

JANUARY 19, 2016



# SPOKES

NEWSLETTER OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF HATTIESBURG

President Sean Priebe: our guest, Dickie Scruggs, and Past President Wes Brooks.



Rotary  
Club of Hattiesburg



## MINUTES: JANUARY 12, 2016

President Sean Priebe presided over the meeting. Thanks to Rusty Edwards who gave the invocation and to Erin Granberry who led us in the Pledge of Allegiance. Thanks to Gene Owens and Mary Cromartie who served as our greeters today.

Jaclyn Adams introduced visiting Rotarians and guests. Krystal Phillips is a guest of Brett Phillips. Melissa Phelps is a guest of Maura McLaughlin. Reverend Tom Sikes is a guest of Gene Owens. Benny Waddle and Jen Miles are guests of Jaclyn Adams. Brad Stinson, Will Russell, Bill Pace, Curtis Smith and Herb Stonebrook are guests of Bill McLeod. Ron Fairley and Caroline Robinson are guests of Aaron Ladner and Chancellor Judge Ron Doleac is a guest of Mike Ratliff.

Today's Mystery Rotarian was born in German and is of Irish and Indian decent. This Rotarian has lived in Hattiesburg for more than 18 years and graduated with a Bachelor's degree from USM and a Masters from William Carey University. This Rotarian has worked in commercial development, financial aide and was a high school teacher in Laurel. This Rotarian was just recently married. Today's mystery Rotarian is Chrissy Yelverton.

Sean reminded Rotarians of the District Conference which will be held on the coast April 7-10. Volunteers are needed to head up the club's food fest tent for this year. If you are interested, please see Sean.

He also noted that the Night in Italy event is quickly approaching. A chair or two co-chairs are needed for this project. Again, if you are interested, see Sean.

Wes Brooks then introduced today's guest speaker, Dickie Scruggs. Mr. Scruggs is a former attorney and Navy fighter pilot. He may be best known as the architect of the litigation that resulted in the multi-billion dollar Tobacco Settlement, and later for going to federal prison in a judicial bribery scandal.

Mr. Scruggs reports that 500,000 Mississippians do not have a high school diploma. That number by the way is the same number of Mississippians who are attending public school throughout the state. A total of 14,000 high school students drop out every year in Mississippi. That represents 77 drop outs for every school day throughout the year. Mississippi workforce participation rate is the second lowest in the nation at 56%. Scruggs notes that he and many other Mississippians are tired of these kinds of statistics continuing to drag our state and our state's economy down.

While serving his prison term he was asked to teach GED classes to fellow inmates. The inmate population has a median 6<sup>th</sup> grade reading level. Only one in 10 can read at the high school level. Teaching the inmates to successfully pass the GED became a challenge for Scruggs and he says provided him with a second chance.

When he had served his sentence he established Second Chance Mississippi. It is a non-profit foundation that raises funds to help adults who are participating in work force development programs throughout the state. Because the Community Colleges are in charge of adult education and skill training for work force development, Second Chance Mississippi is designed to support their efforts.

The GED curriculum was changed in 2014. Prior to the changes 8,000 Mississippians received their GED each year. In 2014 that number dropped to 800. It is beginning to increase but the process is a difficult one for adults who are trying to work or raise a family and take the required coursework.

Scruggs noted that many of those who are attending these GED or skill development classes are often just one flat tire away from having to drop out. Second Chance Mississippi brings churches and civic minded organizations together with their local Community Colleges and provides needed assistance to keep the students in class. There are little or no funds available to meet this need other than through the local communities.

Scruggs challenged our Rotary club to become a partner with the Pearl River Community College and be a resource for them when these needs arise. He introduced a number of Pearl River Community College representatives in attendance today and encouraged our members to meet and talk with them about ways we can help.

If you are interested in offering assistance please contact Dr. Scott Alsobrooks at [salsobrooks@prcc.edu](mailto:salsobrooks@prcc.edu), Ms. Terri Clark at [tclark@prcc.edu](mailto:tclark@prcc.edu) or Mr. Chuck Abadie at [cabadie@prcc.edu](mailto:cabadie@prcc.edu). To learn more about Second Chance Mississippi visit them at [secondchancems.com](http://secondchancems.com) or call 601-265-1895. You can also follow them on Twitter @2ndChanceMs or like them on Facebook at Second Chance Mississippi.

**Minutes provided by:**  
**Lamar Evans, Executive Secretary**



# OUR GUEST

**Dr. Jacob Graham**  
Medical Director, Palliative &  
Supportive Care

Dr. Jacob Graham serves as Medical Director for Palliative and Supportive Care at Forrest General Hospital. He began his career in palliative medicine at Forrest General in August of 2015. Dr. Graham completed medical school at the University of Mississippi School of Medicine and internal medicine residency at the University of Mississippi Medical Center. In 2015, Dr. Graham completed a hospice and palliative medicine fellowship at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Originally from Jackson, Mississippi, Dr. Graham now resides in Hattiesburg with his wife, Dr. Elise Burton Graham, and two daughters, Laurel and Lane. He is a member of First Presbyterian Church of Hattiesburg.



*Upcoming*



**NEXT WEEK**  
**RYAN KELLY**



**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 3 TO MONDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2016**

For Mardi Gras 2016, D6840 will be hosting a delegation of Canadians from the Calgary area, D5360. The 6 couples selected to participate were chosen from a group of 24 who expressed interest in coming to The Big Easy!!

The plan is for the group to arrive on Tuesday, February 2, with the actual program beginning on Wednesday, February 3, and until their departure on Monday, February 15. Since Mardi Gras is February 9, logistics and lodging are both challenging, especially for such a large group. I am very interested in lodging possibilities near the St. Charles Avenue Parade Route around “Mardi Gras Weekend,” as well as lodging with Rotarians along the Gulf Coast (especially between Bay St. Louis and Biloxi) from February 10-15. Please let me know!

**THURSDAY, JULY 7 TO TUESDAY, JULY 19, 2016**

D6840 Rotarians are invited to D5360, a special part of Canada, to enjoy the Calgary Stampede, the beautiful Canadian Rockies, and other activities during the early part of our HOT July! There is a growing list of D6840 Rotarians who are interested in visiting the cool Canadian Rockies in July, 2016!

Both in Calgary and in New Orleans, the plans are home-stays with Rotarians, “Bed & Breakfast style.” Guests may not need to have their own rental cars/vans. Visitors will be responsible for their personal expenses and meals when they are on their own. The maximum number of visitors is 12.

Karen Babin, 2016 Friendship Exchange Coordinator for D6840

504-875-4342, 518-588-9096 (mobile) [ksbabin@gmail.com](mailto:ksbabin@gmail.com)

**OLE MAN RIVER PETS: March 4-6**

**DISTRICT CONFERENCE: April 7-10**

**ROTARY INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION (Seoul, South Korea): May 29—June 1**

**2015-2016 OFFICERS & DIRECTORS**

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**Brett Phillips, *Secretary-Treasurer***

**Lamar Evans, *Executive Secretary***

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**Mike Ratliff**

**Rotary Club of  
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