

CARL MICHEL

TEAM LEADER

AGE: 38

BIRTH DATE: FEBRUARY 27, 1976

HOMETOWN: SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

CURRENT CITY: NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

VOCATION: ATTORNEY, PUBLIC LAW

ASSISTANT GOVERNOR, DISTRICT 6840

PAST PRESIDENT, ROTARY CLUB OF NEW ORLEANS RIVERBEND



Hello & greetings from New Orleans!

My name is Carl Michel and I have the honor of leading our Group Study Exchange Team to your District. I am a Past President of the Rotary Club of New Orleans Riverbend, of which I have been a member for almost three years. Aside from being our GSE Team Leader, I also serve as an Assistant District Governor. Next year I will continue in that role as well as Conference Chair and as the New Club Development Chair for our District. It is an exciting time in our District and I am pleased to be given the opportunity to shape the future of Rotary in our region and beyond.

I am originally from San Antonio, Texas where I studied history and criminal justice at St. Mary's University as well as served as president of my fraternity. After graduation I accepted a position as a leadership consultant with my fraternity's headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia. I have also worked in student affairs at a university and lived in San Diego, California.

In March, 2006, I participated in a week-long service learning immersion program in New Orleans, some six months after hurricane Katrina changed the Gulf coast forever. I had visited New Orleans many times before and the week spend there convinced me to be part of a positive change in this community. A few short months later I moved there and have never left.

I studied law at Loyola University New Orleans, becoming president of the student bar association my senior year. I graduated in 2009 and began working in the field of public law with the district attorney's office. I currently serve as an Assistant District Attorney in the child support enforcement division, specifically in the interstate section. Prior to that, I prosecuted criminal offenses in juvenile court and hope to open my own practice in the next year or pursue advanced legal studies outside of the United States, focusing on public international law as I have taken courses in European Union and human rights law.

In addition to Rotary, I am on the Loyola University Law Alumni Board of Directors as the Young Alumni Chairman as well as the Secretary of the Irish Network New Orleans (and no...not Irish in the least, just a fan). I also serve a facilitator at my fraternity's national leadership institute...I tend to stay busy.

My parents are divorced and both live in my hometown and my brother lives in California with his wife and their daughter and son. I get back to Texas to a couple times a year to visit with friends and family, but my home is in New Orleans. Rotary has become an anchor for me here and I'm so fortunate to have found something again to truly feel a part of that can make a difference. What I love the most about Rotary is its potential to be as great as our member can make it. Our shared values give us an ethical framework that transcend the things in life that seem to only divide us and I feel that it is through organizations like Rotary we can make our world a better place.

I am excited to attend club meetings in your district, especially as I transition into my new role of starting new clubs next year. Never being one to waste an opportunity, I have already begun the process of starting a new club in New Orleans, an evening club, meeting in the private room/art gallery of a local bar, focused on attracting younger professionals who are interested in engaging in hands-on service work of both local and international reach. I hope to build a partnership with your district by creating service learning opportunities and an exchange program for professionals, but that is still in the works – so stay tuned!

Service with and for others has been a central theme in my life. I attribute this to my family as serving our community and country is who we are. My parents both have worked in the public sector and tried to make our home a little better than they found it, which rubbed off on my brother and me. My brother and his wife both work for the federal government, protecting our nation every day and they have two great kids. A driving force in all of us is that we are never satisfied with the way things are and enjoy the work of serving others.

I enjoy talking with complete strangers, bourbon, beer, live music, barbeque (Texas...right), classic cars, movies and movie quotes, trivia, working out, camping, shooting, and fancy myself as an adventurer of sorts, so I am willing to try most anything.

I look forward to meeting all of you, to sharing stories, building community and making friendships that will last a lifetime.

Vocational Wish List:

- Courts as well as other government buildings in urban and rural settings
- Melbourne Legal District
- Melbourne Children's Court
- Family Court of Australia
- County Court of Victoria
- Supreme Court of Victoria
- Victoria University, College of Law and Justice
- Private law practices and firms
- Meeting with attorneys who practice in the field of public law, human rights, and immigration

Personal Wish List:

- Australian National Aviation Museum
- Immigration Museum, Melbourne
- Hellenic Museum, Melbourne

- Melbourne Zoo
- See indigenous animals
- St. Patrick's Day celebrations
- Go to an Irish pub(s)
- Greek community
- Melbourne Wine and Food Festival
- Craft cocktail bars (ex. 1806 in Melbourne)
- Hiking and camping overnight in the outback
- Enjoy local food and drinks
- Whiskey distilleries
- Wine Vineyards
- Local/craft beers
- Car museums – love classic cars and driving them
- Hiking, caving, eco-tourism
- Shooting – pistols, rifles, skeet/trap
- Sydney Harbor Bridge & Opera House
- Service projects with Rotary clubs
- Blue Mountains
- See the beach
- Meet and interact with indigenous peoples
- Barbeque

ALEX MICHAEL

TEAM MEMBER

AGE: 25

BIRTH DATE: JANUARY 13, 1989

HOMETOWN: NATCHITOCHEES, LOUISIANA

CURRENT CITY: NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

VOCATION: SALESPERSON – BROADCAST MEDIA

SPONSORED BY:

ROTARY CLUB OF NEW ORLEANS RIVERBEND



Greetings from District 6840, and more specifically, New Orleans, Louisiana! My name is Alex Michael, and I am absolutely thrilled to begin our Group Study Exchange with your district. My aim is to keep this profile both succinct and informative without boring you with small details, so I hope you can get a good sense of who I am from the information provided.

Here's a little information about me, my life, and what I hope to accomplish during my time in Australia.

I've lived in New Orleans for nearly three years and have absolutely loved my time in this wonderful city. For those of you that are lucky enough to visit New Orleans for the GSE Exchange, or simply a vacation, there's definitely something here to pique your interest. I live in the Uptown neighborhood of New Orleans, just two blocks off of St. Charles Avenue. It will be difficult being away from my girlfriend, Katherine, for an entire month, but she understands and appreciates the opportunity I have. I'm not saying that she and my dog, Jabarkus, *won't* miss me when I'm gone, but I do think they'll enjoy some extra peace and quiet.

I moved to New Orleans for my current job with LeSEA Broadcasting after graduating from Louisiana State University (LSU) in 2011. My years at LSU were some of the best years of my life, and some of my fondest memories are of attending LSU football games with over 90,000 fans on a fall night. I hold LSU very near and dear to my heart not just for the education, but for everything the college experience represents. As some say around here, "you may get your degree, but you *NEVER graduate.*"

Now, let me tell you a little about my job and daily activities. I work for LeSEA Broadcasting's local TV station, WHNO-TV, in New Orleans. Our station offers viewers a blend of Christian, family-friendly and local sports programming. My job is simple: bring new business to the company through programming, commercial and digital sales. On any given day I could be talking with the leader of a local church about broadcasting his service to our viewers, or I could be talking to a restaurant about running commercial advertisements during one of our local sports shows. Each day brings new challenges and opportunities.

In my personal time, I am a man of simple pleasures and few needs. I absolutely love sports and spend the majority of my free time playing or watching sports. I love American football, basketball,

golf and tennis. If you'd like to learn more about American sports, please ask me anything as I'm always up for a good sports discussion. I understand that sport is a major part of Australian culture, so I'm really excited to learn more and hopefully participate in some activities during the exchange.

I have very little domestic or international travel experience, so this exchange will be the biggest adventure of my life by far. I've never spent this much time away from my comfort zone, but I'm not even the least bit nervous or apprehensive. In fact, I could not be more excited to spend time in Australia learning more about you and your beautiful country. It is an absolute privilege to be a GSE Team Member, and I look forward to bringing good times and conversation from the Big Easy to District 9800.

Vocational Wish List:

As a media sales professional, I would like to observe different aspects of Australia's broadcast media industry. It would be great to visit a number of television stations that specialize in different content such as: news, national television shows, syndicated programming, local sports, and community-based programs. I would also like to visit a couple of different advertising agencies to learn more about the strategy behind cultivating a message for television advertisers. Here's just a few of the businesses that I would like to visit:

- ABC Melbourne
- Community Television
- News 7 Melbourne
- 10 Feet Tall Advertising
- McCann Advertising

Personal Wish List:

I can see this list being updated multiple times over the coming months as I learn more about Australia. Here are just a few things that I would like to do or see during the exchange:

- Eureka Skydeck 88
- Royal Botanic Gardens
- Federation Square
- St. Paul's Cathedral
- Queen Victoria Market
- Escape Room Melbourne
- Exitus (escape room)
- Great Ocean Road (time permitting)
- ICC Cricket World Cup
- National Sports Museum
- Night camping in the Outback
- Hosier Lane
- St. Kilda Beach

KAIT SUKIENNIK

TEAM MEMBER

AGE: 30

BIRTH DATE: OCTOBER 10, 1984

HOMETOWN: BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

CURRENT CITY: OCEAN SPRINGS, MISSISSIPPI

VOCATION: OFFICE MANAGER – HOME HEALTHCARE



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ROTARY CLUB OF OCEAN SPRINGS

Hello!

My name is Kait Sukiennik and I am so thrilled to have to opportunity to come to Australia and meet all of you! I am 30 years old and work in the field of non-medical senior care. I live in an adorable small art town on the Gulf of Mexico.

I finished school at a small college in Birmingham Alabama called Samford. I received a degree in interior design and began my career drafting residential kitchens. I went from there to a furniture dealership where I was a project manager on a bid team. We answered bids for large projects such as government hospitals and military bases.

After I moved to the coast I began working for my parents. They own a non-medical senior care business that provides seniors with caregivers, allowing them to stay in their homes safely. I do a little bit of everything; from payroll, to design work, scheduling, manage meetings and some marketing. It is never a dull day!

Throughout school, and even through some of my early career days I kept a side job waiting tables in all types of restaurants. Being around great food and people has really instilled a deep love for great meals. I think the best way to get to know others is by dining with them.

I also love being outside. I have and always will love running, playing tennis, bike riding, sitting on the beach, hiking, walking kayaking, etc.

Vocational Wish list:

- Talk to elderly folks of all income levels to ask about what their plans on aging are
- Home Instead Senior Care offices as well as comparison businesses
- Nursing homes
- Assisted living facility

Personal Wish List – side note, this is hard. I want to see EVERYTHING and do EVERYTHING you do. I want to be outside my element 99% of the time and experience Australia the way you experience it every day. But, to name a few things:

- Camping outdoors overnight
- go for runs through cities and on trails
- Try as many food items as possible
- wander the outback
- Go to local Art museums
- look at giant spiders
- Talk with people
- Sit on a beach

CHRIS VIGNES

TEAM MEMBER

AGE: 33

BIRTH DATE: FEBRUARY 28, 1981

HOMETOWN: HATTIESBURG, MISSISSIPPI

CURRENT CITY: GULFPORT, MISSISSIPPI

VOCATION: PUBLIC SERVICE – PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER



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ROTARY CLUB OF GULFPORT – ORANGE GROVE

Greetings, my name is **Chris Vignes** and I am 33 years old (excited to celebrate my 34th birthday in Australia on Feb.28!). I am a resident of Gulfport on the beautiful Mississippi Gulf Coast.

I am a self-proclaimed "political hack" and my passion for politics began when I was a junior in high school volunteering on the campaign staff of Attorney General Mike Moore in Mississippi. I have since developed a career by working on numerous campaigns across party lines on the local, state and national levels from Mississippi to California. My duties have included: Volunteer Coordinator, Field Rep, Legislative Liaison, Communications Director, Deputy Campaign Director and Campaign Manager. One of my specialties has become the use of social media for campaigns, candidates, and causes including the Ojai Valley (California) Defense Fund. In between campaigns, I took classes at four different universities and graduated with a degree in Political Science in 2009. In March, I was selected as one of five U.S. representatives for the American Council of Young Political Leaders to travel to Brazil and participate in an international exchange for young elected, political, and policy leaders. Recently, I was one of 36 participants chosen for the Mississippi Chamber of Commerce's nine month Leadership Gulf Coast program. Annually, I volunteer as an Assistant for the Department of Mississippi American Legion Boys State program. I currently serve as a member of the board of directors for Coast Young Professionals and also involved with various non-profit and civic organizations along the Mississippi Gulf Coast. In my free time, I enjoy live music, discovering local cuisine, art and travel.

My current position is Public Information Officer for the City of Gulfport, Mississippi's second largest city. The Office of Public Information works closely with the mayor and city council to facilitate communication with citizens, city departments, commissions, businesses and other elected officials regarding city services, projects and events. In the case of an emergency, the PIO helps disseminate and coordinate vital information to ensure public safety. The Office of Public Information also works to communicate directly with members of the media in preparing news stories and responding to inquiries and interview requests.

Vocational Wish List:

- Meet with elected officials and government leaders
- Learn how the political process and campaigns work in Australia
- Learn how officials and government distribute information to citizens
- Visit with local non-profits to learn what they are doing to improve/maintain quality of life in their communities
- Learn about community development and outreach programs
- Visit with media outlets to understand relationship and communication with political leaders/government

Personal Wish List:

- What the local do! (Arts, food, fun)
- Blue Mountains
- Communities of Shoal Haven and Southern Highlands
- Great Barrier Reef tour
- Tasman Sea Coast
- Outback tour
- Perth
- Attend pro surfing competitions
- Chinese New Year
- Melbourne Food and Wine Festival
- White Night Melbourne

MATTHEW WINTERKORN

TEAM MEMBER

AGE: 29

BIRTH DATE: NOVEMBER 4, 1985

HOMETOWN: ROCHESTER, NEW YORK

CURRENT CITY: SLIDELL, LOUISIANA

VOCATION: SCIENCE – METEOROLOGIST



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ROTARY CLUB OF STENNIS SPACE CENTER

Hello to all readers! I have created a short written profile and background on myself.

I am 29 years old and live in Slidell, Louisiana, a northeastern suburb 40 minutes outside of New Orleans. I have lived in Slidell for 6 ½ years now since moving down from upstate New York to start my career in Meteorology. When I am not working hard at National Data Buoy Center (NDBC) and pushing my career forward, you can find me in New Orleans where my girlfriend, Roxanne, lives. She keeps me grounded and has been incredibly supportive of my work as well as the GSE trip!

I enjoy traveling in any form that I get the opportunity. This will be my third international trip. Previously, I had been to Ireland (2007) as well as Germany and the Czech Republic (2012). Germany was special to me since my family originated from Bavaria and I took German in school for numerous years. I have Peru in the planning stages including saving and learning Spanish when I can in the meantime.

I am a healthy person in diet and physical exercise, but I do have the occasional sweet tooth. I enjoy running and playing most all sports especially softball, volleyball, basketball, football and soccer. While in Australia, I hope to learn, attend a game and play some Rugby and Aussie Rules Football!

I started my career and am still taking pride in my work as a Meteorological/Oceanographic Data Analyst at NOAA's National Data Buoy Center (NDBC) in south Mississippi at Stennis Space Center. I was fortunate to find out about my current position while volunteering at a Meteorological conference in New Orleans in 2008. I met my current employer whom was hiring two data analysts at the time. The move and the overall work experience has really expanded my horizons of what is out there in the world for my services and how important connections are. The Group Study Exchange has opened up this avenue for me all over again and I am excited for the opportunity to meet some fantastic people at the Bureau of Meteorology Headquartered in Melbourne with co-located regional office.

At NDBC, I quality control data from buoys and stations all around US territorial waters and globally along the Ring of Fire and Equatorial Pacific Ocean. There are three main programs that are run out of NDBC; Weather Buoys and Coastal stations, Tsunameter buoys and Climate/El Nino buoys. I am qualified in all the above, but Weather buoys and Coastal station data is my first priority. All of this data is used in global weather models for forecasting, real time data use for fishermen, research, Climate data at NCDC and more. My workplace has a motto that I live by and truly believe that goes, "Saving lives, one observation at a time." I think this quote says it all, because everything we do in life really does matter.

In the past couple years, I have begun presenting at conferences about NDBC. Conferences that regional universities put on that have a unique way of uniting our quite divided field that is meteorology. Organizations like the American Meteorological Society and National Weather Association (which I'm part of) that have the ability and great sense to bring conferences and therefore professionals from all over together regularly. Atmospheres like this, I really enjoy and learn a great deal from. Learning and helping others learn.

Vocational Wish List:

- Visit the Bureau of Meteorology Headquarters, meet important decision makers, learn how they organize components and communicate to the public.
- Visit the Bureau of Meteorology Regional Office(s), meet forecasters and other Meteorologists, learn how they deal with Wild Fires, Tropical Cyclones, Ocean Observing Systems and more.
- Visit the Integrated Marine Observing System (IMOS) and any other Weather related programs in Australia and especially Melbourne.
- Visit Australian Universities with Meteorology- How is Meteorology taught, give a talk, attend classes, speak with professors
- Visit Tropical Cyclone Warning Centers (TCWC) (locations in Perth, Darwin and Brisbane) and visit other partners of the Bureau of Meteorology.
- Experience and learn about the unique weather in Australia. Willy Willy's (Dust devils), rip tides, large waves, Cyclones and Mid-Latitude Cyclones with opposite spin from the Northern Hemisphere.
- Share background and present on NDBC to the Bureau of Meteorology and Rotary.
- Attend Weather briefings, conferences and other meteorological/oceanographic meetings.
- Learn about what Australia, Bureau of Meteorology and society are all doing in regards to climate change and their stance on the issue(s).
- Learn about impacts and role of the Great Coral Reef. What is Australia doing to sustain the health of the coral reef and dealing with water quality/pollution in our Oceans?

Personal Wish List:

- Learn, attend a game and play rugby, Aussie Rules Football and Cricket.
- Take The Great Ocean road to Adelaide
- Visit Melbourne's former Olympic sites
- Great Coral Reef
- Hike nearby hills and mountains
- Drive on the other side of the road

- Use public transit- East Link
- Live like a local, eat and drink locally- experience Australian cuisine
- Sydney Harbor Bridge and Opera House
- Meet and learn about the Aborigine people and culture
- See Wallabies, bandicoots, Kangaroos, Koala Bears, Dingos, Tasmanian Devil, Giant Gibson Earthworms and more
- Alpine, Kosciusko, Dandenong Ranges and Snowy River National Parks
- Go to the beach
- Visit The Big Banana, The Big Lobster, The Big Lawnmower
- Experience Australian films, movies and other entertainment
- Ned Kelly Museum
- National Sports Museum
- Werribee Park
- Immigration Museum
- Colonial Tramcar Restaurant
- Old Melbourne Gaol
- Yarra Valley
- Queen Victoria Market
- Shrine of Remembrance
- Royal Botanic Gardens
- Luna Park
- Australian Wine and Craft Breweries
- Visit The “Bush” and the Outback