THE ROTARY CLUB OF SAN MARINO

President Russ Wayne Osmonson - 2014-15 Year in Review

The year was 2014-15 and the theme was “Light Up Rotary.” We were to highlight all the good that Rotary does in the world, which in retrospect was a simple task. My year as President of The San Marino Rotary began auspiciously, with an unnecessary but appreciated amount of fanfare. Pictures were taken, announcements were made, and articles were written in the San Marino Tribune. Then as one would have predicted, it took a natural and precipitous turn towards typical. It digressed from an exciting, jovial and spirited beginning to, what I would call, business as usual. However, even with all the previous propaganda and hype, the club members struggled to get my name right. I was dubbed Ross Osmonson in our ROTOSCOPE (thanks Ken Veronda). Whenever my name was intentionally written incorrectly I felt like I did when I was at Starbucks. You know when they call out the order, “Ross, your order is up.” I thought to myself, “do these guys know who they installed as President?” Desperate times.

My name is Russ Osmonson, and I have learned that my name can be a challenge for some to spell. Trickier still was following in the footsteps of the very capable San Marino Rotary Presidents. I was sworn in by Mr. Peter Corzo, who ran the club the previous year with good humor and direction. He paved the way for me and for my board by making the Motor Classic fundraiser a compulsory contribution. This took a lot of pressure off and allowed our club to focus on the goals for the year. In the end (spoiler alert) we reached all of our goals and won a District Prize for doing so, but more on that later.

The Board members for 2014-15 may have unwittingly agreed to accept my invitation, as they balked a bit when they discovered that my meetings would be held at 7:00 am. The board meetings were convened in the Governor’s Room at Southwestern Academy, and Robert’s Rules of Order were strictly followed. Veteran members like Lee Mothershead and Mike Driebe helped right the ship when it was veering one way or the other. Karen Paciorek, secretary, helped make the minutes seem like a productive use of time. Everything was very official with “motions” and “seconds” as a comfortable formalness began to come into shape. By the second or third meeting we had a good idea about where we were headed and the eventual outcome/s.

Predicting the future is a skill that Denies Kneier (DK) performed with great regularity during my year. Much like a Numerical Nostradamus, Dennis forecasted the Rotary budget accurately. He took me under his wing and helped me allocate our resources, or at least he gave me some idea about where funds were headed. He was an excellent teacher who never minced words, and I never felt at a loss. The previous year we had raised $96,000 from the Motor Classic, which allowed us to suspend billed fines. The committee for the Motor Classic during 2014-15 consisted of Gilda Moshir (Wonder Woman of Membership), Fang Ho, Isaac Hung, Wayne Carter, Dennis Kneier, Tony Chao, and most important…Lucille Norberg. Countless others were involved, who helped raise nearly $100,000 for San Marino Rotary Charities to distribute, and distribute we did. Keeping in mind the four strategic priorities (Support youth services and education, build club profile and motor classic ,encourage fellowship and networking within the club, and enhance membership) funds were allocated accordingly.

Mrs. Debbie Herbert brilliantly ran our Charities Board with clarity and precision. She simplified what was a complex forum of opinionated Rotarians, with our many ideas, and led us to the best outcomes and practices. Her knack for taking large pieces of information and “chunking” them into smaller parts making them much easier for the mortal man to follow. She was a miracle worker!

The Thursday lunch meetings always started and ended on time and a managed to take on a fun feel. Each week a baby picture of a San Marino Rotary past president was shown. With guessing out of the way, we were able to eventually encourage the past president to admit to their image. It turned into a silly fundraiser, which went into the polio pig. Georg Ettinger ensured that a program speaker was in place each week. Without fail Georg had someone worth listening to as our speaker. Thank goodness for Georg, or the club would have had to listen to me or worse, Steve Garret.

By late May of 2015, my year was nearly over, and it was time to attend the District Conference. Those who could take the time headed to Henderson (Las Vegas). San Marino brought back several awards and banners but the most prestigious of all was the Governors Bell, given to the number #1 club in the District. This was bestowed upon our San Marino Club for all of the good work accomplished in the 2014-15 year.

Items we supported included: Beat the Streets, Bill Steele Mini- Grants, Rotoplast, RYLA, TLC, Art, Speech, and Music contests, International Projects, Ophthalmic Eye Van, BCDC Uganda School Project, Mali Water Wells Project, Tijuana Med Ctr - cataract lens , Tijuana Kindergarten project, El Salvador defibrillators. Additionally, we contributed greatly to the following:

* Villa Esperanza Services
* Our Saviour Center
* Foothill Family Service
* Mending Kids International
* Union Station Homeless Services
* Harambee Christian Family Ctr.
* SM Historical Society
* Danny's Farm Charitable Fndn
* Convalescent Aid Society
* Assistance League of Arcadia
* SGV Foundation for Dental Health
* Friends of Foster Children
* Special Olympics SGV
* San Marino Grad Night
* Angel Interfaith Network
* Friends of the M. White Adobe
* SGV Humane Society
* Hill Harbinson House
* La Casa Holiday
* Clock/Mural Maintenance
* Pres's Discretionary Expenditures
* SMHS Boosters Club - ad
* SMNLL Banner Sponsor
* Methodist Hospital
* City - Lacy Park restrooms
* Patrick's Tree - Lacy Park
* PCC Veterans Clinic
* Hope World Wide/La Casa MLK Project

Thank you to all of those who supported me during my year. Isaac Hung should get special thanks for talking me into taking the position, but also because he is a great man. Wray Cornwell is also someone I want to thank as he was my rock for the year. He always had (the right words) something uplifting to say. Thank you Ken Veronda for picking up the slack while I was at Rotary and for encouraging me to act as President for the San Marino Rotary. It was literally a banner year.

   

  

