

SCARC Meeting
November 20, 2008
Program Notes

The November SCARC program focused on “What clubs are doing to assist their members in these difficult economic times?”

Kathleen Archer, President of the Rotary Club of Santa Rosa introduced the subject with the following comments: “When reflecting on what topic would be relevant for the November SCARC meeting, I couldn’t ignore what I had been reading in the paper each day. We are in the midst of very difficult economic times. As you know, real estate values have been plummeting for the last two years. In the past couple of months, the U.S. and International stock markets have lost over 9 trillion dollars in equity ...and counting. There’s a banking and credit crisis and if you’ve heard of anyone trying to get a loan in the past few months, you know it’s very difficult. Eventually, if not already, I’m concerned that this economic crisis could affect our clubs, both in attendance and membership as they are both related.

The goal of the November meeting was to provide clubs with practical tools and ideas to share with your boards. I believe by anticipating potential financial difficulties, clubs can be prepared & strengthened in dealing with their members. At the same time, we want to retain our core Rotary values while continuing to grow our clubs by retaining energy and relevancy as an organization.

Below are the notes from the meeting. There were many great ideas brought forth from the attendees. I hope they become useful guidelines to you and your club members as we look carefully at carefully at remaining positive & successful during these challenging times.

- Allow members to pay their dues in installments.
- Allow for more frequent on-line make-ups.
- Allow for more make-ups in different service areas (community related projects).
- Poor attendance is usually the first indication of a problem.
- The Santa Rosa Sunrise Club has a Buyer’s Guide of its club members to explain the services that they offer to encourage other members to utilize them.
- It was suggested that there be more flexibility in membership types.
- Offer opportunities for members to work on projects without having to make a dollar contribution.
- Have a drop-in pot for members to contribute into that may be used to fund an outside activity (Veterans Day event used as an example).
- Someone suggested that clubs develop a scholarship type program to assist members that may be experiencing financial difficulties.
- It was suggested that the Club Business Directory be expanded to include other local clubs.
- It is important to let donors know how they will benefit from their donation.
- Rotary involvement takes time & money; Need to put more emphasis on time.
- DG Norm Owen reminded us that Rotary started out as a business to business relationship. Maybe we need to go back to that basic principle.
- Recycle older members to do a craft talk.
- Petaluma Valley President Jim O’Grady talked about their “Spin the Wheel” activity & how it added spirit back into the Club. Contact Jim for specifics.
- Organize & advertise club events that will attract new members.
- Improve Rotary’s public image.
- Clubs may need to review their fining process. Talk to the person upfront to save putting them on the spot in the open meeting. What are they comfortable with donating?