

Seattle International Rotary
2006-2007
Lynell Smith

On May 7, 2006, just as everyone was beginning their meal for our live auction, a larger than life cruise ship slipped in to dock on cue just outside our window. With the ahs that settled over the guests, I knew that beginning with this moment, all was set for a good year at the helm as President of the Seattle International Rotary.

The Seattle International Rotary club has a strong history of very active members involved in our service projects. The leadership committees for my year, were already off and running as they put together plans for the funds that were raised at our auction. Therefore, my personal focus was on membership. The lunch meetings that included the privilege of inducting a new member were always my favorite, and we had the pleasure of bringing in several new and already very active, members.

Our District Governor, Mike Montgomery, had made it very clear to us, as we were planning our year, that, "Thou shalt not have boring meetings." My experience with the SIR was that we are a fun group that enjoys the weekly meetings, so my personal challenge was to make sure that the energy and camaraderie of our club would be reinforced during my year. To that end, I asked our past president, Terry Pickering, to expand on the role of Sergeant at Arms. He came up with "passing the football," like a hot potato, from one week to the next. Whoever received the football was the SAA for the following week. The responsibility included everything from setting up, greeting, invocation, fines, to then tossing the football for the next meeting. It wasn't long before people were volunteering for their turn with the football.

Our service projects during the year included a special "Service Above Self" district wide project where each club member donated professional attire to those seeking jobs. It was a personal threat, that everyone give an outfit, or I knew where they lived and that I would come to their homes, enter into their closets, and select my favorite outfit to give away. To the best of my recollection, we did indeed have 100% participation, in order to keep me out of their closets.

Projects for the Bailey Gatzert School continued to be a favorite service of our members. We enjoyed an off site lunch at Bailey Gatzert to meet with the third graders, and present them each with their very own dictionary. Many of us were called upon to tell about our own very first dictionary. Involvement in the dictionary project gave as much to each of us in giving the dictionary, as it gave to each of the children in receiving it.

At year end, we enjoyed a packed house, as Watson Feng presented our very special history regarding women and Rotary. The 15 new women Rotarians, along with the men that welcomed them, is a story from Seattle's China town, International District Rotary that had tremendous impact on the entire world of Rotary.

My year ended when I walked into Bailey Gatzert on the last day of school, for the dedication of a playground project that our club had funded. Feeling like a lame duck president, rushed and late as usual, I walked into a crowded assembly to the cheers of all the children. That was it. That was what Rotary was all about. I could not remember why I had felt it necessary to be late and rushed. I only felt like a Rotarian.