

# The Strand

The Newsletter of PRLS

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## PRLS Calendar

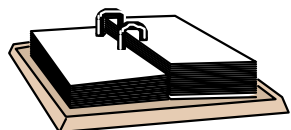
**February 1** Basic PRLS, Cal State Bakersfield

**February 8** Master PRLS 4, Nelson Room, CLU, TO

**February 22** Master PRLS 3&5

Nelson Room, CLU, TO

**March 1** Master PRLS 1, Nelson Room, CLU, TO



**March 22** Master PRLS 1 (add), Thousand Oaks area

**March 29** Master PRLS 2, Nelson Room, CLU, TO

**April 12** Master PRLS 2 (add), Thousand Oaks area.

**April 25** Basic PRLS, TBD

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*From the website.....*

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## Joy To The World

By PDG Jock MacKenzie  
(PP, Westlake Village)

This is being written during the Holiday Season of 2002, and the principal thrust is concentrated on a typical gift of the season – Joy. Joy, however, is not just a gift of this specific time of the year; instead, it's a

necessary accompaniment to every other part of every year.

“Well,” you say, “That’s pretty obvious. Why bring it up now?” Among other reasons, the concept of Joy is a result of our normal relationship with our club. In addition, it would be difficult to mention the subject close to April 15 or to May 30 or to November 11. There are other emotions in play on those dates, and Joy would be *way* out of line.

At this time of year, though, it’s an easy trait to consider, even if there are some barriers to joyful living. I counted three:

**Worry.** There are advantages to planning ahead, aren’t there? We’re able to get ready for what can possibly derail our future. Planning ahead, though, is a form of worrying. Someone wrote one time that “Worry is the interest you pay on tomorrow’s troubles.” And if that were all worry was, we’d be in pretty good shape. Another writer has put it in another context: “We worry away our lives, fearing the future, discontented with the present.” So, worry can be positive in nature as well as negative. In its negative form, it’s a barrier to joy and, indeed, can rob you of happiness.

**Boredom.** “I have seen all the things that are under the sun; all of them are meaningless, a chasing after the wind.” Does that sound like anyone you know? But people who are bored are sometimes not aware of the options available to them. Children are frequently bored because they don’t see the significance of their action options. “Read a book.” Or “Pick up your room.” Or “Do your homework.” These aren’t options, not *real* ones at any rate; they’re adult suggestions presented to help un-stick a child’s imagination, but the child doesn’t see any significance or meaning in any of the suggestions, and so remains “bored.” When were Rotarians any different? “It’s the same old, same old—go to boring meetings, listen to the same stuff, do the same stuff at the annual fund-raisers, read the same stuff in the same meaningless bulletin.” “Stuff” is not significant. “Stuff” is a barrier to joy.

**Selfishness.** Some say, “I have the means, I have the time, I have the energy to do anything I want to do. With the help of my friends in Rotary, I’m able to do meaningful things for others. That gives me pleasure,

and in most cases pleasure is my only reward for all my work. I love it!” Others, who possess this barrier to joy big time, feel that humanity owes them, and they wait in their small negative worlds for the first payment. Know anyone like this? Can we—should we—expose them to these words spoken by Albert Adams in 1919-20? “The great thing that Rotary is doing for Rotarians is: furnishing the opportunity and creating the desire to ‘do something for somebody else.’” Is there a chance that selfish people would heed Adams’ idea? Sure. Give it a try.

Can we help those with full plates of worry, boredom and selfishness? Sure we can. First we can get them to join us; then we can show them what we do that keeps us alive as the premier service organization in the world. We can use the leadership traits built into each of us to bring other people back to life in significant, meaningful ways. We can make real human beings out of people who are now half dead. Do we owe it to other people to get them moving again? No, we owe it to ourselves. We need joy, too.

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### **Pick Both a Negative and a Positive Role Model**

(By PDG Jock MacKenzie)

My positive role models in Rotary have been PDGs Cy Johnson and Sam Greene. The choices were easy — we’ve all three belonged to the same club for over twenty years— and I’ve been able to see how both

of them have been able to accomplish so much. Whenever I’ve had to face tough decisions, I ask myself what either would have done in the same situation.

Conversely, and unfortunately, I have several negative role models. These are people who are arrogant, incompetent, fundamentally unethical (Yes, Virginia, there are a few dishonest people, even in Rotary), yet possessing towering ambition for preference in Rotary. They do, however, serve their purpose for me. I know that they have helped me to decide what *not* to do at many decision points. I have but to recall them to mind briefly, and I know there’s something the matter with whatever it is that I’m doing at the time.

These people, both the good and the not-so-good, have roles to play. You have consciously to say to yourself, though, “I’m going to be called upon to make decisions, some of which will engender hatred and discontent. What would the good guys do? What would the others do?” Passing off your personal decision making to the impressions left by role models doesn’t always work, but it works often enough that you ought to consider figuring out who it is you respect and admire, then calling on their character and judgment to help you over the rough spots.

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### **Polish Your Negotiation Skills**

People in leadership positions, particularly with regard to our loose affiliation of volunteers, need to be conscious that people don’t *have* to do things – they don’t have to do anything at all (except come to meetings and pay their bills); they don’t have to do what they said they were going to do; and if they do what they said they were going to do, they don’t have to do a good job at it. And then most of them want a reward for having participated even minimally!

This is an amazing organization in so many ways, and we all know it or we wouldn’t stick around for more than ten minutes. But dealing with volunteers can drive you nuts! It doesn’t take long, of course, for the really honest, trustworthy members to surface – the ones who will tell you they can’t do a job, who are usually the ones who do what they say they’re going to do.

Recognition for jobs well done is about all these people receive from Rotary, and some of them get along just fine without even that.

Whatever the level of eagerness to shine, though, there are always negotiating skills needed. Somewhere in every dealing with a volunteer, a leader needs to think, “He/she doesn’t have to do this. How can I make the job worth doing? How can I make the job meaningful?”

That’s all negotiating is— letting someone accept an assignment willingly, while at the same time agreeing to meet

the performance standards and the time requirement.



### Look to the Future

There are some really great clubs out there, clubs you attend for a one-time make-up only to think for a fleeting instant that you wish you could live in that community so you could belong to that club. On the other hand, there are some pretty miserable clubs out there! Anyone who has made-up in other states, other countries, knows that a rush develops in your mind when you first realize, "Geez! I wonder if I can leave *before* the program!"

Think what a problem of membership assimilation those latter clubs have. Every Rotarian in business knows a bad situation when she sees one, and she'll probably not go out of her way to tell potential members about a club with a bad history. When the subject comes up, she'll hesitate slightly before praising Rotary – just enough, without actually saying anything negative, to show that she has some reservations.

What if you were in that club? What if the members nominated you for the presidency? What would you think?

Your first thought might be that you aren't going to waste your time with these losers! They've had plenty of chances to come out of their self-induced slump, and never have. Why should you put forth the

effort when no one else ever has?

The key is looking to the future. When you look to the future, the present takes care of itself. The future is exciting, filled as it will be with new friends, new experiences, new ways to do something important with your life! Want to get rid of your club's bad reputation? Take the job, look ahead, then get ready to feel as good about something as you've ever felt in your life!



### Learn By Failure

It's a truism that people learn more from their failures than they do from their successes. As a result, those of us who have made more than our share of mistakes over long lifetimes either become tolerant of the honest failures of others or we have, by default, to become recluses, doomed to live carping lives where no one can hear our complaints and learn of our intolerance.

The answer is, of course, that when major setbacks occur from time to time, whether they're yours or someone else's, try to treat them as marvelous learning experiences. They will, most certainly, be valuable to you in the future if you even *think about* remaining an active, producing member of your community, Rotary or otherwise.

Then, resolve that you'll give others the same breaks you give yourself. They didn't *try* to

fail any more than you did. Cut these people some slack, and get on with it!



**Want to be an in-print author? Send your "Strand" contributions by e-mail to [rbbm717@adelphia.net](mailto:rbbm717@adelphia.net).**

PRLS Registrar **Kimberly Skinner** asks that those in receipt of the printed version of this newsletter send her your updated e-mail address.

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