

## **MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 4, 2007**

### **Minutes of Meeting of August 28, 2007**

- President Freddy Walter presided over the meeting.
- Mike McMillan offered the invocation.
- Francis Farmer led the Club in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Matt Devereaux and Tom Potter served as our Greeters.
- Tina Lowrimore noted that we had no guests and no visiting Rotarians for the day.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- 1) Freddy announced that October 22 is the date for the annual golf tournament. December 11 is the date for the annual Christmas Party. April 22, 2008 is the date for the Night in Italy event.
- 2) It was also announced that District Governor Milton Wheeler will be our guest next week. One-hundred percent attendance is requested.
- 3) Freddy then introduced Jay Dean with the University of Southern Mississippi Symphony/Orchestra. He noted that the USM Symphony and Orchestra is truly an international organization with more than 50% of student members coming from other countries. He also noted that the organization will open its 87<sup>th</sup> season next week with an event at the Sanger Theatre. A calendar of all of their events for the coming season was distributed to all members who were asked to attend and

support the Symphony and Orchestra.

- 4) Annie Wimbish, Superintendent of the Hattiesburg Public School system used the opportunity to thank Jay Dean and the University of Southern Mississippi for supporting the public school system. Five hundred tickets to events throughout the season have been contributed to Hattiesburg High and distributed to students.
- 5) Dr. William "Bill" E. Tolbert, a new dentist in town with offices on Lincoln Road Extension, has been approved by the Board for membership. He is a former Rotarian in Bay Springs, MS.

### **LAST WEEK'S MEETING**

Allen Anderson then introduced today's guest speaker, Bill Moak, Executive Director of the Better Business Bureau. Allen noted that Bill is a third generation University of Southern Mississippi student and is the son-in-law of the late Squat Rock Grantham, a well known area football player when he was in high school and at USM.

Bill indicated to club members that the Better Business Bureau is important to the business community for the work it does to protect good businesses and consumers. He noted that the many Katrina fraud cases over the past two years has left a blemish on the entire Mississippi business community and is something we should all be working together to overcome.

The BBB focuses on increased victimization of older adults, resolving disputes between consumers and

businesses, investigating questionable practices, providing pre-purchase information to companies and educating the public about product and company abuses. Another area the Bureau is involved in is the review of advertising and challenges to unethical advertising content. Bill used as an example the “going out of business” sales that seem to go on for years and years. And finally, the Bureau reviews charities throughout the state, making sure that money raised for charities goes to those charities.

The Bureau also notes trends in complaints against companies and reports those trends to law enforcement agencies. They share information with investigators when trends indicate a problem by providing the complaint information to the investigators. Bill pointed out that the Bureau does not have enforcement powers but does work closely with law enforcement to protect Mississippians.

The Bureau serves all but six northern-most counties in the state. If you have a concern or a complaint Bill suggests you call 1-800-987-8280 or visit their website at [www.bbbms.org](http://www.bbbms.org).

The Bureau has been involved in several of the home improvement scams that have been incurring since Katrina. Citizens, particularly the elderly become

victims of contractors who gain their trust and convince the older adults to give them money up front for roof repairs or other home repairs. After the money is produced the contractors vanish or move on to other neighborhoods where they create more victims.

Bill also reported that a number of scams are on-going throughout Mississippi and the nation where people are using the telephone and the Internet to try and obtain personal and sensitive information. Once obtained, the information is then used to steal identities and create financial havoc. Bill reminded members that reputable organizations will never ask you for your Social Security Number or your bank account number and when someone does, you should be immediately suspicious.

Finally, Bill suggested that members get on the national Do Not Call list to avoid telemarketing scams. You can do that by visiting [www.donotcall.gov](http://www.donotcall.gov) or calling the Do Not Call Registry at 1-888-382-1222.

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**THIS WEEK’S MEETING**

**District Governor Milton Wheeler  
Is our Speaker**

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**Editor: Gary Garner**