

MEETING OF FEBRUARY 26, 2008
Minutes of Meeting of Feb. 19, 2008

- President Freddy Walter presided over the meeting.
- Gary Garner offered the invocation.
- Bradley Black led the Club in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Freddy thanked Johnny Stevens and Chris Strebeck for serving as Greeters today.
- Valerie Sartin welcomed today's guests and visiting Rotarians:
- Levern Smith was visiting from the Sunrise Club.
- Johnny Stevens recognized Patrick Ward, his guest and a new potential club member.
- Lamar Evans recognized Travis Sisson a new transferring member from the Slidell Club.
- Bret Calhoun was a guest of Bob Lockhead.
- Jim Wild was a guest of Bill McLeod.
- Joshua Otaigbe was a guest of the club and a potential new member.
- And Margaret Brinegar with the Children's Center for Learning and Development was a guest of the club.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 1) Quentin Benedict was recognized for having his 89th birthday.
- 2) Freddy welcomed Travis Sisson and invited him to remain after today's meeting to meet new fellow Rotarians.
- 3) Freddy also reminded members of the upcoming District Conference in New Orleans.

- 4) Wallace Weakley reported that Rotary International would be monitoring local Rotary participation in this year's District Conference as a precursor for the Rotary International Conference scheduled for New Orleans in 2011. All Rotarians are encouraged to participate.

LAST WEEK'S PROGRAM

Hayden Mitchell introduced the guest speaker, Dan Henley, Executive Director of the Hattiesburg YMCA.

Henley reported that the three most recognized logos in the world, according to a recent survey, are McDonald, Coke and the YMCA. The organization was established in 1844 by George Williams when twelve men got together for a bible study group meeting. In 1851 the movement was taken to Boston and made its way to Hattiesburg in 1913. The YMCA moved to its present location on Veterans Memorial Drive in 1994. In 1998 the organization purchased the old Kinder Castle and opened the Gandy Child Development Center. In 2003 the Petal YMCA was opened.

Henley recognized and thanked local Rotarians who have supported the YMCA and its programs in the past. He especially thanked the United Way of Southeast Mississippi for its continued support. The United Way contributions are used to provide financial assistance to families and individuals who cannot afford to participate in YMCA programs and events. Henley reported that because of strong community support the local Y has never had to turn an individual away because they were unable to pay the necessary fees.

The YMCA currently has 5,700 membership unites, representing 15,000 individuals. The organization is led by a thirty-member board of directors. The Gandy Child Development Center is currently at capacity with 85 students and a long waiting list. The Y has more than 100 children involved in its after-school program.

The Y will be expanding the Petal facility in the very near future. An after school and school age child care facility will be opened in October of 2008. There will also be the expansion of an adult fitness program at the Petal facility.

The Hattiesburg facility will begin construction of a second indoor aquatic facility in the near future. The new facility will allow the Y to continue to expand its aquatic program offerings and host up to four major swim meets each year. The new aquatic facility is scheduled to open in January of 2009.

The long range growth plan is looking at an expansion of the Y to the western regions of the area. Two developers are offering incentives to the YMCA's board for consideration. The New South Research group out of Birmingham, Alabama has been retained to begin a market research of the area to see if the Y could expect to be successful with a western operation.

THIS WEEK'S PROGRAM

Forest Thigpen is President of the Mississippi Center for Public Policy, an independent public policy organization based in Jackson, MS. Forest is a native of Cleveland, MS and earned an accounting degree from Delta State University, where he served as president of the Student Government Association and of the Pi Kappa Alpha Fraternity. He is an alumnus

of the Leadership Mississippi program of the Mississippi Economic Council.

Forest served on the Washington staff of Senator Thad Cochran for 10 years. He worked in various legislative and administrative capacities for Senator Cochran, including service as the Republican Staff Director for a subcommittee of the Senate Government Affairs Committee. He was responsible at various times in his Washington career for policy analysis in the areas of taxes, government regulation, health reform, banking, insurance, energy, Social Security, welfare, the justice system, communications, housing and environmental issues.

Forest was recently appointed to the Mississippi Advisory committee to the U. S. commission on Civil Rights. After Hurricane Katrina, he was named by Gov. Haley Barbour to serve on a committee of the Governor's Commission on Recovery, Rebuilding and Renewal. The governor also appointed him to the Commission on Charter Schools. In the later 1990's, Forest served as chairman of the Mississippi Task Force on Reducing Out-of-Wedlock Pregnancies, which was established as a part of welfare reform legislation.

Forest has been involved as a volunteer in a variety of ministries. He has developed and directed a church-wide ministry to meet the special needs of the poor and elderly, served on the Inner City Ministry Committee at this church, and served on the board of Battlefield Children's Foundation, a ministry in the Battlefield Park area of Jackson.

Forest and his wife Debbie live in Madison and have two sons: Jason, who is 25, and Clayton, who is 17.

AVENUES OF SERVICE

For years, Rotary's commitment to Service Above Self has been channeled through the four Avenues of Service, which form the foundation of club activity. To get started on a project, think broadly about how your club and its members could contribute within each avenue.

Club Service

Club Service focuses on strengthening fellowship and ensuring the smooth functioning of Rotary clubs. Learn about effective club service in [Membership](#) and [Training](#).

Vocational Service

Vocational Service involves club members serving others through their professions and aspiring to high ethical standards. Rotarians, as business leaders, share skills and expertise through their vocations, and they inspire others in the process. [Learn more](#).

Community Service

Community Service is the opportunity Rotary clubs have to implement club projects and activities that improve life in the local community. [Learn more about community service](#) and [assessing your community](#).

International Service

International Service encompasses efforts to expand Rotary's humanitarian reach around the world and to promote world understanding and peace. It includes everything from contributing to PolioPlus to helping Rotary Youth Exchange students adjust to their host countries.

Learn more about [participating in World Community Service](#).

Editor: Gary Garner