



The Rotary Club of Macon



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Macon Black Pages and the Rising Tide

Alex Habersham

The Yellow Pages may be a thing of the past, but Macon Black Pages is still a thriving publication. The Macon-Middle Georgia Black Pages & Resource Guide has been Middle Georgia’s premier African-American resource guide since 1991. In Central Georgia, the buying power of African American consumers approaches two billion dollars. Learn about this and more when Alex Habersham speaks to our club. Alex is well-known in our community as a former teacher, mentor, business leader, speaker, and much more.



Link for Zoom Recording

Click here to view the recording of our June 3 meeting: <https://tinyurl.com/27m5eyep>

FUTURE MONDAY PROGRAMS AND CLUB EVENTS:

June, 2024

- 17 No meeting
- 24 Changing of the Guard – Stephanie Folsom to Danny Gibson

July, 2024

- 1 No meeting – July 4 holiday
- 8 Bragg Jam
- 15 Macon Water Authority
- 18 Board meeting
- 22 Macon Action Plan Alex Morrison
- 29 No meeting (fifth week)

MEETING June 3, 2024

Attendance: 58.6% - 60 in person, 18 Zoom, plus 6 guests

CART \$24, Raffle \$51

Club Membership: 146 (including today's inductions)

President Stephanie rang the bell to begin the meeting. After welcoming members and guests and thanking Jackie for her piano playing, she invited Past President (and Past District Governor) Albert Reichert to lead the singing and pledge. Albert first recognized two members of the Rotary family who passed away recently; past member Ken Gerdes and Steve Allen's mother, Sue Williams Allen, whom he had as a teacher in the third grade. He chose to sing *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot*, and the members tried to recall the words as best they could.

Gary Abbott then offered a prayer that recognized Rotary's place in the world.

Stephanie then welcomed our guests. Three members had birthdays last week, and Past President Andy Nations' will be this Wednesday. Ten members celebrate club anniversaries, including Nancy White with 19 years, Marshall Butler with 30 years, Milton Heard with 29, and Joe Timberlake with 58 years! Joe received a standing ovation. Stephanie said the ten anniversaries add up to 159 years of service!

Stephanie said she sent an email out last week sharing the news that a former member of our Rotary Club, Ken Gerdes, passed away on Monday May 27th. His memorial service was this past Friday. Ken was the father of Rotarian Lee Gerdes. Ken spent 30+ years in the TV business with his last job being the station manager at WGXA TV 24 in Macon. He dedicated his life to volunteerism and community service. His passion was golf and he was a member of Idle Hour Country Club for many years where he was the SUPER senior club champion. He was also a member of the Georgia Senior Golfers Association. Ken ran and organized the Macon Middle GA golf tournament for years.

The club took a moment of silence to honor the memory of former Rotarian Ken Gerdes.

It was then time for CART brags. We had just a couple, including Rebecca Grist's 30th anniversary and Jim Crisp's return to directing a show after his retirement.



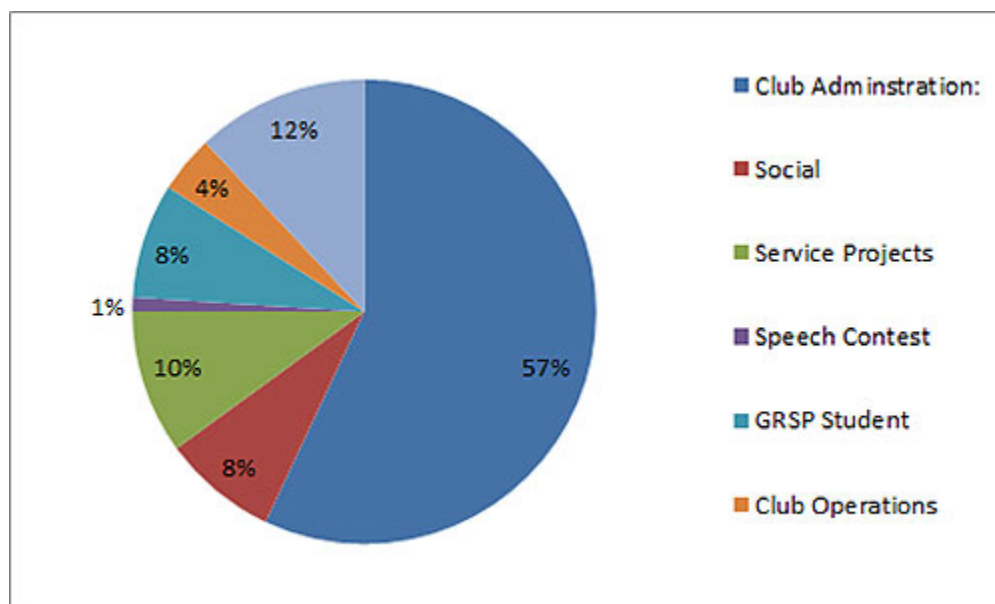
Stephanie then said, as you may have read in *Throbs* we had a GENEROUS member donate \$2,000 so that we did not miss out on the opportunity to meet the challenge of another generous member who matches up to \$5,000 of CART donations. With these donations we have met our goal of \$5,000, which when matched with the additional \$5,000 brings our CART total just north of \$10,000.

“The Board and I are so grateful to each of you for your contributions to the CART Fund, and we encourage you to continue your donations to CART through meeting brags, buying tickets for the raffle and making donations through the link in *Throbs*. As a reminder, the CART Fund provides money for cutting edge, high impact research grants to help find a treatment or cure for Alzheimer’s disease, with 100% of your donation going directly to research.”

President Stephanie then said she had another important topic to discuss, that of dues. Cecil sent out dues statements over the weekend. Rotary’s fiscal year is June to June, therefore it is VERY important that you pay your dues by the end of this month and your account is current. Please check your email TODAY and make payment.

“Every year the President and the Board, with the help of our Treasurer Howard Holleman review and discuss the budget. As you can imagine, we have a lot of expenses to operate at the high level our club demands, as it relates to meeting arrangements, community service, and international dues paid to Rotary.

“Last Year Past President Susan Welch provided a pie chart to show where our dues go. This is a great visual and one that I wanted to present to you this year as well.



Club Administration includes meal and other meeting expenses, plus dues paid to the District and to Rotary International

“The Goal is to have a BALANCED BUDGET. After COVID we have faced increased expenses with food being the most significant of those increased expenses. Meals went from \$8.50 person to \$21.00 person.

“Looking back at what our dues have been, dues remained the same with no increases for three years between the fiscal years of 2019 – 2022 which was during the Pandemic. There was a \$10 quarterly increase in the 2022-2023 year and a \$15 quarterly increase for the 2023-2024 year. The Goal of the Boards since the Pandemic is to slowly work us to a balanced budget. To achieve this, we reduced our meetings to three a month from four and we have incorporated dues increases annually over the past two years.

“To achieve the balanced budget that we have been working towards, the Board and I voted for a dues increase of \$20 per quarter. Your payment of 20 additional dollars will allow the Macon Rotary Club to move forward with a balanced budget and will eliminate us from dipping into savings as we have done in the past.

“We hope that each member will agree that having a balanced Budget is fiscally responsible and MUST for maintaining our financial stability as we move forward. It has been a work in progress over the past three years and I am grateful that Danny Gibson and his Board will be working from a Balanced Budget.

“Please reach out to me if you have any questions and or would like to discuss the budget in more detail. You will see this increase in your next dues statement.”

Stephanie then said it was time for something a bit more fun. We are inducting not just one, but two new members. She thanked Lynn Murphy for sponsoring both Caleb Slinkard and Jonathan Wetherbee, and called on her to give the introductions. Caleb

was a recent speaker at our club. He is the new Executive Editor of the Georgia Trust for Local News and its 19 newspapers, which includes a new digital and print newspaper in Macon supported by a \$5 million grant from the Knight Foundation. Originally from Texas, Caleb began his career in Georgia as the senior editor for both the *Macon Telegraph* and *Columbus Ledger-Enquirer*. He previously led newsrooms for the *El Dorado (Ark.) News-Times*, the *Norman (Okla.) Transcript* and the *Greenville (Texas) Herald-Banner*. Slinkard, a graduate of Texas A&M University-Commerce, has taught journalism classes and practicum courses at the University of



Oklahoma’s Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication and Mercer University.

Before introducing Jonathan Wetherbee, Lynn noted that his wife, Evey, previously introduced as a guest, is a Peabody Award nominee for her podcast *Prison Town*. Jonathan is a manager with United Parcel Service, working with marketing UPS’s key strategic initiatives along with supporting company leaders in strategy development and storytelling. Prior to this role, he served in UPS’s eCommerce team driving miscellaneous efforts for the unit’s strategy and operations. Prior to that, he was founder and Editor in Chief of a digital media startup. He is a graduate of the University of Georgia and has a JD and MBA from the University of North Carolina.

We welcome Caleb and Jonathan to the club!

Andrew Eck then came and said he had the very easy job of introducing our speaker and fellow member, Kaitlynn Kressin, who is well-known in our community. Andrew said he met Kaitlynn in 2013 when she was an intern at the College Hill Alliance while studying marketing at Mercer. She met her husband Nate at the Lazy Dog Growler, now known as Just Tap’d, which was his family’s business. After being married in 2016 she joined that business and led in the renovation that led to Macon’s first brew pub, Ocmulgee Brew Pub which became wildly successful and soon maxed out its brewing equipment capacity. The Kressins sold that business last year to the local restaurant group owned by Wes Griffith, Bryan Adams, and Richie Jones, and

they continue to operate it. That success led Kaitlynn to open up a larger brewery that could distribute to the entire state. At a price of over \$3 million, Fall Line Brewing Company opened in March of 2020 and featured a taproom and beer garden, which is just behind Mercer stadium as the second-largest plot of artificial turf in Macon. Adjoining this is their event space, Fall Line Station, which is booked 18 months in advance for Saturday dates. Her “side hustle” is equally impressive, she buys dilapidated homes and renovates them as high-end apartments to rent. She currently manages 12 units of her own.

Katlynn does nothing half-way, and we all benefit from her obsession. The Just Tap’d Beer Festival in April brings over 2,000 people downtown every year, and there are many unique events at Fall Line. An indicator of business success is the quality of managers and staff you have, and Just Tap’d just celebrated 10 years of service for two of their managers. Kaitlynn also has a servant attitude and helps at Daybreak as well as serving on many boards. She has achieved all this at the age of 30.

After this wonderful introduction, Kaitlynn came up to begin her presentation. She began by saying both she and her husband are natives of Macon, she went to FPD and then Mercer. Just Tap’d is coming up on its 10th anniversary, which is a huge accomplishment for a small business. It was originally planned to be a growler spot for filling up with local beer but they quickly found that their customers were leaving to get food elsewhere downtown, then returning. Therefore, they began offering food and it turned out to be a big part of the business.

Customers also asked if they sold local beer, but at the time there was only Macon Beer Company and they had limited distribution. She and her husband decided to open a brew pub, so they wouldn’t depend on beer sales alone but would also have food offerings. They got the keys to Ocmulgee Brew Pub the day after their wedding and opened in December of 2016. They were surprised to find that food sales were 75% of the business, and decided to try again in 2018 with a full-scale production brewery.

Josh Rogers of NewTown Macon found a building on Plum Street where a restaurant had been planned but was never opened. It was in a rundown condition but when Kaitlynn saw the big, beautiful beams in the ceiling she convinced her husband that it was the place. There was no electrical or plumbing so they had to build out the entire 6,000 square feet.

On March 6, 2020 they hosted a fundraiser for Rebuilding Macon so people could get a look at the new facility. The event went well, and they opened the taproom March 10. On March 12, she got a call from Wes Griffith asking her to write a letter addressing how the restaurant industry is addressing COVID-19. She really didn’t know what that was, and still felt hopeful for the new venture. So, they went from being on top of the world March 10 to shuttering the business on March 16.

Like all small businesses, we faced business closures. We faced government shutdowns. We faced disrupted supply chains. We faced staff and customer safety concerns all, while staring down the barrel of a total loss of revenue. Coca-Cola had purchased all the types of cans we needed, so that supply was shut down. We had trouble getting furniture to finish out the space. And there is no playbook on how to address it.



The first thing we wanted to do was support our team. At the time we had about 75 employees, mostly under the age of 30. So primarily students, part time workers, young professionals who were really looking to us as leaders in our company. This was a big weight to carry, but we tried to make it as fun as possible, focusing on our team. My husband and I hand delivered a dozen cookies to all 75 employee's homes, and in turn they posted cute little messages on social media. We decided, regardless of what happened, regardless of what government loans were available to us, we were going to make sure to maintain as much of our staff as possible, so we kept all of our management and salaried employees on at full pay.

Team Resilience

Cookie Deliveries, Online Happy Hours, and Lots of Fun!



From there we began adapting on an operational front. We changed our business hours. We implemented safety measures. I am not an infectious disease doctor, or professional or expert, but I had to be during that time because I had to maintain up front for our employees and also for our customers. There was signage that needed to go up every day. I was constantly on the phone with HR talking about how I was going to communicate different practices. What if an employee got COVID? What was the protocol? How long did they need to stay out? Did they come into contact and with anyone, what was the definition of contact?

Kaitlyn went on to describe how the business eventually came out of the crisis and continues to be a thriving business in downtown. It's hard to summarize in this short space, so if you missed the presentation or want to see it again, see <https://tinyurl.com/27m5eyep>

The raffle pot was up to \$447, but the King of Clubs is still in the deck so it will be even higher next meeting! The meeting concluded with recitation of the Four Way Test, illustrated by a photo Jeffrey Hagy took while driving through Brundidge, Alabama. The local Rotary Club had the Four Way Test painted on the side of a building, along with the Rotary Wheel. Our next meeting is June 10 with speaker Alex Habersham.

Thanks to Ivey Hall for taking pictures at today's meeting.

Donate to CART

Our club has a \$5,000 challenge match each year and we've always been able to meet that challenge. Thanks to a generous member we have now met the match for this year! However, that doesn't mean we should slow down in our support for this worthy cause. We collect money in the blue buckets at each meeting, but also rely on donations by check or online.



There are three ways to donate, and the most visible is by putting cash in the blue bucket on each table. You may also write a check payable to the Rotary Club of Macon and put "CART Fund" on the check. Thirdly, you can donate online at <https://mycartfund.org/login.cfm>. For online donations you will need to enter our Club number 4202 and District number 6920. This requires logging in to DACdb, if you have trouble please contact Steve Allen or use this [alternate link](#). Online donations qualify as tax-deductible (but ask your accountant!)



Do you have a recent accomplishment? Have you or your organization won an award or otherwise been recognized? We want to know, and to recognize your achievement at a meeting. We also need members to share a short vocational talk at a meeting. Please email Gary Wheat, our Vocational Service Chair, at gwheat@visitmacon.org

-- Donate to Rotary Foundation --

Club members can make donations to The Rotary Foundation online using credit cards or EFT. These can be made in memory of, honor of, or personal donations. They can be set up as recurring or one-time. Follow these easy steps:

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, POLIO PLUS FUND, WORLD FUND, or DISASTER RESPONSE FUND, then just follow easy steps to make payment. Checks payable to Rotary Foundation can also be given to the club and we will forward the payment.

Approved Makeups-Family of Rotary Events:

Reminder - Makeups can only be used two weeks before or after a missed meeting

Anytime Rotary Project or Rotary Committee meeting
Anytime Volunteer at Macon Volunteer Clinic
Viewing of Monday meeting recorded on Zoom - See current or past *Throbs* 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. Our attendance is reported each month to the district and is required to be reported before the 15th of the following month. **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

We are purpose-driven leaders of influence and action. To sponsor a prospective candidate to join our membership, contact Membership Chair Charles Olson EOlson200@msn.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 Membership Chair Charles to send the candidate an invitation to apply online. Once the new member candidate completes the application, Board members review the application. Then, new member candidates are presented for formal approval at the monthly Board meeting. Once approved by the Board, new member candidates are announced in Throbs. Unless there is objection by any existing member, the new member is scheduled for orientation and formal induction. All members of our club need to think about who would make good Rotarians!