

## MEETING OF MAY 6, 2008

### Minutes of Meeting of April 29, 2008

- President Freddy Walter presided over the meeting.
- Travis Sisson offered the invocation.
- Felicia Warren led the Club in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Valerie Sartin introduced visiting Rotarians and guests.
- Amal Mitra was a guest of Susan Steen
- David Davies was a guest of John Guice
- Ryan Galey was a guest of Patrick Ward
- Thank you to James Duncan for serving as greeter.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 1) Susan Steen introduced Amal Mitra as an applicant for the Ambassadorial Scholarship. The Rotary Foundation is currently the world's largest, private sponsor of university-level international scholarships. The Ambassadorial Scholarships and Rotary Grants for University Teachers support approximately 800 students studying abroad annually. The Ambassadorial Scholarship awards \$24,000.00 for one academic year of study abroad. Amal Mitra stated he is from Bangladesh and wishes to go back. Bangladesh has a great need for public health. If anyone has a question about Rotary Foundation sponsored scholarships, Susan Steen is the Rotarian working on scholarships for our club.
- 2) Freddy asked for nominations to be submitted for RYLA. RYLA (Rotary Youth Leadership Awards) is for incoming seniors only. The program is designed to teach

advanced leadership techniques. Last call for Grover scholarship applications is also upon us.

- 3) An invitation to an event dedicating a facility to former Rotarian Jerry Ryan has been extended to all Rotarians. The dedication will be at the Long Leaf Trace Gateway, 2895 4<sup>th</sup> Street, near USM, Saturday, May 10 at 10:30 a.m. Jerry was a dedicated member of our club and was very active in our community as an avid biker and photography enthusiast. All Rotarians are urged to attend. Jerry was a dedicated member of our club and very active in our community as an avid biker and photography enthusiast.
- 4) Richard Topp announced that Josiah Burns, Rotary Scholar to New Zealand, will be the speaker for May 13, 2008.
- 5) Gary Garner received the Newspaper Award from the District Conference for his efforts with Spokes. He extended a thank you to everyone who has contributed to the Spokes newsletter. Gary is also looking for an apprentice to help and someday take over the program.

## LAST WEEK'S PROGRAM

Perrin Lowrey introduced Attorney Moran McLelland Pope Jr.. Moran shared some of his famous stories from his life experiences and left the door open for more in the future.

## THIS WEEK'S PROGRAM

Rick Taylor is the Executive Director of the Hattiesburg Tourism Commission, whose role is to grow the local tourism industry and operate the Hattiesburg Visitors Center, and the Hattiesburg Convention

Commission, which operates the Lake Terrace Convention Center, Historic Saenger Theater, the East 6th Street USO Club and the historic Eureka School.

Since his arrival in 1993, Rick has instituted a variety of programs to increase the visibility of the Hattiesburg area and grow the local tourism industry. The result has been Hattiesburg's recognition as a dynamic environment for leisure travelers, meeting and convention delegates, sports enthusiasts and tournament participants. The development, construction and highly successful operation of the Lake Terrace Convention Center has made Hattiesburg a leader in the meetings industry in Mississippi and the Southeast. Three times, the Lake Terrace Convention Center has been awarded ConventionSouth Magazine's Reader's Choice Award for Exceptional Convention Facility.

In addition to facility management, Rick is responsible for the operation and management of VISITHATTIESBURG, which has been recognized by their peers in the state as Mississippi's CVB of the Year in 1999, 2001 and 2004. In 2004, the results of an 18-month research and branding

project received a Gold, Silver and Bronze Award for outstanding tourism marketing by the Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association, International. Hattiesburg joined Las Vegas, Barbados and Malaysia to be recognized as the best marketing programs of 2004. In 1996, the Hattiesburg CVB was awarded the nation's top tourism public relations honor, the Edward L. Bernay's Award, for bringing Olympic Teams to Hattiesburg prior to the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta.

For his leadership and knowledge of tourism development and his marketing savvy, Rick was inducted into the Mississippi Tourism Hall of Fame in 2006.

Prior to moving to Hattiesburg, Rick worked five years in tourism development in the British, French and Dutch islands of the Caribbean. He received his BA from Ambassador University in Los Angeles and his MS in Economic Development from the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg. Rick and his wife, Vicki, are the completely exhausted parents of two very active boys, Skye and Archer. They often reminisce of relaxing weekends with a good cup of coffee and a newspaper.

**Editor: Gary Garner**