

# Rotary Club of Santa Rosa West

## Bulletin for August 16, 2010 Ben Stone gives us his annual Sonoma County Economic Overview

By Matthew Delaney

### Preliminaries



**President Bill** opened the meeting at 12:32 PM. He welcomed everyone and had **Sylvia Newman** lead us in the pledge.

In an unprecedented fashion, **Bill Fisher** was caught off guard when **President Bill** called on him for the Rotary moment. With his quick wit, he quickly delegated to **Gary Lucas**. **Gary** reminded us that things around us are constantly changing.



Gary's changing moment

[PDF Version for Printing](#)

[Last Bulletin](#) | [Bulletin Archive](#)

#### Coming Up:

8/23 - Jonathan Coe,  
President/CEO, SR Chamber of  
Commerce

8/30 - TBA

9/6 - Labor Day (Dark)

9/13 - Matthew Kerns, Interim  
Artistic Director & Educ.  
Coordinator, 6th Street Playhouse

9/20 - Rod Dole, So. Co.  
Treasurer, Earthquake Retrofit  
Program and other updates

9/27 - John Stewart



Speaker Ben Stone, Scott Bartley's  
guest

**President Bill** thanked the following people for making the meeting a success:

Cashier – **Bob Zeni**; Set-up – **David McDonald**; Tickets – **Louie Capuano**; Photos – **Jim Valinoti**; Bulletin – **Matt Delaney**; Programs – **Chris Rosell**; Greeter – **Bill Fisher**.

**Visiting Rotarians:**

Un-phased by being caught off guard, **Bill Fisher** did a great job introducing our visiting Rotarians.

**Mark Burchell** and **Vickie Lockner** from The Rotary Club of Santa Rosa.



Greeter Bill handles the introductions

**Ulf Bohlin** and his wife from Sweden. **Ulf** took a few moments to tell the club that he met his wife 50 years ago when he was a Rotary exchange student. They are now celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary. **Ulf** and **President Bill** took a few moments to exchange Rotary flags.



Ulf



The flag exchange

**Guests:** **Pamela Domino** introduced her guest **Lizette Hall Fry**. **Scott Bartley** introduced our speaker **Ben Stone** and **Jeff Ray** introduced his assistant **Sarah** who has just relocated here from Seattle.



Pam & Lizette



Jeff & Sarah

### Announcements and such...

**President Bill** informed everyone that on Wednesday, August 18th, **Larry Miyano** from the downtown club is hosting a social event for the clubs to meet **Leonard**, our inbound foreign exchange student. See **Bill** for additional details and directions.

**President Bill** gave a special thanks to **Jeff Ray** for his efforts on the Rotary Annual Golf Tournament held on Saturday, August 14th. The tournament brought out 40 golfers and 75 people for the ever-so-successful BBQ.

**Jeff Ray** thanked everyone for their help with the golf tournament. In particular, he thanked both **Casey Williams** and **Louie Capuano** for their much anticipated "tri-tip cook-off." He informed the club that **Louie** ended up taking the title! **Ginny Pitts** did a great job getting the food and wine ready while **Pam Davis** spent a few hours in the kitchen baking up some of her famous cookies. **Tracy Kline** made the garlic bread and **Scott Bartley** made a rice and bean dip which won everyone over. Jeff gave a special thank you to **Tarina Hall** for, well, everything!



Thank you all around from Jeff

**Chris Parr Feldman** reminded everyone of the upcoming membership super seminar this Saturday, August 21st at the Wells Fargo Center for the Arts. Our very own Tracy Kline, Kerry Rego and Casey Williams will be serving on a panel with Efren Carrillo. **Mike Merrill** and **Chris Parr Feldman** will be making appearances as guest speakers. She informed everyone that this year's district goal is to get membership up to 3,000 and open up a new club!

**Mark Burchell** from the downtown club asked everyone to buy a ticket to his club's annual fundraiser raffle. The winner can choose between a luxurious cruise through the Panama Canal or \$10,000 in cold hard cash. Tickets are \$50/each. He incentivized the club by offering to donate \$5 to our club for every ticket purchased by our members. Then he took it a step further and offered to bump up his donation to \$100 if he sold all 17 remaining tickets before he left the meeting. 17 hands quickly shot up and Mark made good on his promise by pulling out a \$100 bill from his wallet!



Mark



Thank you Mark!

**President Bill** promoted the "End Polio Now" program which includes a walk across the Golden Gate Bridge with all participants wearing an "End Polio Now" t-shirt. On October 24th, the Ferry Building in San Francisco will be lit-up to commemorate the event. He asked for our club members to participate. Past Rotary International President **Frank Devlyn** will be the guest speaker.

This year's Crab Feed Chairman, **Kris Lepore**, reminded everyone that we need to start collecting both live and silent auction items for this year's event. **Tracy Kline** and **Kerry Rego** are in charge of the silent auction. There will be a crab feed committee meeting next week after the regular meeting. More information to come in the following weeks.

**Bob Zeni** announced that crab feed tickets will cost \$75. There will be a limited number of tickets sold this year so he is going to start taking reservations soon. See **Bob** for more details.



See Kris about auction items



See Bob for Crab Feed tickets

**President Bill** recognized **Chris Parr Feldman** and **Past President Susan Nowacki** and then invited **Susan** up to the podium and presented her with a plaque for their efforts in helping our club take 1st place in Club Membership this past year.



President Bill & Past President Susan

**President Bill** announced that he received a thank you letter from **Jason Foss**, the 2nd place winner in this year's annual speech contest. **Jason** thanked our club and said he learned a great deal about public speaking and plans on buying a German cello with his winnings.

## Recognition



SRW Rotary makes the PD



Happy Birthday Tracy

**President Bill** first called on himself. This past Sunday in the Press Democrat, there was a picture of **Scott Bead** manning a bar. When **Bill** took a closer look, he noticed that the picture was taken at our crab feed last year. **Bill** fined himself a generous \$25.

**Tracy Kline** was recognized for her recent travels to the Pacific Northwest. She attended a wedding in Seattle. She also had a milestone birthday of 30 years on August 10th! She was fined \$25.

**President Bill** then recognized **Matt Delaney** for his climb up the corporate ladder. **Matt** announced to the club that he recently became a partner in his wealth management firm, JDH Wealth Management. President Bill didn't feel the typical \$25 fine did justice so he bumped up to \$50.

**Peter LaMonica** was asked his recent trip to Seattle with his two grandchildren, ages one and two and a half. **President Bill** probed a bit farther and Peter admitted that he also went on a fishing trip to Alaska. He caught a 63 pound Halibut. He was fined \$25.



Climber Matt



Fisherman Pete

## Raffle

---

**Bob Zeni** pulled the winning ticket for an opportunity to become a wealthy man but unfortunately he didn't pull the black marble.

**Gary Lucas** pulled the second winning ticket and took home a fine bottle of Albertina wine.



Gary wins the wine

## Program: Sonoma County Economic Overview with Ben Stone

---

**Scott Bartley** introduced our speaker, **Ben Stone**.

**Mr. Stone** serves as the Economic Development Director for Sonoma County. He has been with the county since 1986.

He expressed how grateful he is to have the opportunity to come and speak to our club.



Ben Stone, Sonoma County Economic Development Director

He started things off by telling the club how **Ginny Pitts** told him that she had a dream about **Bill Fisher**....he was eating, drinking and dancing (this dream shouldn't surprise anyone). **Ginny** indicated that **Bill** was the tour guide. **Mr. Stone** found this story ironic since the tour guide on his GSE trip to Brazil some years ago was also **Bill Fisher**. He remembered **Bill** always saying, "It's after five in London, let's start drinking!"

**Mr. Stone** then jumped right into his presentation. We currently have unprecedented unemployment nation wide. In Sonoma County, unemployment is roughly 11%. This does not take into count the "underemployed" which are those people who have part time jobs.



While construction remains slow, this continues to have a large negative ripple on our local economy. 10% of our local workforce is in the construction industry. This means that these business owners and employees are not bringing in as much income so they are not out there spending money.

Consumer credit is also very concerning. When people don't have jobs, they can't pay their debt. It's that simple. This is why foreclosures are at 14%.

In 2000, our national debt was around 5 trillion dollars. Our current debt is around 10 trillion. We have nearly doubled in 10 years. With our growing debt, American products continue to get cheaper overseas.

**Mr. Stone** feels that we will eventually see interest rates return to normal levels. Housing will continue to become more affordable and we will continue to be the most affordable housing area in the Bay Area. Commercial properties are stabilizing and overall consumer confidence is up.



Here is a brief lesson in innovation history:

### 1960s - Space race

### 1970s - Food and wine

**1980s - Tourism** – deregulation of the airline industry. More people could now get around. This was the first time when Europeans started vacationing in the United States.

**1990s – Technology** – in 1997, 15% of the Christmas gifts were purchased over the internet. Agilent had 5,000 employees. You started seeing Land Rovers here in Sonoma County.

**2000s – Credit** – unemployment in the early part of the decade was at 3%. People were refinancing their homes and using their equity to buy "toys." It was a false boom. We had creative financing and it was not sustainable.

### 2010 - ?

What are the upcoming industries for Sonoma County to take advantage of? Here is a brief list:

**Baby boomers are aging** - Average age in Sonoma County is 40 years old. This means that health will continue to be a major industry.

**Creative Clusters** – green, digital, bio and life sciences, etc.

**Tourism** – Sonoma County has always thrived on tourism and will continue to do so. Sonoma County is the first county in the country to have tourism applications for iPhones.

**FIRE** – Finance, insurance and real estate. These industries will eventually pick back up and continue to provide jobs for many residents.

**Health wellness** - This includes spas, gyms, dieticians, yoga centers, etc.

**Wine** – While Sonoma County remains one of the nation's wine headquarters, winery owners will continue to utilize tasting rooms and wine club memberships to sell their goods across the country.

### Outlook

**Mr. Stone** thinks that the economy will start to recover in early 2011. Unemployment is a

lagging indicator, not a leading indicator. 2012 unemployment is projected between 8 and 9%. We have averaged 6% to 7% unemployment since the great depression. Job growth should come back in 2011 and income levels will start to rise in 2011.

Economic recovery will occur gradually as unemployment starts to stabilize. Sonoma County's pace of recovery is likely to follow the US path closely. Areas of opportunity are in export-oriented and tourism related industries. Our long-term outlook is promising. A good portion of our local tourism comes from California residents.



### Local Philanthropy

They surveyed 400 Sonoma county businesses and asked how many of them give back to the community. 78% of the businesses gave back to their community. They also contacted 18 Rotary clubs to determine their impact on the local economy. 9 of 18 Rotary club responded and indicated they contributed \$400,000 and 14,500 hours of community service. **Mr. Stone** felt confident that had all 18 Rotary clubs responded, the total dollars contributed would be around \$1,000,000 and hours of community service would be roughly 30,000.

**Mr. Stone** is very proud of our club and for what Rotary does both in Sonoma County and worldwide.

For more information on the Sonoma County economy, please visit

<http://www.sonoma-county.org/edb/>

Your Bulletin Reporter:

**Matt Delaney**



Your Bulletin Editor:

**Jim Valinoti**

