

eCone

Meeting: March 4, 2010

Presiding Rotarian: Mary Bellefeuille

Visiting Rotarians: none

eCone correspondent: Evan Tuchinsky

Board Meeting Recap

Mary gave highlights of a well-attended Board Meeting earlier in the day.

- The recent storm blew down our road sign for the Skyway Cleanup Project. Bill Mannell is contacting Public Works about getting the sign put back up. Meanwhile, Community Clean-up Day has been rescheduled to May 22.

- Rotary International is putting together a list of requirements for clubs to receive grant monies. One we already know: attendance at a training session June 12. Clubs that don't have at least one member at the International Projects training will be disqualified from grant funding for a full year!

- The board approved a request from Jackie Gitman to use Rotary plates and utensils at a Chocolate Queen fundraiser. (Look for more from the Queen-to-be in the announcements section.)

- Leaves of absence were granted for John Senior (3 months) and John Downham (6 months).

- We have six applicants for Camp Royal, and it's not too late for more! If you know a high school junior who would be interested, please direct them to Trudi Angel for an application – soon!

- Trevor Davis came up with a novel way to bolster club coffers: selling packs of Meeting Make-up Cards! He is selling five packs of 10 cards. The asking price is \$100 each, but if demand outstrips supply, he'll hold an auction.

- Put a special check mark on your calendar for April 22 -- Bring Your Friend to Lunch Day. The program that meeting is on the wheelchair project. Mary says it will be "Dutch Treat" (assuming that means members treat their guests to lunch); she will hold sign-ups ahead of time so the kitchen will be prepared. Remember our District Governor's charge and bring us a prospective member, please!

- Justin Miley needs your home and/or your help for the Foreign Exchange Program. He's still looking for a family to host Josefa from April through July – contact him ASAP if you're interested. He's also forming a three- to four-member Foreign Exchange Committee – contact him if you would like to join.

- Ron Jones let the board, then the rest of the club, know that the Polio Plus Project is looking for fresh approaches to fundraising to help Rotary International reach its goal of \$91 million for the final push to eradicate the disease. If you have ideas, please contact him. One such idea comes from our local trash-hauler on the Ridge, which plans to ask all of its 12,000 customers to round their bills up to the nearest dollar, with the change – which could total thousands of dollars a month – going toward polio-eradication.

- Deadline for the Ambassadorial Scholarship Program is April 1.

Other Announcements

Chow-dah: Congratulations to Arthur and Annie Pollock for taking the grand prize at the Corning Clam Chowder Cookoff! “Annie worked her clams off,” President-Elect Bob Irvine relayed, “and Art was a great salesman!” Their savory soup brought two rewards to the Ridge: \$500, and a mammoth trophy that will rotate between the work places of willing hosts. Idea for next year: a Manhattan chowder made from tomatoes grown in club members’ gardens!

Chile: Rodrigo (our exchange student last year) and Josefa both report that their homes and families were spared the devastation of the earthquake, but that’s just a sliver of good news in a tragic situation. Josefa said the 50 Foreign Exchange students in different Rotary Districts held a group chat on Facebook and hope to make a difference with fundraisers. Josefa’s idea: a Chilean meal she’ll prepare for an event at the Touchettes’ home (more details to come). Meanwhile, Justin Miley challenged all of our teams to come up with enough money to buy at least one “shelter box” (which we’ll learn more about at an upcoming meeting).

Chocolate Fest: Jackie Gitman, in her regal way, reminded everyone about the Bowling Night fundraiser March 15 and the Greek Festival (a joint fundraiser with other Queen candidates) on April 11. She still needs more hands in the kitchen, so please sign up if you’d like to help cook. Even if not, see her for tickets!

Salsa de Border: Trudi Angel announced that the first big planning meeting will be at 12:30 p.m. Monday at Barney O’Rourke’s. *¡Andale!*

Mentors: Kent Rasmussen has compiled a list of mentors. Red-badgers looking for a mentor should check with Kent, who hopes each new member will complete the steps to Blue-badgedom within three months of induction.

Missing banners: Art Pollock, the Storeroom Czar as well as Chowder King, lamented the loss of our Rotary banners. He checked the storeroom, and none were there. If you know the whereabouts of our much-needed signage, please let him know.

House of Sports: Roger Bylund delivered some bad news about the financial situation of Paradise public schools. Though high school sports have been spared the budget axe for the moment, “athletics won’t stay off the table,” he says. That makes the House of Sports fundraiser even more urgent. Keith’s Crazies have volunteered to serve as guides at the house March 13-14. Other teams’ members would be most welcome!

Recognitions (a.k.a. Fines)

Tom Baker: Leaving last week’s meeting with his lunch ticket. **1 bell**

Kathleen Dwyer: After declaring, “I didn’t do anything,” she was reminded that her son did – Carlton earned a scholarship to the summer program of the American Ballet Theater in New York. **1 bell**

Speakers

Carey Gross, Christine Wilder and Parke Colbert

Topic: Butte County Library Literacy Services

Carey, coordinator of Butte County Library Literacy Services for the past seven years, came with two program participants to show one of the ways in which “libraries change lives.” Since 1984, the library has paired up volunteers and adults who want to learn how to read and write. She calls it “a learning partnership – rich lives coming together.”

One such volunteer is Christine, who grew up in a family of readers and wanted to help when she learned how pervasive illiteracy remains. She described her experience tutoring a 77-year-old woman named Billie; Billie had left school in the fifth grade and decided to learn to write and spell better after the death of her husband.

Billie, who turned out to live just a block and a half from Christine, was “so energized with life.... What an experience it was,” said Christine, who now tutors Billie’s son, as well as a man in Magalia. “I gave something to the tutoring program and received unimaginable riches back.”

Parke spoke about the program from the perspective of a learner. Though he went to school through the eighth grade, he never learned to read. He'd managed to hide his illiteracy for decades, until he got divorced at age 55 and found himself thrust into a situation for which he was unprepared. Not only did he have to pay bills for the first time, he found he needed to take tests to get licenses he needed as a tree-trimmer. "A lot of us go into good jobs and get by with it [illiteracy] for a long time," he explained. "The [prevalence of] illiteracy out there is unbelievable because we get so good at hiding it."

Overcoming his embarrassment, he got help through the library. "You have to be really dedicated to learn to read and write," he said. "It's something you have to commit to. And tutors are very special people."

Parke's talk inspired Don Peck to share his own story. Don has battled dyslexia – "I still can't read out loud or write," he revealed. He got help from teachers who recognized his situation, yet he felt a similar stigma.

Carey let the group know about several ways to help. First, you can volunteer to tutor. Second, you can help spread the word about the program. Third, you can participate in fundraising events such as the Bocce Ball Tournament at the Red Tavern in Chico on May 2 and the Trivia Bee this fall.

Fittingly, Mary announced that a book will be donated to a Paradise second-grade class in honor of Carey, Christine and Parke.
