

FIRESIDE CHATS

Dale Pelch (Pasadena Sunrise, September '03)

1. Location – Makes sure it is a warm and comfortable environment. Someone's house is (I believe) is a must. Light snack and beverages but not overstated. It should be like a small get-together of close friends.
2. Time - We chose a weekday evening at time that would hopefully not be too late or early to try to avoid people needing to rush to get there or rush to get home.
3. Attendees - We tried to make sure there was a good mix of young and more seasoned (in Rotary years) and, of course, wanted to make sure that newer Rotarians and their spouses were invited to attend. We urged spouses to attend so they could get a glimpse of where their spouse was going every Thursday morning and when they attend other meetings or events. We wanted to encourage spouses in our various events and let them know they are welcome. We also introduced Rotary's new program of the "Family of Rotary". We explained that we wanted, and we are trying to have more events for the family, not just spouses.
4. Program - We tried to make sure that it was not a "canned" presentation.
 - A. Introductions - After a period of "chit chat" we settled down and went around the room with everyone introducing themselves (name, family, occupation, history with Rotary, etc.).
 - B. Financial - Our treasurer discussed the financial expectation of being a member of our Rotary Club (We did this 1st as our Treasurer needed to leave early -- it may be best to introduce this at the end). The basic thrust was "In order to do all these wonderful things, we need financial backing from various sources. We have fundraising projects which need the active participation, energy and involvement of all our members. We also look to our members to support the programs directly" Then discussed the dues, fines/recognitions (indicating the range at which our members participated). Paul Harris Fellow contributions, Polio Plus annual contribution, etc.
 - C. Avenues of Service - We had each service chair there (or someone to fill in for them if they couldn't attend) to talk about the specific projects we are involved in. Keeping it brief but real and concrete. Vocational, Community, International, Club (social events), etc. We also had someone discuss RI and how the contributions to RI are used, including coming back to our District for local projects.
5. Interactive - Throughout, the attendees are invited to ask questions. It makes it more interactive and less like a series of speeches. Keep it light and fun.
6. Conclusion. Get it over with soon. Don't over do the event. We went a little longer than I wanted it to. We didn't want it to be a burden on anyone. That was basically it. Nothing special in the agenda -- just special people there participating.