

## MEETING OF NOV. 14, 2006

### Minutes of Meeting of Nov. 7, 2006

- Presiding: Conrad Welker
- Invocation: Joe Riley
- Pledge of Allegiance: Dan Kibodeaux
- Introduction of Visiting Rotarians and guests: Kristy Gould
  - ✓ George Karnes was a guest of Frances Karnes.
  - ✓ Pierce Stevens and Milton Wheeler were visitors from the Petal Club.
  - ✓

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 1) Greeters were: Skippy Haik and Stanley Carpenter
- 2) Thanks to Joe Spell for sharing his great sense of humor as well as his most talented singing voice.
- 3) The Edgewater Club announced that it has moved its monthly meeting to the Bone Fish Bar and Grill in Edgewater Mall. Bone Fish has re-opened after the storm.
- 4) It was also announced that the St. Bernard Parish club is moving its meeting to a permanent location after Katrina. The club also thanked the North Shore club for providing their meals since July.
- 5) Members were also encouraged to vote today.
- 6) Milam Cotton asked for volunteers to assist him with a clean-up project at Oaklawn Cemetery.

- 7) Dave Senne reminded members that the Christmas Party is scheduled for December 5, 2006 at Southern Oaks. The event will begin at 6:00 p.m. Attending this party will count for attendance at a regular meeting. Invitations and additional information will be mailed out within the next two weeks.

### LAST WEEK'S PROGRAM

Kris King introduced the speaker, Steve Floyd.

Steve moved back to the Hattiesburg area in 1994 and took over the re-development of the Cloverleaf Mall. At that time, the complex had a 30% occupancy rate. Today, 95% of the complex is occupied. The property has now become the Cloverleaf Center with retail on the outside and office facilities on the inside.

Bearing Point, an international software development company has its only United States location in Cloverleaf. Walmart.com has recently expanded its lease to encompass 65,000 square feet. When fully expanded, Walmart.com will have 700 work stations that will operate 24 hours a day.

Floyd says retailers and others who look to the Hattiesburg area as a location don't just look at the number of people living in Hattiesburg. He says Hattiesburg serves a population of 340,000 within a 40 mile radius, making it a great location for retail and restaurant locations.

### THIS WEEK'S PROGRAM

**Robin Robinson is our speaker.**

Ms. Robinson was appointed to the Mississippi Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning by Governor Haley Barbour for a term to expire in May 2015. She received a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration with an emphasis in accounting from The University of Southern Mississippi. Ms. Robinson is the Director of Organization Development and Corporate Communication at Sanderson Farms, Inc. She serves as chairman of Leadership Mississippi and currently serves as vice chair of the M.B. Swayze Education Foundation. She serves on the Board of Directors for the following organizations: The University of Southern Mississippi Alumni

Association International, Jones County Junior College Foundation, the United Way of the Pine Belt and the American Lung Association, Mississippi Chapter. Ms. Robinson also serves our state as a member of the Southern Growth Policies Board and the Mississippi Supreme Court Judicial Advisory Study Committee. In 2003, Ms. Robinson was appointed by Governor Musgrove to serve on the Mississippi Gaming Commission. She served as chairman of the Board of Directors and National President of Business and Professional Women/USA, chairman of the Board of Trustees for the BPW/USA Foundation and is past president of the Mississippi Federation of Business and Professional Women. Ms. Robinson has been named as one of Mississippi's 50 Leading Women, recognized by the Mississippi YWCA as a "Woman Who Makes a Difference," named one of America's 2000 Notable Women, and has been inducted into The University of Southern Mississippi Alumni Hall of Fame.

## **ROTARY INTERNATIONAL NEWS**

### **Rotarians rebuild hope in New Orleans**

**By Bettina Kozlowski  
Rotary International News**

When U.S. President George W. Bush spoke on 29 August at Warren Easton Fundamental Senior High School in New Orleans, which he selected as his platform to address the nation on the first anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, members of the Rotary Club of New Orleans were among the VIP guests. They watched as the first lady, Laura Bush, handed the school's librarian a \$70,000 check to rebuild Warren Easton's damaged library.

But long before the president and the first lady came to Warren Easton, Rotarians rallied to save the public school that had been a source of pride in a shaken community.

### ***The devastation***

After the hurricane struck on 29 August 2005, the city's levees burst, and 5 feet of water covered Warren Easton's first floor. The flood damaged electrical wiring, plumbing, walls, floors, furniture, and equipment. In all, the historical landmark building suffered \$3 million

in damages.

The devastation was more than financial, though: It was also emotional. Warren Easton had long served as a beacon of hope for many inner-city, minority families. The school had garnered a national Blue Ribbon designation from the U.S. Department of Education for its students' academic excellence. On average, 90 percent of its graduates went to college, a rarity among New Orleans public schools.

When the school board announced Warren Easton might need to be sold and transformed into a condominium complex, the news was a blow to the community. Judy Demarest, a veteran Warren Easton English teacher and the school's Interact club faculty adviser, appealed to local Rotarians for help. They didn't let her down. They couldn't. The Rotarians knew what the school meant to poor New Orleans residents.

### ***Calling all Rotarians***

"Without the kids, this place will remain desolate," says Henry Lowentritt, of the Rotary Club of New Orleans, who's managed the Warren Easton renovation project since March. "Teachers, parents, and kids who've left New Orleans won't be back without quality schools."

Along with the school's newly established charter foundation, New Orleans Rotarians lobbied the city school board to reopen Warren Easton in time for this year's fall semester. In the club's weakened state, the Big Easy Rotarians couldn't have done it alone, says Lowentritt. Many members were recovering from personal hurricane damage, and some clubs had lost their meeting spaces.

Clubs in California, Florida, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, New York, and even Germany helped the New Orleans Rotarians in raising \$60,000 for rebuilding Warren Easton.

But Rotarians donated much more than money to the project. They also gave 2,000 hours of "sweat equity," as Lowentritt puts it. Visiting Rotarian volunteers paid for their own airfare and lodging. They brought kneepads, putty knives and, in some cases, respirators to work eight-hour shifts inside the school. They repainted and stripped about a third of the

school's classrooms, the main administration office, and two staircases. They also replaced old chalkboards with new dry-erase boards and installed new bulletin boards.

The volunteers ran a 300-foot garden hose from a working faucet to a second-floor restroom so they could use running water, and they drew electricity from cables strung from utility poles on the street.

As the group worked inside, former students and other teens and parents clamored for the school application forms Demarest was handing out in front of the building. The entire community waited in anticipation for Warren Easton to open.

### ***The rebuild***

On 7 September, the Rotarians' dream came true. Club members stood in front of the school's marquee, where a Service Above Self banner hung, and welcomed back some of the 800 students who poured through the school's doors for their first day back at Warren Easton since Katrina struck. Despite struggling to overcome personal losses, they had helped build a new, improved New Orleans. "This is the most important thing we, as a club, have ever done," Lowentritt says. He pauses. "It's the most important thing I've ever done."

The Rotarians see their work at Warren Easton as far from over, though. They still want to improve plumbing, replace window shades, repair and resupply science labs, and refurbish athletic facilities.

With a recent \$33,000 Rotary Foundation grant from the Katrina Relief Donor Advised Fund to help cover those needs, along with more funds coming from the New Orleans club and the Warren Easton Charter Foundation, the school can look forward to \$100,000 in new donations.

The Warren Easton Charter Foundation vice president, Arthur Hardy, says the school may not have reopened without the Rotarians' help. "The long-range effects of their work will be evident to students for years to come, but more importantly, the example set by Rotary will live in our hearts forever," he says.

### **KID'S STUFF!**

**Be sure you don't read the bottom until you've worked it out! Work this out as you read ...**

1. First of all, pick the number of times a week that you would like to go out to eat (more than once but less than 10).
2. Multiply this number by 2 (just to be bold).
3. Add 5.
4. Multiply it by 50.
5. If you have already had your birthday this year add 1756 .... If you haven't, add 1755.
6. Now subtract the four digit year that you were born.

You should have a three digit number.  
The first digit of this was your original number (I.e., how many times you want to go out to restaurants in a week.)

The next two numbers are

YOUR AGE! (Oh YES, it is!!!!)

THIS IS THE ONLY YEAR (2006) IT WILL  
EVER WORK, SO SPREAD IT AROUND  
WHILE IT LASTS!

**Editor: Gary Garner**