



Rotary



The Rotary Club of Macon

♥ **THROBS**

Published Weekly Since 1914

February 17, 2025
No Meeting – Presidents Day

Presidents Day, celebrated on the third Monday of February, originated as a tribute to George Washington’s birthday, which was officially recognized as a federal holiday in 1879. Over time, the holiday evolved to honor not only Washington but also Abraham Lincoln, whose birthday falls in the same month. By the late 20th century, it became widely known as Presidents Day, recognizing the contributions of all U.S. presidents

Beyond its historical roots, Presidents Day serves as a reflection on the leadership and legacy of those who have shaped the nation. For Rotarians, the holiday is a reminder of the values of service, leadership, and civic responsibility that great leaders exemplify.



Link for Zoom Recording

Click here to view the recording of our February 10 meeting: <https://tinyurl.com/29bhh2em>

FUTURE MONDAY PROGRAMS AND CLUB EVENTS:

February, 2025

- 18 Board Meeting
- 24 RBI Baseball Jeff Batcher

March, 2025

- 3 No Meeting
- 10 Goodwill Jim Stiff (President, Goodwill Middle
GA and Central Savannah River)
- 17 USDA Nikki Thomas, Acting State Director
- 18 Board Meeting

24	Unified Defense/Prince Service & Mfg.	Eric Williams, CEO
31	No Meeting	
April, 2025		
7	Chancellor Perdue	Sonny Perdue
14	Georgia Supreme Court	Justice Verda Colvin
14	Board Meeting	
21	Cherokee Brick	Kate Sams Peavy, President
28	No Meeting	
May, 2025		
5	Spring Picnic – no regular meeting	
12	GRSP Student	João Victor Verçosa Vilela
19	Performances by Morning Music Club’s Maerz Award winners	

New Member Approvals

The Board has approved several new membership applications. Their names and proposed classifications are:

- Al Baggarly: Car Wash
- Roscoe Sandlin: CIA, Retired
- Ed Hubbard: Low Voltage Contracting

Members have 10 days to make comments in writing to President Danny Gibson.

MEETING February 10, 2025

Attendance: 61.7% - 63 in person, 19 Zoom, plus 10 guests

CART \$5, Raffle \$165

Club Membership: 146

President Danny Gibson rang the bell to start the meeting. In his inimitable style, Danny said he felt very good and compared it to the feeling of using a new toothbrush (you had to be there). He then called on Albert Reichert to lead the singing and pledge. Albert honored speaker Bill Underwood by leading the club in singing *For He’s a Jolly Good Fellow*. Charles Olsen followed with the prayer.

President Danny, as always, thanked Jackie Riley for her piano playing, but also noted that her birthday is this week. He then welcomed our guests, most of whom were pending or potential members. He encouraged those who normally attend by Zoom to come in person if at all possible.

David Frolich celebrates his birthday February 17, and Danny asked the members to keep David in mind as he recovers from back surgery. Tripp Yarbrough celebrates on the 20th. Several members have club anniversaries; Chris Turner has one year, Cameron Bishop and Andrew Eck have two, Keisha Callins has four, and Julie Wilkerson and Todd Suttles have five years of service.

It was then time for CART brags, and we had just two. That was a big contrast from last week, so please be thinking of something to say at our next meeting on March 24!

President Danny reminded the club that our annual Speech Contest for high school students will be March 8, from 10:00am at the Arts Center of Middle Georgia State University. Judges have been chosen, but more student participants are still needed. Members are encouraged to attend!



President Danny announced a change for the February 24 program. We will hear from Jeff Batcher, who started Major League Baseball's RBI (Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities) program. Our original speaker was David Wood of Good News TV but he had to reschedule. Danny asked us to keep David and his family in our prayers since our member Don Wood has recently moved to the memory care section at Carlyle place.

Jonathan Wetherbee was then called up to give a classification talk. Previously, during the brag session, he had remarked that reliability numbers had just been released for on-time package delivery between Thanksgiving and Christmas. The Postal Service had a rate of 90%, FedEx had 92%, and UPS delivered 97% of its packages on time. Jonathan is Manager, Strategic Initiatives for United Parcel Service, and holds the classification of Shipping-National Private. Jonathan said since joining UPS he has been involved in special projects such as establishing their internet presence. The latest project is Hyperlocal, which will provide same-day or next-day shipping within cities.

Past President Bob Hatcher then introduced our speaker, Mercer President Bill Underwood. Bob said he would give a very short background and then tell a story about a trifecta as an illustration of his leadership. Bill's background is in the law. He received his JD Degree from the University of Illinois, graduated *summa cum laude*, and was the class Salutatorian. He clerked for the Honorable Sam Johnson, who was judge on the US Court of Appeals for the 5th District. He then he went into the practice of law, and after a few years took a position teaching law at Baylor.

"Well, after a little while longer he was named the interim president of Baylor. And in 2006, when we at Mercer were looking for a new President, we were fortunate to be able to recruit Bill to become the 18th President of Mercer University. And ever since he's been the President, things really continue to be really happening, and happening well at Mercer.



“And the story of the trifecta that I want to share with you happened early in his administration. When you think about building an institution of higher learning, you need growth in lots of areas, but particularly in students. Well, a lot of things can go wrong if you don't do that correctly. It's pretty easy to lower the academic standards, so more students can come in, or you can lower the price so that more students can come in. But early in Bill's administration I was talking with him one day, and he said, ‘We've hit the trifecta. We've had more students. We've got higher academic standards by any measure, whether it's entry requirements, student success.’”

“Now, I've been on this board for 30 years, and Mercer's finances are in the best shape that they have ever been in, and it has a lot to do with Bill Underwood and the team he has built there”

President Underwood then addressed the club.

A Vision for Growth and Impact

President Underwood began by reflecting on his journey to Mercer and the responsibility he felt when taking on the role of university president. He expressed that, from the start, he did not see himself merely as a manager of an institution but rather as a leader with a vision for expanding Mercer's influence—both academically and within the broader community.

That vision has materialized over the years in tangible ways, with Mercer experiencing record-breaking enrollment, expanding its academic programs, and taking an active role in revitalizing downtown Macon. Today, Mercer boasts an enrollment of 9,250 students, a testament to its growing reputation and reach. Beyond Macon, the university has extended its impact across the state with medical school campuses in Savannah and Columbus, as well as rural healthcare initiatives designed to serve communities with limited access to medical care. Many may be surprised to see just how extensively Mercer touches all parts of Georgia, as illustrated below:



Mercer's Commitment to Macon

A key theme of President Underwood's speech was Mercer's unwavering commitment to the Macon community. He outlined some of the university's major investments in downtown Macon, which have played a vital role in the city's ongoing revitalization efforts. Among these investments are the restoration of the historic Bell House, the development of Mercer Music at Capricorn—a project that celebrates the city's rich musical heritage—and the establishment of the McEachern Arts Center, which provides a space for local artists to showcase their work.

These initiatives, he explained, are part of Mercer's broader strategy to create an environment that attracts young talent to Macon while also preserving the city's cultural and historical significance. By investing in these projects, Mercer aims to strengthen its ties to the community and contribute to the economic and social vitality of the region.

A Transformative Future: The Downtown Medical School Campus

Perhaps the most significant announcement of Underwood's address was Mercer's plan to build a new downtown medical school campus. He described this initiative as the largest investment in Mercer's history, one that will have a profound impact on both the university and Macon's economic landscape.

With financial support from the Peyton Anderson Foundation, the Knight Foundation, and state funding, this new medical campus will not only enhance Mercer's ability to train future healthcare professionals but also serve as a catalyst for further downtown development. The project aligns with Mercer's long-standing mission of addressing Georgia's rural healthcare crisis by ensuring that more of its medical graduates remain in the state to serve underserved communities.

A Lasting Legacy

Underwood concluded his address by reaffirming Mercer's role as an institution dedicated to education, innovation, and community service. He emphasized that Mercer's ongoing growth is not just about expanding its physical footprint but about creating lasting, meaningful change in Macon and beyond.

As Mercer continues to evolve, its commitment to fostering a thriving academic environment, supporting local businesses, and driving economic development remains steadfast. With bold initiatives and continued investment in downtown Macon, Mercer is poised to leave a lasting legacy - one that will benefit students, residents, and the broader community for generations to come.



The CART raffle was up to \$1489, with only 14 cards remaining in the deck. Ed Olson had the winning ticket, but couldn't draw the Queen of Clubs, so the pot will roll over to next week.

As always, we concluded the meeting by reciting the Four Way Test.

Donate to Rotary Foundation and CART

Club members can make donations to The Rotary Foundation or the CART Fund online line 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 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 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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