



# Rotary



## The Rotary Club of Macon

 **THROBS**

*Published Weekly Since 1914*

**July 29, 2024**

*No Meeting*

July 29 is the fifth Monday of the month, so we will have no club meeting that day. Please join us next Monday, August 5 for another great program where the topic will be the Center for Middle Georgia Studies.



### Link for Zoom Recording

Click here to view the recording of our July 22 meeting: <https://tinyurl.com/28znelgw>

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

#### **July, 2024**

29 No meeting (fifth week)

#### **August, 2024**

|    |   |                           |
|----|---|---------------------------|
| 5  | Center for Middle GA Studies at MGS           | Dr. Kristie Roberts-Lewis |
| 12 | Macon-Bibb Mayor                              | Lester Miller             |
| 19 | No Meeting – Tu B'av (Jewish holiday of love) |                           |
| 20 | Board meeting                                 |                           |
| 26 | RYLA (Rotary Youth Leadership Awards)         |                           |

#### **September, 2024**

|    |  |                              |
|----|--|------------------------------|
| 2  | No meeting                                 |                              |
| 9  | Journalism, Humor, and <i>Macon Melody</i> | Ed Grisamore                 |
| 16 | “Trouble in God’s Country” (economics)     | Charles Hayslett             |
| 17 | Board Meeting                              |                              |
| 23 | First Tee of Middle Georgia                | Elliott Ruus, Exec. Director |
| 30 | No meeting                                 |                              |

# MEETING July 22, 2024

Attendance: 59.8% - 64 in person, 13 Zoom, plus 1 guest

CART \$40, Raffle \$38

Club Membership: 144

President Danny is traveling this week and immediate Past President Stephanie was also out of town, so Past President Susan Welsh ably filled in to run the meeting. After ringing the bell, she called on Katie Carr to lead the singing and pledge. Katie chose *America the Beautiful* and it's always nice to hear her voice.

Sarah Harris offered the prayer, and began by confessing that she had a very hard weekend with some close friends who just lost their 19-year-old son. When she noticed she was supposed to lead today's prayer she used the one that had been going through her mind during those difficult days, a prayer she cherished from her youth. It was recited at her wedding, her children's weddings, and at funerals for both of her parents. It's known as the Irish Blessing, and is well known to most. It is:

*May the road rise up to meet you.*

*May the wind be always at your back.*

*May the sun shine warm upon your face;*

*the rains fall soft upon your fields and until we meet again,*

*may God hold you in the palm of His hand.*

Susan then welcomed out guests and offered a "Today in History" that reflected her background at the museum. On this day in 1784, German astronomer, mathematician and physicist Friedrich Bessel was born. His scientific observations and study advanced our knowledge of the cosmos, specifically his more than 50,000 precision measurements of the positions of stars. She then invited all the stargazers to check out the current NASA Hubble Space Telescope exhibit at the Museum of Arts and Sciences.

Bob Hatcher celebrated his birthday yesterday, and Austin Sturdivant's is tomorrow. Susan Johansen and Andrew Eck also celebrate birthdays later this week. Marcus Tripp marks 21 years with the Macon Rotary Club plus seven additional years as a Rotarian before joining us, so he has 28 years of Service Above Self.

Josh Rogers then came up to introduce our speaker and fellow member, Alex Morrison. Josh said that Alex asked him to skip a traditional introduction since he spoke here recently. Josh said he would mostly follow that request but wanted to add some personal observations. Alex is a really inventive leader, and what he does sometimes looks like magic because he can conjure a lot from a little. He's not just MacGyver at work, he's an equally creative cook. "Alex prepared one of the best meals I've ever eaten my whole life in the back country, the Smoky Mountains, with only a steak and a campfire.

"He's also an incredibly effective public servant. Right now in America, it seems like it's every man for himself, but I have never seen Alex act out of self-interest. Instead, he is consistently putting the needs of his fellow Maconites first. In just the past year Alex has been the primary public administrator



to deliver both the largest indoor pickleball complex in the world and the Atrium Health Amphitheater to the citizens of Bibb County on time and on budget. He's not even 40 yet, and those are career defining successes.

“Despite his youth, Alex has been doing this work for a long time as an undergraduate, studying philosophy and journalism. Alex was using his extracurricular time to lobby the University's president, and the Mayor of Macon, to form a new partnership, to revitalize the city through the College Hill Corridor Project, which resulted in over \$100 million dollars of investment. Alex took that success and honed his skills through a graduate degree program in public administration before coming back to Macon to lead the Urban Development Authority and join the city's Economic Development Department.

“Within months of starting these jobs, Alex enticed the Peyton Anderson Foundation and the Knight Foundation to invest \$500,000 in the first Action Plan for downtown.”

Alex then took to the stage to begin his presentation, aided by a PowerPoint. He thanked Josh for the introduction, which is only briefly summarized above. He began by saying he hopes everyone is proud of what has happened in our community. He often thinks about the Four Way Test and how it applies to a lot of the work they do at the Urban Development Authority.

“Is it the truth?” asks if they are building from the right data and understanding. “Is it fair to all concerned?” is critical in public service.

Alex's topic was the Macon Action Plan (MAP). MAP is a comprehensive, community-driven, plan that envisions the future of Macon's Urban Core. The “Urban Core” refers to Downtown Macon and nearby neighborhoods. The urban core is where the City was first established, and it remains a center of employment, entertainment, and institutions, as well as home to a collection of historic and diverse neighborhoods and communities. The urban core is the heart of Macon, which includes Downtown and surrounding intown neighborhoods.



Alex said this is the one club that has seen the drafts of both plans before they went live. The first Macon Action Plan was completed in 2015, and it answered a very basic question of how to turn all the potential of downtown into something that works for all. How do we get something going? How do we stop having a conversation about empty storefronts and empty upper floors?

“Because we had a democratized implementation, we brought a lot of different players to it. We saw a huge amount of success in the first several years that led us doing a second version and make an action plan. But as we were building that second version of the plan, the one we call the refresh in 2019, we started hearing that while it was great that there was all of this activity, there was a weakness in the plan, a weakness in the process, and that was that we weren't hearing all of the voices. Not everybody saw themselves represented in the plan or the success of downtown Macon. So we made sure that through the second version of that plan we were more deliberately inclusive, and who was on our steering committee, who was part of our targeted planning sessions.

“Voices were allowed in the planning process to make sure that all people making felt like they were in. That refresh launched in 2020.”

Alex noted that 2020 was a very difficult year to launch a new plan that was about bringing people together but they made a concerted effort. The plan focused on anchors of growing economic development, growing jobs in our community, creating an unparalleled urban core experience, and making sure that our events were strong, our public spaces were strong and our quality life issues were addressed in some type of way. Another goal was increasing the residential base of downtown, growing our housing stock, and making sure that we are enticing more people to invest in residential development downtown, which has been the underpinning of all the success that we've had.

Alex used many slides to illustrate the goals. He touched on parking, growing our pedestrian and bicycle network, defining the hospital campus, sustainable infrastructure, and much more.

The current plan is the third Action Plan, and is based on the premise that what happens downtown benefits the whole city. Input was received from hundreds of citizens and was distilled into ten priorities.

## Your Priorities

- 1 Continue to support minority and women-owned businesses
- 2 Diversify downtown retail and restaurant offerings
- 3 Create an entertainment district and manage nightlife
- 4 Make a big statement at the River and establish a clear connection to the National Park
- 5 Create a family-friendly downtown destination for large events and programming
- 6 Continue to build out from strength and diversify the housing stock
- 7 Make sure public improvements support vibrancy downtown
- 8 Connect Downtown across MLK Boulevard
- 9 Invest in neighborhood parks and open spaces and repair past harms
- 10 Create a neighborhood infill and preservation program to protect affordability

Alex's presentation touched on too many topics to sum up in this newsletter and included housing, community involvement, diversity of retail and restaurant offerings, establishing an entertainment district and managing nightlife, making downtown a more family-friendly destination, connecting downtown across MLK boulevard, and much more.

# Make a BIG Statement at the River & establish a clear connection to the National Park



The plan includes making a big statement at the riverfront to establish a clear connection to the future national park, and even a pedestrian and bike bridge. It was one of the better-received programs we've had, based on the number and quality of questions that followed. If you didn't have a chance to see it, or want to view it again, see <https://tinyurl.com/28znelgw>



The CART raffle pot was up to \$616. Ed Olson drew the winning ticket but not the winning card, so the jackpot will be carried over and increased at our next meeting of August 5.

As always, the meeting concluded with recitation of 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 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**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| 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 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 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!*