

Augusta Rotary Minutes

August 12, 2024

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

Bill Keogh gave the pledge and invocation.

Richard Rogers gave the Sunshine Report.

Dat Hoang introduced the guests and visiting Rotarians.

Announcements

President Surendra kicked off the meeting by sharing that we sponsored a Global Grant Project in India that will provide a mobile cancer screening van. Thanks to our support the van will be used to scan 5000 children and adult patients per year. We were able to watch a video of the new van and the equipment inside.

Jerry Woods and the **Membership Development Committee** will meet immediately following the Club meeting.

President Surendra announced that the **Open World Program 2025** is available to all Rotary and Rotaract Clubs to build fellowship and friendship to strengthen international understanding by hosting emerging Eurasian leaders. Clubs interested in participating will need to host a six-participant delegation for eight days and nights and must prepare a professional program related to business, community, and civic life in the US. The program is operated by the Congressional Office for International Leadership (COIL) secured through a grant by Rotary International. The contact for the program is Natalia.Kunzer@Rotary.org.

President Surendra reminded the club that member surveys had been distributed and everyone was asked to complete and return them.

GRSP Update

Our GRSP student, **Daniel Lopez Londono**, gave his introductory program to the club. Daniel is from Medellin, Columbia in South America. He is one of 40 GRSP students in the program this year.

Daniel shared interesting facts and photos about his country and his home town. He has an older sister who is currently studying in Australia. He traveled to Augusta with his parents a couple of weeks ago who have now returned to Columbia.

Daniel is a musician who can play both a ukulele and bass guitar. He enjoys rock climbing, biking, and time at the beach. He has a tremendous love of animals and at one time considered a career as a veterinarian.

He looks forward to his time at Augusta University and is available for any events or activities club members may have available for him. At the end of his presentation, he exchanged club flags with President Surendra.

New Members

No new members welcomed today.

Paul Harris Fellows

President Surendra presented **Dee Pierce** and **Leland Malchow** with their PHF +2 pins.

CART: **Robert Baisden Sr.** was the inside challenger this week and **Tom Kiernan** was the outside challenger this week. **President Surendra** asked everyone to 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

August 19 – Stacy Tallent, College Football Pick'em

August 26 – Dr. M.V. Kamath will speak on the “Ten Easy Ways to Help Your Heart”

September 2 – No Meeting due to Labor Day

Guest Speaker/Program

Haskell Toporek introduced our guest speaker, **Mr. Roy Simkins** with the Augusta Tree Commission. Mr. Simkins is a certified arborist and former member of the Georgia House of Representatives.

Mr. Simkins gave a brief presentation on Augusta's history of government, which included having a now dissolved Trees and Parks Department. While in existence, the department worked with Augusta's Planning Commission to insure all projects considered the current and proposed tree and landscape changes.

Since being disbanded, the Planning Commission has been more focused on asphalt, concrete, and steel and have essentially ignored any tree management considerations. As a result, historic trees are being removed causing the city to be hotter and increasing energy cost for everyone impacted. This has made the “Garden City” less of a garden and less appealing to all who visit.

Mr. Simkins encouraged all attendees to pay attention to what is happening in the community and to get involved with the local media and local commission to make sure the remaining trees are not destroyed unnecessarily.

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