

# The Rotarygram



## Rotary Club of Van Nuys

Volume 4, Issue 9

Club 1470 — District 5260

September 1, 2004

### Meeting Highlights



Devon Brown, far left, gave an update on the East-West Busway (now named the Metro Orange Line). Her report included the progress on construction and current status of pending litigation.

The Orange Line will have a travel time of 30 to 40 minutes between North Hollywood and Warner Center using new, 60 foot-long, articulated buses. New transponder technology will be used to ensure faster travel and safety at intersections with street traffic.

Construction is scheduled for completion in August 2005.

Preceding Devon's presentation, Marta

Mack, above right, told us of the wider range of transportation concerns and plans of the MTA, including 'Metro Rapid Lines' to be implemented on Sepulveda Blvd. in 2005 and on Reseda Blvd. in 2006. The MTA's long-range planning is made in conjunction with Mobility 21, a coalition of transportation agencies in Southern California.

The pressing problem of overloaded streets and highways is being studied continuously — the solutions, however, are not easy and costs far exceed the funding available.

Both speakers kindly answered questions and concerns brought up by Rotarians and guests in attendance.



**Program chair Joe DiFatta, left, introduced Andrea Reinken, center, who introduced today's speakers. Andrea was given a huge bouquet in recognition of her contributions to the Rotarygram. Barbara Baerg, right, presided at the meeting...and looks on.**

### Visitors

**Visiting Rotarians:** Emily Golanco, PP and Danny Golanco, PDG visiting from the Philippines. Roz Kogler, PP of the NSFV-PC club.

**Guests:** Former members of Van Nuys: Leon Nitz and Joe Baldeschi, PP & PDG. Margie Hawkins, guest of Cherie Spamer. Zack Bajakjian, guest of Mike Quiroga. Julie Beauchamp, president of VN Kiwanis and wife of George. Charles Shapiro, guest of Barbara Baerg. Guest of the club, Ned Treanor with American Guard Services, Inc.

**Entertainment Books—2005...see Paul Davis!**

## Student Recognition



Youth Director Joe Chu, left, joyfully extended congratulations to the two honorees from New Horizons, noting their self improvements and service to others. Barbara Baerg and their coach look on.

## Announcements

- See HOT DATES on page 4 for upcoming club and community events.
- Tuesday, 9/7, 7:45 a.m., the M-V Police Council Meeting will feature a talk on narcotics by detective from LAPD, according to Don Fetherolf, president of the group.
- Our member, Gary Cunial, has been hospitalized...send him a card.
- President Carlos Rivera has recently lost a dear aunt, Juana Figueroa. They were very close and Carlos gave the eulogy at services for her on September 1st. The club sent flowers to mark her passing, and Carlos asked that his grateful thanks be extended to everyone in the club.

## The Spotlight's On...

### KENNETH E. BENSON



Ken Benson credits a Little League field in his hometown for his decision to join Rotary. He had played softball as a youngster growing up in Bay City, Michigan and visited the field when he returned home many years later for his mother's funeral. "When I saw the Rotary Wheel on the field and found out what Rotary was," Ken

recalls, "I decided to join Rotary. It was my way of thanking the Rotarians who built the Little League field where I played as a child."

During those softball years, Ken was also influenced by country western and church music as he was growing up. His father played a "big ole' Hawaiian guitar," while Ken sang in the church choir and took piano lessons from the church organist. He also took trombone, saxophone and accordion lessons before finding out that "what I played best was the radio." He became hooked on Elvis Presley, Buddy Holly and other rock-and-roll stars in the 1950s and got a job as a disc jockey in high school.

After graduation from high school and a three-year stint in the Army, Ken took advantage of the GI Bill to get a bachelor's degree in geology and English literature from Central Michigan University. He never used his degree, however, as he headed straight for Detroit after graduation to work for a music company. Within two years, he

was dealing with 50 different record labels and artists, from James Brown to Ann Murray, the Jay Giles Band and Bob Seger.

"My sole mission in life when I came to California," Ken says, "was to promote Bob Seger on every radio station up and down the coast." He and Bob Seger had played softball together as children and he convinced Capitol Records to sign the recording artist because he believed he had great talent *and* he liked his music. "That's the kind of rock-and-roll I like," Ken says, "I don't like screaming. I like good, driving rhythm and blues based on rock-and-roll." It's only in the last 10 years, he adds, that his musical tastes have changed dramatically. He now enjoys classical jazz, too.

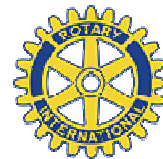
After his daughter, Alison, was born in 1989, Ken made a dramatic career change, as well. Promoting recording artists required considerable travel, he says, and he didn't want to be on the road several months out of every year. He joined Shearson Lehman Hutton 15 years ago and began putting his energy into helping clients manage their assets. Today, Ken is a financial consultant and second vice president-investments for Smith Barney – the brokerage arm of Citigroup, the largest financial institution in the world.

Rotary continues to be an important part of his life, Ken says. A past Van Nuys Rotary Club president and current Club secretary, he believes Rotary provides the avenues to do what he likes to do, such as reading to second-grade students at Cohasset Elementary every two weeks. "You have to do things with your time for other people," he adds.

*Contributed by Andrea Reinken*

**"To love what you do and feel that it matters - how could anything be more fun?"**

**- Katherine Graham**



# "Service Above Self"

## Rotary Club of Van Nuys

### Upcoming Programs

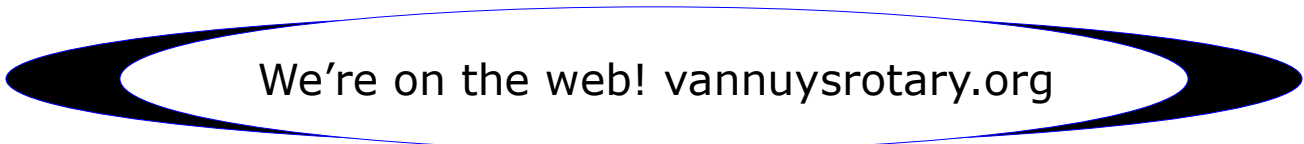
- Sept. 8 "Stem Cell Research"— one of today's hot topics — will be presented by Sherri Cunial who has a vital, personal viewpoint. Program chair — Gary Cunial.
- Sept. 15 Craft Talks (always one of our most interesting programs) will be given by two of our newer members: Victoria Castillo and Fred Rabban. Program chair — Diane Eaton.
- Sept. 22 Former member, Gordon Mace, will give us his insider's view of what's happening in Commercial Real Estate. Chairperson — Archie Kidwell.
- Sept. 29 Conejo Valley Little League Champs — Vince Bonsignore, sports writer for the Daily News, has reported on this team and will tell all about the competition and more. Bring a youngster...you'll be glad you did! Program chair — Joe DiFatta.

#### BIRTHDAYS

- Sept. 6 Gary Cunial
- Sept. 6 Ken Worthen
- Sept. 17 Barbara Baerg
- Sept. 19 Barry Leonard

#### HOT DATES

- Sept. 8 YMCA "Swingin' Jitterbug Jubilee" 6 p.m.
- Sept. 11 District Leadership Meeting, 8 a.m., Sam's Café.
- Sept. 24-26 Sierra (Bishop) Safari. Reserve NOW.
- October 7 Mid-Valley Comm. Police Council — Annual Citizen's Recognition Luncheon 11:45 a.m. — Airtel Plaza
- October 22 Dinner/Theater: "Late Night Catechism II — The Sequel" El Portal Theater, North Hollywood.



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