

# The Nerve



A Weekly Newsletter of the Rotary Club of Tuscaloosa

P.O. Box 2403, Tuscaloosa, AL 35403 — [www.Rotarytuscaloosa.com](http://www.Rotarytuscaloosa.com)

Volume 95 — Issue 34 — March 26, 2013

## This Week, March 26, 2013

### J. Wesley Brown with the Marshall Space Flight Center

Wesley joined the Marshall Team in 1997. Since that time, Wes has served in a variety of positions ranging from business development for the space optics division, business manager for a major rocket engine program, and deputy project manager for an Agency-wide project management improvement initiative.

Wes has also served on a number of Agency teams that have looked at numerous issues ranging from the creation of a Human Exploration Framework to serving as lead architect for the National Institute for Rocket Propulsion Systems.

For the past year and half, Wes has served as the Lead for Strategic Integration in Marshall's newly formed Center Strategic Development and Integration Office.

Prior to his career at NASA, Wes served for seven years in the Army, where his assignments include serving with the 24<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division during Desert Storm and Alabama's own 20<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group during Operation Uphold Democracy in Haiti. Wes is a graduate of Athens State University and received an M.B.A from the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

#### Officers, 2012-13

James Leitner  
*President*

Karen Baldwin  
*President-Elect*

Nancy Jones  
*Secretary*

Joe May  
*Treasurer*

Frank Deaver  
*Executive Director*

Bruce Burrows  
*Sergeant-At-Arms*

#### Directors, 2012-13

Clark Swail  
*Membership*

Lowell Davis  
*Programs*

Ryan Stallings  
*Communications*

Mitchell Loper  
*Vocational*

Chuck Turner  
*Community Service*

Margaret King  
*International*

J. G. Brazil  
*Foundation*

Warner Johnson  
*Past President*

Jerry Shepherd  
*Assistant District Governor*

## Last Week, March 19

Last week Rotarians held an off-site meeting at the Tuscaloosa Amphitheater. Wendy Riggs hosted our tour of the Amphitheater. Wendy is the Director of the City Arts & Entertainment Division in which she oversees the operation of not only the Amphitheater, but also the Tuscaloosa River Market, and the Mildred Westervelt Warner transportation Museum located at the old Queen City Bathhouse.

There are various events that take place at the Transportation Museum, and also the River Market. The River Market is open from 7am – 12 Noon year round featuring freshly grown produce, locally raised beef and pork and a variety of home-made goods from area farmers and vendors. Beginning in May the River Market is also open on Tuesdays from 7am – 12 Noon through the fall. The River Market is available to host private events and also hosts public events, like the Christmas Movies etc. that were offered during the Holiday Season this past year.

The Transportation Museum also hosts events, and during the spring and fall hosts outdoor movies on the lawn. The Museum currently has a traveling exhibit from the Civil Rights Institute in Birmingham that features Spider Martin's photography that captures the March from Selma to Montgomery. This is in conjunction with the 50<sup>th</sup> Commemoration of the Civil Rights Movement in Alabama. More events will follow throughout the year.

Wendy began with a brief history. The Amphitheater opened in 2010 to a sell out crowd and has had three successful seasons. This year we already have two confirmed shows (with the first – John Mayer already being sold out), and three acts not yet announced. There are 15 more shows lined up which are all expected to confirm. The next announcement will come on April 12th and is a Country act. Stay tuned!

The seating in the venue consists of the 100 section which is the "floor" and may be standing or set-up with chairs depending on the Artist's preference.

Above this section you will find the Box Seats which have private seating and a server that takes care of any of their food and beverage needs. Just FYI – there are 10 seats available at this time in the box section (#26) for a company that would like to co-lease a 20 seat box! This year, iPads are being added for

ordering! Above the private boxes is the 200 section. The entire venue seats roughly 7,800.

Upgrades and improvements are always taking place to keep the venue "1st class" This year a new entrance is being added on the West side, and the wireless is being upgraded. The Mayor and City Council spent money for this to be a top notch facility and have plans in place to continually improve to remain one of the most sought after venues for performers to play. "We have a great reputation in the entertainment industry based on our facility - its location and the beauty of this riverfront venue" says Wendy Riggs. "We are being sought out by artists requesting Tuscaloosa over Birmingham and Huntsville!" The future may even hold a roof over the seats – and the Amphitheater was built to be able to have everything in place to do this if decided upon later.

Our Amphitheater was built as a state-of-the-art permanent facility. Training of permanent staff is always a focus. Currently two team members are in Norman, OK at the National Weather Service receiving training to formalize the Emergency Plan changes for this year.

The UA Film Department does all filming and photography for the events. The Amphitheater donates to the program in return for offering these hands on experience to the students. Other Sponsors/Contributors include Mercedes-Benz and Coca-Cola, Box Seat holders and Select seat holders. The Hotel occupancy tax paid for the construction of the Amphitheater.

Red Mountain entertainment books all the acts, but the city remains as the Producer in order to control what types of acts can book into the venue. This is to keep the best interest of our citizens in our own hands. The City and Red Mountain has a great partnership. Red Mountain gets \$4.00 off of every ticket sold – so the primary way the venue makes money is through Food & Beverage sales. This nets 55% of the necessary budget. To date the two seasons have operated in the black.

Wendy was asked about her schedule on a typical show day. She replied "We are here at 5am and we leave when the last person loads out". This makes for a pretty long day! She was also asked about what strange things have happened, and the list ranged from bats in the curtains to all kinds of wildlife onsite!

Strange requests from artists were a yoga room for Kelly Clarkson to food requests such as all gluten – free or vegan menus. She said that she has not had many strange requests from the artists, but told of a few at the Fox Theater in

Atlanta – where Jerry Lewis made them paint his dressing room a different color, and destructive bands (whose names get around) like the Red Hot Chili Peppers who tore out an entire wall to make a larger room.

Wendy said their goal is to give these artists a great experience here in Tuscaloosa, because it is their "home-away-from-home". They are on the road so much that they just want to feel comfortable and be well cared for. Nothing really unusual – just the same things we all want.



## Announcements, March 19

- Tuscaloosa Rotary Honor Flight will be making its 4<sup>th</sup> flight on May 18<sup>th</sup> 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@mlc](mailto:james_plasterjr@mlc)
- In other Club business, President Leitner encourages attendees to the 6860 Conference in Gunterville. So far we have not had anyone step up to take advantage of this opportunity. The Club will pay the conference fee for anyone who wishes to attend.



## New Membership Proposals:

Three new proposals for membership have been approved by the Rotary Board. They are **Marty Wright** (Sponsored by Tina Jones), **Karis Wilson** (Sponsored by Carol Wright), and **Ryan Delfin** (Sponsored by Trey Mosley).

## UPCOMING PROGRAMS

April 2  
Caroline Novak  
A+ Education  
Partnership

---

April 9  
Interact

---

April 16  
Janet Teer DCH  
Administrator

---

“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



## Helping with the program, March 19

**James Leitner** (guest intro), **Joe May** (pledge) and **Patricia Parnell** (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](http://www.rotaryclubone.org).

REPORT ALL MAKEUPS TO CLUB SECRETARY NANCY JONES