

Augusta Rotary Minutes

February 3, 2025

President Surendra Gupta rang the bell and called the meeting to order.

Henry Holt gave the pledge and invocation.

Brad Means gave the Sunshine Report.

Bob Goodman introduced the guests and visiting Rotarians.

Announcements

February is Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution Month. Rotary has four primary roles in promoting peace worldwide, we are;

Practitioners – we fight disease, provide clean water and sanitation, work to improve the health of mothers and children, support education, and grow local economies.

Educators – through our Peace Centers we have trained 1800 peace fellows to be catalyst for peace.

Mediators – we have negotiated humanitarian ceasefires in areas of conflict to allow polio vaccinators to reach at risk children.

Advocates – we have a role as impartial participants during peace talks and post-conflict reconstruction.

Rotary Leadership Institute will be held Saturday March 8 in Augusta at the Augusta University Summerville Campus. Cost is \$100 per Rotarian.

District Conference will be held in Jekyll Island again this year please make hotel reservations as soon as you can.

Dustin Young reminded the club to get tickets for the annual signature fundraiser. Each member is asked to sell 5 tickets this year.

Mickey Williford reminded the club of the upcoming Speech Contest being held 2/27/25 at the Morris Museum of Art. The deadline to participate is February 17. The contest is open to all high school students in Richmond and Columbia Counties including private and home school students.

GRSP Update

No report this week.

New Members

No new members were introduced.

Paul Harris Fellows

No Paul Harris Fellows recognized this week.

CART: **Steve Chalker** was the inside challenger this week. Please continue to contribute to the blue buckets on the table or online at mycartfund.org using the same login credentials you use with DACDB. Also, please complete our club's Google form to sign up to be a Cart Challenger.

Upcoming Speakers

February 10 – DG Todd Freeseemann will speak about his vision for District 6920.

February 17 – No meeting in observance of Presidents Day

February 24 – Danny Broyles – Area Governor will speak about ShelterBox

Guest Speaker/Program

Ed Presnell, Past President and Past District Governor, introduced our guest speaker, **Mr. Brad Usry**, Chair of the New Arena Committee for the Augusta Richmond County Coliseum Authority. Brad introduced several of his guests, including Mr. Cedric Johnson, Chair of the Coliseum Authority.

Brad provided an update on the current project to demolish and rebuild the James Brown Arena. This project has been approved by voters and included in the most recent SPLOST funding.

The new arena is following the renovation of the original Bell Auditorium which was funded with \$17.5 million in SPLOST dollars. The Bell Auditorium will be connected to the arena to provide easy access and transition between the two structures.

The new arena will feature 10,500 seats, 14 luxury suites and boxes, and will create 600 new jobs. The groundbreaking took place on June 25, 2024 and is expected to be completed by Spring 2027.

One of the enhanced features of the new arena will be the return of an ice rink which will allow for 45 more days of attractions including hockey games, ice capades, and ice skating. Adding ice will increase the number of jobs created, the number of hotel stays booked, and will increase tax revenues by 22% over estimates without a rink.

His presentation concluded following question and answer session.

President Surendra led us in reciting the four-way test and then adjourned the meeting.