

## Augusta Rotary Minutes

September 23, 2024

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

**Henry Holt** gave the pledge and invocation.

**Connie Melear** gave the Sunshine Report.

**Sheri Osborn** introduced the guests and visiting Rotarians.

### Announcements

October 24 is **World Polio Day** and we will celebrate Rotary's efforts to eradicate polio.

**New Member Orientation** will take place September 24 at 4:30 p.m. at Enterprise Mill.

**Speech Contest Committee** will meet Monday September 23 immediately following our Club meeting.

The **Hull Fund Committee** will meet Monday September 30 immediately following our Club meeting.

**Brenda Durant**, Executive Director of the Greater Augusta Arts Council for the last 27 years, will be retiring on September 27. Under her leadership, the Arts in the Heart festival has grown to be one of the largest in the Southeast with more than 100,000 attendees. We are so proud to have Brenda as a member of our club and wish her all the best in her retirement.

President Surendra discussed the **Rotary Youth Exchange** program which takes place each year. There are nearly 10,000 students who participate and travel overseas to learn about the customs and culture of other countries. The program is open to students 14-17 years old and they must reside and attend high school in a certified district. This is a scholarship opportunity valued at over \$24,000 for the student.

Club member, **Karen Head**, walked with the Rolla Rotary Club to help provide free water at the "House of Friendship" tent Rotary shares with S&T Chapter of Engineers without Borders in Missouri.

### GRSP Update

No report this week.

### New Members

**Chris McKinney** introduced our newest member, **Dr. Beth Nesmith**, AU College of Nursing.

## **Paul Harris Fellows**

No Paul Harris Fellows recognized this week.

**CART:** **Shell Knox Berry** was the inside challenger this week and the outside challenger was **Kevin Grogan**. **President Surendra** asked everyone to please continue to contribute to the blue buckets on the table or online at [mycartfund.org](http://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**

September 30 – Katie Berube with an update of the Bell Auditorium and James Brown Arena

October 7 – Glenn Fink will speak on ChatGPT and Generative AI

October 14 – No meeting on Columbus Day

## **College Pick'em**

Commissioner Stacy Tallent reminded the club that the weekly email was sent out just prior to the meeting and if you did not receive it, please contact Ashlee Duren or Stacy Tallent using their contact info in DaCdb.

Week 4 was won by **John Whitwell** with 9 wins and he would have been perfect had he selected the University of Tennessee to win.

## **Guest Speaker/Program**

Charmaine Brackett, Publisher of Augusta Good News, was our guest speaker today. Charmaine shared with the club her journey through a professional career that included nearly 30 years at the Augusta Chronicle in a variety of areas.

After leaving the Chronicle and doing some soul searching, she decided to pursue a calling of sharing all of the good news that happens every day in our area. Early on she decided there would not be any political or crime stories in her publication which directly targets Richmond, Columbia, and Aiken Counties. She focuses on stories that are first and foremost local, but also must be positive and uplifting to the community.

Charmaine comes from a long line of storytellers in her family and journalism has been in her blood for generations. She shared a personal story about writing an article about a young man from Lakeside High School and his accomplishments being the first in his family to attend college. All these years later, that young man is now the new President of Augusta University.

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