

SALUTE TO ROTARY

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110 years of humanitarian work

Rotary International has deep roots in North County

By Allyson Oken
OF THE ATASCADERO NEWS

Rotary International was founded as a result of one man's vision, to impact positive change on a grand scale. Paul P. Harris was an attorney in Chicago when he formed the Rotary Club, one of the world's first service organizations, Feb. 23, 1905. Now 110 years later, the words that Harris spoke still hold true, "Whatever Rotary may mean to us, to the world it will be known by the results it achieves."

With 1.2 million members internationally it is clear that the result is an expansive membership that can achieve almost anything with the sheer mass of membership and networking ability. Here in the North County, Rotary Club District 5240 is very active according to Rotary International District Governor Loretta Butts.

"In the North County, we have two clubs in Paso Robles, one club in Templeton and another in Atascadero," said Butts with pride. "Most of the clubs are community focused. Most people join to give back to their community. It is a growing organization that is in need of new membership in the form of youth to keep the organization alive for another 100 years. Fortunately up in the North County the clubs work together."

There are nine or 10 clubs that are part of the district of clubs and get together once a month to see how they can help each other, Butts said. One of the missions through Rotary is to eradicate extreme poverty.

"What we are trying to do is to build micro loans as well as vocational programs to combat this issue all over the world," Butts said. "We also do work in literacy, health, peace and conflict resolu-

tion, not to mention the fact that in our spare time we are eradicating polio."

Rotary's fight against polio began in 1979 with a project to immunize 6 million children in the Philippines. By 2012, only three countries remain polio-endemic — down from 125 in 1988.

"I have been in Rotary for over 20 years and have been to Nigeria to administer vaccines and seeing these poor children begging on the streets crawling around in the dirt," Butts said, "being able to help and see what is going on in these areas of the world is amazing. We are hoping that by 2015 we will have eradicated it completely. We knocked out India about a year ago and that was the turning point, when we knew we could actually accomplish it."

Rotary International is an inspiration to its members all over the world and here in the North County Butts said they bleed yellow and blue, the official colors of Rotary.

THE ATASCADERO ROTARY CLUB

It was founded in 1950 with 22 members, sponsored by the Paso Robles Rotary Club. This year in conjunction with the Rotary International 110th anniversary the Atascadero Club celebrated 65 years on Feb. 28.

Current Club President John Hollenbeck said, "We really wanted the 65th to be a birthday party where all our members could come together and enjoy the celebration. We have just competed all of our fundraising for this calendar year and I will soon be choosing a project to allocate funds to. We will also be giving

See ROTARY, C12



Each year to raise funds for projects the Atascadero Rotary hosts a crab feed.

Courtesy of Atascadero Rotary



One of the Paso Robles Rotary events is the Old Timer's Luncheon hosted yearly in conjunction with the Pioneer Day Parade.

Courtesy of Paso Robles Rotary



Each student here was given a scholarship by the Paso Robles Rotary Club to help them with college.

Courtesy of Paso Robles Rotary

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