



The Rotations

March 19, 2014

SANTA ANA NORTH ROTARY 1959

SANTAANANORTHROTARYCLUB.ORG

Santa Ana Mayor Miguel Pulido

Miguel Pulido, a CSF graduate in mechanical engineering, has been mayor of Santa Ana for close to twenty years, after serving on the city council.

After mentioning a string of successes and improvements for the city such as creating the enterprise zone, and securing federal and state funding for various purposes, Miguel characterized his role as “cheerleader” – he encourages people to invest in the city. Be they developers, business, banks, or residents, he helps them see that investing in Santa Ana is good for their future.

Going into specifics, Miguel began with the story of the Ronald Reagan Federal Courthouse in Santa Ana. The short version of this story is Miguel had to fight to get the courthouse built in the county seat, where federal law states it should be, rather than some other city who was trying to grab it. This involved ten or more same-day turnaround flights to DC and lots of persuasion – not just to secure the Santa Ana location, but then federal funding to get it built.

The Discovery Science Center, site of our first three Discover the Taste fundraisers, was another story of Miguel wresting success from other cities who wanted to house the project, and building a diverse base of financial support to get the project funded. In this case, an added persuasion was (paraphrased), there is greater need in Santa Ana to expose kids to science and inspire their interest in it. A city like Irvine has schools that are already heavy in science and technology.

Miguel also successfully got OCHSA moved from Los Alamitos to Santa Ana. In its former home, the commuting student populace was causing problems in the city. To counteract fears that the school would lose its student base by moving to Santa Ana – and to secure a location – the mayor first persuaded a bank building owner to invest \$12M in physical improvements required to convert it into a school, then secured a \$20M loan for the school to buy the building, and then secured guaranteed loan funding to cover three years of operational costs in case there was a dramatic falloff in enrollment following the move.

We meet Wednesdays 12:15 PM
at Antonello Ristorante
3800 S Plaza Drive, Santa Ana, CA

UPCOMING SPEAKERS

Mar 26, NO LUNCH MEETING. Instead we will meet in the evening to reprise last month’s very popular membership mixer.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Mar 26 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.: membership, vocational, social: bring potential new members to meet our friendly club and learn more about Rotary. Mingle, garner business leads, and socialize with your club family! We will once again meet in the Antonello Library room, adjacent to the bar.

March 29 or April 12, District grant training (it is offered both days, choose which date to attend)

April 14 District Presidents’ Meeting: Jim McClure will be honored.

May 2-4, District Conference – Temecula Creek Inn, Temecula



Instead, in the first year, enrollment more than doubled from 430 students to 970 and is now over 2,000. For 400 openings the school receives 3,000 applicants, and families move from all over the country into the area so their children can enroll in Orange County's High School of the Arts. In addition, students get to network with a student body from all over the county, not just within a few blocks. And parents and family friends who might not otherwise visit Santa Ana come to the school for events and get to know the city a bit.

NOTE OCHSA big annual fundraiser is THIS SATURDAY NIGHT 3/22 at the former Hyatt Regency Irvine (now Hotel Irvine Jamboree Center) For more info: www.ocsarts.net then choose Support OCSA and then Annual Gala.

My own grasp of the French language is less than minimal but I believe Miguel attributed his own fluency in French to his grandfather. Whatever its source, it led to interesting interactions with a group of French nuns at the US Open. (They were advocating for AIDS care and had been given tickets to attend the event.) Upon learning Miguel is a mayor in California, they decided he was just the man to help them attain their goal of meeting the mayor of New York City. And he did. A few days later, they asked to come see him in Santa Ana and presented to him their desire to open an AIDS hospice center here.

Once again the mayor was able to talk with people and gather widespread support, with donated land, building materials and more. However before the project fully launched, the nuns were called to service in Haiti. Carl Karcher's son, a Jesuit priest, offered to lead the project to fruition, and Santa Ana now houses a 28 patient AIDS hospice residence, Emmanuel House, affiliated with the Jesuit organization's Mercy House.

Newer projects include "The Academy", a charter school (and soon residence) for at-risk youth, through Orangewood, championed by Susan Samuelli. In addition there is an effort underway to open a light rail circle, starting with an old Pacific Electric Railway right of way from the transportation hub to Garden Grove (Harbor Blvd where 17th street turns into Westminster Blvd), then pushing east on Katella from Disneyland to the Honda Center where it would connect back to heavy rail.

Miguel also mentioned crime statistics. When he became mayor, Santa Ana ranked #35 of 35 (that is, worst) among U.S. cities over 0.5M population, for crime. Now, it varies by month but is usually in the top (best) 3 of the rankings, and is often #1. Citizen complaints used to involve how many spent shell casings were scattered on the ground, and now involve jacaranda tree

flowers dropped on cars. Nothing's perfect, but the improvements have been significant.

The mayor also mentioned his involvements with OCTA and SCAQMD. His interest in cleaner air has resulted in a 730 bus fleet run entirely on natural gas, replacing the old diesel fleet.

Miguel is an engaging and entertaining speaker, and we got a good perspective on some of the evolution in the city of Santa Ana over the past 20 years or so.

CLUB ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMITTEE UPDATES

Guests

In addition to our speaker, we welcomed back **Kelli Brown** who has visited us several times and was introduced to us by Crystal. Kelly is a National Accounts Director of Sales for First American Data Tree. She is an avid sailor and captain, and recently bought a boat. New guests were **Ila Fragada**, of Pacific Premier bank, invited by Penny; and **Kathy Ruvolo**, of Habitat for Humanity, invited by Matt. **Jeff McKee**, our program speaker last week (from Angels RBI League) joined us and we were happy to see him again. We enjoy the energy and interest of our guests and look forward to inducting some new club members.

We also welcomed two Adopt-a-Class representatives from the Ocean Institute. **Kat**, with whom we've worked the past few years, is moving on to major fundraising for OI, and introduced us to her replacement **Mary Elizabeth**, who has spent 4 years as an instructor with OI. (Apologies for not having the surnames of these gracious visitors.)

President's Remarks – Mel El Guindy

Mel reminded us signups are open for the District Conference to be held in Temecula May 2-4, at DaCdb or www.rotary5320.org (District website). There will be children's events and hot air balloon ride opportunities. Also, the RI Conference will be in Sydney June 1-4.

Members are encouraged to register for and attend **District grant training** to be held in Anaheim. The same presentation will be offered on two days, so members may attend March 29 or April 12. Please go online to register, at DaCdb or www.rotary5320.org (District website).

Jim McClure is being honored at the April 14 District Presidents' meeting at The Hills in Laguna Niguel (off the 5 at La Paz); please let Mel know if you'd like to attend and help honor Jim.

See you the evening of the 26th, at our mixer.