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## News

### Four-Way Test: Or what they didn't teach you in Civics 101

By JOHN EBY / Niles Daily Star  
Friday, January 18, 2008 11:50 PM EST

DOWAGIAC - Rotary's Four-Way Test, the "ethical standards by which we can separate fact from fiction," apply as appropriately to personal lives as business decisions.

"Through your fellowship and ties to the community, you can teach fellow citizens what we didn't learn in Civics 101," 78th District state House candidate Judy (Fitzpatrick) Truesdell of Niles told the Dowagiac club Thursday noon.

Being mindful of "the things we think, say or do - is it the truth? Is it fair to all concerned? Will it build good will and better friendships? Will it be beneficial to all concerned?" can help anyone "listen and take into account all concerns, work out compromises that reasonably satisfy the needs of everyone and then communicate what has transpired in the most open and meaningful form.

"Only then will we be able to actively participate as responsible citizens whether it is to assess the value of proposed policies or ballot questions; to judge the effectiveness of leaders and the promises of candidates; or to measure progress in lessening the gaps that exist today between the 'haves' and 'have nots,'" said the businesswoman, who was elected in 2000 and re-elected in 2004 as trustee of Lake Michigan College near Benton Harbor. She is not a Rotarian.

Her daughter, Meg, owner of Red Shoe Jewelry in downtown Niles, has given them two granddaughters.

Terry and Judy have started three businesses in the past 34 years, including IDI Design Group; the first female-owned business in the Niles area, Tree Play Inc., which produced redwood play structures for children; and, with Meg, [Cupcaketree.com](#).

"Your mission to foster unity, strengthen and expand relationships and communicate collaboratively within the community is what strengthens and maintains the foundation of self-governance and the responsibility of us all," Truesdell said. "The application of ethical standards set out in the Four-Way Test are the ways by which we insure that 'freedom' remains in good health. It is an excellent best practice that is missing in the debate about our future. And it is the best practice that I want to bring to Lansing and carry home to my neighbors."

As a Pontiac native and Eastern Michigan University graduate who has lived in Niles for 40 years and someone "who has both struggled and benefited as a member of society, and as one who has been baptized by the fire of competition" in trying to unseat entrenched Berrien County incumbent Neal Nitz of Baroda as a female Democrat in 2006, "I am committed to doing what it takes to bring our communities and our beloved state back to its days of prosperity," Truesdell said.

Besides being a businesswoman and elected official, Truesdell, the youngest of four children, is a "family partner who has learned the art of cooperation and compromise" in her marriage to Terry.

"I know better than ever our need to get beyond old battles. And while I may stand in danger by bucking existing economic and social practices, I am, and will remain, forever optimistic about our future and committed to those 'other' basics they forgot to

teach us in Civics 101 - the ones that give rights to government and its people, but demand responsibilities of both, starting with: is it the truth? and ending with will it be beneficial to all concerned?"

Truesdell related that the Four-Way Test was introduced 70 years ago in 1938 as the ethical standard for Rotary International membership.

"I think it is significant that you keep it as a proverbial signpost on your door and you repeat it in unison each time you induct a new member," she said. When Truesdell became a candidate in 2006, "I did so because I felt deeply and passionately about the need for change in southwest Michigan. But what I didn't know then - that I do today - is that the basic understanding of how our government works, which makes up Civics 101, was less essential than the understanding of what our responsibilities were to the government as citizens and how we could contribute to effective self-government ... we need not look any further than right here at your Rotary Club to learn this important lesson."

"When all is said and done," she said, "you set an example for all service organizations - and for all of us individually. You are what we all should have learned in Civics 101 but didn't."

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