



## Rotary Club of Santa Rosa West

### Bulletin for December 15, 2008

#### "State of the City" with Jane Bender and Ernesto Olivares

By Anne Abrams

#### Preliminaries



**President David McDonald** welcomed everyone to the "cool club" meeting wearing yet another dashing holiday tie and a Santa hat with sun glasses.

Thanks to the following Rotarians for their assistance with today's meeting:

Secretary: **Janet Coddig**, Cashier: **Will Richards**, Greeter: **Jim Sullivan**, Tickets: **Phil Talamantes**, Rotary Moment: **Chuck Olson**, Photos: **Chuck Baker**, Bulletin: **Anne Abrams**, Program: **Susan Nowacki** and **Pam Davis**.

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<b>Coming Up:</b>
12/22 - DARK
12/29 - DARK
1/5 - Geology of Sonoma County
1/9 - 5 PM Fireside @ Janet's <a href="#">Please RSVP</a>
1/12 - Immigration Issues in Sonoma County, Richard Coshnear, Esq.
1/21 - Cool Club Happy Hour @ Cafe Portofino

#### The Pledge:

**John Hathaway** led us in the salute to our flag.

#### The Rotary Moment:

**Chuck Olson** offered a quote from Walt Disney: "If you can dream it, you can do it".

#### Visiting Rotarians and Guests:

**Phil Talamantes** introduced **Steve Armand**, **Mark Burchell** (the office furniture guy) and **Roger Olson** to the SR West meeting.



Also several guests were introduced including the maestro and Music Director of the Santa Rosa Symphony, **Bruno Ferrandis**. Welcome **Bruno** (guest of Roger Olsen) and a real estate person who was introduced as "needing a free lunch."

#### Announcements & Such

**Chris Parr-Feldman** directed our attention to an array of fine shirts that can be had (sporting our Rotary club's insignia) for \$35.00. They come in several styles: polos for men and women, denim collared shirt with buttons, and hooded t shirts for women. All come in Rotary Blue. Talk to Chris to order yours. ( No, they won't be here for Christmas, sorry.)



**Harry Rubins** announced that we made \$500 for the foundation at the Bartley Barbeque. He is offering a \$50 match with the funds to takers who have previously contributed \$140. Ten hands quickly flew in the air: Thanks **Susan, Pam, Chris, Bo, Gary Chuck, Bill, Ralph, Terry** and **Von!** Thanks, **Harry!**

**Prez David** announced that Sally Tomatoes Catering is donating a dinner for eight to our Crab Benefit Feast. The dinner is valued at \$650! Thanks! (much applause)

Note that we will be dark for the next two weeks 12/22 and 12/29. We will be back at St. Rose on January 5<sup>th</sup> when Terry Wright will talk on the "Geology of Sonoma County".

**Ginny Pitts** reminded all of our social activities scheduled for January 2009:

We are invited to the January fireside at Janet Coddling's new home on 717 Buena Vista Drive from 5:00-:700 PM on Friday, January 9<sup>th</sup>. **Please, please RSVP to Janet Coddling at 843-7213 or [janet@scanitjanet.com](mailto:janet@scanitjanet.com)**

There will be a "cool club happy hour" at Café Portofino's at 535 Fourth Street with complimentary appetizers on January 21<sup>st</sup>.



**Bill Dodson** put in a plug for more auction items for the Winter Charity Feast. **Julie Ratto** from the Children's Museum donated a case of some very fancy wine for the live auction. This wine (Brown's?) I'm told goes for wildly huge sums of money.

**Tarina Hall** thoughtfully thanked **David McDonald** for welcoming us to his home for our Christmas Holiday Party and a fun one it was. **David** came to the meeting with bags of items abandoned by party-goers. He charged Rotarians \$5, and \$10 to retrieve items. **Terry** had matching hot plates and a baking pan. **Chris** retrieved a pair of winter gloves. **Doug** paid \$10 for a Christmas plate. **Carson Mitchell** collected his fine silver platter with an award engraved on it. There was "polish" crystal, matching red and white plates, stainless salad bowl, cookie plates and even a pair of boxers with holly...no story there...and by this time he couldn't give the stuff away although **Pam Davis** managed a plate for just 50 cents! What a bargain! All were thanked for their generous donations to the club.



**Bob Zeni** announced that we are about half way there on ticket sales for the Winter Charity Feast. You can get them on lay away or pay with MC or Visa. **Jim Benoist** is handling raffle ticket sales for WCF. They are \$10 or 3 for \$25. The prize is a one week trip to Hawaii.



At last meeting we raised \$500 for Christmas gifts for families of Ridgeway Students. Thanks to all who contributed to making their holidays warmer and brighter.

#### Casey Williams Craft Talk:

**Casey** was born in Santa Rosa in 1976 and grew up in Santa Rosa's South Park neighborhood rich with diversity and humble beginnings. He began working at age 14 as janitor at the YMCA making \$4.50 hr. He's had several careers since then in telemarketing, managing a portrait studio, and as manager for a mortgage company, where he increased customers from 30,000 to 150,000 in three years and developed a new software system. There he met his future bride, Gina, and her 3 year old son. He proposed, diamond ring in hand, as they walked across the Golden Gate bridge. He later adopted her son as his own. **Casey** now works with **Pam Davis** for North Bay Management as outreach recycling manager. He closed by saying through Rotary he wants to give back to community, to help and have fun. He thanked the members for welcoming him into the club.



#### Raffle

##### 21 marbles and \$350.00

The wrong marble was drawn by **Doug Angelo** and **Bruno Ferrandis** gleefully accepted a wonderful bottle of wine.

#### Program: "State of Our City"

**Susan Nowacki** introduced our two speakers, **Jane Bender** and **Ernesto Olivarez**

**Jane Bender** was city council member in 2000 and re-elected again in '04 and '08. She served as Mayor from 2004-06. She is the former director of Re-leaf, a non-profit that works with at-risk youth planting trees in the community. **Ernesto Olivares** has worked in law enforcement for 30 years and is manager of the Gang Prevention Task Force on Gang Violence, working on behalf of public safety. He also serves on the boards of the Volunteer Center and the United Way.



**Jane Bender** was the first to speak. She talked about the history of the Gang Prevention Task Force and how important and fortunate it is that Santa Rosa relatively early on recognized our community had a problem> The wake up call was an incident where three people were shot in a riot in 2002.

A group formed to see what other communities had done and modeled our program after that of San Jose. The issue was taken to the voters (Measure O) in Spring of 2004 and 73% of voters approved a ¼ cent tax increase for additional funding of our safety infrastructure (Police Dept, Fire Dept, and Gang Prevention Task Force). By coordinating efforts across city departments a systemic

plan was put in place. Community members -Superintendents of Schools, Probation, District Attorney, Dept of Social Services, Judges, Hispanic and African American Community leaders- met every 2 months to report what was going on – a "climate" report. This group became a strong team committed to keeping the community safer and healthier.



**Ernesto Oliveras** has been committed to Gang issues and stressed the importance of our community responding in a comprehensive manner before the situation reached a crisis as so many other communities have done. You can't eradicate problems completely but our current structure for addressing gang violence has resulted in stemming the escalation of gang activity and has helped to reduce violence in our community in the last two years by about 7%.

Non-profit organizations and others contributed to providing infrastructure that would bring services to "hot spots" where youth were at high risk, bringing park and playground programs, summer programs, after-school programs into neighborhoods to help children and youth develop healthy and safe choices. Funding came from grants, community programs, and taxes. It's certain that there will be fewer funds for these programs this year.

Parent involvement has been an essential component of Gang Prevention programs. Children as young as 10 are at risk for joining gangs. Parents can help children with their school work to keep them in school and to keep them in programs that keep their minds productively engaged.

The two most important things we can keep doing to preventing problems with gangs are: 1) to provide more interventions for children and youth and 2) provide more services in schools on campus. Our system of gang prevention is now becoming a model for other communities.

#### **Q and A:**

*What kind of programs is available for parents?*

Single mom programs, parenting classes, single father programs, couples programs, programs that teach parents to become involved in helping children with schoolwork at home.

*What are the numbers of gangs in Santa Rosa?*

Depends. Are you counting certified gang members (with records) or are you counting youth not classified but ones who hang out with gangs? The rough estimate is between 2,000 and 5,000.

*Is there a large problem of adult gang members?*

Yes, there are many in the 20-30's age group all the way to grandpas- generational gang members. They are establishing programs to encourage some to voluntarily get out of gangs. There 's California Youth Outreach in the street working with police offices to go into neighborhood to respond after incidents to keep everyone calm, to encourage youth to make better choices

*How many organized gangs are active in Santa Rosa?*

The two strongest are Latino: Surenos and Nortenos. There are many others Asian, African American etc.

*Are there programs that Rotarians can become involved in without fear?*

Yes, Boys Action Team was created after a scouting model. They are at 10+ sites and connect volunteers to act as mentors for young kids. "We can find a place for you."

Your Bulletin Reporter:

**Anne Abrams**



Your Bulletin Editor:

**Jim Valinoti**

