

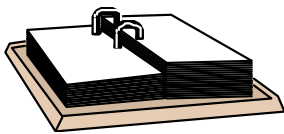
# The Strand

The Newsletter of PRLS

Volume 7 Issue 3

April 1, 2005

## PRLS Calendar



- April 2 Basic PRLS CalState University, Bakersfield
- April 22 Basic PRLS CSUCI (Fri. before Assembly)
- April 23 District Assembly CSUCI, Camarillo
- April 30 District Assembly CalState Bakersfield
- May 7 Master PRLS 5, Cal Luth. Thousand Oaks
- May 14 Master PRLS 5 Peaceful Point, Arroyo Grande



**Want to be an in-print author? Send your "Strand" contributions by e-mail to [rhm717@adelphia.net](mailto:rhm717@adelphia.net).**

### Joy to the World (Part 3)

Regular readers of these notes will recall that "Boredom" was one of three reasons given for not seeing any Joy during the last holiday season. Now, the dictionary definition hasn't changed since 1852, so I expect we're all

completely familiar both with the word and with the feeling. It's "the state of being weary and restless through lack of interest."

Schopenhauer wrote "The two foes of happiness are pain and boredom." Well, I guess there's nothing new there. What's new, maybe, is that so many of our members say they're bored with what they see in Rotary, and they opt out, because they consider what we do and how we do it a waste of their time. It's true, sadly enough, that when you have a business life, a family life and (even) a personal life you have to balance the demands put on the 16 hours of time available each day. If Rotary can't compete favorably with business, family and a personal life, then Rotary will go, not one of the others. That's the way it is, and we all understand that.

In some clubs, I would agree, attending over-long, under-planned meetings will drive people up the walls with the monotony of what they see and hear. Now, I just know that none of us ever attended a club social event which had no one left in the room at 9:00 PM. I know that none of us has ever

sat through a program presentation during which the speaker read transparencies or PowerPoint slides to us. I know that no club President has ever said the same things week after week, has rambled on and on about his goals, only to discover at the end of the year that his goals weren't acceptable to the club.

It takes only a little energy to make the mundane exciting. Only a little imagination is required to have a small program at a social event. It lacks only the hint of excitement to counter the indifference of people who are painfully aware of how easily bored they are.

Come on! Can't a genuine leader muster some energy, some imagination, some excitement to keep members off the walls and in the club?



### Facilitation Skills

In case it's been a while since you last attended Master PRLS 3 (Facilitation Skills), the manner in which the course is being presented these days would amaze you! The class started back in 1997 with a one-hour mostly-lecture format by

Dick Mallard (then Taft, but now Bakersfield). Over the years it gradually proved its pertinence, moving to two hours, then three, and finally, in 1998, to a full day of instruction. And that's where it is now.

Bill Wilmer (Santa Barbara Sunrise) teaches it now, and what he does with the lesson plan is something that's worth another visit. I can tell you that I try to get to at least one iteration every year, because I always find something new in what Bill presents – not that he didn't make his points before, but that I didn't notice them appropriately before.

We use the general MPRLS3 format in nearly every problem-solving and goal-setting district meeting. Out of these facilitated sessions, we are able to analyze the current status of a program or problem, develop plans and choose courses of action.

I have no idea, of course, how many clubs swear by it, but I can tell you that mine does. What do we use the format for? We use it to set club objectives, to figure out the best ways to conduct fund-raisers and social events. We use it at Fireside Chats to identify things that need attention. We use it to evaluate issues that arise in the day-to-day operation of the club; we use it to build our teams. It works in nearly all situations where a leader wants prioritized input from attendees.

Most clubs pick up the tab for all PRLS and MPRLS sessions; you ought to revisit MPRLS 3. Your mouth will hang open and your fingers will cramp while you consider, then write down, all the ideas you'll

get while in the class. Your personal and professional lives will get a boost, and your Rotary leadership functions will improve. That's a promise!

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### Mid-Terms 2005 Version

Mid-Term Seminars have been around for ten years. Developed from an idea generated by Dennis Johansen (San Luis Obispo de Tolosa) in 1995, they gather together in one spot three years of presidents, three years of governors, and two years of Assistant Governors and Group Representatives.

**Jock MacKenzie** (Westlake Village) ran Mid-Terms for five years; then **Steve Goad** (China Lake) ran them for four years.

There are a lot of people still around who remember the days before Mid-Terms:

Successive presidents didn't speak to each other, nor did successive governors.

Clubs were run, if at all, year-to-year, with not much thinking done about the future, or the past, for that matter.

Now, after over thirty iterations, in one place or another, one year or another, you'd think we'd have it right.

And we do. Only the second change in command occurred this year. **Butch Walls** (Simi Valley) took the helm with a small committee (**Dick Wieler**, Thousand Oaks; **Goad** and **MacKenzie**) and moved onward with two discussion questions:

What's it take to become a District Governor?

What's it take to run a really good Youth Service program?

Discussion was lively on both major points, and interesting side effects were noted.

Coordinators at the various sites were **Wieler** at Bakersfield, **Arnie Dowdy** (Santa Paula) ran the Ventura session, and **MacKenzie** was in charge at Santa Maria.

PRLS and Master PRLS graduates were used throughout all three sessions to facilitate the discussions. Included among the Facilitators were:

**(NOTE!)**

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### Guiding Us Through

I think it would be safe to put General George S. Patton Jr. on a short list of those who are leadership experts. He once said, for example: "No one is thinking if everyone is thinking alike. In too many organizations, toadyism is buried like a cancer. It must be removed with the sharpest bayonet available. All sorts of suggestions, ideas, concepts, and opinions must be allowed to promote an environment of learning and imagination. A fault of many potentially fine commanders is a lack of the ability to admit that other people have good ideas. If younger Soldiers are not allowed to use and cultivate their imaginations and their abilities for abstract thought, where will we get the next generations of qualified, motivated, and confident

commanders? Commanders who never ask for an opinion, never listen to suggestions, and think they have the only correct idea find that their Soldiers will stop communicating altogether.”

“It’s my way or the highway!” That’s a familiar expression that means:

“I’m the only one around here who knows anything.”

“If you really want something done right, do it yourself.”

“Anyone with new ideas is just trying to take the spotlight off me.”

Give it up. That may have worked with your children when they were five years old, but it doesn’t work among people who are accustomed to being responsible for their own lives. Will some of them let you down? Of course. Will some of them say they’ll do things, then not do them? Naturally.

We don’t reinvent the human race when people come to us as new members, and we have the same percentage of undependable people as the rest of society’s endeavors. We do, however, have a different, newer brand of leadership available. Where there’s PRLS, a unique District Assembly, Mid-Terms and Fall Retreats it’s not really bragging to point out that we “have the best training system of any District in Rotary.”

A quote from George Patton is just one of the guides available to us. Some of the guides are alive, and some of

them are members of clubs in our District. Not all of them are obtuse, “my way or the highway”-type people.

**New PRLS Graduates**

On February 19, at California Lutheran University in Thousand Oaks, a special Basic PRLS class, put together by Group 4 Governor’s Representative Andy Lupanow, led to the graduation of another 29 Rotarians and spouses. The graduates included:

Debra Anderson (Camarillo)  
Diego Velasquez (Conejo Valley)

Patricia Forgey (Goleta Noontime)

Rey Sarmiento (Port Hueneme)

Robin and Mark Dietrich (Simi Sunrise)

Roger Benson, Carol Freeman, Jacqui Irwin, Julia Ladd, Matt and Teresa Lallo, Chris Lamia, Richard Perini, Doug Tapking, Pete Turpel.  
Grant Tustin (Thousand Oaks)

Wendy and Bob Pazen, Gene Cherry and Deborah Pudlewski (Ventura East)

Frank and Linda Huybrechts, Gary Keller, Tom Mosher, Steve Schleikorn, Lou Ruano and Dennis Stewart (Westlake Village Sunrise)

Tom Dawes, Bruce House and Eric Wiltfang (Westlake Village).

The instructors included **Steve Goad** (China Lake), **Neil Steadman** (Santa Barbara), **Rodney Skidmore** (Simi Sunrise) and **Jock MacKenzie** (Westlake Village).

The next scheduled Basic PRLS class will be on April 29 at CSU Channel Islands.



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