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Governor, District 5300, 1998-1999

My Governor's year began officially in October of 1997 with the Western Zone Institute, a training session and Past Governor's Institute held in Victoria, Canada. A week of training, culminating in a black tie presentation, left me and Therese wondering what we'd gotten into. Then the task of selecting some 100 people to help the clubs in the district run smoothly took quite a bit of time and thought, not to mention trying to finalize a database of incoming presidents which changed several times as the year approached. The International Institute, to which all 521 incoming governors are brought all-expenses paid was held in Anaheim (I didn't turn in an expense sheet for travel). Lasting a week and two days, this was an intensive training in all aspects of Rotary from the club to the International level.

Next was PETS for incoming presidents, the International Convention in Indianapolis where I was made official, and the year began on July 1, 1998. From July 14th to December 15th, and extending into January, I visited 63 clubs in District 5300 ranging from San Marino to Ontario and Rancho Cucamonga, to Victorville and other High Desert Clubs, to Las Vegas and beyond to Caliente and to Mesquite.

Accompanied by Assistant Governors, and Governor's Reps, each visit was calculated to help the club strengthen itself, to acquaint its members with some of the Rotary programs they might not be familiar with, to bring them up to date on new changes in Rotary International bylaws, to encourage international matching grants, to help with membership development, yearling programs, club foundations, and a host of other sometimes mundane, but always important practices which go to making up a successful Rotary club.

I had three major goals for the year. First, to raise membership by 3% in District 5300; second, to try to put every Rotarian in the district to work at something; and third, to raise $400,0000.00 for the Rotary Foundation. Secondarily, I tried to get clubs to get together on joint projects. I eliminated a printed District Newsletter and established a District web page which distributed the Newsletter via the Internet. Each club was to appoint a designated downloader who would download the newsletter and xerox it for the club members. It was carefully kept to four sides, two pages, so that it could be mailed out with club newsletters at no extra mailing expense (six pages meant another stamp was needed). The web page also had the monthly attendance reports, a "Looking For" section, a "You're Invited" section, a calendar on which club events could be placed, and "Hot Buttoned" to an explanation of the event, a list of where and when clubs meet listed by date and by club. We started on an archive of Quality Rotary Programs with a complete index which can grow over the years. We tried to establish a speaker's bureau. The Internet can be a much more efficient means of communication.

We came close to or achieved our goals for the year. The one thing which became abundantly clear to me as I made my rounds was how incredibly much this district does!

To list all the clubs' accomplishments would take pages - some are listed on the web page in the archived District Newsletters. We had more joint matching-grant projects than ever before, we accomplished several Children's Grants. We lost one club, but not its members as the Irwindale Club dissolved so members could join the Azusa-Glendora-Foothills-Sunrise Rotary Club which became the Foothills Rotary Club. One other club had its struggles with membership, but managed to squeak out they year thanks to support form a number of concerned Rotarians from neighboring clubs. What I'm proudest of the District for, however, was the spirit of cooperation which permeated the district, permitting it to accomplish much more than it would have with just individual clubs, each doing its own thing. Congratulations District 5300!