



# The Rotary Club of Macon

❤️ **THROBS**

*Published Weekly Since 1914*

June 17, 2024

*No Meeting - Juneteenth National Holiday*

There is no club meeting June 17, please join us next Monday, June 24 for a very important meeting when we mark the end of the terms of President Stephanie Folsom and her board, and formally install Danny Gibson and his board. Please be on hand to show thanks for all the hard work these people do for our club!

June 19 is our country's newest national holiday and it commemorates the end of slavery in the United States. A blend of the words June and nineteenth, it marks June 19, 1865: the day that Union Army Maj. Gen. Gordon Granger rode into Galveston, Texas, and issued General Order No. 3, proclaiming that the enslaved African Americans there were free.



What began as an informal celebration of freedom by locals in Galveston eventually grew into a wider commemoration of the end of slavery as African Americans in Texas moved to other parts of the country. Juneteenth became a federal holiday on June 17, 2021.

## Link for Zoom Recording

Click here to view the recording of our June 10 meeting: <https://tinyurl.com/28ehyf6r>

## FUTURE MONDAY PROGRAMS AND CLUB EVENTS:

### June, 2024

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

### July, 2024

- 1 No meeting – July 4 holiday
- 8 Bragg Jam Olivia Walker
- 15 Macon Water Authority Gary Bechtel & Ron Shipman
- 16 Board meeting
- 22 Macon Action Plan Alex Morrison
- 29 No meeting (fifth week)

## MEETING June 10, 2024

Attendance: 50.8% - 53 in person, 14 Zoom, plus 4 guests

CART \$135, Raffle \$36

Club Membership: 147 (including today's induction)

President Stephanie rang the bell to start the meeting. After reminding members and guests of our 110-year history and thanking pianist Jackie Riley, she asked Kathy McCollum to lead today's song and Pledge of Allegiance.

Kathy noted that Friday is Flag Day, so she chose to sing *Grand Old Flag* before leading the pledge. Ivey Hall then came up to lead the prayer, and she offered thanks for all the blessings we enjoy. Stephanie then welcomed our guests, which included Past President Chip Koplin. Both Milton Heard and Cynthia Knapp have birthdays today, June 10, and Andy Mealor and Frank Wood celebrate later in the week. Three members have club anniversaries, including Club Administrator Steve Allen with 19 years and Meghan Blight reaching her first year.

It was then time for CART brags to support Alzheimer's research. Club Receptionist Merrily Burns brought a card from her Pilot Club in Honolulu expressing their *mahalo*, or thanks, for our help with grant funds to aid the people devastated in the 2023 fire in Lahaina. The Pilot Club in Honolulu designated grant funds for the use of small nonprofits but needed help in contacting the two Rotary clubs in Lahaina. President Stephanie suggested contacting the Hawaii Rotary District, and eventually the District Governor in Honolulu contacted the Pilot treasurer after Merrily was able to get them in touch. At their July meeting, the Pilot Club will present District 5000 (Hawaii) a grant for \$10,000.



Stephanie said she wanted to present one last “Rotarians in the News” before the end of the Rotary year. Gary Wheat wasn’t able to attend but sent his report to Stephanie. She said that Julie Wilkerson, Andrew Eck, and she were featured on TV and in numerous publications, including *The Telegraph*, for the installation of the Peace Pole at the Atrium Health Amphitheater.

Dr. Keisha Callins and Rebecca Grist were honored in a proclamation from Georgia State Representative Miriam Paris for the International Women's Day at the State Capitol. The event was featured in the April-May Women's issue of member Susannah Maddux’s *Macon Magazine*.

And finally went a shout out to Jessica Walden, who was featured in a Macon article for the publication *Town Carolina*, discussing her family ties to the Macon music scene as well as her company, Rock Candy Tours.

Member Sarah Nicholls then gave a Vocational Talk. She is the owner of SJ Labs & Analytics, which was the first cannabis testing lab in Georgia. Georgia is relatively new to legal cannabis, so testing is a really big topic. California was the first state to legalize medical cannabis in 1998, but problems developed when patients couldn’t get consistent access to quality products. So a group of scientists in northern California got together and decided they needed to have some testing standards. When Oregon adopted their medical cannabis program two years later, this group of scientists in California successfully lobbied these testing standards into Oregon's law. Since then it has been the precedent for every cannabis regulation in the country. Products must be tested for potency, and also for levels of pesticide residues, heavy metals, micro toxins and others. Legal cannabis came to Georgia through the back door of hemp production, and SJ Labs was the first Georgia lab available to test those products. This is a new industry, and Sarah is happy to discuss it more with anyone who has questions.



It was then time to induct our newest member, who is actually returning to the club after moving away for several years. Shannon Fields has returned to her hometown of Macon as Regional Director of the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS). She has been with DFCS for 27 years and was Director for Bibb County from 2014 to 2019, serving in Macon Rotary from 2017 to 2019. In her current position she oversees operations in 16 counties. She was introduced by Nancy White, who cited Shannon’s passion for issues impacting children and families across Georgia.

We welcome Shannon Fields back to our club!

Our featured speaker was Alex Habersham. He was introduced by Josh Rogers.



Josh said he was honored to introduce his friend, mentor, and Macon hero, Alex. C. Habersham. For more than five decades. Mr. Habersham has worked to develop businesses, coach entrepreneurs, support community development, train leaders and protect and promote civil rights for all Maconites.

In honor of his work. Mr. Habersham has received dozens of community service awards, including the Small Business Champion of the Year for Georgia and the Southern region by the Small Business Administration, as well as Citizen of the Year by the Macon Chamber.

An entrepreneur himself, Mr. Habersham founded Habersham Enterprises which encompasses Habersham Promotions, a marketing promotional outreach business, and the Macon Middle Georgia Black Pages, a resource and business guide of African American businesses which also features other community partners.

Josh said that marketing often seems like voodoo to him, and it's incredibly hard to figure out what's going to work to reach your target market, your customers and your clients, but not to Mr. Habersham. "I have never met anyone who could get a crowd of hundreds to show up anytime, anywhere for anything. Wherever Mr. Habersham goes, an army follows.

"I follow his email marketing because I know he's going to inform us on the important events in Macon. And continuously. I find out about things from the Black Pages marketing that I didn't hear about anywhere else, and that I would have missed entirely without that resource."

He's responsible for thousands of conversations, relationships, and business transactions that would not have happened without him.

He is a graduate of Savannah State University, a member of Macedonia Baptist Church, and married to his lovely wife, Myrtle. But, Josh added, "I know from personal observation that Mr. Habersham's greatest duty and accomplishment is as the world's greatest grandfather to his granddaughter and my daughter's dear friend, Alexandria, who was named in his honor."

While Macon's downtown has experienced a huge revival, in the beginning its businesses were only 18% black owned in a city that is more than half black. Alex's Downtown Diversity Initiative changed



Newtown, and it changed downtown, resulting in a doubling of black-owned businesses in just three years.

Mr. Habersham said he was honored and humbled to be here today, and was asked to repeat his oft-used phrase that a rising tide raises the whole ship. He said he is the Publisher of the Macon-Middle Georgia Black pages, which is the directory of African American businesses throughout Central Georgia. About 32 years ago he began to kind of realize the economic impact of black consumerism in Central Georgia, which is \$3.5 billion dollars a year after taxes. He started the publication as a way to highlight black-owned businesses but added this is not predicated on separatism but on cooperation and a utilization of resources to uplift lift the entire community.

Alex said, “What I do each year is, I try to think of something in the community that needs to be addressed, and I theme a book. Last year was 200 years of African American businesses. I've done books on young entrepreneurs and professionals, on downtown growth and development, and in one the theme was about women.

He recalled downtown Macon of the 1950s and ‘60s, when there was a very robust black business corridor.

## Macon's Downtown Black Business



In the mid-20th Century, there were 125 licensed and Black-owned businesses:

- 40 grocery stores
- 17 barber shops
- 15 cafes
- 8 cleaning & pressing shops
- 5 butcher shops
- 3 banks
- 2 blacksmiths
- 2 theatres
- 1 haberdashery
- 1 hospital

He mentioned Charles Douglass, regarded as Macon's premiere black entrepreneur with the Douglass Theatre and Hotel, a shoe shop, pool room, beauty shop, restaurant, liquor store and investment properties. There was also Ruth Hartley Mosley, a healthcare professional for whom the Ruth Hartley Mosley Memorial Women's Center is named.

Desegregation was overall a good thing but it led to the decline of many black businesses.

Macon was also ranked as the most redlined city in the United States in the 1930's, with 65% of neighborhoods marked "hazardous." This meant areas of Macon that were mostly black were ineligible for loans, leading to a population of renters who couldn't build up wealth. The racial wealth gap is still higher in Macon than in the state of Georgia or the U.S. as a whole.



Alex approached Josh Rogers about starting a Downtown Diversity Initiative. Since 2019, 133 people have participated in the program and taken advantage of \$95,000 in grant money awarded over five years. Since 2019, 63% of NewTown's loans have gone to BIPOC-owned (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) businesses. The average loan size is \$30,000.

Mr. Habersham highlighted several success stories in downtown Macon and his presentation was full of pictures, charts and illustrations. If you missed it, or just want to go back to take it all in again, see <https://tinyurl.com/28ehyf6r>

ECONOMIC POLICY

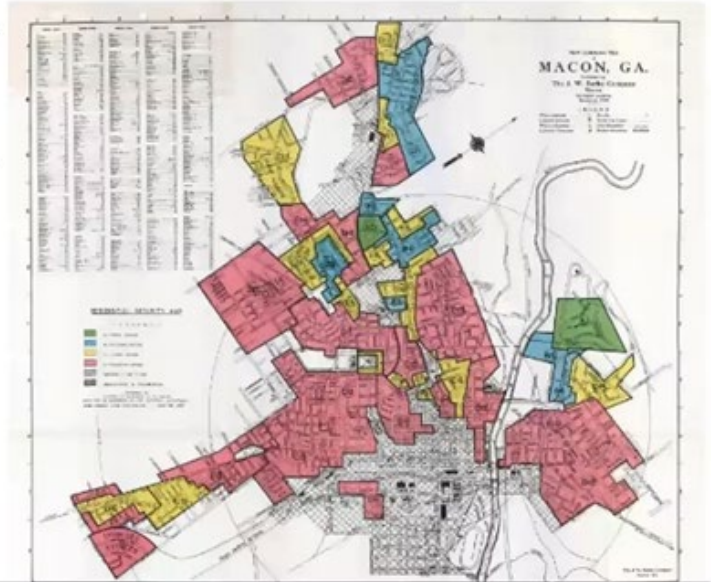
## Redlining was banned 50 years ago. It's still hurting minorities today.



Analysis by **Tracy Jan**  
Deputy Health & Science Editor

March 28, 2018 at 6:00 a.m. EDT

In Macon, Ga., 65 percent of neighborhoods were marked "hazardous" in the 1930s, making it the most redlined city in the United States, followed closely by Birmingham, Ala., and Wichita, Kan.



The CART lottery pot was up to \$483 but the King of Clubs was still not dealt, so it will be even higher next meeting. Be sure to buy several tickets!

There is no meeting next Monday, June 17 but please mark your calendars for June 24 and the annual "changing of the guard." Scarlet uniforms and bearskin hats are optional.

As is our tradition, the meeting ended with recitation of the Four Way Test.

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## CART Appeal

There is only one club meeting left before the end of our fiscal year. Please help us to once again be the top club in CART giving! We collect money in the blue buckets at each meeting, but also rely on donations by check or online (<https://mycartfund.org/login.cfm>). And don't forget that half our lottery pot winnings also go to support CART.



## -- Donate to Rotary Foundation --

Club members can make donations to The Rotary Foundation online line 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 <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. Our attendance is reported each month to the district and is required to be reported before the 15<sup>th</sup> 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](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.

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## *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](mailto: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!*

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