

MEETING OF DEC. 12, 2006

Minutes of Meeting of Nov. 28, 2006

- Presiding: Conrad Welker
- Invocation: Erin Granberry
- Pledge of Allegiance: Kristy Gould
- Introduction of Visiting Rotarians and guests: Kristy Gould

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 1) Greeters for today are: Gary Troutman and Shawn Lowrey
- 2) Rotarians are encouraged to sign up for the Salvation Army Kettle project. Our club will ring the kettle bell at the theatre entrance of Turtle Creek Mall on Saturday, December 16. A list of those signed up is being sent out to each participant with the time and phone numbers.
- 3) The newly elected board members and officers for the Rotary Year 2007-2008 are: Todd Bradley, Kristy Gould, Perrin Lowrey & Bill McLeod. Freddy Walter will be the president next year, Richard Topp the president-elect, Steve Ramp the vice president and A.D. Hunt the secretary/ treasurer.

PROGRAM FOR THE WEEK OF NOVEMBER 28TH

Kris King introduced the speaker, Billy Scruggs. Billy is the Coordinator of Community Service for the Twelfth Judicial Court District and is under the direction of District Attorney, Jon Mark Weathers.

Billy let members know that a felony is a crime that carries a sentence of 11 months and 29 days. He also reported that it takes \$26.00 per day to house a prisoner in the Forrest County jail. He noted that the jail currently has a population of 222. The average cost to house an inmate in a prison setting is \$34.85 per day. At Parchman he reports that the cost is \$39.71 per day.

Persons who are screened and get assigned to this program have to pay fines, court costs, and a monthly supervision fee. So, in addition to keeping them out of the prison system and incurring those expenses, this program actually offers some offset to the expenses of maintaining the program.

For a person to get into the program, they must plead guilty to their crime. The judge then defers acceptance of their plea and places them into this program. During their five years, the candidate must not break any laws, must not ever be in possession of a firearm, must take regular drug tests and must contribute up to 35 hours of community service each week. They have to have approval of who they associate with and where they can go. They cannot leave the state of Mississippi without advance permission.

If a candidate successfully completes the five year program, they are released with no criminal record.

Bill notes that most of their candidates, about 85%, are high school dropouts. A GED element is new to the program. If a high school drop out gets into the program, they are required to attend the GED classes

PROGRAM FOR THE WEEK OF DECEMBER 5TH

There was no noon program. Instead, the club held its annual Christmas Party at Southern Oaks in the evening. There was a social hour at 6:00 p.m., a welcome by President Conrad Welker at 7:00 p.m., invocation by Gene Owens, followed by a delightful dinner and a musical presentation by Carpenter's Wood from William Carey University.

THIS WEEK'S PROGRAM

The Hattiesburg High School Orchestra will present the program today.

Local Rotarians partner with Mississippi clubs to assist library

Way The Rotary Club of Florence recently became aware of a public library in Mississippi which was devastated by Hurricane Katrina and which receives no state funding. The Long Beach Public Library is supported by the town of Long Beach, MS. Not surprisingly, the town of Long Beach was also devastated by Hurricane Katrina and is close to running out of money.

Rotarians in the Florence Club "passed the hat" and contributed \$2,050 to assist the Long Beach Public Library. The club's Board of Directors also pledged \$2,500 toward the project.

Club President Charles Saverance then contacted Rotary District 7770 Grants Chairman Rick Moore about some matching Rotary grant money. Moore informed Saverance that Rotary grant money was only available for use in the United States if the club partnered with another club in another district.

Saverance contacted Conrad Welker, President of the Rotary Club of Hattiesburg, MS. Welker enlisted the assistance of the Rotary Club of Hattiesburg Sunrise and the Rotary Club of Petal, MS. Those three clubs raised approximately \$6,000 for the project and agreed to partner with the Florence club.

Since there was now a partnership with clubs in Rotary District 6840, Saverance applied for grant money from District 7770. A matching grant in the amount of \$2,500 was approved by the Grants Committee. With the \$2,050 in contributions from the Rotary Club's membership added to the \$2,500 approved by the Board and the \$2,500 matching grant, the Rotary Club of Florence had a total of \$7,050 for this worthwhile project.

Saverance drove to Mississippi to personally present a check for \$7,050 to the Friends of the Long Beach Public Library to be used for book bindings, book covers, staples, paper clips, tape, filing systems and other supplies and materials needed in the operation of a library which were not currently within the budget of the town of Long Beach.

Rotary Club of Hattiesburg President Welker, Rotary Club of Hattiesburg Sunrise President Peggy Carlin, Rotary Club of Petal President Kay Spiers and Rotary Club of Long Beach President Doug St. John also participated in the presentation of the check.

Saverance thanked the other club presidents for their participation, and thanked his own board for their initiative in making the project a reality.

"The world is full of sayers of things," Saverance said, paraphrasing Rotary Founder Paul Harris. "I am glad to have a Board made up of doers of things."

The Rotary Club of Florence meets Mondays at the Florence Civic Center. It is made up of 147 leaders in the community. Rotary's motto is "Service Above Self," and the current year's theme is "Lead The Way."

Subject: How blessed we are to be citizens of the USA

Written by an Australian Dentist....

To Kill an American
You probably missed it in the rush of news some time ago, but there was actually a report that someone in Pakistan had published in a newspaper an offer of a reward to anyone who killed an American, any American.

So an Australian dentist wrote an editorial the following day to let everyone know what an American is. So they would know when they found one. (Good one, mate!!!!)

"An American is English, or French, or Italian, Irish, German, Spanish, Polish, Russian or Greek. An American may also be Canadian, Mexican, African, Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Australian, Iranian, Asian, or Arab, or Pakistani or Afghan.

An American may also be a Comanche, Cherokee, Osage, Blackfoot, Navaho, Apache, Seminole or one of the many other tribes known as Native Americans.

An American is Christian, or he could be Jewish, or Buddhist, or Muslim. In fact, there are more Muslims in America than in Afghanistan. The only difference is that in America they are free to worship as each of them chooses.

An American is also free to believe in no religion. For that he will answer only to God, not to the government, or to armed thugs claiming to speak for the government and for God.

An American lives in the most prosperous land in the history of the world. The root of that

prosperity can be found in the Declaration of Independence, which recognizes the God given right of each person to the pursuit of happiness. An American is generous. Americans have helped out just about every other nation in the world in their time of need, never asking a thing in return. When Afghanistan was over-run by the Soviet army 20 years ago, Americans came with arms and supplies to enable the people to win back their country!

As of the morning of September 11, Americans had given more than any other nation to the poor in Afghanistan. Americans welcome the best of everything...the best products, the best books, the best music, the best food, the best services. But they also welcome the least.

The national symbol of America, The Statue of Liberty, welcomes your tired and your poor, the wretched refuse of your teeming shores, the homeless, tempest tossed. These in fact are the people who built America.

Some of them were working in the Twin Towers the morning of September 11, 2001 earning a better life for their families. It's been told that the World Trade Center victims were from at least 30 different countries, cultures, and first languages, including those that aided and abetted the terrorists.

So you can try to kill an American if you must. Hitler did. So did General Tojo, and Stalin, and Mao Tse-Tung, and other blood-thirsty tyrants in the world. But, in doing so you would just be killing yourself. Because Americans are not a particular people from a particular place. They are the embodiment of the human spirit of freedom. Everyone who holds to that spirit, everywhere, is an American.

Editor: Gary Garner