



Waunakee Rotary Club

June 7, 2007
Vol. 40 No. 47

What qualities does it take to be an effective leader?

Retired Brigadier General Kerry Denson began to answer that question at the May 31 meeting of the Waunakee Rotary Club.

Kerry, who retired from the Wisconsin National Army Guard in November, now has a consulting company, Applied Leadership, and works with businesses and organizations to get people motivated about what they can do differently in the workplace.

A good leader has to be a good manager, Kerry said, but a leader will also inspire troops or staff and get them excited about challenges. Leaders are also expected to be confident, and they walk just up to that line of arrogance but should never cross it. No one likes an arrogant leader, he said.

Leaders should never have bad days and should always be predictable. Otherwise, their workers will not share information with them, and they will make decisions based on uninformed choices.

Also, leaders need to share their greater vision or goals with their staff. And to motivate others, they should remember that people want to belong to an organization bigger than themselves where they feel they are making contributions and are recognized.

That yearning to belong to an organization may date back to cave-man days. It's the same motivation that drives young high school students to join gangs – something bigger than themselves where they feel recognition, he said.

During Kerry's tenure, he saw every unit of the National Guard mobilized – except the band. He watched people working weekends and during the week to get the troops mobilized, he said.

Kerry sent letters of appreciation to the National Guardsmen's homes, he said.

"I took time to say thank you and sent them to their homes so families could see the head of the National Guard was recognizing them," Kerry said.

He saw many of those personal notes pinned up in cubicles across the state.

Another effective tool of leadership is accurate, timely information. We live in an age of CNN news and instant access to information, Kerry said.

Without clear information, rumors and gossip develop – information that is never positive. What stops those rumors and gossip is accurate, timely information from leaders.

"You as a leader gain respect, morale goes up, productivity goes up, and absenteeism goes down," Kerry said.

Leaders should also have a vision for their company or organization of it in its perfect formation. Without it, leaders can have what he called the "lost pilot syndrome," where every turn is the right one because the pilot is lost.

Instead, all decisions should be filtered through that vision of the perfect organization. That vision can also be used as a benchmark to judge how the operation is running.

"It will never be perfect, but I will guarantee you that it will get a lot closer to that vision," Kerry said.

Other items:

- Harriet Statz hosted a follow-up meeting for hosts of the Russian visitors June 6. She was made an honorary member of the organization in San Francisco that organizes the visits.

- Lynne Spielman shared pictures of the library in Nigeria that the Waunakee club helped with. The

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Calendar of Events:

June 17-20, RI, Salt Lake City

June 28, Steak Fry

Oct. 6-7, Oktoberfest

governor's welcoming in Columbus is June 23, and the Nigerians involved in various projects there will also attend.

Guests: Shawn Smith, guest of Mike Lawrence; Brady Endl, guest of Ken Pesik; Joanne Leonard, guest of Jim Leonard.

Birthdays: None.

Anniversaries: June 7, Craig and Judy Larson; June 11, Rod and Wendy Cupp; June 13, Sandy and Tim Taylor.

Prayers: June 7, Susan Vergeront; June 14, Leonard Allen; June 21, Kim Wilde; June 28, Pat Durden.

Programs: June 7, Club Assembly; June 14, RYLA Students, Kim Wilde and Ellen Schaaf on the Waunakee business survey; June 21, Valerie Breunig, World Council of Credit Unions; June 28, Mary Dowling, Sharing Resources Worldwide.

Greeters: May 31, Tammy Reefer, Tom Reis; June 7, Ellen Schaaf, Jim Schmitz; June 14, Gene Smith and Lynne Spielman.

Make up meetings online

It's easy to make up a meeting on the Internet. The site is www.rotaryclubone.org. Print out the form and give it to Phil Willems, the club secretary.