



# Rotary



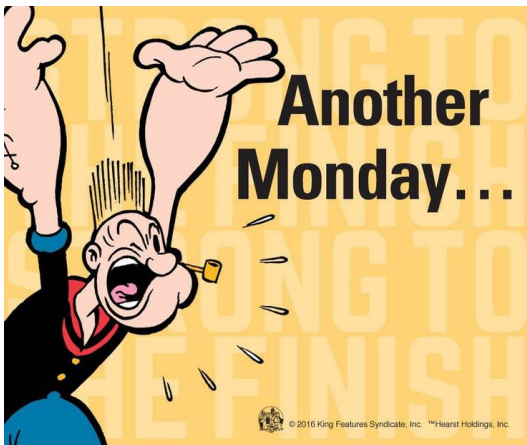
## The Rotary Club of Macon

 **THROBS**

*Published Weekly Since 1914*

**March 31, 2025**

*No Meeting*



March has five Mondays, and is just one of four months in 2025 with that distinction (the others being June, September and December). Our club meets only three Mondays per month, so we won't be meeting on March 31.

However, we have some extraordinary programs planned for upcoming meetings, beginning with Chancellor Sonny Perdue on April 7. We'll meet at First Presbyterian as usual, but will be joined by Rotarians from the other two Macon clubs plus Jones County. Be sure to be there for this one!

Link for Zoom Recording

Click here to view the recording of our March 24 meeting: <https://tinyurl.com/26mcty4l>

### **FUTURE MONDAY PROGRAMS AND CLUB EVENTS:**

#### **April, 2025**

7	Chancellor Perdue - joint meeting	Sonny Perdue
14	Georgia Supreme Court	Justice Verda Colvin
15	Board Meeting	
21	Cherokee Brick	Kate Sams Peavy, President
28	No Meeting	

### May, 2025

5	Spring Picnic at Otis Redding Center for the Arts – no regular meeting	
12	GRSP Student	João Victor Verçosa Vilela
19	Performances by Morning Music Club’s Maerz Award winners	
20	Board Meeting	
26	No Meeting	

### June, 2025

2	No Meeting	
9	Mercer Medical School	Dean Jean Sumner
16	AI (Artificial Intelligence)	Brandon Haddock
17	Board Meeting	

## MEETING March 24, 2025

Attendance: 52.9% - 61 in person, 12 Zoom, plus 20 guests (incl. two on Zoom)

CART \$26, Raffle \$160

Club Membership: 153 (including today’s inductions)

President Danny Gibson rang the bell to start the meeting and remarked that he thought this year the cherry trees are putting on the best show in a long time. He then called on Dianne Brannen to lead the singing and pledge, and she chose *My Country, 'Tis of Thee*. President-Elect Rebecca Grist offered a prayer of thanks for the glorious spring and our friendships and service in Rotary.

President Danny welcomed our guests, which were more than usual. Several were pending members, others came from Stratford Academy and more came to hear the speaker. Danny welcomed back Don Cornett, a former President and longtime member who just rejoined the club.

Raegan Atkinson, Director of College Counseling at Stratford Academy, introduced student Sophie Leigh. Raegan said Sophie is an outstanding member of Stratford's class of 2025. A wonderful example of the kind of graduate Stratford seeks to nurture and develop and to send off into the world. Sophie is a top-notch scholar, electing to take the most rigorous classes. She will graduate with 14 advanced placement classes to her credit, and she has earned stellar grades in all of them. She is also an active and impactful community member in both the Stratford community and the Macon-Bibb County community. She is an accomplished multi-sport athlete, a Girl Scout Gold Award recipient, and a dedicated National Charity League member just to name a few of her many roles and activities.

Sophie said that for her Gold Award, she made three pollination gardens for the preschool playground, and did an education program for them. “After this project I decided I wanted to do more. I became a citizen researcher for Project Monarch Health at the University of Georgia I raised and tested monarch butterflies for the OE protozoan pathogen. This parasite kills monarchs once they are fully infected. This research allows for scientists to know and understand where the pathogen will most likely be prevalent in the community. In the fall, I am attending Georgia Tech with a major in biomedical engineering.”

Since we won’t be meeting again for two weeks, President Danny acknowledged members celebrating birthdays or club anniversaries through April 6. Today, March 24 is Shannon Fields’ birthday. Then on the 26<sup>th</sup> it’s Mayur Patel, followed by Ivey Hall on the 28<sup>th</sup>, and Jonathan Wetherbee shares the 29<sup>th</sup> with Karen Lambert. Finally, no fooling, it’s Mack Minton’s on April 1.

We have a wide range of club anniversaries, beginning with Richard Frazier at one year. Brian McCommon and Bradshaw Ford have been in the club three years and Chris Howard for seven. Moving into the double digits, Matt Heller has 10 years of service, Justin Towers 15 and Lynn Murphy with 28 (she obviously joined quite young). Finally, William Slocumb and Past President Robbo Hatcher both have an amazing 35 years of service to Rotary.

It was then time for our CART brags to raise money for Alzheimer's research. We had fewer than usual, but they were good. Gary Wheat, resplendent in a cherry blossom-pink jacket, told us of Macon's attempt to enter the Guinness Book of World Records by having the largest kazoo ensemble. The kazoo has roots in Macon, so it's only fitting that we, and not the current group in London, should have the honor. The attempt will be this Friday, March 28 at the Atrium Health Amphitheater. Doors will open at 4:00 and the attempt will be at 6:00. In the meantime, lots of entertainment is planned. Admission is \$5 and you get a keepsake kazoo. We need some volunteer stewards, and one is needed for every 50 people. If you are interested, please contact Gary. Tickets and more information are at <https://visitmacon.org/kazootix>. We need 5,191 people for the record.



Club announcements followed. President Danny thanked everyone who participated both in person and online last week with our club assembly. He's still compiling the survey questions and will make results available soon. Danny then reminded the members that there is no meeting next week, but we will have our big joint meeting April 7. Our club will be joined by members of the Downtown Macon, Macon North, and Jones County clubs to hear from Chancellor Sonny Perdue.

Notably, the three Macon Rotary clubs are sponsoring a Habitat home in honor and memory of Josh Rogers. Please get your money into the Community Foundation this week, if at all possible. We now have a physical address for the home, and it's 1975 Feb Avenue, which is off Holt Avenue near Central High School. The new owner will be Anthony Hearvey and his son. Anthony works for the sanitation department, and they are both very excited.

We then inducted three new members, beginning with Greg Pope. He was introduced by Charlie Jay, who reminded us that it's a great day to be alive. Charlie said we have a new Pope in town, and that's the pastor of the 134-year-old Vineville Baptist Church. Greg a graduate of Shorter College and

Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and is presently writing his final thesis for a Doctorate in Worship from the Webber Institute for Worship Studies. He has pastored churches in Florida, Kentucky, and Georgia, and most recently was a pastor of First Baptist Church in Fitzgerald, Georgia, where he was a member of the Rotary club. His family consists of his lovely wife Cindy, their son Ryan, and their two daughters, Kristen and Jennifer.

Gene Dunwody then introduced Brad Belo. He began by saying that Brad would bring up the average height of our club, being 11-7/8 inches taller than him. Brad grew up in Pittsburg and graduated Virginia Tech with a Master's in Urban and Regional Planning. He worked 12 years for the Virginia State Government, where he enforced environmental land issues, helped local governments implement community development block grants, and did lots of other things, including working in the Main Street communities in Virginia. He moved to Macon with his wife Amy, who is an anthropologist and is a professor at Mercer University. He came to Macon and worked as a Senior Planner at Macon-Bibb County Planning and Zoning, and has served on many boards including the Georgia Planning Association of Macon, Main Street, Bike Walk Macon, Intown Macon Neighborhood Association, Beall's Hill Neighborhood Association, and College Hill Corridor Commissions. He has taught urban planning classes as a lecturer at Mercer University, and he is particularly proud to have served on the Pedestrian Safety Review Board and to assist GDOT in completing Road Safety Audits on several of Macon's most dangerous roadways.

Then, in 2018 he became Vice President of Impact Poultry Products - a small agriculture supply business established in Virginia in 1997 and relocated to Macon in 2018 – which provides bacteria-based waste remediation products for large-scale poultry and aquaculture in the US and abroad. He's lived in the Beall's Hill neighborhood since 2014. He and his wife have a 13-year-old son, Liam, who is in 8<sup>th</sup> grade at Mount de Sales.



The third new member, Ed Hubbard, was introduced by Andrew Eck. Ed comes to Middle Georgia following his retirement from a 33-year career in commercial electronic security and life safety

systems. Ed spent the previous the nine years as the Owner/President of Adroit Systems Co. in Greenville, SC. Adroit Systems provides custom-designed security solutions with vertical markets including healthcare, construction, government, education, utilities, and manufacturing. Provided services include 24-hour monitoring, 24-hour repair service, custom design, and installation by factory-trained technicians. Ed is currently president of AngHubb Properties, a real estate Investment and Service Company. AngHubb is currently acquiring architecturally and historically interesting properties. One of the current projects is the renovation and restoration of Duane Allman's house on Bond Street. Ed's partner in life and business is his wife, Angie, who's here today. They met when they were still teenagers several years ago. His hobbies include classic automobiles, hockey, memorabilia, and vintage timepieces.

Our speaker, Eric Williams, was introduced by Jessica Walden. Jessica began by commenting on the upcoming kazoo record attempt, saying the original name for the kazoo was the Down South Submarine, which doesn't roll off the tongue as well. Eric Williams is the founder and CEO of Unified Defense, and a young business leader with expertise in manufacturing and business development who is making his mark on Macon with an entrepreneurial spirit and dedication to workforce development and economic growth for our region. Eric earned his business management degree with a minor in accounting from Hope College, in Michigan. After gaining experience in project management and business development, Eric founded Unified Defense in 2016 - a metal components manufacturer serving government and commercial sectors. He later chose Macon and relocated to Central Georgia, where in 2022 he acquired Prince Service and Manufacturing to expand precision metal fabrication.

Today, Eric leads both companies, which have grown to over 350 employees and nearly 600,000 square feet of manufacturing space. "This dedication to Central Georgia is evident. Prince manufacturing immediately invested in our Chamber of Commerce as a top regional influencer tier, joining our largest economic engines like Georgia Power, Atrium Health, and Piedmont.

"Eric has been all in looking for ways to use the talent and expertise of Prince Manufacturing to give back to our community. They've built bus shelters for our community and have sponsored local youth soccer leagues. Eric was named the 2024 Georgia Small Businessperson of the Year, something we haven't had in Macon in a few years. And, let me just add, he probably doesn't like me saying this, but he wasn't even 30 yet.

"And then the Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce was proud to recognize Eric and his team at Prince Manufacturing as the workforce champion at our annual awards in 2023. But what I appreciate most about Eric is this vision. To make his companies the best workplaces in Middle Georgia, fostering a culture of teamwork, innovation and success.

"He lives in Macon with his wife, Kim Palmer, and their new baby boy, Wesley, who made his debut at the bed race to help the firefighters take home another victory. His mother, Sue, recently joined the company, and she's been visiting our Rotary. Please join me in welcoming Eric to our club."

Eric began his speech by thanking Jessica and saying she's one of those unique people who make you a better person whenever you spend time with her. He said he grew up in Canton, Ohio, an industrial town known best for the Pro Football Hall of Fame. Coming from a family of entrepreneurs, he gained early business insights by attending meetings with his parents. His mother ran an interior design company, and his father was involved in what he perceived as high-level business discussions. This experience, combined with the entrepreneurial mindset instilled by his family, led him to start working

young—mowing lawns, shoveling snow, and taking on various jobs that taught him business and work ethic.

He attended Hope College, a Christian institution that reinforced his values and provided leadership opportunities, including serving as fraternity president. In 2016, he founded Unified Defense, which specializes in contract manufacturing in both the commercial and government sectors, producing everything from lawn mower parts to components for drones and buses. His initial venture was financed by acquiring equipment from his former employer on a seller-financed deal. Early on, he worked long hours to build the company, eventually securing government contracts that propelled the business forward.

He got started with Prince Manufacturing when they landed a very large government contract and he approached them about doing the painting for them. Eric said that Prince is a 60-year-old company he admired, and it aligned with his values of fostering partnerships over mere vendor relationships. He was eventually able to acquire the company. The company's proven process focuses on assessing mutual fit, ensuring quality, and maintaining continuous improvement. Prince primarily handles large-scale government contracts, while Unified Defense manufactures fuel tanks and backup power enclosures for data centers.



Eric said he chose to stay in Macon because of the strong work ethic and community support he encountered. His goal is to make Unified Defense and Prince the preferred employers in Middle Georgia, providing competitive pay, benefits, and career growth opportunities. Despite stiff competition from other companies, he is committed to building a workplace where employees thrive.

Inspired by his mother's work with Rotary in Canton, where they built a single bus stop, he felt compelled to do more in Macon. Remembering his grandmother waiting in bad weather for the bus, he partnered with the Macon Transit Authority to donate and build 15 bus stops. His desire to give back and make a tangible impact reflects his deep commitment to the community.

As promised, Eric ended his presentation with a picture of his wife and new son Wesley.

(Eric's speech was much more colorful than the summary above. You can review the entire meeting at <https://tinyurl.com/26mcty4l>)

The raffle pot was up to a whopping \$1,998, with only nine cards remaining in the deck. Jimmy Asbell had the winning ticket, but the Queen of Clubs is still taunting us from the deck! There will be no raffle during our joint meeting of April 7, so be ready to buy tickets on the 14<sup>th</sup>, when the pot will be well over \$2,000!

The meeting closed with the Four Way Test.

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## Donate to Rotary Foundation and CART

Club members can make donations to The Rotary Foundation or the CART Fund online using credit cards or EFT. These can be made in memory of, honor of, or personal donations. They can be setup as recurring or one-time. These online donations qualify as a tax deduction (but ask your accountant). Follow these easy steps:

**The Rotary Foundation:** Go to <https://rotary.org/> If you have never signed in you will need to register so it credits your Paul Harris Fellow account and our club. You may need our District number 6920 and club number 4202. Once registered you can SIGN IN to MY ROTARY then click DONATE button in upper right. Check the area ANNUAL FUND, DISASTER RELIEF FUND, or POLIO PLUS to donate, then just follow easy steps to make payment.

**CART FUND:** <https://mycartfund.org/Login.cfm> follow the online instructions. You will need our **Club number 4202** and **District number 6920**. (This link requires logging in to DACdb. If you have trouble with that, use <https://mycartfund.org/NewUser.cfm> instead.) All donations to CART go to support cutting-edge research on Alzheimer's.

### Approved Makeups-Family of Rotary Events:

**Reminder - Makeups can only be used two weeks before or after a missed meeting  
(There are no meetings in December)**

Anytime	Rotary Project or Rotary Committee meeting
Anytime	Volunteer at Macon Volunteer Clinic
Anytime	Viewing of Monday meeting recorded on Zoom - See current or past <i>Throbs</i> link.

### HOW TO MAKE UP MISSED MEETINGS

Please make up missed meetings to help our club's attendance percentage rank with District 6920 and Rotary International. **Members are encouraged to maintain an attendance average of 60%.**

Missed meetings must be made up **14 days before or after the meeting you miss.**

See list above of approved makeups. You can make up from the comfort of your home or office online at <http://rotaryclubone.org/> They will email a notice of the makeup to the Club Administrator and you will be credited. Also, attendance at another Rotary Club is a great option when you are traveling!

When you make up using the **Zoom link** of our meetings listed in meeting summary above or makeup in person at another club please send an email immediately afterwards to the Club Administrator, [steve@eggmedia.com](mailto:steve@eggmedia.com) so your makeup can be recorded. Do not expect the club you visit to report to our club.

## Excused Absences

Members have the opportunity to receive a board approved Excused Absence during a long-term family, health, or business crisis. When a member realizes they have a situation that will keep them from attending Monday meetings for an extended period they can contact the Club Administrator or President with the reason. This contact needs to be immediate and not after the crisis. The board can approve a beginning and ending date and attendance is excused on club and district level. Short term absences are best made up online.

### *Club Membership Applications*

*Our club continues to grow! To sponsor a prospective candidate to join our membership, contact Membership Chair Gene Dunwody [gdunwodyjr@dunwodybeeland.com](mailto:gdunwodyjr@dunwodybeeland.com) or any member of the Board of Directors to ensure a vocational classification is available for your candidate. Once the Classification Committee approves the classification, invite your new member candidate to a weekly meeting. If the candidate expresses interest in joining our club, then ask the Membership Chair to send the candidate an invitation to apply online. Applications are reviewed by the Board and then announced in Throbs, after which any member can express an objection.*

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