

MEETING OF NOVEMBER 28, 2006

Minutes of Meeting of Nov. 21, 2006

- Presiding: Conrad Welker
- Invocation: Conrad Welker
- Pledge of Allegiance: Bill MacLauchlan
- No visitors

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 1) David Senne reminded members of the Christmas Party scheduled for Southern Oaks on the evening of December 5. Entertainment will be provided by the Carpenter's Wood. The event begins with a social hour at 6 p.m. Dinner will follow with entertainment afterwards.
- 2) Members were reminded to vote in the runoff elections today.
- 3) Conrad reminded board members of the board meeting at 10:45 a.m. on Tuesday, November 28. He also noted that club members will be manning the Salvation Army Kettle at Turtle Creek Mall on Saturday, December 16 from 10 a.m. until 8 p.m. A sign up sheet will be available next week.
- 4) It was also reported that Joe Spell has apparently taken a fall. Club members wish him a speedy return to his Rotary friends.
- 5) Remember the Christmas Party on December 5th at Southern Oaks. Fellowship at 6:00 p.m. &

Dinner at 7:00. Sign up and be there or be nowhere!!

- 6) Did you know? Al Brush of the Rotary Club of Laurel, MS became the first Paul Harris Fellow in 1957. Will you or someone you know be the one-millionth?
- 7) Election of Board Members & Officers for the 2007-2008 Rotary Year: [Vote for four of the eight Board of Directors candidates below:]
Todd Bradley, John Curley, James Duncan, Kristy Gould, Perrin Lowery, Bill McCleod, Maura McLaughlin, & Susan Steen
Candidates for Officers are:
Freddy Walter – President
Richard Topp – President-Elect
Steve Ramp – Vice President
A.D. Hunt – Secretary/Treasurer

LAST WEEK'S PROGRAM

Kris King introduced the speaker, Ramona Lockett with Bethany Christian Services.

Ms. Lockett, a graduate from the University of Southern Mississippi and currently employed with Bethany gave members a good overview of what Bethany is all about. The national organization has four offices in Mississippi, including the one in Hattiesburg. The mission of the organization is to provide adoption alternatives and counseling to mothers in need. Ms. Lockett noted that Bethany is a pro-life organization and does not make abortion referrals. The non-profit organization employs about 900 people and opened its Hattiesburg office in 1985.

In addition to the adoption services, Bethany offers foster care services, infertility

counseling and infant supply provisions. They also operate 24 x 7 at an 800 number that will connect a person in need to a birth parent twenty-four hours a day.

Ms. Lockett reported that the youngest person going through their program was 12 years of age. The average age of participants is 17 to 20. Twenty-six infants were placed through Bethany last year at a cost of between \$7,000 and \$17,000. The adoption fees are based on 10% of the adoptive family's income. There are tax credits available to adoptive parents in amounts up to \$10,000. Mothers are able to follow their children placed by Bethany through a communications system they have established. Although direct contact between the mother and child are prohibited, Bethany does coordinate communications between the adoptive parents and the birth mother.

There is a need for African-American adoptive families in the Hattiesburg area. If you know of a family interested, please ask them to contact Bethany Christian Services.

THIS WEEK'S PROGRAM

Billy Scruggs is our speaker today. After graduating from Southern Miss with a degree in Mathematics, Billy began his professional career with NASA, working in the Apollo Space Program. After three years, he left to take a job with W.E. Walker Stores, Inc. in their Data Processing Department. In 1970, he accepted a job as Director of the Computing Center at Southern Miss. After retiring from Southern Miss, he started a consulting business, providing Information Technology services to Business, Industry, and Education. In May of 2004, he became the Coordinator of Community Service for the Twelfth Judicial Circuit Court District under the direction of District Attorney, Jon Mark Weathers.

The Forrest Perry Counties Community Service Work and Restitution program is a community-based corrections program which allows non-violent offenders to

perform community service for various governmental and non-profit agencies, make restitution to victims, and adhere to various rules, regulations and conditions of probation over a period of years. Participants pay a monthly supervision fee which allows the program to be self-sustaining.

The Community Service program was established at the request of District Attorney, Jon Mark Weathers. The program was approved and implemented in the Twelfth Judicial Circuit Court District by Order of Circuit Judge Bob Helfrich.

Currently, over 300 persons are participating either in the Community Service Program or Pre-Trial Diversion..

HERE IS A GREAT WAY TO START OFF THE CHRISTMAS SEASON:

A Different Christmas Poem

*The embers glowed softly, and in their dim light, I gazed round the room and I cherished the sight.

*My wife was asleep, her head on my chest, my daughter beside me, angelic in rest.

*Outside the snow fell, a blanket of white, transforming the yard to a winter delight.

*The sparkling lights in the tree, I believe, completed the magic that was Christmas Eve.

*My eyelids were heavy, my breathing was deep, secure and surrounded by love I would sleep.

*In perfect contentment, or so it would seem, so I slumbered, perhaps I started to dream.

*The sound wasn't loud, and it wasn't too near, but I opened my eyes when it tickled my ear.

*Perhaps just a cough, I didn't quite know, then the sure sound of footsteps outside in the snow.

*My soul gave a tremble, I struggled to hear, and I crept to the door just to see who was near.

*Standing out in the cold and the dark of the night, a lone figure stood, his face weary and tight.

*A soldier, I puzzled, some twenty years old, perhaps a Marine, huddled here in the cold.

*Alone in the dark, he looked up and smiled, standing watch over me, and my wife and my child.

*"What are you doing?" I asked without fear, "come in this moment, it's freezing out here!"

*Put down your pack, brush the snow from you sleeve, you should be at home on a cold Christmas Eve!"

*For barely a moment I saw his eyes shift, away from the cold and the snow blown in drifts.

*To the window that danced with a warm fire's light; then he sighed and he said "it's really all right, I'm out here by choice. I'm here every night."

*"It's my duty to stand at the front of the line, that separates you from the darkest of times.

*No one had to ask or beg or implore me, I'm proud to stand here like my fathers before me.

*My gramps died at 'Pearl' on a day in December,"

*Then he sighed, "that's a Christmas Gram always remembers.

*My dad stood his watch in the jungles of 'Nam," and now it is my turn and so, here I am.

*I've not seen my own son in more than a while, but my wife sends me pictures, he's sure got her smile."

*Then he bent and he carefully pulled from his bag, the red, white, and blue...an American flag.

*"I can live through the cold and the being alone, away from my family, my house and my home.

*I can stand at my post through the rain and the sleet, I can sleep in a foxhole with little to eat.

*I can carry the weight of killing another, or lay down my life with my sister and brother...

*Who stand at the front against any and all, to ensure for all time that this flag will not fall."

*"So go back inside," he said, "harbor no fright, your family is waiting and I'll be all right."

*"But isn't there something I can do, at the least, give you money," I asked, "or prepare you a feast?"

*It seems all too little for all that you've done, for being away from your wife and your son."

*Then his eye welled a tear that held no regret, "just tell us you love us, and never forget..."

*To fight for our rights back at home while we're gone, to stand your own watch, no matter how long.

*For when we come home, either standing or dead, to know you remember we fought and we bled.

*Is payment enough, and with that we will trust, that we mattered to you as you mattered to us."

Editor: Gary Garner