

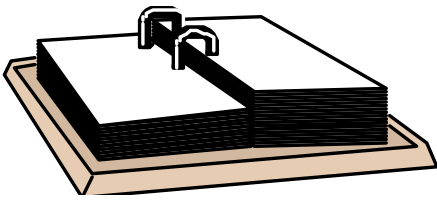
# The Strand

The Newsletter of PRLS

Volume 7 Issue 4

January 1, 2007

## Calendar



### January

- 6 Master PRLS 2 (Planned Public Speaking), TBD
- 13 Master PRLS 4 (Situational Leadership) TBD
- 20 Mid-Terms, Santa Maria Radisson
- 27 Mid-Terms, Poinsettia Pavilion, Ventura

### February

- 3 Mid-Terms, Four Points Sheraton, Bakersfield
- 10 Water Conference TBD
- 10 Master PRLS 5 (Project Management) TBD
- 17 AG & GR Training, Ojai

### March

- 01-04 PETS, LAX Hilton
- 03 Basic PRLS, Kern Bridges Youth Homes
- 10 District Team Training Seminar, TBD
- 17 Master PRLS 1 (Public Speaking), Kern Bridges Youth Homes
- 30 Foundation Gala, Ventura

### April

- 03 Master PRLS 3, Kern Bridges Youth Homes
- 21 Master PRLS 2, Kern Bridges Youth Home

## Why Stay in Rotary?

*Ed note: This is the third in a series of short notes trying to explain why we keep our personal ties to Rotary.*

I think that Rotary helps us realize our potential. Rotary *expects* us to make a difference, but we learn that we don't know our own strengths until we're called upon to use them. It's a deal we make personally with the ideals of Rotary: "OK, you make me a mature citizen by providing me with a community of support, and I'll offer to let you use my skills, my time and my aptitude. I have some special abilities, and I'd really like to learn how to use them to help others."

## But It's a Volunteer Organization!

One of the most-used and misused clichés heard around Rotary is "It's a volunteer organization." The expression is normally used as an excuse for when a job is not done or is done improperly. The implica-

tion is that since we are an organization of volunteer members, we cannot possibly expect people to meet their obligations.

It should be the other way around. Because it's a volunteer group and you cannot force members to take on jobs, there should be a *higher* level of expectation. People agreed to do a job of their own free will, and said they would do a job or complete a task. No one forced them to "volunteer."

All Rotarians are presumed capable. We are owners, managers, directors or key employees in our stated professions and, therefore, presumably capable of continuing the income-producing part of our lives. It follows that we should be capable of knowing whether we can accomplish one more task or not.

A voluntary "yes" to a request for help with a task has set a level of expectation in the person asking. He/she should be able to expect that the task will be completed satisfactorily.

If you don't mean "yes," don't say "yes.!" If you do say "yes," live up to the obligation

to do a good job and finish it on time.



### **PRLS Spreads Its Wings - Again**

Editor’s note: DG Rich Abbott received the following letter from Walter Buchanan, the Chairman, Membership Development and Retention Committee, and District Trainer for District 9600 (Brisbane, Australia) as one result of the visit to Brisbane made by David Gore (Goleta Noontime) and Doug Hoffman (San Luis Obispo Daybreak). Walter had visited our district in July.

“My time in your District was an extremely busy and yet enjoyable one, not to mention the knowledge gained by attending the PRLS program. I completed Basic PRLS, Master PRLS 1 and Master PRLS 2. I hope to be afforded the opportunity to return, sometime in the future, to complete the balance of the PRLS program.

“As you are aware, my visit to District 5240 was to assess the PRLS program and ascertain its suitability for my District 9600. The PRLS program exceeded my expectations, and I indicated to DGE Steve Kruger that we would be remiss if we did not introduce the program during Rotary year 2007/08.

“Of course, as with much of Rotary, the plan changed mid-way through my stay in your District. It was suggested that I move from concentrating on only one District (D9600) to introducing PRLS to the 23 Australian Districts in ANZO Zones 7A and 8A.

“You can imagine the challenge this was for me. However, your two outstanding trainers, David Gore and Doug Hoffman, traveled down-under and undertook a pivotal role in the introduction of PRLS at our Zone Institute. Their involvement ensured the stunning success of the program.

“You will be proud to know that through the efforts and passion for PRLS displayed by David and Doug, of the 23 Districts in our Zones 11 Districts were represented at the introduction to PRLS. Of these 11 Districts, ALL were so impressed with the program that ALL have indicated a willingness to introduce PRLS to the clubs in their districts as soon as possible.

In addition to these 11 districts, three other district representatives heard about the program – word-of-mouth is powerful – and these extra Districts are also wishing to have PRLS introduced as early as possible. This means 14 districts (60% of Rotary districts in Australia) want to adopt PRLS as a means of providing an environment for current and potential Rotary leaders to learn how to be more effective as individuals on a daily basis, while at the same time developing leaders for club and district advancement.

“You have every right to be so proud of yourself as District Governor. Both David Gore and Doug Hoffman did an outstanding job as your Ambassadors and PRLS Trainers. Further, we recognize

the support that your PRLS Director Stewart Fries has given in providing data which has underpinned our presentation package.

“On behalf of DGE Steve Kruger and myself, please pass on to your District just how appreciative we are for your support and to David and Doug for their efforts in traveling to Australia and promoting this excellent program.



### **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 or work 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 the thought, “Geez! I wonder if I can leave *before* the program!”

Think what a problem of membership assimilation those latter clubs have. All Rotarians in business know bad situations when they see one, and they’ll probably not go out of their way to tell potential members about a club with a bad history. When the subject comes up, they’ll hesitate slightly before praising Rotary – just enough, without actually saying anything negative, to show that they have 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 accomplishing something as you've ever felt in your life!

### **Focus on Function, Not on Form**

Though it's form that gets us through our programs week and after week; though it's form that defines our RI, District and Club Awards; though it's form that determines much of what we in Rotary try to do, it's *function* that gives us the derived meaning in all our lives.

Someone pointed out to me once that it's certainly important to be clear on the job to be done, but it's similarly important that we be flexible on the way to do that job.

Leadership, everyone will agree, is not a position. It is a *process* where leadership and followership constitute one seamless web. Without followers, leaders always fail. Leaders and followers tend to predict each others' successes.

Today you lead, tomorrow you follow. It's the function of leaders to meet goals; it's the function of followers to see that leaders meet their goals. That's not form at all. That's the highest of functions in this or any other striving organization.

### **Picking the Same Old Crew to Lead**

What kind of leader lets the same old crew lead the same old events the same way every year? I'll tell you – it's a leader who doesn't want to take chances with the status quo. If a long string of leaders lets Charlie be the Secretary for twenty years, then woe befall the president who comes along desiring to make a change. There'll be a mutiny in the club. "Ah, you really hurt Charlie's feelings. He wants to be part of the club, and you just told him 'I don't like what you've been doing and don't want you as the secretary during my administration.'"

Is that a good idea? Sure it is. Count on it—Charlie's going to do things his way ("Presidents come and go, but I'm always here to see that the club runs right!"), and you won't have anything to say about how the position is handled. The

Secretary is one of the six club officers who must be elected by the club. Properly done, the person holding the Secretary's position can *make* a club, because in many clubs the organizational force and institutional knowledge is held by the Secretary. Indeed, in many clubs in the world, holding the Secretary's position successfully is considered *the* steppingstone to the presidency. If you don't see the Secretary's position as anything more than a steppingstone to redundancy, change the name associated with the job!

Here's another situation: The same old fund-raiser has been going along for 25 years, making money every year, and while the chair changes every year (because being the chair is a piece of cake), the subordinate labor-intensive positions are held every year by the same people. Is that a good idea? Sure it is, provided that the subordinate positions are staffed by at least two club people, so that when one person gets tired of doing the work year after year, there's another one ready to step in.

You just *have* to get new people involved in club activities in meaningful ways. What can you do if all the old people hold all the jobs?

1. Make sure everyone has a backup.
2. Pick the backups with eventual succession in mind.
3. If the backups do well, move them to other positions of responsibility, then get new backups.

These three steps require a *great* degree of inter-year cooperation and some degree of conscientious personnel management. How does that get done?

That's a later article.

## Why Public Relations?

What we're doing these days doesn't seem to fit what Paul Harris had to say about public relations: "In the promotion of understanding, it is important to reach large numbers of non-Rotarians as well as Rotarians, and you cannot reach large numbers privately."

The practice of PR varies throughout the world. Regardless of cultural differences from one country to another, though, Rotary clubs around the globe have audiences with which they should communicate. Developing a message, then taking action by finding an appropriate way to deliver that message is what it means to "reach large numbers of non-Rotarians."

We have a *great* story! By sharing our clubs' deeds with the others who matter in our communities, we contribute to an accurate, positive image of Rotary. It's not that a newspaper's subscribing population will lead better lives if we let our message be known to them; and it certainly doesn't mean that our clubs will necessarily be better off for the publicity engendered by a pen-happy scribe.

Is this brain surgery? No. Is it rocket science? No. Is it DNA

mapping? No. Is it putting some words on a piece of paper, e-mailing it to a newspaper, and reading the results of a one-person effort? Yes.

How hard is it to find one person in each club to make the effort? Pretty hard, obviously, since the author knows of only two who seem to be any good at getting articles in the papers on a consistent basis. How hard is it to *try*?

What's the problem here? Can't we even *try*?

## "Scooting"

I hate scooting! People who leave meetings early, normally just as the speaker is being introduced, are in a "rude class" by themselves. Members know how long a meeting is to last. Year after year, presidents structure weekly meetings to take up an exact amount of time. You can count on that time.

What in the world possesses people who think that they should attend only part of a function? It's like being there for the birth of a baby, but leaving after the baby's head shows. The same people leave football games at the end of the third quarter "to avoid the rush."

Tell people that if they can't stay for the full meeting, arrange to make up somewhere else, but don't come to our meeting! Our meeting is not over, as Yogi would have said, until it's over!

## Party Time!

Make any excuse at all to throw a party.

It's the club's 18<sup>th</sup> anniversary? Bash-time!

Charlie has twenty years of perfect attendance? Hey, what's everyone doing this Saturday night?

Doris just made her husband a Paul Harris Fellow? Pot luck at Harry's a week from Sunday!

Just pass a total in your club of 100 Paul Harris Fellows? Haul out the refreshments!

Ten (20, 30) new members this year already? Special lunch for the sponsors and Mentors!

Just got your 25th Foundation Benefactor? "Who's up for dinner and a show?"

*If you can get people to remember the accomplishments of a club, they're more apt to avoid actions which will result in bad things happening to your club.*

*If you can get people to congregate together, they're more apt to become and remain friends.*

*There's no point here at which anyone loses anything, right? Come on! Really!*

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