



The Weekly Roundup

A 501 (c)(4) Organization

SEPTEMBER 10, 2009

THE ROTARY CLUB OF RANCHO BERNARDO

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The Hospitality Industry During Economic Down Times

By Marty Judge

Looking much like a mild mannered reporter – Clark Kent comes to mind – John Gates darts into his wood paneled office a few feet from the front desk of the Rancho Bernardo Inn. A split-second later the General Manager of the RB Inn emerges as Super Marketer.

Faster than a speeding tweet, more powerful than a Four Star Rating, and able to fill empty rooms with a single idea, this man of steel fights for occupancy, profit, and the American way. He innovates.

Mr. Gates will speak to our club on Thursday about his recent marketing strategy for the Inn and how the hospitality industry is fairing in these harsh economic times.

Facing the darkest forces in his 20-year career in the lodging industry – a reported plunge in San Diego hotel occupancy of 13 percentage points compared to last year – Mr. Gates boldly slashed his room rates from \$219 to as low as \$19.

Suddenly he became the darling of the air ways. CNN had to have an interview. Fox News left breathless messages on his answering machine. And London’s *Guardian* Newspaper



Normally mild mannered RB Inn General Manager John Gates (left) and Super Marketer John Gates (right) fights for occupancy, profit and the American way.

sent a reporter to camp out in one of his deeply discounted rooms.

The media frenzy began when Mr. Gates advertised bargain basement room rates and services to match at unheard of rates for a Holiday Inn let alone a venerable Four Star-, Five Diamond-rated resort.

His innovative “Survivor Package” sells for just \$19 and offers a deluxe room without bed, air-conditioning, light bulbs,

towels, or even toilet paper. The required taxes, self-parking fee, and a resort fee bring the total room cost to \$40 or about the price of a room at Motel 6 in many areas.

For the non-camper, a bed (without sheets, of course) can be added for \$20 bringing the room rate up to \$39. And for total pansies, toiletries and toilet paper are added for a total of \$59.

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MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

By Bill Angus, Scribe Extraordinaire

President Barbara called the meeting to order at 12:20 p.m. on September 3, 2009. The volunteers for the meeting performed their duties with enthusiasm as the pledge, invocation, and welcome song went off without a hitch.

There were numerous guests. Don Lisio kicked things off with a sunshine report and we were all enthusiastic to hear that Jim Reading is on the road to recovery. We miss you and get well soon!

President Barbara then presented Rotary's theme for the month of September and that is New Generations and the efforts by Rotary locally and internationally to appeal to the next generations of Rotarians and get members engaged. She made some observations on programs that the

younger Rotarians enjoy doing. They are conducting and working on service projects during the regular weekly meetings. Many new generations' clubs are conducting happy hours after work along with removing any talk of politics or religion from the meetings. These were just some observations and a way in which the New Generations were making Rotary their own.

The always effervescent Arilla St. Laurent announced this year's dictionary project and told everyone



Bill Angus

to stand by for the dictionary party to ready the dictionaries for delivery to the elementary schools. Party and prep begins in two to three weeks. Details to follow.

Our International Service Guru Jason Salazar announced the Outback Steakhouse fundraiser for our club to raise funds for the Rotary International Foundation. It will be held at Outback Steakhouse in Poway on October 8, 2009 at 12 noon. He is looking for 100% participation from the club and for everyone to bring a guest and if you can donate one item for the silent auction. This should be a great event and we look forward to seeing all of you!

Ed Knight announced that our matching grant request to Rotary International was one of the few to get approved before all funding ran out for the Rotary International Year 2009-10 for matching grants. Well done Ed for all of your stewardship and watchful eye over RI. Ed also announced that he and John Goodrich would be contacting everyone via mail to allow members the opportunity to give to RI Foundation.

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Our Rotary Club's answer to a star on the Hollywood Walk of Frame is the Captain's Star Cap presented to Jack Mitchell by President Barbara after his all-too-brief talk about his life last Thursday. -- Photo by Arilla St. Laurent



Recurring Events

Rotary Club Meetings: Weekly on Thursdays from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. Buffet opens at 11:30 a.m. for early

birds to socialize.

Rotary Golf: Meets 1st Wednesday of each month at the Oaks North Golf Course at 10 a.m. Reservations are a must! Call Dan Malloy for information.

Rotary Board: Meets the 4th Wednesday of each month at the San Diego Na-

tional Bank in the upstairs conference room at 4 p.m.

Rotary Foundation Board: Meets the 4th Wednesday of every third month at 4 p.m. at Rancho Financial in the conference room.

Newsletter Deadline: Thursday 5 p.m. the week before the speaker speaks.

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This marketing strategy was buttressed by Super Marketer’s incessant tweets that he broadcast over the social networking medium Twitter, the same network used recently by Iranian dissidents to protest the presidential election in that country.

Mr. Gates’ Twitter account is titled GM Gone Mad, which caused one rival hotel executive to quip, “Sure, mad like a fox.”

Has Mr. Gates’ marketing strategy plunged his bottomline into the pits and blackened the good name of his resort? You can bet your Kryptonite it hasn’t. Thanks in part to national television coverage, his August-September package sold out in six days.

Mr. Gates has spent 12 years at JC Resorts, the parent company of the RB Inn, serving first as General Manager of the Surf & Sand Resort and now as General Manager of the RB Inn.

At the Surf & Sand he oversaw the daily aspects of the high-volume, luxury, oceanfront resort and managed a \$7 million renovation, the global Leisure Sales Center and the IT Division for JC Resorts.

At the RB Inn he was instrumental in the \$25 million renovation, which included a spacious conference center and The Spa at Rancho Bernardo Inn, which has been

named the Number One Resort Spa in North America by *Conde Nast Traveler*. He previously opened two luxury properties, The Allerton in Chicago and The Loews Coronado Bay in San Diego.

Mr. Gates holds a hospitality degree from Penn State University and is an active Board Member of both North San Diego County and the City of San Diego Convention and Visitor’s Bureaus.

A Guardian Newspaper reporter pumps up his air maattress in a delux room of the RB Inn that he rented for \$19 a night and a big story. -- *Photo by The Guardian*



VOLUNTEERS

	Greeter	Pledge	Invocation	Raffle	Scribe
9/3/2009	Lynn Ross	John O’Neill	Jason Salazar	Karen Stelman	Bill Angus
9/10/2009	Lew Tyler	Bob Wells	Larry Valente	Tim Whyte	Karen Stelman
9/17/2009	Jim Wise	Bill Bonner	Ann Calvert	Paul Casterline	Kathleen Smith

Use this link to obtain information from our website:
<http://www.rbrotary.org/Lists/Volunteers/CurrentList.aspx>

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS CONTINUED

Keep your eyes out for that letter. Again our goal as a club is for 100% Paul Harris Fellows.

Sherry Collins then announced a new twist for our vocational lunches and we will be heading to the newly chartered Miramar Rotary Club that we sponsored for our vocational lunch on October 15, 2009 at the MCAS Miramar Officers Club.

Marty Judge then made his challenge to the club to match his \$1,000.00 contribution to Operation Home Front. Operation Home Front assists our men, women, and military families with much needed resources when their deployed loved ones are not around and a crisis on the home front occurs.

John O'Neil our beloved and exalted fine master collected happy bucks and fines from Benita Page, Marty Judge, Troy Daum, and Charley Crew.

Bob Wells introduced our program which was the life and times of our very own music man Jack Mitchell! Jack has lived such a rich life that we only got to explore his childhood. We enjoyed a "Sentimental Journey", "Goodwill Begins with You", and "What a Wonderful World".

Our song maestro provided us with the soundtrack of his youth and how a pre-med student became a musical tour de force and big band leader. Jack is a treasure and having Harriet, his bride and life partner along his journey with us was a delight. Jack briefly teased us about his tenure at the Prairie School in Racine, Wisconsin. He worked with the world renowned Frank Lloyd Wright to build a beautiful Frank Lloyd Wright architecturally-styled campus whose unique prairie design and curved hallways inspire learning. <http://www.prairieschool.com/page.cfm?p=348>

I believe a Jack part 2 program is in the works next quarter for one of our club's most talented members. The meeting was adjourned at 1:35 p.m. and a true sentimental journey was had by all! Thanks Jack!

