



# Membership Matters

Zones 24, 25, 26 & 32 Newsletter

[www.rotaryzones24-32.org](http://www.rotaryzones24-32.org)



## Membership Session at Zone 22 Institute



Session Chair, RRICM Alana Bergh



Good Attendance! Membership is Important

Here are some of the highlights of the Membership session held at the Zone Institute.

PDG Mark Starratt (D5360) described Urban Spirits Clubs as the future of Rotary – as relevant and easy to attend meetings for younger professionals who may have families. Discussion on why those folks don't just join existing clubs, and the various reasons why they might not be attractive, including meeting times and demographics. (editor note – more on Urban Spirit Clubs next month).

PDG Bernie Carriere (D5360) had mentioned the “elephant in the room” which continues to be the issue of women in Rotary. This was mentioned as one of the barriers to young people joining Rotary; they will not join single gender clubs (especially Rotaract). Alana mentioned that RI senior leadership could do more to be sure that women are appointed to positions of responsibility and visibility, although it is at the Zone level that directors are selected. Qualified women must stand, but the Zones need to select them if the image of Rotary is to change and women are to be effective senior leaders.

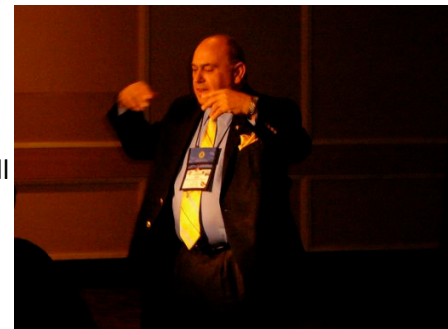
**Membership Matters is a newsletter for Rotarians and non-Rotarians in Zone 24 - Alaska, Canada, the Russian Far East, Siberia, St. Pierre and Miquelon, and parts of the northern USA. Zone 32 - the northeast USA extending into Quebec and Maritime Canada and Bermuda. Zone 25 - north west USA and southern British Columbia. Zone 26 - south west USA and Hawaii.**



Rotaractor Paul Hillier, PDG Mark Starratt, RRICM Elaine Toussaint, PDG Bernie Carriere

rather than joining Rotary – feeling that the mentoring aspect is important in Rotaract as well as in Rotary. PDG Mark pointed out that he had in fact joined Rotary at 24. Some discussion on the cost of Rotary, however, in looking at the young professionals in many Rotary clubs, it may be a misconception to assume that they are “poor”, as they are very successful in their occupations and enjoy nice lifestyles.

Paul Hillier, Rotaract, led into a discussion of why young people are staying in Rotaract



RID Mike Colasurdo speaking Italian!

Finally there was discussion of Rotary's emphasis on its image as a service club, rather than a networking opportunity for business and professional people. PDG Elaine Toussaint (D7790) commented that her club revealed in a recent assessment that the members would like more networking and fellowship opportunities, and also that the international aspect is over-emphasized at times. They felt that more local involvement coupled with the public relations that would be generated, would strengthen membership. RID Mike Colasurdo also spoke about the desire to associate with the Rotarians as the reason to invite good people into the club.

# Rotary as a Networking Opportunity

submitted by RRIMC Alana Bergh

An often-stated benefit of Rotary membership includes the opportunities for “networking”. Rotarians refer to ourselves as a “global network of business and professional leaders”. How, exactly does that work? How does it benefit your business or professional occupation when it is possible there are few potential customers in your club?

New York Times best selling author Ivan Misner writing in **“You Never Know Whom They Know”** observes “that we don't walk around wearing signs displaying the names of everyone we know. It would probably shock you to learn about some of the influential people your best friend knows but hasn't told you about. You can't assume that your friend, acquaintance or referral partner doesn't have powerful contacts that can help you--or your business--in important ways.



The value that you bring to a referral network or to a strategic alliance is directly related to the number of relationships you have and the quality of those relationships. In a typical referral-networking group of 20 to 40 people, the number of referrals that could be created, among all the possible contacts within one or two degrees of separation, is almost incalculable. And it doesn't take a corporate executive to connect you with another corporate executive, or a rich person to introduce you to another rich, influential person. That's not the way the world works anymore--and quite honestly, I'm not sure it ever was.”

The lessons to be learned from Dr. Misner, then, are that by introducing even one new person to Rotary membership, you potentially increase your immediate contacts not by one, but by 20 to 40 people. Multiply that by all members in the clubs, then by all of the members of clubs in the district or those your club works with, and the number is staggering. They aren't all potential customers; they are potential references, potential sources of assistance, and resources for many business or personal decisions. Some will become friends as well. But to maximize the network you have to get to know each other, by taking part in the weekly meeting, enjoying the fellowship activities, contributing your time and expertise to projects and helping organize and attending multi-club and district meetings.

We all have stories about how our Rotary connections have helped us in business, travel, professional advice or referrals. We need to tell those stories to potential members, so that they too understand the power of the Rotary network.

Read the full text of **“You Never Know Whom They Know”** and other networking articles at <http://www.entrepreneur.com/marketing/networking/>

Is a ‘Networking Chair’ a step in the right direction?

DGE Diana White from District 7020 (Northern Caribbean Islands), a district that had 10% membership growth last year, is planning to institute a "Networking Chair" for next year.



# Public Relations.... Are We Failing?

Paul Kiser, District 5190 Public Relations Chair [pakiser@sbcglobal.net](mailto:pakiser@sbcglobal.net)

For most of our one hundred and four year history Rotary has quietly performed millions of acts of kindness for the local and world community. The result has been a dramatic transformation for millions of individual lives who have benefited from polio vaccinations, literacy programs, free wheelchairs, free restorative surgeries, clean water projects, emergency relief, and countless other efforts by Rotarians using the power of caring to bring hope where none existed.

Despite our labors most people do not know what Rotary has done in the world, nor do they understand the purpose of the organization. People see only glimpses of our projects and programs, but typically what they hear about Rotary is said and done relating to our fundraising efforts. It is sad that many people only see a Rotarian as someone who asks for donations once or twice a year with no comprehension of the impact of Rotary around the world.

Rotary is literally dying due to a failure of communication. As I visit clubs around the Reno/Sparks area I see meetings held in smaller rooms with fewer people attending. Clubs struggle to maintain current membership and to have a net gain of one member is cause for celebration! We carry a reputation of being an elite, elderly, wealthy, conservative, secretive group of white men that exclude anyone who doesn't match the preceding description. Many don't even know that women make up a significant (but still not sufficient) percentage of our membership and that they hold the highest offices in Rotary Districts around the world. We are shrouded by the fact that most clubs in our District only exist for 90 minutes a week and then fade back into the everyday world.

But how do we overcome this anonymity so that we can recruit new members while gaining community recognition and support for our programs? To turn around the invisibility of Rotary to the rest of the community we have to understand how information is received and how the new model of the public relations operates.

First, public relations consists of two messages.

The **INTERNAL** message helps your members understand the scope and purpose of Rotary and facilitates how members project Rotary to others. It consists of doing a thousand little things right, rather than doing one or two big things. The internal message is created by the weekly bulletin, the speaker programs, what the Club President and Board of Directors make a priority, and the strength and focus of the committee chairs. Little things like encouraging members to wear the Rotary pin everyday, receiving a membership certificate for the wall and member card for the purse or wallet when inducted, and recognizing members in the bulletin and website all work to create a feeling of belonging and ownership. Once the internal message is perfected, the rest of a club's public relations effort tends to fall into place.

The **EXTERNAL** message is the second part of public relations. There is one thing that a club can do that will have more impact than anything else on the External PR message, which is to have a current and dynamic club website. The club website is vital to public relations because:

1. Public Service Announcements (PSAs) and media coverage have limited impact in both scope and duration of exposure.
2. A club website creates a 24/7/365 presence to the members, potential members, the local community, and to the world.
3. Quality club newsletters/bulletins may be great for internal public relations, but they have minimal or no impact externally.
4. To the average person, a website gives legitimacy to an organization and it makes it easier for members to introduce potential members to a club and its activities.
5. A Rotary club website can benefit a community when people are considering relocation and researching the community on the web.
6. A club website can have a positive impact on retention efforts by providing contact info, member recognition, and upcoming program information.

In our District a great example of a quality club website is the one created for the Rotary Club of Incline Village ([www.inclinerotary.org](http://www.inclinerotary.org)). Almost any information you need about the club can be found on the home page or through one click to another page or website.

The need for us to understand public relations and step up our efforts to create and distribute our message is critical to our ability to serve our members and our community today and into the future. Public Relations is not about selling Rotary, it's about telling the story.



Paul Kiser

Potential club members are everywhere. But to get them to join Rotary, clubs must use creativity and imagination, says Past RI President Cliff Dochterman.

"Rotary International leaders keep emphasizing membership growth and extension because Rotary's very survival depends on it," says Dochterman, a member of the Rotary Club of Moraga, California, USA, and author of [The ABCs of Rotary](#), a resource for new members. "If Rotary is to grow, we all must take action."

Dochterman believes clubs can thrive by seeking new members, retaining current ones, and sponsoring new clubs in the community. He offers the following tips:

### Seeking new members

Clubs must have a specific plan in place, says Dochterman.

- Use a team approach. Teams should have several members who meet with qualified business and professional leaders to discuss the benefits of joining Rotary.
- Set aside one club meeting per month to be a "visitor day," to which all club members would invite a friend or prospective member.
- Seek out natural prospects, including Rotary Foundation Ambassadorial Scholars, Rotaractors, and Group Study Exchange (GSE) team members.

### Retaining current members

"Keeping current club members is just as important as bringing in new ones. The key is to adapt and change," says Dochterman.

- Make sure club meetings, service activities, and social events are interesting, fun, and worthwhile.
- Initiate more hands-on projects so club members will feel that they're making a difference.
- Eliminate 100 percent attendance requirements.
- Be alert to the symptoms that lead to resignation. Club leaders should be considerate to members' personal problems.

### Sponsoring a new club

"Don't think about cloning your existing club. The new century of Rotary requires and permits a new vision of fellowship and service," says Dochterman. "It's time to think about sponsoring a new kind of Rotary club." For example:

- A club composed entirely of executives and professionals under the age of 40. The nucleus could be former Rotaractors, GSE team members, and Foundation program alumni.
- A club in an ethnic or minority section of the community, with members who share common economic and cultural interests.
- A club that meets in a shopping mall, airport, high-rise office building, golf course, or other nontraditional but convenient location.

## PRIP Cliff Dochterman on MEMBERSHIP the KISS Principle



I urge a team approach, or at least in couples, because there is a degree of fixed responsibility.

When you say that "Membership is Everybody's job - it soon becomes nobody's."

Responsibility to do a job must be allocated with a time frame for reporting to the club on the work that is done.

When asked "What is Rotary?" each of us should have a prepared response on the tip of our tongue.

# Membership Growth: Stay Above the Curve

Adapted from Toastmasters International



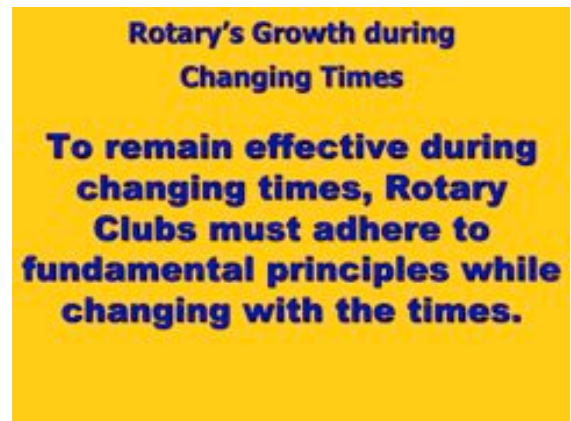
The law of diminishing returns is that a "success" curve flattens out at the top. Regardless of the amount of extra work you put in, you just can't expect to get the same proportionate result. But have you ever thought about the declining curve? When an undertaking begins to slip over the edge, you will find the curve tends to plunge. The further along you go, the steeper the slope and the harder the recovery.

So, be warned! If your club's membership remains at a low level, you may be on the beginning of such a curve. If it's declining, you're on the slippery slope. Don't ignore it or delay your plan to rectify it. There's no time like the present to implement a plan. Act rather than react and you'll get better results!

Membership growth is both a long-range goal and an immediate need! It's known that people will join a club because they have a keen interest in what it stands for and how it will benefit them.

Generally, this includes community involvement and building relationships. Consequently, they will leave the club if they fail to achieve this purpose. Basically, the reconstruction process involves **three simple factors**: an analysis of the problems impeding your club, the establishment of goals and improvement strategies, and sheer effort.

To determine what factors are hindering your membership efforts, take a look at where your club falls short. The most prevalent problem is weakness in club programming. **Good programs aren't presented with the charter.** They must be developed and maintained by dedicated club officers. Here is an action drive that can get your club back on the road to excellence:



- 1. Focus** on the needs of individual members by presenting the different opportunities that the club can offer. These opportunities are not just limited to what you may think are the main goals of a club. Perhaps some members are seeking the social aspects of joining a club, or enjoy the networking exposure, or perhaps they simply enjoy belonging to various types of groups. Have information regarding membership readily available. This may be in the form of a club brochure, a guest invitation card, or simply your "elevator speech".
- 2. Seek Information.** Find out what does the member wants, their long and short range goals and how can the club help to achieve these purposes? Do this via a club survey, an impromptu meeting or perhaps you can assemble a team to call on each member. Remember, sometimes the answers are clearly out there, it's just a matter of asking!
- 3. Seek Help.** Work with your Assistant Governor, District Membership Committee and District Governor in preparing a rescue plan for your club. These roles exist for the sole benefit of helping your club. Your district officers have experience with club membership issues and will be able to offer personalized, real-life advice on how to improve your club.

**What are our Fundamental Principles?**

# Know Your RRIMC

**Alana Bergh**

**Zone 24W**



A lifelong Alaskan, Alana Bergh is a graduate of the University of Alaska with a Bachelors of Business Administration. She has been married for 40 years to her husband, friend and business partner, Ron Bergh, with whom she has two children, Cale and Siri, both former Rotary Exchange Students, and two grandsons. They also count among their children a number of exchange students who have lived in the Bergh household over the past ten years.

The Berghs have retired from businesses they operated from the 1970s. Beginning with a stock car racetrack, they owned a neighborhood tavern near their home in North Pole, Alaska for twenty years. In 1976 they also established Alaska Lifts, which, for 25 years, provided elevator installation and maintenance in northern Alaska, and handicap access to all of Alaska.

A member of North Pole Rotary Club, Alana is past governor of the district that includes the state of Alaska, USA; the Yukon Territory, Canada; and Russia, east of the Ural Mountains. Ron is a member of College Rotary.

The Bergh's Rotary passions include Youth Exchange and Alana was instrumental in starting youth exchange in the new Russian clubs of District 5010, a program that grew from 2 students in 1994, to more than 70 students in- and outbound today. Alana has worked with Rotaract in Russia which has led to the establishment of Rotaract in Alaska and the multi-country Rotaract District. When she chaired D5010's Rotary Foundation Committee the district was ranked 25<sup>th</sup> worldwide in annual giving. Recently Alana chaired the Rotary International Membership and Development Committee, served as Zone 22 coordinator for the Health & Hunger Resource Group, and will serve as a Regional Rotary International Membership Coordinator for Zone 22 Far West beginning in July.

Alana and Ron spend their time traveling and working for rural electrification, snowmobiling, boating and fishing. Alana enjoys in-line skating, weather permitting, and is always ready for a game of cards. Both Ron and Alana like to cook, and have used their talents to raise funds for Rotary Foundation projects and youth exchange.

## Diary Dates

January 17-24, 2010	International Assembly	San Diego, California, USA
April 25-30, 2010	Council on Legislation	Chicago, Illinois
June 20-23, 2010	RI Convention	<b>MONTREAL, CANADA</b>
November 10-13, 2010	Zone 24/32 Institute	London, Ontario, Canada

### 2009 - 2010

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