**SPEAKER GUIDELINES FOR ROTARY PROGRAMS**

**Revised July, 2013**

Weekly programs are an integral part of Rotary, as they serve to inspire, motivate, entertain and inform us on diverse topics of interest to Rotarians and guests. Programs need to reflect the interests of the membership and community Overarching topics related to business, safety, medicine, science, history, culture, art, education, community and human interests, government are most appropriate, but others may be suitable as well. Programs on Rotary on activities tied to our Club, District, National and International levels increase our knowledge and nurture our commitment to further Rotary’s mission in promoting world peace and understanding.

There are, of course, programs that are inappropriate for Rotary meetings. For example, programs where the speaker has come to sell or promote certain products, services, or simply promote their self-interest are inappropriate. These can be polarizing and divisive and must be avoided, as Rotary members and their guests span the full range of social, economic, political and religious philosophies in our society.

Elected Government officials must deal with some of the most polarizing and divisive issues in society. Because Rotary is a community service organization, not a political organization, the Temple-South Rotary will avoid placing those seeking an elected government office on the Program six (6) months prior to the election.

When deciding on suitable programs ask: Does the prospective speaker or the organization the speaker represents sell a product or service? If so, will the speaker’s presentation be construed as an attempt to sell or promote his/her self-interest? Will the speaker or topic be polarizing? Will it offend or heighten the divisions associated with the diverse social, economic, political and/or religious beliefs within our membership or guests present? To distinguish between programs that are acceptable and those that are not, consider the following examples…

Acceptable Rotary programs:

* A person who is in the nursery business is asked to provide advice to club members on horticultural topics such as plants, shrubs, trees and grasses that thrive in Central Texas. This is an acceptable program even though the speaker might sell the products mentioned in the speaker’s remarks.
* An attorney is invited to speak to our club about the benefits of developing a good estate plan. This is an acceptable program even though the attorney provides estate planning for a fee.
* A financial planner is invited to speak to our club about the benefits of a sound financial plan. This is an acceptable program even though the planner is in the business of preparing financial plans for a fee.
* A School Superintendent, City Manager, or the Chief of Police, or the Fire Chief, or other public officials speak to our club about topics of interest to citizens.
* Elected officials, such as our Senator, our State Representative, or our Congressman speak to our club on matters of public interest before the elected body.

Unacceptable Rotary Programs.

* An Insurance salesman speaks on the use of life insurance in financial planning. He brings applications for the insurance products and distributes them at the conclusion of his presentation. The presentation is clearly self-serving and not appropriate for Rotary.
* One of our current elected representatives (to the U.S. Congress, Texas Legislature, County Commissioners Court, City Council, etc.) is invited to speak on his/her priorities for the office they seek.
* A political consultant or activist supporting a hotly contested issue is invited to speak on the issue at an upcoming meeting. At the conclusion of the program, he/she circulates plans to circulate a form granting permission to use their names in an upcoming newspaper advertisement affirming support for the issue. Information is also given so those wishing to contribute to political action committee formed to support the issue. The topic and presentation are both polarizing and self-serving, as viewpoints could be biased toward the issue and the political consultants/activist’s self-interest.

Adopted by the Board of Directors at its meeting on July 8, 2013.

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