

MEETING OF MARCH 11, 2008

Minutes of Meeting of March 4, 2008

- President Freddy Walter presided over the meeting.
- James Duncan offered an invocation.
- Quentin Benedict led the Club in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Valerie Sartin welcomed visiting Rotarians and guests:
 - Ken Ribelin and Richard Baylor visited from the Petal Club.
 - Mark Gibbons was a guest of Bob Riley.
 - Lamar Evans introduced Terrie Trudeau as his guest and a representative of Association Management Systems, Inc.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 1) Walter announced that the Club was about to undertake another literacy program and would be looking for volunteers in the near future to help with the program. From past responses, school children respond well when an adult male reads to them.
- 2) Walter asked that Club members keep the Ben Stevens family in their prayers. Mr. Stevens died earlier today.
- 3) Walter introduced and welcomed Susan Morgan a Rotarian transferring in from the Biloxi club.
- 4) Heath Hillman, a part of the “new meat” project was then introduced and asked to talk about the upcoming RYLA program. The Club will fund two positions to RYLA for rising juniors. One of the positions has been filled. Any member with a nominee, especially a male nominee,

is asked to get with Heath in the near future.

- 5) Bill McLeod was then introduced and presented the Club with a detailed Night in Italy update. Volunteers and their positions were assigned. Tickets will be mailed from the office in the near future. Bill noted that members are asked to either sell the tickets or buy the tickets and give them away as a part of the Club’s community service project.
- 6) Richard Topp relayed information to members about the recent PETS conference. He also provided more information on the upcoming District Conference. Members are encouraged to attend and to sign up, prior to being drafted, to assist with the Friday night special event.
- 7) It was also announced that if a member is interested in attending the cruise being offered as a part of the District Conference they should immediately contact Vicky Gutierrez. The fee is \$50 per person. Her email address is Vickyg@cablone.net. Her mailing address is 1598 Birkshire Court, Biloxi, MS 39532.
- 8) Francis Farmer was then introduced and conducted the monthly auction. Dr. Greer bid \$100 on a USM football signed by Ray Guy.

LAST MEETING’S PROGRAM

Dan Kibodeaux introduced Sheila Gaudet, the director of The Salvation Army Boys and Girls Club. Gaudet has been the Club’s executive director since last May.

The Boys and Girls Club is a part of the local Salvation Army and is housed in that agency’s facility. Gaudet reported that,

because of their affiliation with the Salvation Army, the Club has an excellent facility, including a full size basketball court.

Some of the activities offered to attendees include computer lab programs, arts and crafts programs, tutoring, homework assistance and a variety of other events and activities. Club members are required to spend a minimum of one hour each day doing their homework. Staff and volunteers are used to assist the children.

The local program has 250 members. Each member pays \$30 per year. There is an average daily attendance of 150. During summer months the program is expanded and participants are bussed twice daily in order to take advantage of free food services available in the community. Summer program participants have one field trip each week and all of them get an opportunity to swim each week. The summer program fee is \$200 and 205 children participate daily.

The Boys and Girls Club has a \$300,000 annual budget. Approximately \$65,000 of that comes from the United Way of Southeast Mississippi. The Club generates another \$30,000 in fund raising activities. The annual Steak 'N Steak program is coming up on April 24. Gaudet encouraged businesses to buy a table during the event and spend an evening with the children enjoying a good steak and learning more about the children and what the Boys and Girls Club is all about.

Research presented by Gaudet indicated many of the successes of Boys and Girls Club alumni. Fifty-four percent of the Alumni report that the Club saved their life. Forty-four percent of the alumni participate in community service projects, as compared to a national average of twenty-percent.

Gaudet invited Rotarians to come visit the Boys and Girls Club to see what is going on and to meet the participants. Members are being taught to maintain a positive attitude, lead healthy lives, create positive values, become socially competent and are encouraged to learn.

THIS WEEK'S PROGRAM

Chrissy Gilder, a Hattiesburg native, was the 2006-2007 Ambassadorial Scholar for Rotary District 6840. She spent her year abroad living in Prague, the capital city of the Czech Republic. Chrissy was hosted by Rotary Klub Praha and, through them, enjoyed being acquainted with Rotarians from across the Czech and Slovak Republics. While in Prague, Chrissy studied at Charles University as a visiting graduate student in the faculty of social sciences. Currently she attends the University of Mississippi, where she will complete her second bachelor's degree in May, in economics. Her first degree is in international studies.

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL NEWS

RI President's Message: Share through Membership

March 2008

Dear fellow Rotarians,

Mohandas Gandhi once said, "If we are to teach real peace in this world, and if we are to carry on a real war against war, we shall have to begin with the children."

What Gandhi understood so well was simply this: that anger and hatred, arguments and

differences, rivalries and quarrels are not inherited or innate. They are learned. Children who see hate, learn hate. But children who see sharing and love, learn sharing and love.

The way things have always been is not necessarily the way they will always be. For better or for worse, almost any status quo can eventually change. When there is a new threat to be faced, people can be divided by it and fight each other, or they can come together and work together and find a solution to their problems together. Every new challenge has the power to divide – and the power to unite.

In a world of change, Rotary must be the constant. And in a world of increasing needs, Rotary must keep pace by making sure that we have the strength and the numbers to do what needs to be done.

In this Rotary year, I have asked Rotarians everywhere to focus on sharing Rotary through membership. It is time to evaluate where we are in this task. Have we all invited a potential new member to a meeting? If we've succeeded in bringing in a qualified new member, are we helping that member to grow and succeed in Rotary?

Rotary can only continue to serve if it continues to grow. Simply maintaining our membership at current levels will not be enough. As the world's population and its needs continue to rise, we too must rise to the challenge they present.

We must show the world that Service Above Self is more than just a motto, and Rotary Shares more than just a theme. These words are our truth – a truth that defines us, and all of Rotary.

Many decades ago now, Gandhi – who I think would have made a very good Rotarian – said something else that resonates with us as Rotarians: “Man becomes great exactly in the degree in which he works for the welfare of his fellow men.”

Each of us has the opportunity to become great through our Rotary service. Let us all be sure that this is an opportunity that we seize.

Wilfrid J. (Wilf) Wilkinson
President, Rotary International

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