**RIO GRANDE ROTARY: THE YEAR IN REVIEW 2015-2016**

*by Ross M. Burkhardt*

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It’s a pleasure to sum up our Rotary year

And hit all the highlights that caused us to cheer,

To recollect Tuesdays and laughter and fun

And reflect on the good work that RGR’s done.

We’re here at the Grapevine – the Annual Dinner

To honor club members – each one’s a winner.

This was the year that we purchased blue shirts

And learned(*thanks Richard Haas*) to give Happy Dollars until it hurts.

“A gift to the world” was our Rotary theme.

We were that motto– it wasn’t a dream.

We gave to our club, city, country, and more

Through projects and deeds and donations galore.

What memories – what service – what projects – what fun!

And now this Rotary year is all done.

So many contributed energy and time;

My apologies in advance if you’re not in this rhyme.

As we look back on a year of success,

There are just a few points that I’d like to stress.

We could not have done it  – succeeded like this–

Without the devotion of President Chris.

Give her a hand! Because, week after week,

She joyfully engineered our winning streak.

Yet she’d be the first to remind us that, no,

Her board made it happen, that they ran the show.

So give them a hand, because they were the team

That set it up next for Ronnie’s regime.

From Dressing the Children to Dictionary Day,

To the annual Yard Sale, where we made 8K;

From RYLA and Interact and Student Rotarians

To make-ups and monthly poems and great nonagenerians

      (*I’m talking about you, Don Buck*!)

To Paul Harris Fellows and a Taste of Las Cruces,

Our 4-Way+1 Test was put to good uses.

There’s many a club in District Fifty-five Twenty

But Governor Tom cited seven, not plenty,

For pledging to “Every Rotarian, Every Year” –

A distinct commendation that we all can cheer.

Hospice advanced from steps that we took;

Habitat for Humanity? Thanks to Scotty, they also partook.

The Emporium raised money, and for that we’re glad;

And these are just some of the victories we had . . .

Because a great many club members stepped up to bat:

Student Rotarians? Diane Indorf took that.

Interact? Kathy Olson volunteered to be chair.

Student Essay Contest? Jaime and Midhat were there

(*along with 125 or so students*!).

Let’s commend Vic and Bink, our great auctioneers,

And Richard Coltharp, whose programs drew cheers.

For Ken Martin’s health we all could root,

And Matt Olson led us in our flag salute.

At Yard Sale collections on Saturday morn,

Picking up items both fancy and worn

Were (*among others*) Chub and Richard and Chris E. and Peter,

Each of whom sweated off pounds by the litre.

The Yard Sale itself was a special event;

For all the volunteers on Saturday – it meant

Unloading the trailers and selling the stuff;

Thanks (*among others*) Eddie, Andy, and Don – you’re tough!

Our Holiday Party was special, you bet,

But that, my good friends, is just what you get

When you give such a task to the legend, the myth,

The dynamic hostess, our own Peggy Smith.

Distributing dictionaries in every third grade

Meant we had to manage a multi-school parade.

Gene, Rob and Mike – word men of renown –

Helped us boost learning all over town.

But before we could hand out dictionaries with pride,

A 4-Way Test label had to be pasted inside.

And who made this labeling happen so quick?

Search and Rescue volunteers – so thanks again, Vic!

For our 40th anniversary, President Chris

Seized on the moment to stop and reminisce.

She honored three gents whose attendance is steady;

Our original club members – Len, Don and Eddie.

Pam Lillibridge deserves a Rotarian roar –

At the District Conference she was named an O.A.R.

(*that’s Outstanding Active Rotarian*!)

Our Assistant District Gov was Past President Guy Floyd;

At Chris Erickson’s “after hours” gatherings, spirits were buoyed.

Bob Skolnick was ever a generous dispenser

Of auctionable tickets for shows at the Spenser.

But wait – what’s that sound – that dreadfully sad noise?

Why, it’s Chris Cruz bemoaning his Dallas Cowboys.

Pour the champagne and then cue the cellos –

We honored several spouses as Paul Harris Fellows.

Matt Holt organized the Dress the Child event

And club members made sure the kids’ funds were well-spent.

Thanks to Sarah from Belgium, and Club Secretary Larry,

Taste of Las Cruces James Dolin, and Yard Sale Treasurer Larry.

This was a great year for Rio Grande Rotary,

A fun-loving, Tuesday lunch, non-singing coterie.

You each did your part – you each served us well.

You each made it happen – there’s still more to tell.

So, gratitude to the old team, and welcome the new.

Rio Grande Rotary – this poem is for you!

Ross Burkhardt