



The Desertarian

**Newsletter of the
Rotary Club of Palm Springs, California**

THE ROTARY CLUB OF PALM SPRINGS *Desertarian* for September 19, 2012

"School days, School days, dear old golden rule days..." For those of us who are old enough to remember this 1907 classic (like **Bob Elsner**), today's program featuring school board member Shari Stewart should be especially meaningful.

President **Denise Ellis** asked **Judy Bronstein** to lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance, which she managed to do with minimal errors. **Don Aikens** led us in the Four Way Test. And sharing an attitude of inspirational prayer was **Rev. Jim Griffes**.

Nancy Palmer introduced visiting Rotarian Jerry Coe (University Club, Seattle, WA). Other guests included Alison Elsner (who obviously inherited her mother's charm genes).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- PDG **Milt Levinson** announced a fireside meeting for all new Rotarians, to be held at his home on September 20th from 5:30 to 9:00 p.m.
- **Tim Ellis** updated us on the Million Meals program. Giant food distributor SYSCO has published a comprehensive list of available bulk food items that they will deliver to our staging point. We Rotarians can choose the items we wish to purchase and then write a check to the Rotary Club of Palm Springs that will pay for these items. The district wide packing day will be held on October 6th at Second Harvest in Riverside. Volunteers from our club and Interact are needed.
- PDG Dr. **Helene Kalfuss** briefed on the October 19th Rotary Foundation Workshop, to be held at the Red Robin restaurant in La Quinta from 5:30 to 9:00 p.m. Maximum attendance is encouraged.
- JJ (aka **Judy Bronstein**) is again in charge of this year's R.A.G.S. garage sale, a major fundraising effort for our club. Collections will take place in December with the sale being held in February.

TODAY'S PROGRAM - PSUSD School Board Member Shari Stewart

Shari has served for many years on our district's school board. She opened her remarks by complimenting our club for its close ties with many of our schools, especially Cahuilla Elementary, Raymond Cree Middle School, and Palm Springs High School. Some of the key points she covered were:

- Our members have an open invitation, and are more than welcome to tour any of the schools within our district.
- Palm Springs Unified is one of the largest employers in the Coachella Valley, including 1070 teachers, 79 administrators, and 972 classified staff members. It serves 23,698 students in six cities, with 3 high schools (soon to be 4 with the addition of Rancho Mirage High), 5 middle schools, 16 elementary schools, and 2 alternative education schools.

- The ethnicity make of our students is 73% Hispanic, 17% Caucasian, 5.6% African American, 2.5% Filipino, and 1% Asian American. 31% are English as a second language students. Approximately 2000 students receive special education, and 85% are at or below poverty level!
- Despite serious funding problems, our schools continue to provide quality education opportunities in core curricula in addition to arts and technology. Test scores continue to improve, and many schools continue to receive national accolades.

OTHER TIDBITS

Tim Ellis did a fine job as finemaster, garnering unwilling donations from **Dr. Denise Ellis, Don Aikens, Judy Bronstein, Milt Levinson, Jacques Wachs, Mike Sellin, Dr. Helene Kalfuss, Frank Peabody, Dr. Jenny Vu,** and **Bill Lentz**. Happy Rotarians donating Happy Dollars included **Dr. Denise Ellis, Frank Peabody, Mike Brill, Rev. Jim Griffes,** and guest speaker Shari Stewart.

Frank Peabody's ticket was drawn in today's marble game, but Frank picked a white marble out of the bag. Better luck next time, Frank!

Have a great week!
Mike Brill
Desertarian Editor