



Rotary



The Rotary Club of Macon

♥ **THROBS**

Published Weekly Since 1914

June 16, 2025

Artificial Intelligence – Brandon Hancock

During his address to our club in January, Dr. Kirby Godsey offered many thought-provoking insights. One of the most striking was his comparison of Artificial Intelligence to the discovery of fire, an innovation he believes will reshape the world.

On June 16, we'll hear from Brandon Hancock, who is using AI in innovative ways. Brandon is an AI developer, educator and entrepreneur with a YouTube channel that's attracted over 60,000 subscribers. His projects include implementing AI-driven operational systems for local businesses like Fall Line's wedding venue, and streamlining medical Q&A and billing processes for a Miami fire chief. Learn more at Monday's meeting!



Zoom Link

Click here for the recording of our June 9 meeting: <https://tinyurl.com/222knxn9>

FUTURE MONDAY PROGRAMS AND CLUB EVENTS:

June, 2025

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| 17 | Joint Board Meeting |
| 23 | Changing of the Guard – Meeting to be held at The Overlook on First, 484 First Street (in the old Armory building, next to Macon Arts) |
| 30 | No Meeting |

July, 2025

7	No Meeting	
14	Ending Hunger, American Heart Assoc.	Carla Howard, Kelly Mitchell & Bennett Smith
15	Board Meeting	
21	Accessible Playgrounds	Natalie Mackay
28	Georgia Power	Patrick Harris, Region Executive

August, 2025

4	Big Brothers, Big Sisters	Betsy Fitzgerald
11	50 Years of GNTV	Rev. David Wood
18	GA Dept. of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities	Commissioner Kevin Tanner
19	Board Meeting	
25	Rescue Mission	Pat Chastain, CEO

MEETING June 9, 2025

Attendance: 54.2% - 64 in person, 14 Zoom, plus 17 in-person guests and one Zoom guest

Raffle \$155, CART \$29

Club Membership: 156

President Danny Gibson rang the bell to begin the meeting and then invited Past President Albert Reichert to lead the singing and pledge. As always, Albert found a lesser-known song, at least to us. He called on Past President Jonathan Alderman to help lead the singing. The song, *R-O-T-A-R-Y That Spells Rotary*, was copyrighted in 1923 by the Wilmington, Delaware Rotary Club, and is sung at club meetings all over the country. However, this may be the first time for our club. Thankfully, Albert provided the lyrics.



Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Past President Andy Nations offered the prayer. Andy asked for continued blessings for our club, and reminded us to be mindful of those less fortunate with whom we share this world.

President Danny thanked Albert, Jonathan, and Andy. He noted that he grew up in Tift County, and the local Rotary club there sang that song at every meeting. He thanked Jackie Riley for her piano playing, and also noted that Pearce Miller, our AV tech, played the piano some before the meeting and was very good.

Danny then addressed our speaker, Dr. Sumner, noting the large crowd she had drawn. With so many physicians in attendance, he noted, this would be a good time for someone to have a medical emergency. He noted that a member once collapsed years ago and was attended by a member physician, but it turned out the person had just fallen asleep.

Danny then welcomed our many guests, which included a large delegation from the Mercer School of Medicine and several potential members. Next, he noted members celebrating birthdays and club anniversaries. Past President Andy Nations had a birthday June 5, and tomorrow both Milton Heard and Cynthia Knapp celebrate. Frank Wood's birthday is June 13.

This week had a lot of club anniversaries. So many, in fact, that the full list is here:

- One year: Jonathan Wetherbee, Caleb Slinkard, and Shannon Fields
- Two years: Meaghan Blight
- Three years: Macey Terrell and our most valued assistant, Merrily Burns
- Four years: Sarah Harris and Kaitlynn Kressin
- Seven years: Robert Bowen
- 10 years: Rob Betzel
- 20 years: Steve Allen
- 20 years plus eight in previous club for 28 total: Nancy White
- 30 years: Milton Heard
- 31 years: Marshall Butler
- 59 years (!!!): Joe Timberlake

That adds up to an amazing 201 years of Service Above Self!

CART brags followed, which always gives members a chance to relate significant happenings while contributing to Alzheimer's research. There were some great ones, see the video if you missed them!



President Danny followed with club announcements. In two weeks, on June 23, President-Elect Rebecca Grist and her 2025-26 board will be sworn in. For that meeting, we won't meet at our usual place but will be down the street at Overlook on First in the old Armory building. More details will be in next week's *Throbs*.

Volunteers are still needed to work on the Habitat house our club is sponsoring to honor our late member Josh Rogers. Sign-up information can be found at the end of this newsletter.

Finally, there will be a dues increase of \$20/quarter, beginning in the new Rotary year July 1. This will bring quarterly dues to \$300, which is still a good value.

Danny then called on Program Chair Jimmy Asbell to introduce our speaker, Dean Jean Sumner. Jimmy said Dr. Jean Sumner is Dean of the Mercer University School of Medicine and a lifelong advocate for rural health care in Georgia. A third-generation Georgia physician, Dr. Sumner began her

career serving in Washington and Johnson counties.

She joined Mercer in 1989 as a community faculty preceptor and became dean in 2016 after holding a series of leadership roles. Her career includes service as a hospital chief of staff, nursing home medical director, and leadership on numerous professional boards, including as President and Medical Director of the Georgia Composite Medical Board.

Dr. Sumner was the first Georgian to receive the Ralph O. Claypool, Sr. Memorial Award from the American College of Physicians, where she is also a Fellow. She earned her nursing degrees from the Medical College of Georgia and her M.D. from Mercer, completing her internal medicine residency right here in Macon.

“I’m particularly happy to introduce her today because she’s not only a friend with whom I’ve worked with closely, but she’s my son, Jimmy’s dean.”

Dean Sumner then took to the podium. The following is a condensed version of her remarks, for the full program see <https://tinyurl.com/222knxn9>.

When Mercer School of Medicine was founded in 1982, its mission was clear: to train doctors who would serve Georgia’s rural and medically underserved communities. Dean Jean Sumner shared how Mercer is delivering on that promise, and doing so with bold innovation and measurable results.

Georgia has 120 rural counties, and 65 of them have no pediatrician. For many families, a simple checkup requires a drive of 40, 50, or 60 miles. Parents often have to choose between gas, groceries, and medicine. Mercer is changing that reality by recruiting students from rural communities, educating them close to home, and helping them return to serve the places they came from.

One key initiative is the Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta Scholars program, which now supports 28 students. Another is the Nathan Deal Scholars Program, launched during Dean Sumner’s first week, with a \$35 million endowment from the state. The fund has now provided full-tuition scholarships to 113 students who pledge to practice in rural areas, over \$11 million in support since 2011.

Mercer also created the country’s first accelerated primary care track, where qualified students can complete medical school in three years and enter a pre-matched residency program with no tuition after year one. Programs in family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, and now psychiatry ensure graduates are prepared to serve where they’re most needed.

Beyond education, Mercer operates six rural clinics, strategically placed in counties where no other providers go. These clinics are not built to compete; they’re built to fill gaps. The Plains clinic, inspired



by a call from President Jimmy Carter himself, stands as a shining example. Today, it serves patients in a once-vacant lime green building, and continued to get the occasional quality-control call from President Carter until his recent passing.

Mission

To educate physicians and health professionals to meet the primary care and health care needs of rural medically underserved areas of Georgia.



Other projects include:

- A new Mercer Center for IDD Care in Macon, a state-funded 34,000-square-foot facility providing coordinated care—including dental and diagnostic services—for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Mercer will also train physicians and dentists in this often-overlooked specialty.
- A partnership with Marcus Autism Center to pilot 10-minute autism screenings in rural counties using iPad-based technology backed by Arthur Blank.
- An opioid prevention initiative, training “life care specialists” through technical colleges, in partnership with the Christopher Wolf Crusade and tested in five rural counties.
- The Kids Alliance for Better Care, equipping rural hospitals and schools in 23 counties with tools like infant warmers, telehealth tech, and mental health screening for students. In one case, the alliance helped a South Georgia hospital that delivered babies without even having a baby scale.

Dr. Sumner closed with a powerful reminder: “We’re short of physicians in Georgia, and really short in rural areas. But I believe we’re solving that problem. We’re helping these kids become really good doctors. And we’re helping them go back home.”

Dean Sumner's speech was greatly appreciated by the members, who stayed long after the meeting to continue the conversation. When her speech ended, it was time to have out lottery drawing in which half of the pot goes to the winner and the other half to the CART fund. The pot was up to \$3,043 with only five cards left in the deck. Past President Don Cornett, who only recently rejoined our club, had the winning ticket. Then, it was...

Winner, Winner, Several Chicken Dinners!



As always, the meeting concluded with recitation of the Four Way Test.



Habitat House Honoring the Memory of Josh Rogers

As previously published, the first volunteer group to help build the house will be Monday, June 30th (when there will be no Rotary meeting). To volunteer, sign up at <https://forms.gle/kfpgYVPgyCKiU69P9>. For questions, contact Ivey Hall at ihall@maconhabitat.org.

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 (such as the Habitat house) 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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