

# The Rotarygram



## Rotary Club of Van Nuys

Volume 4, Issue 18

Club 1470 — District 5260

November 3, 2004

### Meeting Highlights

Program chair, Joe DiFatta, had to do some swift juggling today when the scheduled speaker cancelled at the last moment. Joe's solution turned out to be a real winner. We were treated to a talk by PDG John Alexander on the RI Rose Parade floats and how they come into being.

The Rose Parade, first conceived in 1890, has been held each year on New Year's Day, moving down the streets of Pasadena with ever increasing grandeur. Rotary entered its first float in 1927. Since 1980, Rotary has entered a float each year...several have won awards.

John told us of his first joining the Rose Parade Float committee in 1993 and his experiences on many of the sub-committees.

All of the funding for each year's float is



**Artist's rendering of the Rose Parade Float of Rotary International for January 1, 2005.**



**Photo of 2005 RI Float under construction.**

from voluntary contributions from Rotarians in the U.S. and Canada. Design and construction of Rotary's floats is contracted to Charisma Floats and begins in early spring.

Much of the decoration is done by volunteers who painstakingly apply flowers and other plant material, covering every square inch of the float. You can sign up to help by visiting the Rotary Float web site at: [www.rotaryfloat.org](http://www.rotaryfloat.org).

This year's theme is: "Family Tree — A Century of Service." The parade is broadcast on TV around the world and will be viewed by over 400 million people...the Pasadena Police Department estimates that more than one million spectators view the parade in person.

Thanks, John for a great story and talk!

## Student Recognition Program

Students this week were from Van Nuys High School. Each honoree receives a Certificate of Commendation from Van Nuys Rotary and a \$50 US Savings Bond. Pictured, from the left, President Carlos Rivera; honoree Lauren Woods, senior class president; honoree Jennifer Doubek, an exchange student from Hamburg, Germany; Jann Carr, ASB advisor for VNHS; Victoria Castillo, youth recognition program chair.



## Announcements

- See HOT DATES on page 4 for upcoming club and community events.
- Our December 1st meeting will be a USC-UCLA Party...stay tuned for more fun times.
- The painting project for the Van Nuys facility of Tierra del Sol needs your help...talk to Jim Sullivan to get on board.
- Don Fetherolf announced that at the Mid-Valley Police Council meeting they elected our stalwart member, Pete Satuloff, as their president. Congratulations, Pete!
- Mike Quiroga suggested two trips to Mexico for Eye Clinics during November and is looking for approval of funding.
- Barbara Baerg is starting the planning for our annual Holiday Party — is there anyone who might offer their home to host this pot-luck event? Call Barbara: 818-601-0192.
- Our recent Dinner/Theater event gathered 22 folks who had a great time dining and seeing a fun show!
- Jim Tenner is looking for help Saturday 11/6 from 6:30 to 8:30 a.m. to help with a foundation project. Call Jim Tenner.
- Ed Viramontes says the planning for our annual Track Meet at Birmingham HS has begun — make a mental note to plan your participation.
- Leo O'Bieunas needs computers and printers for our education project...the need is urgent and we can accept any available surplus gear. Call Leo: 818-988-0180.

## The Spotlight's On...

### Joe DiFatta



What's most important in Joe DiFatta's life? "People," he says. He puts family at the top of the list and then the friends he has accumulated during the years. He and his wife, Marsha, will celebrate 45 years of marriage in March 2005. He's very proud of his children, Dori and Alan, and his four grandchildren, Jenifer, Mallory, Nicholas Joseph and

Jacob. As for friends, he's blessed with many that he's met through his business and community activities and through Rotary. "I'm still running around with friends from junior high and high school, too," he adds.

Joe was the middle of five children as he grew up. His parents, John and Dora DiFatta, moved from their native Italy to Baltimore, Maryland in 1933. They lived in a three-story row house, with the first story dedicated to his father's barber shop. In 1951, his mother's family in California convinced them to move west to the Los Angeles area. "A year later, Pops bought a house in Mission Hills," Joe recalls.

After high school and a three-year stint in the Navy, Joe went to work for Chick Hart Printers in Van Nuys. "Chick was my college," Joe says, "and like a second father to me." Joe also credits Chick with drawing him into community activities, including the Junior Chamber of Commerce and – in 1968 – the Van Nuys Rotary Club. It was the networking in these organizations, he believes, that contributed to his success in the printing business...especially Rotary. And when Chick Hart passed away in 1970, it was Rotarian Irv Ryder who "took over as my father," Joe adds.

Joe kept the Chick Hart Printers name when he assumed ownership of the company, but changed it to DiFatta Graphics in 1985 after son Alan graduated from college and joined the business full-time. In 1995, he moved the business

to Valencia. "I bowed out in 2001," Joe says of his retirement, but he still enjoys visiting to see his family and long-time employees. He also likes to see what's being printed, he adds, as printing continues to change.

As president of the Van Nuys Rotary Club, Joe's theme was – "Look Back and Be Proud...Look Ahead and Achieve" – a thought he continues to apply to his life and activities. He was "super proud," he says, to be president of the Van Nuys Club in 1974-75 during its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year when the Club purchased a 1929 Model A Ford as its top raffle prize. He's also proud of the Club's on-going Rosarito service projects that started during his term– a project initiated by Carlos Rivera, Bob Rice and Joe.

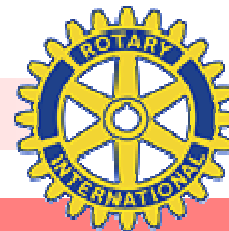
Serving as District Governor in 1982-83 was another great experience, Joe says. He and Marsha visited the 36 clubs in the district, "making our rounds and making more friends." Avid travelers, they've had many opportunities to travel through Rotary. He recalls how they enjoyed the week-long trip to Boca Raton, Florida for his training as governor, as well as the international conference held in Dallas, Texas.

**"Rotary must be fun."**

Rotary and traveling are not Joe's only passions...he loves collecting antique cars, too. He has a six-car garage that houses three Chevys (a '51, '55, '57), a 1950 Plymouth station wagon and two Fords ('46 and '47). He's also an active member of an antique car club in the Valley.

To keep in touch with the many people in their lives, Joe and Marsha have always planned outings and events (remember the barbecues and Halloween parties?) to pull together a mix of the people they care about. ...including family and the friends they've met in the community, at Rotary and at the car club Joe supports. "Throughout our years, Marsha and I have planned social events, skiing trips, ship cruises, car cruises and trips to Bass Lake to bring our family and friends together," he remembers. "Our life has been an open book!"

*Contributed by Andrea Reinken*



# “Service Above Self”

## Rotary Club of Van Nuys

### Upcoming Programs

- Nov. 10     **Harvey Englander** — His topic: “Now that the Election dust has settled...like, what now?” Program Chair: Flip Smith.
- Nov. 17     **Economic Alliance of the SF Valley.** Mr. Kenn Phillips. Program Chair: Flip Smith.
- Nov. 24     **Joint Service Club Meeting — to be held at the Airtel Plaza.** Chaired by Nancy Hoffman.
- Dec. 15     Mark your calendar and **plan to bring a guest...**this will be our **Annual Holiday Luncheon** — with choral entertainment by the Glee Club from Mission College. Always an excellent program!

#### BIRTHDAYS

- Nov. 5     Carlos Rivera
- Nov. 5     Mary McDannel
- Nov. 20    Marilyn Fetherolf
- Nov. 26    Irv Ryder
- Dec. 2     Andrea Reinken
- Dec. 26    Gonzalo Tejada

#### HOT DATES

- Nov. 13    District Leadership Meeting — 8 a.m. at Sam’s Café
- Nov. 20    Community Clean-Up Day at Bassett Street Elementary School
- Nov. 21    Cunials’ Wedding Anniversary
- Nov. 21    Satuloffs’ Wedding Anniversary
- Nov. 28    Riveras’ Wedding Anniversary

We’re on the web! [VanNuysRotary.org](http://VanNuysRotary.org)

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