

The Strand

The Newsletter of PRLS



SERVICE Above Self

Volume 7 Issue 4

April 1, 2006

Recent PRLS Grads

Attending and graduating from a Basic PRLS session coordinated by **Mark Hahs** on February 10 in Bakersfield were:

Bakersfield East

Dona Faz, Dan Giordano, Judith Rolph, Vernon Varnor.

Bakersfield South

Roger Allred

China Lake

Ferguson Ayres, Jinny DeAngelis, Elsa Hennings, David St. Amand

Delano

Sandra Bello, Cathy Gonzalez, Domingo Zepeda, Mary Beth Myers

Frazier Park & Mtn Comm.

Glen Calloway, Leslie Long, Dave McGrath, Steve Stark, Mitch Wood, Dylan Keenberg

Shafter

Karen Richardson

Taft

Julie Franks



Attending and graduating from a Basic PRLS session coordinated by **Bonnie**

Cameron and Hal Larson on

February 25 in San Luis Obispo were:

Camarillo Breakfast

Michael Levenant

Cambria

Joan Broadhurst

Cambria Sunrise Centennial

Lisa Franklin

Grover Beach

Suellen Iness

Nipomo

Jim Anderson, Richard Beedle, Bill Bettencourt, Cathy Cachu, Mike Eisner, Jim Harrison, Peter Hesse, Terry Iavicoli, Floyd Johnston, Ingmar Lauringson, Mike Leon, John Normanly, Eileen Ottariani, Kevin Stevenson, Harry Walls

Paso Robles Sunrise

Lynne Dee Althouse, Gary Peterson

Pismo Beach 5 Cities

Sharon Ellis, Ashlea Boyer

Santa Maria Breakfast

John Reinacher

Santa Barbara Sunrise

W. Scott Burns

San Luis Obispo

Bob DeVries, John Dunn, Karen Fields, June Gelling, Dan Howard, Bev James, Peter Kardel, Vic Sterling, Gail Stork

San Luis Obispo Daybreak

Bill Almas, David Nilsen, Jan Owens, Christopher Waterbury,

Templeton

Katrin Colamarino, Jean DeCosta



Recent Master PRLS Grads

Attending and graduating from a Master PRLS 5 session in Thousand Oaks coordinated by **David Migocki** and **Mary Howard** on March 4 were:

District 5280

AG Carmela Raack, PDG John Colville

Morro Bay

Judy Salamacha

Ojai

Terry Beckett

Simi Sunrise

Doug Feco, Wayne Snyder

Simi Sunset

Cindy Belmonte

Simi Valley

Dee-Dee Cavanaugh

Thousand Oaks

Darin Arrasmith, Frank Corrigan, John LaRocca, Anne Savko, Janice Small, Pete Turpel

Vandenberg Village

Fiona MacFarlane

Ventura East

Jeff Mata, Carol Marquez-Olson, Bob Pazen, Wendy Pazen

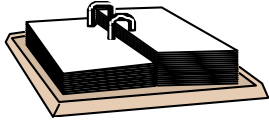
Ventura Marina

Jan Feingold

Westlake Village Sunrise

Rose Falocco, Nick Frankle, Karl Keller, Susan Lindemann, Preethi Marla, Geoffrey Sindon

PRLS Calendar



- April 8 Master PRLS 3
Kern Co.
- April 29 Basic PRLS, Simi
Valley
- May 6 Master PRLS 4
Kern County
- May 12 Basic PRLS, Oxnard
- May 13 District Assembly
Pacific Union HS Ventura
- May 20 District Assembly
CSUB, Bakersfield
- June 3 MPRLS 5, CSUB
Bakersfield

So, What Is This I'm Supposed to Become?

In "Mission Possible," Ken Blanchard wrote, "At work you produce something; in service you *become* something." Is that possible? Can it be that just by joining with Rotary in our quest for service to our communities people can actually change? Sure they can. Look around you at the next meeting—just check out the people at your table, and note which of them are in a growth pattern. Confirm in your own mind that they didn't have that sort of attitude back when they first joined your club. We aren't a miracle organization with magic qualities, but we do see some major surprises when we see what can happen to people when they associate themselves with us.

Seeking

When I first joined Rotary, it seemed to me that students in the local high schools were more independent. They could be assigned a chapter in a text and listen to the teacher say, "Read this, and we'll talk about any problems you're having."

Today, it appears as though there are still some students who are willing to dig in on their own, but I think there may be many others who are used to having everything come to them. The idea that you can go off by yourself and open a textbook and spend two hours trying to decipher what's there is not a natural sort of thing today, it seems to me.

There may be the same sort of problem with our current Rotarians. The purpose of educating Rotarians is to move members from a point where they're willing to rely on the "old folks" to the point where they're self-motivated and self-driven. Just as in the high schools, that's a harder task than it was.

PRLS, Mid-Terms and the District Assembly help, of course, but it always gets back ultimately to the individual club member who has to make the decision between letting things come in by hearsay, or going out and seeking something out aggressively. That decision point is where a good club Mentor program pays off the most.

How Open Am I to Rotary's Presence?

I don't know, Honest to gosh, I don't know! I've been

around this lashup for more than 25 years now, and members still surprise me every week. Some come out of their shells; some dive into protective shelter; some work hard; some will do anything at all to keep from working. When people change for the better, their real stripes show, and what you originally saw is not what's there.

I'd have to admit that I haven't always been open to Rotary's presence, because I'm constantly overwhelmed by the strengths (and the weaknesses) of other members.

Do I take it to heart? Sometimes. Do I take it to heart in a good way, thankful for the strengths I see and dismissive of the weaknesses? Well, I don't do as well there.

Am I smart to react that way? No! Can I help myself? Certainly, by paying more attention to the other members, lingering with them before meetings, sitting with different people during meetings, strolling out to the car with different people. Want a suggestion? Make a checklist of all your members, then as you speak with someone, cross off the name and go on to the next one.

You shouldn't be surprised by what you find, though I'll give you a hint at what will *really* surprise you. You'll discover that Rotary's presence has turned into something meaningful in your life. And you'll find that people start using adjectives like "gracious," "caring," "nice" when referring to you. Now, in my opinion, those are much better words to

savor than “grouchy” or “grumpy.”

Open up! It’s not going to hurt!



Wait a Minute, Now...!

Are you trying to tell me that Rotary wants me to insinuate myself into someone else’s life? Intentionally?

Are you trying to tell me that I’m supposed to change someone else’s habits of a lifetime? On purpose?

Are you trying to tell me that my nosiness and my butt-in-sky ways will really result in the improvement of someone’s life? You’re kidding, right?

That’s exactly what Rotary is asking. Don’t want to be responsible for making someone else a better person? Don’t have the stomach for seeing someone change in a positive direction? Don’t want to be the cause of someone else’s help in the community? Then, don’t ever bring in a new member. You’ll think of the experience as akin to, well, learning – it’ll hurt your head. There’s already enough in there to cause headaches for the next hundred years.



The Ins and Outs of Awards Programs

In another one of these little paragraphs there’s mention of setting club goals; in yet another there’s a short note about why and how RI and the District set goals.

It follows, then, that clubs set goals, and members of clubs

set goals. And I recall writing that, though it’s hard to believe, there are still members of Rotary clubs running around without any goals at all. Thus, it’s not unusual that there are *clubs* with no goals, no way of telling whether they are successful or not, no way of determining *why* they’re good (or not) and successful (or not). This note is directed at those whose belief systems don’t stretch far enough to see that living without goals means living without the means to see progress.

So the District composes an awards picture. To reward high performers, there are inexpensive sets of glassware, meaningless wall plaques, carved Indian boxes purchased by the hundreds, paper awards in a bewildering array of colors and fonts. Is receiving this flotsam important? No. Will they adorn closet walls forever? Probably. Are the physical awards themselves valuable? Not at all. Well, then, why do they exist? What is there about awards, pronouncements, trophies, benedictions and diplomas that cause people to expend extraordinary energy in attempting to claim them?

There’s the effort; there’s the earning; there’s the reward of the work itself; there’s the benefit to oneself and the organization occasioned by community participation in jobs common to all.

Want a District Award? Plan on getting it. “We are going to earn the District award for best club in, e.g., Vocational Service.” Is that affirmation by itself going to get you the

award? No, Sir, it’s not. Then, where do you go? You break that goal down into its component parts and you start answering questions:

Who won this award last year?

What did last year’s winners do?

What events must the club sponsor if we’re going to get the Vocational award this year?

Who in the club can we get to run the events?

Who else in the District has ever done one of these? Will they help us?

Who’s the District Vocational Service Chair this year? Last year?

Will they come to our club to speak on the idea?

What help and/or advice can we get from RI?

What will it cost the club? (time, money, effort etc.)

Then, in June of the following year, send someone to the District Awards Party and get ready to receive your reward—“Best Vocational Service in the District!”

Right after that, since getting one of these is oftentimes a full-club effort, watch your “weak” club turn itself around from the sheer pride of having *tried*, then of having *earned*, then of having benefited the club and the community. It never gets any better than that.



Effective Ways of Leading a Board of Directors’ Meeting.

It’s covered at length in “Leading a Meeting,” one of the classes in Basic PRLS, but in

the sense that we're maybe dealing with a club termed "weak," we're probably talking about reconstituting good practices in the club's Board of Directors' meetings.

It's axiomatic that there'll be an agenda for a board meeting, put out in advance to the expected attendees to let them know:

Who's speaking?

On what subjects?

For how long?

And in what order?

Just as the club president sets the tone for the club meetings, the president also sets the tone (and the rules) for the Board meetings. It's not too much to suggest that a properly structured Board meeting can change the face (and the attitude) of an entire club.

Can't seem to get the hang of doing it? Talk to any Group Rep or AG; to any PDG. They've all been through it literally hundreds of times.

Just Do It!

The Nike commercial has been around for a few years now, and it leads me to a thought—when we only listen to Rotary and don't do anything with what we've heard, we're fooling ourselves. Maybe the best way to get a stuck Rotary Club back on the track is just to increase the number of members who can be shaped by what they value, then "just do it."

Who's Good and Who Isn't?

It's nearly axiomatic that when a club feels itself to be in trouble, someone calls a District staff member for help. It's not enough automatically to call someone currently in office, though, because the incumbent may not be as experienced in a particular function as you'd like. So, the question is—how do you identify those people who can give you the best advice when you're in trouble?

1. Save old District Directories, and call someone who *used* to be, for example, a District Vocational Service Chair.

2. Call the Group Rep or the AG, both of whom are experienced Rotarians who know a *lot* of good, competent people in various specialties.

3. Remember the people and the instructors from your PRLS and Master PRLS classes who impressed you. Ask them to steer you in the right direction.

Within three phone calls, you can be on the way to unsticking a problem.

And maybe, just maybe, you make up your mind that one of these days *you'll* be the expert on call!

Plug In

I suppose someplace in the five counties which go to make up our district, in someone's home, there is no electricity. Certainly, there are places where there is no plumbing, and there are lots of homes which don't have the trash truck coming around weekly.

There are ways to bypass the lack of plumbing and non-availability of trash trucks.

Electricity, though, is something for which there is no substitute, and many of us would be helpless without it.

I've always believed that the difference between a really good club and one not doing so well is the electricity that is generated by the members as they try new ideas, increase their personal attachments to other members, help solve problems in our communities, encourage people to advance their lives.

To get access to that electricity, though, you have to plug in. You have to say to yourself, "This is what I value; this has meaning for me." Then you have to act on your resulting decision.

How does a club plug in? Here's one way: Make it a practice at every meeting to schedule a two-minute talk praising some club member or some club project. There are few members who will not react favorably when they hear themselves praised in front of a group of people they already admire.

The result will be an automatic plug-in. You can't help it! It'll just be there!

Extra Committee Meetings

It seems axiomatic to me that when things are going well *or* when things aren't going so well, holding extra meetings of the pertinent committee would be the first thing that would enter a Chair's mind. In the one case, it would be a chance to heap praise on the committee

members who have contributed to it's success; on the other hand, it would be a chance to regroup, reenergize and move forward, maybe in a different, better direction.

These extra meetings count as makeups. They don't cost anything. They're perhaps at more convenient times and places, There are no distractions from the business at hand. There are no dress codes to conform to.

Why don't Chairs see this elementary truth?

My God! Who knows?

Rewards

"Rewards" is always a tough subject to write about. Most of us say we don't want them, that recognition for doing good is way down the chain of what we want to get out of helping others. Most of us say that the many worthwhile projects we complete with people whom we like and respect are rewards in themselves. Most of us look at the sometimes-expensive gifts we're expected to like and we think, "I don't need another coffee cup, pen, calendar, banner, etc. Why don't they just give the value of this to some needy person in the community?"

On the other hand, rewards can be, well, rewarding. How can you do them so they're meaningful, reflective of the effort and appropriate?



Praise in public, in front of the recipient's club. Spend a few minutes composing what you're going to say about a person. Try to avoid, though,

using words like "outstanding" or "great person." Those are the words most used to describe someone's noteworthy actions, but the words don't mean a thing. Indeed, it's a sign that the recognition is mostly "winged," making it meaningless to the recipient.



Send a private letter/note to the person. People will remember that they've been praised, even if they don't remember what was said. But people will *save* thank-you notes and letters. It's enough for now to ask, "Who knows who will see that letter in the future? Who knows what effect that letter will have on others' motivation?"

Who knows, indeed!

Others' Problems

It's axiomatic that non-Rotarians are generally worse off than we are. They do not, after all, have our built-in social life, our actions to improve both local and international communities or our broad insights gained as one result of 52 varied programs every year.

They're worse off in another way also. According to an article recently published in the *Los Angeles Times*, they lack (but need) leadership training. "Clearly, corporations are demanding more leadership training. Our whole society does." (Mike Orsak, co-founder and general partner of Worldview Technology Partners).

The article points out that graduate business schools, as well as some undergraduate

programs, are increasingly taking steps to make sure that leadership courses are a key part of a curriculum.

As **Steve Goad**, our Director of Education and Training says in every single leadership course he teaches in the PRLS program, "Leadership can be learned. Although there may be people born with certain leadership skills, there are many aspects of leadership that can be taught."

As **David Migocki**, our PRLS Registrar wrote to one of his constituents last month, "We should raise the price of admission to our PRLS program to reflect its true value. The price should be \$1,000 per session – about what it would cost non-Rotarians to receive the same sort of training. That way, we could pay our instructors and administrators to reflect at least some of the sacrifices they make for their year-after-year support of this marvelously effective leadership tool."

**District
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Committee**

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