

## 2016 COL Gives Flexibility to Clubs

*By PDGs Penny and Chris Offer, District 5040*

The Council on Legislation approved two key measures that will give clubs greater flexibility in their meetings and membership. Both were proposed by the RI Board of Directors and passed overwhelmingly after vigorous debate.

The first measure gives clubs greater autonomy as to when and how often they meet, how often they cancel meetings, and what constitutes a meeting, as long as they meet at least twice a month. Clubs may also meet twice a week. A model being used in several locations offers members a choice of meeting times.

The second change gives clubs flexibility to experiment with

districts share an area. The enactment was passed and then reconsidered and rescinded.

There were long debates about the role of the Vice Governor. Many districts asked for clearer rules on how the person will be selected and when they would take over management of the district. No substantive changes were made.

The RI Board presented a persuasive case for a dues increase. The Council approved three \$4 increases in the annual per capita dues that clubs pay to RI. The increase sets the annual dues at \$60 in 2017-18, \$64 in 2018-19, and \$68 in 2019-20.



membership models. The new membership opportunities are included in "active" membership, which means they must pay RI and District dues. Clubs may adjust club dues for the new membership types if they wish.

Clubs must opt in to these new models of meeting times and membership and change their club bylaws. They are not imposed on clubs unless the club chooses to make the changes.

The COL agreed to simplify the qualifications for membership in a Rotary club. The measure removes six membership criteria from the RI Constitution, replacing them with *"adult persons who demonstrate good character, integrity, and leadership; possess good reputation within their business, professions, and /or community; and are willing to serve in their community and /or around the world"*. Advocates argued that the amendment will give power back to clubs to choose their own members without a checklist and encourage membership growth.

An enactment would have allowed districts to add a descriptive name; such as District 5040 British Columbia. There is nothing stopping districts from currently doing this. The enactment would make this official and could create many problems when

The Council approved the creation of a Council on Resolutions, a separate governing body that will meet online every year. It will review resolutions sent by clubs and districts to the RI Board. This leaves the triennial COL to deal solely with enactments, which change Rotary's governing documents. The change could save \$300,000 by shortening the Council on Legislation by a day.

Representatives also voted to allow Rotaractors to concurrently be members of Rotaract and Rotary clubs. This will assist Rotaractors moving to Rotary without the loss of their friends and network. Only about 5 percent of Rotaractors join Rotary, and the hope is to raise this number. Suggestions to change the age of Rotaract membership — both to decrease and increase the maximum age — were defeated.

Representatives from 530 Districts around the world debated and voted on 181 proposed enactments and resolutions at the 2016 COL April 10 to 15 in Chicago. The decisions made provide flexibility to clubs and an opportunity for the future of Rotary — Rotary democracy in action!