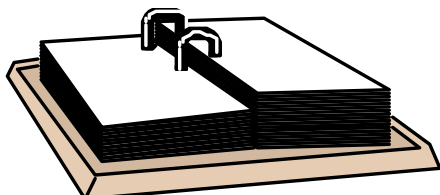


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Why I'm in Rotary

By Barbara Butler (China Lake)

Editor's note: Sharon Girod (China Lake), in her PRLS class on "Communications," asked her students to "tell your Rotary story." This is one of the submissions.

I have been attending Rotary meetings for 35 years as a "Rotary Ann."

When my husband died some five years ago, the Rotary Club of China Lake made me an honorary member.

After a year, PDG Darrell Johnson asked me to join the club as a full member, and I accepted!

My husband ran the Scholarship and Ambassadorial programs. I became the Director of New Generations, and through this avenue of service I have been able to carry on my husband's legacy.

Youth seems to me to be the most important asset of our society. We as Rotarians have the ability to teach our kids about "Service Above Self" and to encourage them to "Lead the Way."

My passion is Youth Service – my energy will always focus on youth – the Rotarians of tomorrow.

Life is a Leadership Laboratory

All too often, we look at PRLS or some expensive non-Rotary academy to teach us about leadership when, in fact, life is a leadership laboratory. Those whom we meet every day will teach us all lessons if we just take the time to stop, look and listen. Many of us have spent years and years and *years* studying and trying to apply leadership principles. Many of us know literally thousands of people. We can learn a little bit from each one, if we but let ourselves. Take notes. But attend PRLS anyway; the instructors know different people than you do, and their experience is that much broader.

Will the Real Rotarian Please Stand Up?

The key to recognizing a real Rotarian is to recognize his friendship with other Rotarians. We are a community of people joined together by our social and community outlook. How do we celebrate our community of spirit? We recognize the efforts of our presidents and the work of their staffs. We peer through the veil of our dreams, hopes and concerns. We

break all the rules. We are not supposed, for example, to be honest and trusting with relative strangers, yet we do that every day when we take the word of other members that they will or will not do something.

There's a uniqueness to Rotary, both of ourselves and of the organization itself. Rotary is just like us. It lives or dies as we do. Creativity, generosity and imagination come to us as talents we sometimes didn't know we had until we got a chance to star in leadership roles in Rotary.

The organization helps us to grow. Without Rotary, most of us don't have ways of demonstrating our desire to help others. Social activities, shopping with underprivileged kids, involving ourselves in high school or grammar school activities—we end up wanting to do those things to make plain to everyone that we're part of this great organization. The way we use the resources we have under our control—our time, our talent, our money, and our ability to influence others in positive ways—that will determine the directions we take in Rotary. Even when we don't *want* to be responsible, don't *want* authority, others in Rotary show us ways to help.

In an organization of committed people, it isn't possible to go long without someone trying to get us to grow out of our shells, and sometimes we resent their prodding. Part of growing as a Rotarian, therefore, is to have doubts, face challenges and know that the goodness of this great organization will go further with us than without us. How we behave in those situations during which our beliefs have been tested is the way we deal with our lives—our marriages,

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our jobs, our hobbies, our sports enthusiasms, and Rotary. Why would anyone think we were different than real life? It's real life that makes us real Rotarians, and it is real life that allows us to stand up in public when the public wants to recognize Service Above Self. Get ready! You're the next to stand!

