



Club Administration Report

Overview

Roswell Rotary has enjoyed (suffered) through three consecutive presidents with process improvement tendencies. Blame Georgia Tech for two of them! But suffice to say that in my year, I attacked areas of club administration with a goal of lowering the barrier to entry for future volunteer leaders. I also looked at infrastructure issues that, if not strengthened, would put our club at risk as we try to grow into the future.

As you can see from the length of this report, we bit off a lot this year. And there is not a single paragraph of fluff. Each represents a major effort by lots of dedicated members with the unified vision of preparing our club for the future. These are not presented in any particular order as I believe they were all necessary improvements.

Audio/Visual Upgrades

We meet in a gymnasium. By definition, the most difficult room in which to project quality sound and have projector capabilities that can be seen by all. In a creative financing move with the City of Roswell, we were able to contract, install and implement a new system that includes a huge, motorized screen with rear projection (to keep projector away from basketballs). We installed all new speakers and a control system that includes Wi-Fi, podium inputs for all types of video and sound and Wi-Fi microphones. And all of this is controlled by a modern digital control panel that runs as an application on an iPad or iPhone. The results have been amazing. No more feedback, no more time consuming setup of equipment and no more complicated analog controls. This was expensive but necessary.

Accounting

It was a significant undertaking, but it was time to revise all of our accounting methodologies in both our operating account and our club foundation account. Working with our club administrator and our CPA, the general ledger was cleaned up to insure that we could present to our board a complete and accurate picture of our budget, our plan for charitable giving and our tracking of member accounts.

Club Administrator

Speaking of Club Administrator (previous paragraph), it is becoming abundantly clear that a club our size can no longer expect volunteers to take on the day-to-day administrative tasks of running the club. We have enjoyed the services of a part time club administrator for years. But this year, we increased her hours by 50% and will likely make this a full time position by next year. Board members were trying to tackle all collection issues, booking seats on buses, keeping membership steps on track and dozens of other clerical issues. As these tasks grow, it will be harder and harder to get qualified members to commit time from their real-world jobs and become leaders of Roswell Rotary. By shifting most of these tasks to our administrator, we start to enjoy consistency, accuracy, proper documentation and so much more. And it frees up our board members to focus their time on leading service projects and caring for members in a more personal manner.



Meeting Setup

When our club was small, it made sense to honor Paul Harris Fellows, Will Watt Fellows, etc., on heavy wooden plaques with brass name plates screwed to the wood. It made sense to show off our award banners and the flags from club visits throughout the world. But as we grow, this becomes unwieldy. So the goal was to preserve the past but lower the pain of meeting setup.

As we are now a 100% Paul Harris Club, that created over 100 new PHF awards. So instead of heavy plaques, we are now moving to classy foam board prints that can be updated and reprinted as needed, but still show off our club's honors to encourage others.

Banners from the most recent years will still be displayed, but hung on permanent hooks rather than custom made stations that are time and maintenance intensive.

Move to Hembree

Our permanent home needed repairs and the City of Roswell required us to vacate the building for almost 3 months. The temporary home of the Roswell Rotary Club became the gym at Hembree park. But that created an administrative and logistic nightmare. That facility has no kitchen. All A/V equipment had to be relocated, all meals had to be prepared offsite and trucked to the temporary gym and we had to communicate to our club and to the world that RRC was still in business. I anticipated a drop in attendance, but with our new text messaging system and constant communication through our Rotascope bulletin, we managed to avoid that problem.

Move to Cloud for all club Administration

This is an effort that I began in my first year as an officer and put on steroids during my presidency. It took a long and consistent effort, but our club now runs in the cloud. That means that every committee, every service project, all accounting records, board minutes and bylaws, all membership tracking and much more can now be accessed by authorized club leaders from anywhere in the world. More importantly, it means that future leaders can easily see what came before them without digging records out of someone's attic.

Each committee can control member access to their respective sub-folders, but the entire library has a consistency of file management, labeling and security. This is backed up nightly.

Getting buy-in to this technology was slow, but now the club has firmly embraced it and I would have a riot on my hands if I threatened to remove it! The benefit of this organization of documents will be felt for many years to come if not permanently.

Text Messaging Service

Communication with 270 members is always daunting. Some want e-mails, some prefer to just read the Rotascope. Others find the website to be the best source of information. But there is a certain type of communication that is best done by text messaging directly to phones. This was a first for our club, but we had tremendous buy-in. By sending a quick reminder text just before events, we drove attendance levels through the roof. In years past we would hear "I meant to come to the family dinner social, but it just slipped my mind". By sending a text at noon saying "Looking forward to seeing everyone tonight at Slopes restaurant", we more than doubled participation. Same was true for the new "Hump Day Pub



Club” we started this year. But there are other times when texts like “Remember to bring your donation to the Toy Drive” or “Services will be held at...” were equally important. In summary, this is a means of communication more urgent messages that just don’t seem to soak in in any other way.

Website Upgrades

We are blessed to have a true technology guru in our club that continued the good work he started in the past two years as we completely transitioned from an old out-sourced service to a new, state-of-the-art web presence. This year, we focused on content for our big events so that members and those in the community could truly rely on our website for timely information, back issues of the newsletter, details about our events and fundraisers, and so much more.

District Support

Throughout the year, things come up that were not part of the planning, but require and timely and effective response. This year, the challenge of becoming a 100% Paul Harris Club did not really gain traction until a few months into my year as president. But we met that challenge and put together a 3-month long project, led by 10 past presidents, to achieve the goal. We succeeded.

Similarly, we received a challenge from Zone 34 to come up with events to demonstrate to our communities that “Rotary Has Heart”. This was further embellished by District 6900 to make it “Rotary has a Heart for Seniors”. On both counts, we revised our plan for the year to accommodate. Our club has put together 3 projects specifically aimed at meeting these challenges.

When the South Carolina Floods hit, our club answered the call from the District to raise funds and put a sizeable contribution in the pot to help our neighbors.

Our Governor asked that Roswell lead the charge in getting people to the Fall Membership/Foundation Seminars in Columbus. We brought the most members.

We were asked to help provide content to the District Newsletter, we made it a goal to highlight at least one of our activities in each monthly edition.

Rotascope

This is our weekly bulletin to club members. This year, we completed a move to a WordPress based presentation that makes it easier for less technical people to edit and contribute, without diminishing readability or content.

In addition, I made it a goal this year to directly communicate a message to the members in each edition. Unlike most clubs that have canned and repeated content such as a welcoming message from the President, or lots of static information about club meetings, we wanted our Rotascope to really pop with pictures and information about our service projects, events and member news. In short, we opted for function over form. With complex layout tools and lots of static content, you can make pages more suited for publication on paper. But our members are getting younger and most reading is on a screen of some sort. This is the way of the future and Roswell Rotary is one of the first to embrace it.



Scrapbook

This year is no different. A committee of over 12+ members will pull together the “evidence” of our year and present it in digital and printed yearbook form to be uploaded to the District and to be displayed in the “Evidence Room” at the convention in Hilton Head. With a club our size, this is no small undertaking. And we do use the professional publishing tools to get the backgrounds, layouts and text presented in a creative manner that best tells our story while capturing the Governor’s theme.

Digital Wall of Club Information

In spite of all the ways members can read about the happenings of the club, it never seems to be enough. But when they show up for lunch, if the giant screen is reminding them of opportunities to serve, upcoming events, and pictures of our accomplishments, they seem to pay attention. So this year, we instituted a weekly slide deck that is presented during the hour preceding each meeting to make sure there is communication with eye candy to catch even the “hard to reach” members.

Permanent Endowment

Last, but certainly not least, we achieved a lasting legacy for our club this year. The monies we have raised and invested over the years are maintained in a special reserve foundation fund and managed by the Community Foundation Association. But there has not been a long range plan for the use of those funds. But through an effort, largely spearheaded by past President Dave Schmit, we were finally able to establish an endowment that is now codified in our by-laws. A portion of funds raised each year will be set aside to add to the corpus of that endowment. And on December 31st of each year, we will look at the balance in that fund and pull back a small percentage to flow back into our club’s charitable works. What is exciting about this endowment is that based on current trends, we expect the amount coming back to the club to exceed the amount sent to the fund from our golf/tennis tournaments within the decade. It will grow from there and allow our club to do more and bigger projects in the future.

Club Directory

As the club has grown, the task of creating a published directory replete with member pictures, profile information and monetary giving levels has become daunting. Working with DGN Alec Smythe, Roswell is helping the District create an online way to keep all this information up to date and then produce a fresh PDF file with all the information. Now, we can still print a directory, but members will be able to get an updated digital file throughout the year. We expect this to be completed this spring.

New Membership Process

Messing with the secret sauce of membership is tricky business and everyone has an opinion on how our club should preserve our culture by bringing in quality members. But we are approaching the point where we will likely have to impose a cap on the size of the club. There is nowhere in Roswell where a club over 300 members strong could meet and eat each week.

Our new approach will be to look for members of our local community that we are missing. That is a unique perspective. But do we have the correct balance and diversity representing our businesses, clergy, non-profits, civic leaders, etc. And if not, let’s be intentional about reaching out to prospective members that complete us. And if we continue to enjoy an embarrassment of riches when it comes to membership, how can we help grow our sister clubs in the area.



ROSWELL ROTARY CLUB

P.O. Box 783
Roswell, Georgia 30075

This year has been full of meetings, bylaw changes, vision changes and the like. The input is mostly coming from past and current presidents to be sure we embrace the history and culture of the club. But it will result in a plan that is not centered on growth, but on quality of membership.