

MEETING OF JANUARY 8, 2008

Minutes of Meeting of Dec. 18, 2008

- President Freddy Walter presided over the meeting.
 - Allen Anderson offered the invocation.
 - Susan Light led the Club in the Pledge of Allegiance.
 - Kris King welcomed guests and visiting Rotarians;
- Jim Hutto visited from the Petal Club.
 - Jamie Hollard was a guest of Bill McLeod.
 - Charles Greer V was a guest of Charles Greer IV.
 - Bob Riley's two daughters and sister-in-law also visited.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Steve Ramp and Valerie Sartin were thanked by the club members for their hard work in putting together the Christmas event. Approximately 130 Rotarians attended and a good time was reportedly had by all. It was suggested that several club members signed up to attend and then failed to attend resulting in a considerable loss of food.
2. Freddy welcomed Tina Lowrimore back after the delivery of her new child and reported that, unfortunately, she will be moving to Georgia where her husband now resides. We will miss her.
3. Suzy Steen was recognized for earning her Ph.D. from the University of Southern Mississippi.

4. Chris Strebeck also was recognized for recently completing his MBA degree and Annie Wimbish was recognized for being one of the top 50 business women in Mississippi.
5. Freddy reported that no club meetings will be held on Christmas or New Year's Day. The next meeting will be January 8.
6. Bill McLeod thanked the club members who participated in the Salvation Army's bell ringing campaign recently. It was reported that the club generated almost \$1,000 during the day.
7. The District Conference will be held in New Orleans on April 18 - 20. Volunteers are being sought by Richard Topp to assist with the Friday night social event. The Night in Italy fund raising event is scheduled for April 22.

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James Duncan was introduced and presented the speaker, Chris Bowman. Chris is currently the director of the Pat Harrison Waterway District. He is a Forrest County Board of Supervisor-elect and will assume that position in January.

Chris gave the club an overview of the area served by the Pat Harrison Waterway District and the district's mission. Basically PHWD is responsible for the fifteen counties found in the Pascagoula River Basin. Although the documents creating the District give it a wide scope of possible duties and responsibilities, the board has chosen to focus on flood control, surface

water retention and recreation. Locally, Lewis Myrick, Jr. is the Forrest County representative on the Pat Harrison board of directors.

The PHWD district manages 9 water parks in southeast Mississippi, 600 RV sites, 91 cabins and a motel.

Chris says Hurricane Katrina seemed to take direct aim on the properties managed by the PHWD. Thousands of trees were knocked down by the storm and extensive damage was caused to almost all of the facilities, including water and sewer service lines, cabins, offices and other entities. Many of the trees that did not die as a direct result of the high winds continue to suffer from stress and insect damage and continue to die. Because of the massive amount of limbs, trees and leaves that fell into the waterways under the PHWD management, massive fish kills were encountered throughout the basin due to the lack of dissolved oxygen.

Although some parts of the district are now in a drought situation, especially the facilities in the northern and eastern most portion of the district, the drought conditions still do not compare to the drought of 2000. One gauge within the district has an average runoff rate of 900 cubic feet per second and is now flowing at 400 cubic feet per second. However, that flow is still faster than the flows recorded in late 2000. The drought that year was broken by eleven plus inches of rain that fell in the month of November.

Although recreation is a primary focus of the District, they must also help protect industries that rely on the water supplies within the District. The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality has to shut some of these industries down when an

appropriate amount of water isn't available. PHWD managers work to ensure that adequate water flow is available, even when they must release water hundreds of miles upstream.

Chris says he is not concerned as much about managing surface water as he will be concerned about managing business and industry growth in the coming years. Mississippi has the best underground aquifers in the world, and he says this readily available water supply will attract large numbers of businesses and industries who will need a water supply for their operations in the future.

THIS WEEK'S PROGRAM

Gene Taylor, of Bay St. Louis, is one of only a handful of Members of Congress with hands-on experience in the United States Coast Guard. Serving in the Coast Guard Reserve from 1971-1984 as the skipper of a search and rescue boat, he received the Commandant's Letter of Commendation for fire fighting and a letter of Commendation for saving the life of a crewmember.

Prior to his election to Congress in 1989, he served as a member of the Bay St. Louis City Council and the Mississippi State Senate. In the U.S. House of Representatives, Taylor serves on two major committees, the [House Armed Services Committee](#) and the [House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee](#).

As a member of the Armed Services Committee, he is the Chairman of the

Subcommittee on Seapower and Expeditionary Forces. He also sits on the Readiness Subcommittee. On the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee he serves on the Water Resources and Environment and the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Subcommittee.

In addition, Taylor serves as co-chair of the following four Congressional member organizations: Shipbuilding Caucus, National Guard and Reserve Caucus, Coast Guard Caucus, and Expeditionary Warfare Caucus. He is also a member of the [Conservative Democrats' Blue Dog Coalition](#).

Taylor and his wife, the former Margaret Gordon of Bay St. Louis, have three children, Sarah, Emily, and Gary. After losing their Bay St. Louis home to Hurricane Katrina, the Taylors currently reside in Kiln, Mississippi, with family.

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Editor: Gary Garner