

## MEETING OF SEPT. 19, 2006

### Minutes of Meeting of Sept. 12, 2006

- Conrad Welker, President, presided over the meeting
- Francis Farmer led in the invocation.
- Tom Potter led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.
- Kristy Gould introduced visitors and visiting Rotarians:
  - ✓ Richard Begley and Ken Ribelin visited from the Petal Club.
  - ✓ Mark Dever was a guest of Rob Jackson.
  - ✓ Jarrod Gray was a guest of Andy Mercier.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 1) Robert Cornett and Bill Pace were our greeters.
- 2) Birthdays and anniversaries were recognized.

### LAST WEEK'S PROGRAM

Mike Ratliff introduced and welcomed Jenna Brown and Robert Gore who were present to tell the Club about their experiences at RYLA (Rotary Youth Leadership Awards) this past summer. Jenna and Robert both indicated that the RYLA meeting in New Orleans was a positive and life-changing event. RYLA leaders gave presentations on leadership, team building and the value of the Rotary Club. Both RYLA scholars made new friends and will encourage other student leaders to participate in RYLA if invited.

Jenna Brown is currently a student at Piney Woods School. Robert Gore is a student at Hattiesburg High School. Jorge Jimenez, a

student at Presbyterian Christian School, was also selected to attend the RYLA convention.

### THIS WEEK'S PROGRAM

James "Jerry" Michael Fortino, District Governor of District 6840 for the 2005-2007 Rotary International Year, is our guest speaker.

"Jerry" Fortino was born and raised in Grand Ledge, Michigan. He graduated *cum laude* from the University of Notre Dame in 1956 and got his M.D. from the University of Michigan Medical School in 1960. He then came to New Orleans for his internship at Charity Hospital. On Monday, August 1, 1960 at 10:00 he met Carolyn, a student nurse who came into his ward to learn patient nursing. Carolyn and Jerry have been working side-by-side ever since – first as intern and student nurse and then later as pediatrician and registered nurse in their pediatric clinic for a total of 46 years thus far. They were married on September 8, 1962, as soon as Carolyn graduated as a R.N. They have four children and ten grandchildren.

Jerry has twenty-six years of perfect Rotary attendance. In 2001 Carolyn and Jerry attended their first international Rotary Convention in San Antonio. Their interest in Rotary was so stimulated that they have not missed an international Rotary Convention since and Carolyn became an active Rotarian along side her husband. They love having Rotarians from around the world come to New Orleans and showing them the Mardi Gras and of course, visiting these same Rotarians to see their homes and communities. They have many interests from opera and Broadway shows to gardening...they seldom stay home in the evening. You might catch them at the ballet, dining in New Orleans' fine restaurants, teaching dance lessons, museum hopping or attending charity benefits. For many years, Jerry and Carolyn have been collecting 19<sup>th</sup> century Louisiana Oil Paintings and they have

decorated their home with English and Louisiana Plantation antiques.

The Fortinos are retired from private pediatrics. They both donate four days a week and treat Medicaid patients only, especially those with attention deficit disorder or respiratory allergy. Carolyn and Jerry are both members of the Algiers Rotary Club in New Orleans, Louisiana. Jerry was named *Rotarian of the Year* in 2003 and *Rotary Club President of the Year* in 2004 by Rotary District 6840.

**WELCOME, DR. FORTINO!!**

## **ROTARY INTERNATIONAL NEWS**

### **Young blood: Why Rotary needs it and how to get it**

By Vanessa N. Glavinskas  
*The Rotarian*

I go to Rotary clubs, and I look at photos, and I think, How did it happen that we don't look like the young businesspeople in Paul Harris' first club?" says Rosemary Barker Aragon, regional Rotary International membership coordinator for Zone 23 (USA).

A recent study shows that most Rotarians are between the ages of 50 and 59. Rotarians under 40 make up only 11 percent of overall membership.

"If we don't get enough young people into Rotary, then Rotary will die," RI President Bill Boyd told the newest regional Rotary International membership coordinators (RRIMCs) at their training seminar in March. "We take young people and give them that Rotaract experience and then tell them, Go away — come back in 10 years."

Youth program alumni rarely make the transition into Rotary, a pattern that many consider a missed opportunity. After all,

participants in Interact, Rotaract, Rotary Youth Leadership Awards, Rotary Youth Exchange, and Group Study Exchange are selected because they represent the best of the best in their age group. Many are sponsored by Rotarians or The Rotary Foundation to travel abroad, where they learn about the organization and develop exceptional leadership skills. About 84 percent of current RI and Foundation educational program participants say they would like to join Rotary someday. Still, most of them are not invited to join.

"There are many clubs [in England] who say, 'Why would they want to join us? We are not working, we're older and set in our ways,' rather than trying to make their club attractive to younger people," says RRIMC John Hockin, of the Rotary Club of Woodhall Spa, England. And some Rotarians in Europe and Japan believe that young people don't have enough professional experience to be Rotarians.

"There are clubs that say at age 25, you can't be at the top," says Argentine RRIMC Modesta Genesio de Stabio, who hails from a region with a relatively high proportion of young Rotarians. "But you have to know who are the young leaders in your community and invite them into Rotary."

In 2001, the Rotary Club of Birigui, Brazil, did just that. After having little success recruiting younger people, the club's members decided to establish a new club and looked to young community leaders to become its charter members.

Mauricio Barbeiro, a 28-year-old systems analyst, was courted because of his demonstrated leadership in Interact. "Today, we work in partnership with our founding club," says Barbeiro of the new Birigui-Cidade Pérola club. "We can reach other levels in society by promoting something in places older people don't go, like a dance club, for example.

People in my city don't relate Rotary to old people. They relate Rotary to service."

In other parts of the world, young professionals are actually reshaping the business landscape, which gives current Rotarians another incentive to recruit them. "In India, more and more youth are getting into business," says Ramachandran Ganapathi, a member of the RI Membership Development and Retention Committee and the Rotary Club of Madras-T. Nagar, India. He notes that this trend, combined with the country's rapid economic growth, means tomorrow's leaders will be younger than ever before. "As the IT [information technology] sector booms, we try to make Rotary attractive to its leaders."

Sam F. Owori, of the Rotary Club of Kampala, Uganda, says clubs in his district use Rotaract as a recruiting tool. "Many Rotaractors know more about Rotary than the Rotarians," Owori says. Rotaractors around age 30 begin visiting Rotary clubs in their area to determine which one they would feel most comfortable joining. "They join [Rotaract] with their sights set on becoming Rotarians," he says.

Although recruiting younger members is crucial to ensuring a strong future for Rotary, many RRIMCs point out that seasoned members are still the backbone of the organization. They bring both knowledge and

resources to their clubs, and older members, especially retirees, often have more time than younger members to devote to service projects, not to mention a wealth of business savvy to pass on.

Because demographics and cultural norms vary by region, there's no single best way to attract younger members. But if you're concerned about the future of Rotary in your area, take a look at your local business community and compare it with your club. Do they reflect the same picture? If not, raise the issue with club leadership for discussion. Your club might consider supporting one of Rotary's youth programs or keeping better tabs on youth program alumni for future recruitment. Also, stay aware of volunteer trends, and keep an eye on other organizations in your region. Is there a young professionals group that potential Rotarians flock to over your club? Finally, try to picture your club 10 years from now. Who will be in charge? Will the club still be a pillar in your community? Get everyone involved in keeping your club relevant. After all, the next 100 years are up to you.

**Editor: Gary Garner**