October 2004**



**2-Week Period Starting on...**

## **V. BRAZIL (Zones 19 and 20)**

From **26 March – 9 April 2004**, RI executed the Public Image Campaign in São Paulo, Brazil, in conjunction with the Presidential Celebration on 27 March. As part of the campaign, 375 promotional billboards, which listed the [www.rotary.info/portuguese](http://www.rotary.info/portuguese) Web site, were placed throughout Brazil.

During the 2003-04 Rotary year, RI received **51** Prospective Member Forms from Brazil.

### **Period of Media Exposure**

- **16 of the 51** Prospective Member Forms were submitted from **26 March-22 April 2004**, which corresponds to the dates of the campaign plus a two-week lagtime.
- The upsurge in Prospective Member Forms during the period of heightened publicity represents a **503% increase** compared to the average during other months in 2003-04.
- **All 16** forms were submitted on the [www.rotary.info](http://www.rotary.info) Web site, which was advertised on the billboards, not on the [www.rotary.org](http://www.rotary.org) site.

During the same period of the previous year (26 March – 22 April 2003), only **2** Prospective Member Forms were submitted from Brazil.

The following page shows a graph of Prospective Member Forms submitted from Brazil in 2002-03 and 2003-04. The significant peaks in March and April 2004 represent the period of heightened media exposure.

**Prospective Member Forms in Brazil:  
January - June 2003 and 2004**

