



Mike's Memo



Rotary District 6080

5/17/2014

[Edition 1, Volume 4]

FROM THE DESK OF THE DGE



In Rotary, membership is at the core of everything. Without members, we could not survive. We could not network and we could not help our communities. Rotary International's membership has remained stagnant for a number of years. It's time to take a new look at membership and how we attract and retain Rotarians. Thank you to Duane Sterling for passing along the information you see below. It's food for thought.

This will be my last newsletter as District Governor Elect. I've enjoyed this last year, and, with your help, I'm looking forward to a great year as District Governor. I'll attend your meetings, but I would really enjoy coming to your service projects and socials, so please let me know when those are scheduled.

Please feel free to contact me to discuss any Rotary issues or questions you may have. I can be reached at mbeahon.rotary6080@ktis.net.

ROTARY 2.0: A CAR THEY WANT TO BUY

By Tom Carroll on RI Discussion Forum: Membership Best Practices

For some time I've been thinking about the Rotary membership challenge in the United States and Canada, and what lies at the issue's core.

I've come to the conclusion that it isn't that we don't ask guests to come to meetings, or even that members leave because they are not engaged. If this were true, then simply inviting people to meetings and engaging the membership would have solved our problems years ago.

As Gateway Rotary (D5020) experiences dramatic growth (50 percent so far this year) and Gig Harbor Rotary (D5020) even has a waiting list, I'm constantly being asked, "What are you doing differently?" The answer? **We're selling a car people want to buy, not the car we have always sold.**

In the '70s and '80s, American car manufacturers were slow to recognize that customers wanted smaller, fuel-efficient cars. As a result, Japan was able to surpass the Big Three and redefine the industry.

WONDERLAND CAMP

Wonderland Camp in the Lake of the Ozarks provides a fun, educational experience for mentally and physically disabled individuals of all ages. We want to encourage all Rotarians to help this camp continue to thrive.

To earn a Governor's Citation this year, you must participate in at least one Wonderland Camp activity (July 27-Aug. 1, Oct. 18, Oct. 25 or another project with DG approval.)

For more information, go to www.wonderlandcamp.org

DISTRICT CONFERENCE

District Conference will be held at the Capitol Plaza Hotel in Jefferson City Oct. 31 (Halloween) – Nov. 1. We have been given a room rate of \$74 and I will do my best to keep the registration fee under \$140.

I am asking Rotarians this year to "Think outside of the box," and we will be doing just that for this conference as the Jeff City Clubs, under the direction of Jeff City Rotaract, will be hosting this conference.

The Rotary "Car" most are offering today has several attributes and traditions. We meet weekly during the business day, usually requiring a 1.5- to 2-hour time commitment. We sing songs, typically written decades ago. We pledge our patriotism and we recite in unison our Four-Way test. We refer to our Rotary Foundation's donations as to "My Paul Harris" making no mention of the Rotary Foundation, and we tend to sit with our close friends at the same table each week.

I'm not saying these things are wrong or bad; I personally enjoy many of them. But I'd argue we're in the business of attracting and retaining members. **If the Car we're selling isn't what the customer are buying, then it's time to take a hard look in the mirror and make some changes.** All of the rebranding and public image efforts underway will not solve this problem. We must lower the barrier to membership and increase the membership value.

So what are the attributes of this new Car, something I am calling "Rotary 2.0"?

• **Fun and Fellowship.** A wise and learned Rotarian said to me, "Make your meetings fun! If it were not fun, why would you go? And why would you bring a friend?" Rotary is an opportunity to relax, have fun, meet with your friends and if you're not watching too closely, you just might help your community ... and the world. Club business should be conducted at board meetings, and general announcements should be made via other media. The club meeting is the center of what Rotary is. "Where everyone knows your name ..."

• **Affordable.** "What's it cost?" If the answer is \$3,000, then many will take a hike. Gateway charges annual dues of \$200, and requests an additional \$100 optional donation to the Rotary Foundation. No meeting fees. If you want coffee or breakfast, that's on you.

• **How do I join?** If it's a courtship with a long dating period, potential members will balk and find an easier path. Unless your club has a waiting

list, perhaps it's time to take a look at the membership process. One week is a good goal.

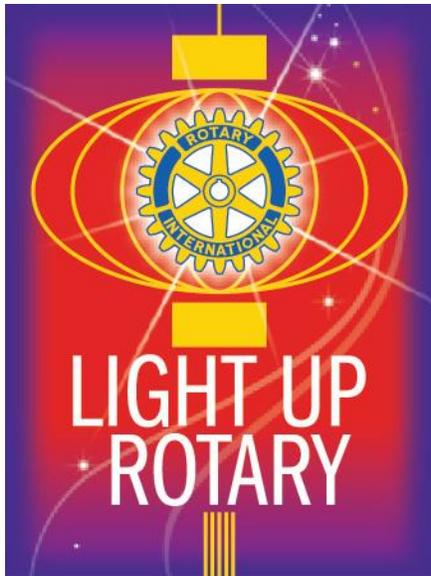
• **Networking.** I realize many strongly disagree with me on this point, but I firmly believe most young professionals are seeking networking organizations; if that's not Rotary, then they will find another opportunity. The reality is that young people value talking with experienced business professionals, not as marketing prospects, but as mentors. Sounds like Vocational Service to me. I believe Paul Harris formed the world's first business networking organization, and I think we should embrace, rather than shun, the concept.

• **Short Meetings.** Many people are unwilling or unable to take nearly two hours out of their business day to attend a service club meeting. Gateway starts at 7:05 a.m. and ends before 8 a.m. If members are in town, they attend. Rarely is there a business conflict at 7 a.m.

• **Singing?** Some like it, but most do not. My parents were born in the early '20s, and they enjoyed gathering around the piano and singing songs. I was in a fraternity in the late '70s and our alumni sang; we did not. This is not a typical activity of Baby Boomers, Gen X or Millennials. It's not the Car they want to buy.

• **The Rotary Foundation.** It's one of the best things about Rotary, and it is why people want to associate with us. Many clubs don't fully participate and instead, focus on their own foundation's fund raising. Without the Rotary Foundation, I think we're just another service club. That's not bad, it's just not optimal.

I don't think it's reasonable to expect most Rotary clubs to move to this new model; the resulting change would cause many valuable members to leave. I think the best approach is to identify opportunities for Rotary 2.0 clubs to be chartered in communities throughout the district, allowing the concept to grow membership while retaining our core.



2014-2015

District 6080

Governor's Citation

To earn a Governor's Citation in 2014-2015, clubs must complete the following requirements and submit paperwork to the District Governor by April 1, 2015:

- Participate in at least one Wonderland Camp activity (July 27-Aug. 1, Oct. 18 or Oct. 25 or another project approved by the DG)
- Attend District Conference Oct. 31-Nov. 1 (at least three members, plus club president)
- Increase membership—be at Plus 3 members by March 15, 2015
- Add one new Paul Harris Society member (\$1,000 annually) or five new Paul Harris fellows (\$1,000 each) by March 15, 2015
- Support the Foundation—achieve an average giving of \$150 per member by March 31, 2015
- Visit at least one other club per quarter by March 31, 2015. This can be for a club meeting, social function or service project.
- Submit copies of at least three published articles about your Rotary club to the Public Image Chair by March 31, 2015