

The Nerve



A Weekly Newsletter of the Rotary Club of Tuscaloosa

P.O. Box 2403, Tuscaloosa, AL 35403 — www.Rotarytuscaloosa.com

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This Week, March 19, 2013 Off-site at Tuscaloosa Amphitheater

Officers, 2012-13

James Leitner
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Community Service

Margaret King
International

J. G. Brazil
Foundation

Warner Johnson
Past President

Jerry Shepherd
Assistant District Governor

We will be meeting next week at the Tuscaloosa Amphitheater. 11:30-12:00 is lunch and 12:00-1:00 is tour

Newk's will be doing box lunches

We'll park in Mercedes lot (#8) and enter Gate 10 on map. Eating in Mercedes club as well

A map will be attached to this e-mail for directions.

Last Week, March 12

Last week Rotarians welcomed **Mr. Eric Suder** with the Suder Foundation. He spoke to us about The Suder Foundation – and in particular, The First Scholars Program. UA is now a part of this great program, which is offered to college students who will be the first in their family to attend college. The program provides financial, emotional and social support for the students selected into the program in order to improve the graduation rate of these 1st generation students.

The program takes 20 new incoming freshman students each year at the 7 colleges currently on board with the program. Without the help of this program, these 1st generation students have a graduation rate of 37%.

Through the program, that rate increases to 85%! When a 1st generation student meets the many challenges of College life, it usually results in them quitting.

The program tests these students through a model called "SSI", or Student Strength Inventory to determine their inclusion. Counselors individually address the three "S's" - SELF (self awareness/self worth), SUCCESS (what is their goal for personal success?) and SIGNIFICANCE (what will they do to make a difference in life).

The program is a franchise, of sorts, in that the Foundation starts the program at the school, provides the seed money for its inception, then the school runs the program and must raise funds to keep in going. The goal is to have 100 Colleges and Universities on board!

They are not looking for the highest test scores, nor the lowest – but the mid-range kids that have the chance to make it with just a little encouragement and investment into their experience. These are the kids that did not have the support from a family to score well – but manage to on their own.

The next step for the First Scholars Program is to gain the support of large National Foundations to help fund the program as an investment in their future, as the program will produce more qualified students to enter the workforce in later years.

The program allows an environment where the kids feel safe, confident and have a "family" support team on campus. It totally changes the dynamics for these first generation kids and transforms their whole life and future! It levels the playing field in the first year, and then puts a plan in place for the remaining three years to carry the student all the way through graduation by developing the whole student, laying a foundation for the rest of their life.

The University of Alabama was chosen because it was determined to be a great school, and there was a great commitment from the University to have this program offered. It is not an easy program, and has a rigid foundation of rules that MUST be followed. Schools cannot choose to differ from the principles set forth in the program whatsoever. UA is PLEASED to report that they are in their 2nd cohort, and have 36 students with an average GPA of 3.0 and boast a 95% retention rate of first year students that continued on to their 2nd year! They have one student on the Dean's list and another on the President's list!

UA will need the financial support of organizations like ours and individuals who want to make a difference in a student's life! There are also needs for mentors. The 2nd year students in the program receive support from Juniors and Seniors, the 3rd year, they receive support from faculty and in their 4th year will need business leaders in our community as mentors. This is a couple of years away for the UA students – so be thinking about this opportunity.

"It has been a fantastic and rewarding experience." says Suder. It all started as scribbling on a cocktail napkin! One day he hopes the Board of Directors for the Foundation is comprised of all 1st Scholar graduates.



Announcements, March 12

- Tuscaloosa Rotary Honor Flight will be making its 4th flight on May 18th and we will be taking both WWII and Korean War Veterans to see their memorials in Washington, D. C. More information will be posted on the Club's Website, and anyone interested in helping out with this year's flight or knows a potential veteran or guardian can e-mail Rotarian Jordan Plaster at james_plasterjr@ml.com.

- On Tuesday 3/19/13 we will have our meeting off-site at the Tuscaloosa Amphitheater. Mark it on your calendar!
- The Tuscaloosa Rotary Memorial Foundation is looking for a new project. Normally we have a three year pledge drive to fund a project that the club selects. The Caring Days drive was a success, but closes June 30, by which time we hope the remaining pledges will be paid. We hope to have a new project selected by July 1. We want your suggestions since it is the club who ultimately makes the decision. We need these in our hands not later than April 15.
So far, we have requests from the DCH Breast Center for needed improvements, the Arts' Council to help fund the restoration of the old Allen-Jemison building to make the Dinah Washington Cultural Center, and Hospice of West Alabama wants our help in its expansion of its inpatient facilities.
Please let one of the TRMF Board members of your requests. The members are Rufus Lewis, John Snider, Alan Hartley, Charles Nash, Joe Wheeler, Diane Salls, Frank Deaver, Pam Parker and me.
- District 6860 Annual Conference is April 18 – 20 in Guntersville. If interested in going, please let James know. The club will sponsor your registration.
- Rotarian of the week was Carol Wright, and she was introduced by Anthony Holloway.



Handwriting on the Wall

By Frank Deaver:

Seated comfortably at a weekly Rotary Club meeting, we hear from the podium that literacy programs are among the projects encouraged by Rotary International, and that March is designated as Literacy Awareness Month. But we immediately turn our attention back to our salad and social conversation. "Illiteracy? Not a problem around here," we apparently assume. So it comes as a shock to realize that yes, we are challenged by the scope of functional illiteracy among us, and it's not limited to distant and less-developed societies.

Cities and counties in the United States, with few exceptions, have illiteracy rates above 20 percent. Although the "functionally illiterate" may attempt to disguise their limitations, they are handicapped in performance of many daily activities. They may not be able to read a help-wanted ad in the newspaper, or understand the label instructions on a bottle of medicine. Projecting their own shortcomings to the next generation, they do not read to their children, and by example they convey the impression that literacy is not a high priority.

Years ago, and for some people even now, "literacy" was indicative of "the ability to read and write," simply that and nothing more. In predominantly agrarian societies of the past, the most important knowledge might have been how to feed and milk a cow, or how to manipulate a horse-drawn plow. No more, for now the successful farmer must be able to operate and maintain increasingly complex machinery, determine the pH value of soil, and follow market prices for crops.

As younger generations abandon rural life for city employment, they find it is no longer enough to be "willing to work." Meaningful employment requires at least high school education, but more likely a college or trade school preparation for skilled job opportunities. No more can they find access to the basic job of "digging ditches," for now that task requires the ability to operate heavy equipment and to read plats identifying underground utility lines.

A recent study concluded that people with literacy limitations are twice as likely to be unemployed, and many times more likely to receive some form of social assistance. The social impact of illiteracy has been directly correlated with poverty, crime, broken homes, teen pregnancy, health, and welfare costs.

No wonder, then, that RI Presidents – past, present, and future – have emphasized literacy projects as a challenge for Rotarians. RI President Glenn Estess (2004-05) told a Rotary audience that "in your own communities there are individuals who need some help to live a better life."

Rotarians, the "handwriting is on the wall." It is up to us to read it!

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

March 26
J. Wesley Brown
Marshall Space
Flight Center

April 2
Caroline Novak
A+ Education
Partnership

April 9
Interact

“If there is any one particular in which I would have Rotary distinguished from other organizations, it is in the quality of character which results in the doing of things.”

— Paul Harris



Guests, March 12

Guests at the March 12 meeting of the Rotary Club of Tuscaloosa included: **Victoria Gilbert** (intern at TTSC), guest of Tina Jones; **Chris McCano** (Cadence Bank), guest of Drew Kyle; **Kathy Bannasch** (Area Manager Hotels), guest of Liz Obradavich; **Deborah Suder**, (Suder Foundation), guest of Club; **Jessica Franks** (UA first scholars), guest of Club; **Leslie Abernathy** (UA), guest Club.



At the Head Table, March 12

Mark Nelson (speaker intro), **Anthony Holloway** (guest intro), **Linda Chambers** (pledge) and **Buddy Moman** (Invocation)

ABSENT? MAKING UP ATTENDANCE IS EASY...

- Visit with the Morning Rotary Club every Thursday at 7 AM at Indian Hills Country Club.
- Attend another club's meeting within two weeks before or after an absence.
- Participate in a Rotary event, such as a committee meeting, social function, Interact event, etc.
- Make up at E-club online: www.rotaryclubone.org.

REPORT ALL MAKEUPS TO CLUB SECRETARY NANCY JONES