

Augusta Rotary Minutes

January 27, 2025

President Surendra Gupta rang the bell and called the meeting to order. Today was a special joint meeting and included fellow Rotarians from the Augusta West Club.

Members of the Augusta West Club gave the pledge and invocation.

Matt Barrett gave the Sunshine Report.

Matt Barrett introduced the guests and visiting Rotarians.

Announcements

Anna Reeves reported that this was Vocational Service Month and she gave a brief introduction of herself and her dog treat business. She was followed by Past District Governor, Pam Lightsey, who gave an overview of her real estate company.

Brittany Burnett reported that Golden Harvest Food Bank received \$2500 from Rotary for their disaster relief efforts and Club members helped stuff 600 backpacks on Friday January 24.

President Surendra thanked District 6920 for providing a gift of 80 dogwood and 20 persimmon tree saplings to our club.

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

Daniel George was introduced as the newest member of our club.

Paul Harris Fellows

No Paul Harris Fellows recognized this week.

CART: **Monty Carlton** was the inside challenger this week and **Tom Kiernan** was the outside challenger. 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 3 – Brad Usry will discuss hockey in Augusta.

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

Guest Speaker/Program

Kelly Knitter, Assistant District Governor and Augusta West Rotary member, introduced our guest speaker, **Ms. Beverly Trainer**. Beverly will be District Governor for the 2026-2027 Rotary year. She joined our club today to discuss a topic that is extremely important to her and our area; sex trafficking.

She shared that Rotary has formed the Rotary Action Group Against Slavery to help raise awareness for and fight against this terrible activity. Sex trafficking is a \$150 billion annual business and it is estimated 40.3 million people worldwide are enslaved. Trafficking includes labor, sex, organs trafficking, child soldiering, and child marriage.

Beverly shared many informative statistics about sex trafficking but perhaps the most disturbing was that Richmond County has the second highest number of cases in the state. This is not an Atlanta problem, but a statewide issue.

To help fight against this abuse, there will be two training classes offered March 28-29. One will be for law enforcement, educators, hospitals/first responders, and hospitality staff to teach them how to recognize victims of sex trafficking. The second will be for parents and children and will share information from industry experts and survivor testimonials. Watch for more details closer to the time of the event.

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