

MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2007

Minutes of Meeting of September 4, 2007

- President Freddy Walter presided over the meeting.
- Richard Topp offered the invocation.
- Jeff Bowman led the Club in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Valerie Sartin and Gene Owens served as our Greeters.
- Tina Lowrimore welcomed visitors:
 - ✓ David Owens was a guest of Gene Owens.
 - ✓ Chris Martin was a guest of Dan Kibodeaux.
 - ✓ Frank Derks of the Netherlands and Derk Weber of Switzerland were guests of Robert Lockhead.
- Freddy welcome Sam Britton, a Rotarian transferring in from the Columbia Club.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Francis Farmer then conducted the monthly auction. One gift certificate from Anytime Fitness and one from Francis Farmer Photography were auctioned off. Erik Graham was the high bidder on the Anytime Fitness certificate for \$40. Mike McMillan was the high bidder on the Francis Farmer certificate at \$55. The proceeds from the auction will be donated to the Rotary Foundation.

LAST WEEK'S PROGRAM

Freddy then introduced today's Donna Milton, the wife of District Governor Milton Wheeler. Mr. Wheeler was then introduced as today's visitor and guest speaker.

Milton presented the newest Club members with their Blue Badges and welcomed them to the Club and to Rotary International. He pointed out that the Hattiesburg Rotary Club is the second oldest club in the district, having been founded in 1918. Our club is currently the fourth largest club in District 6840. Milton pointed out that the Club's current membership stands at 112 members, the same number the Club had when he was

District Governor several years ago. He challenged the new Blue Badge recipients and other members of the Club to focus on membership recruitment over the next few months.

Rotary International is the oldest service club in the world, according to Milton. It is also the most international of all service clubs, existing in 170 nations. Rotarians are invited to become members and must have discretionary authority in their job. Rotarians also have a fifty percent attendance requirement. The thought is, the more a person attends meetings the more likely they are to do things.

The Rotary theme for this year is "Rotary Shares". Dr. Wheeler pointed out that Rotarians share their wisdom, their time, their resources their kindness and their love. He pointed out that twenty-one million dollars in actual money has been contributed to south Mississippi and Louisiana since Hurricane "K". Rotary has built and given away eleven new homes in Pass Christian with three more under construction. The goal is to build a total of 100 free homes for "K" victims. The only stipulation a new owner must agree to upon accepting the keys to one of these new homes is that they will be a good neighbor.

The Group Study Exchange program for the year has a theme of Levee Construction. Our exchange program will be conducted with the Netherlands, who are experts in levee construction. District 6840 needs to find four non-Rotarian engineers who would be willing to visit the Netherlands, all expenses paid, to learn the technique of levee building. Those nominees need to be selected in the near future and must be between the ages of 25 to 35.

Milton invited Club members to attend the upcoming District Conference which will be held in downtown New Orleans. The District Conference is to be held April 17 - 20, 2008. He noted that the International Conference was to have been held in New Orleans. Those plans were made impossible by storm damage. It is the goal to host the International Conference in 2011.

Milton concluded his presentation by thanking the Rotary Club of Hattiesburg for their hospitality and support over the years. He also noted that Rotarians work and he challenged Club members to, "Get out there and see what you can do this year."

Thanks for the challenge, Milton!

THIS WEEK'S PROGRAM

The speaker for today is Charles Brown, who has spoken to our club before. Charles is a decorated Vietnam Veteran.

He will speak to us today about East Hattiesburg, especially the Mobile Street area when it was a major economic are of Hattiesburg.

A new look at global ethics and The Four-Way Test

By RI Director-elect Lars-Olof Fredriksson

September 2007

Moral codes and ethics give us tools but also raise questions to be answered: How should we live? What is morally good and bad, right and wrong? Shall we aim at happiness or knowledge? Virtue or the creation of beautiful objects? If we choose happiness, will it be our own or the happiness of all?

And what of the more specific questions that face us? Is it right to be dishonest for a good cause? Can we justify living in opulence while elsewhere in the world people are starving? Is going to war warranted in cases where innocent people will likely be killed?

Ethics deals with such questions at all levels. The subject's core consists of the fundamental issues of practical decision making, and its major concerns include the nature of ultimate value and the standards by which human actions can be judged right or wrong.

For Rotary, The Four-Way Test is the cornerstone of all action. It has been for years, and it will be in the future. Of the things we think, say or do

- 1) Is it the TRUTH?
- 2) Is it FAIR to all concerned?
- 3) Will it build GOODWILL and BETTER FRIENDSHIPS?
- 4) Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned?

The test is one of the hallmarks of Rotary. Since it was developed in 1932 by Herbert J. Taylor, who later became RI president, it has never ceased to be relevant. Its four brief questions are not based on culture or religion. Instead, they are a simple checklist for ethical behavior. They transcend generations and national borders.

As Rotarians, we should have The Four-Way Test in mind in every decision we make, all day long. Our utmost responsibility is to speak the truth, to be fair, to build goodwill and better friendships, and to do our very best in all situations.

Life is very turbulent today, and people all over the world are exhausted in their duties. Where are the dreams of a better world? Where are we? Who are we? What is our duty to ourselves, neighbors, and fellow citizens? Where are charity and our joint responsibility to humankind?

Now more than ever, we need a vision and knowledge of what is happening around us, a new view of cultural and religious phenomena, without dividing humankind into limited and subjective categories. That's the tenet for a better world and a job for us Rotarians: not engaging in politics, but serving without any boundaries.

This happens through our programs, and it happens through acting as a guide for international coexistence, providing a forum for dialogue and discussion worldwide, giving perspective to views and models, finding new solutions using Rotarians' great knowledge and expertise, and having interfaith, multicultural, and ethical standards as guiding principles in all dealings.

No divine right can be vested in anyone to pronounce the final word or the ultimate truth. In matters of faith and religion, prescriptive morality should be avoided, as it often is the root cause of hostility and divisiveness. Global ethics is based on an interfaith mind and ecumenical way of living.

The one universal, unsurpassed principle expressed by nearly every major religion and values system is similar to the golden rule: Do to others as you would have them do to you.

Today, it is especially confusing to determine what is really right and wrong. But the fundamentals of Rotary are bound to universal ethics and humanity without any boundaries between race, religion, or ethnic background.

Rotary offers a possibility for solving ethical problems. Well-trained, well-engaged in social life, and with strong consciences, Rotarians must try to address these issues through Rotary's vocational and community service programs. People all over the world need more safety, tolerance, understanding, and love. They want to live in peace.

Tolerance, fairness, respect, compassion, and hope are particularly needed today. But what are tolerance and fairness? Are they only a question of sharing resources, rights, and obligations, or more a question of an ongoing dialogue? For an effective discourse, we have to identify the real problems, discuss them, and try to find compromises.

We should know what the human culture is made of, and what it means to different people and to the identity of other nationalities. The knowledge of other cultures, along with the skill to face the dissimilarities in our lives and lifestyles, seems to be a key point and the biggest issue.

Rotary, whose club members represent many cultures and religious beliefs and are committed to high ethical standards, can support mutual understanding and serve as a tool for peace. Rotarians and Rotary clubs all over the world — in small country towns and huge capitals, in the East and West, South and North — may provide enduring forums for peace discussions and together work for peace.

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

THE INDIVIDUAL WHO ONLY DOES ENOUGH WORK TO GET BY SELDOM GETS MUCH MORE THAN "BY."

There is a cause-and-effect relationship between your actions and the rewards that accrue to you. When you put more of yourself into your career, your personal relationships, your religious faith, and any other aspect of your life, you get more out of it. If your ambitions are no greater than simply "getting by" in life, you will never be truly happy with your company, your job, or yourself unless you do your best every day. Your harshest critic and your toughest competitor should be you.

The Napoleon Hill
Foundation

Editor: Gary Garner
