



Rotary Club of Santa Rosa West

Bulletin for March 9, 2009 SOS Update

By Diane Winsby

Preliminaries



President David McDonald brought the March 9, 2009 meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by **Jeff Ray** and the Rotary Moment was given by **Jim Hinton**.



Kris Lepore announced that four Rotarians visited us today: **Nancy Aita** from the Santa Rosa Sunrise Club and **Linda Sinka, Otis Brown** and **Jim Goodenough** from the Sebastopol Sunrise Club.

Guests of Rotarians: **Chris Feldman-Parr** introduced her guest **Susanne Drace**. **Darcie Fellows** introduced her guest; **Jason**.



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Coming Up:

3/16 - 5:00 pm - St. Pat's Day Ball @ Sally Tomatoes, Sonoma Mountain Village, 1100 Valley House Dr., Rohnert Park. No-host cocktails at 5:00, Buffet dinner @5:45, Irish Dancing Girls, too!
[See map.](#) RSVP [Tarina](#)

3/26 - SCARC Dinner - Santa Rosa West

Announcements & Such

President David announced that there are still copies of the new club roster available. He also said that there were still some Rotary shirts and hats available for purchase. He said to contact **Chris Parr** if anyone wanted to purchase these items. He also announced that the Boys & Girls Club crab and shrimp feed will be held on March 14th.

Otis Brown announced that the Sebastopol Sunrise Club will be having a fund raising event on May 30, 2009 at the SRJC Dutton Agricultural Pavilion, Forestville; "Guys Can Cook Too!" a wine and food extravaganza. Mr. Brown said that the tickets will be on sale for \$50 each.



Tarina Hall reminded us that our St. Patrick's Party will be held on March 16, 2009 at 5:00 PM at Sally Tomatoes, member's guests are invited too. The charge will be \$20.00 each attendee. This meeting will take the place of the regular meeting on the 16th, there will be no lunch meeting that date. The beautiful young Irish dancing team will also be there to entertain us at the party.

Gail Johnson announced that the District Assembly will be held on April 3 & 4th and encouraged members to attend. She also reminded the group that the District Conference will be held in Petaluma at the Sheraton Hotel on May 14, 15, & 16th.

President David said that our club will be dark on May 11, 2009. He also announced that a Board meeting will be held tomorrow.

Pretty as a picture, **Susan Nowacki** announced the members of her new Board of Directors for the Rotary Year of 2009-2010



They are:

Officers:

President – **Susan Nowacki**

President Elect – **Bill Dodson**

Secretary – **Jim Hinton**

Treasurer – **Barbara Larson**

Immediate Past President – **David McDonald**

Board of Directors:

Club Service – **Tarina Hall**

Community Service – **Doug Angelo**

International Service – **Pam Davis & Matt Delaney**

Vocational Service – **Chuck Baker & Darcie Fellows**

Board Members:

Attendance Advisor – **Janet Coddling**

Communications – **Jim Valinoti**

Crab Feed Chairperson – **Casey Williams & Pete Lamonica**

Membership – **Diane Winsby**

Member Retention Advisor – **Mike Merrill**

Social Events – **Ginny Pitts**

Special Advisor & Sunshine – **Phil Talamantes**

Programs – **Bill Fisher**

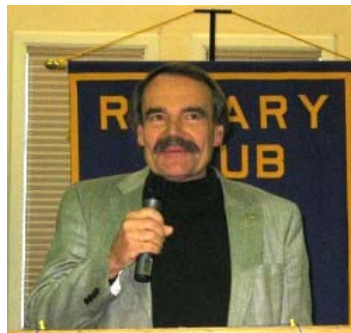
Public Relations – **Ruth Lincoln**
Sergeant at Arms – **Gary Lucas & Gil Lucas**

Raffle

No winner today for the \$575 prize. There are 14 marbles left. **Diane Winsby** won the wine.

Program: S.O.S. – Support Our Students Program

Bob Zeni introduced **John Palmer** who is a founding member on the Board of this fine organization. **John** gave a brief history of the S.O.S. program which four rotary clubs have supported for almost 18 years in Sonoma County. The original purpose of the program was to help truant students get back to school. The S.O.S. program has evolved into a much more comprehensive program helping at risk students not only with truancy issues but with drug, gang and other problems that interfere with the student's ability to attend school. When the program was being formulated **Dr. Mark Doolittle** of Sonoma State University was asked to participate.



Dr. Doolittle was introduced by **John** to give an up-to-date on the S.O.S. program. **Dr. Doolittle** said that he had been involved with the program since its inception, and that he has retired from his position at Sonoma State University and is now volunteering his time to the program completely.

When the program first began it began on a budget of \$10,000 but now has grown to a yearly budget of \$2,000,000 with zero administrative costs being taken from the funds. All of the funds are used to pay councilors that work with the at risk students. The program is active in 12 Sonoma County schools mostly in the Santa Rosa area. They perform an average of 250 hours of counseling each week and serve between 400 and 500 client students each year. Their purpose is to help these at risk students find a sense of community, hope and encouragement which is usually lacking in their lives by listening to their troubles and by finding ways to help them. There are so many cultural issues, gangs, abuse, poverty, and anger issues that need to be addressed to help the students see that their lives can be so much better. He said that the program is "all about finding hope, with face-to-face and person-to-person contact being the key."

Dr. Doolittle then introduced three at risk students who are attending the "Clean & Sober High School" in Santa Rosa. **Maria** is a sophomore, **Sonja** is a freshman and **Juanita** is a freshman. Each girl gave about a 5 minute presentation on what the S.O.S. program has done for them. This writer can tell you that their individual stories brought tears to your eyes.

Basically all three girls described their familial situations as dysfunctional; alcohol use, drugs, gangs, abuse, fighting, gun fights, sibling deaths, etc. All of them were involved in gang related activities by the tender ages of 10-12 years old; one of the young women said that she thought the style of life she was living then was normal because everyone she had communication with lived similar lives. They described stories



Maria



Sonja

of parents encouraging them to get involved in gang activity, to get in fights and even offering them alcohol to drink. One of the girls described losing her Grandfather, who had always told her she could do anything she wanted if she tried, and when he died she recognized that she had no one left in her life to encourage her and how hopeless she felt.

They all said that S.O.S. had helped them in a BIG way, by encouraging them to do better in school, by helping them see fighting and anger isn't right, by helping them to stay away from drugs, gangs and alcohol, how to dress and how to fit in much better. They stressed that the support they get from their S.O.S. counselors was changing their lives. One of the girls said that she now hopes to be able to go to college to become a counselor too to help others in her community in the future.



Juanita

They said that the program is helping each of them to look at the world in a different way; a positive way rather than the negative way they thought before getting involved in the S.O.S program.

Before **President David** concluded the meeting he congratulated **Jim Underhill** for his 75th birthday today – and OH, today is the Barbie Doll's birthday too - she's 50. The meeting concluded promptly at 1:30 PM.



Your Bulletin Reporter:
Diane Winsby



Your Bulletin Editor:
Jim Valinoti



3/16 - St. Pat's Day Ball @ 5:00 pm - Sally Tomatoes

