



February 28, 2017

JOE STEWART

NCFree Enterprise Foundation



Change is the name of the game for the years ahead in North Carolina is the take away from the talk at Tuesday's Rotary presentation by Joe Stewart, executive director of the North Carolina Free Enterprise Foundation, a non-partisan, nonprofit organization that conducts impartial, objective research and analysis of candidates, campaigns, voter attitudes and demographic changes that impact the state's political landscape.

Some quick facts:

- Fifty percent of NC voters are non-native.
- The state has joined the ranks of most urban states, albeit the most rural still of that group.
- Population growth will continue with most coming from folks moving here.
- The partisan typography of the state is now urban vs. rural where for decades it was East vs. West.

The battle for votes, Stewart says, will be in the suburbs.

In 25 years from 1990 to 2015, NC's population grew from 6.6 million to 10 million and became more diverse, especially with the growth of the Hispanic population. Demographers predict the Hispanic population will be 30 percent by 2050. The population is also older; the median age has increased 2 years to 37.8.

The state's population growth will continue to be uneven with most of the increase in the Piedmont Crescent and other urban centers. Many rural counties will continue to lose population.

The result is a shift in the state's political landscape. Much of the growth is in two urban centers: Charlotte and Raleigh. What Stewart calls "Char-lie" where the new residents bring a different world views. They bring their politics and their sports allegiances with them, he said. For example, the largest Steeler fan club outside Pittsburgh is in the Triangle area.

The veteran political activist noted that the HB2 controversy is the first noteworthy manifestation of the urban-rural divide. "I'll admit, I was surprised," Stewart said. "I thought it would have come from Asheville, not Charlotte."

Stewart outlines three trends affecting voting patterns:

1. Greater urbanization and demographic diversity from population growth
2. Generational shift in partisan and ideological orientation

3. Continued economic globalization

What does this mean, Stewart asked? From 2010 to 2015 the state's population increased by about one-half million. Half of that was in two counties – Wake and Mecklenburg, thus the name “Charlie.”

Voting wise, the two counties backed George Bush for president in 2000 with slightly more than 50 percent of the vote; in 2016 those counties' voters backed Clinton with nearly 60 percent or more.

“Unaffiliated” is the fastest growing category of voters in urban and rural areas, and that, Stewart says, has significant implications for all office seekers. Unaffiliated voters increased by 600,000 in the past eight years. Today, Democrats represent 40 percent of registered voters; Republicans, 30 percent and unaffiliateds, 30 percent.

Where NC voters were once referred to as “yellow dog Democrats,” today the weathervane is a much more descriptive symbol and it has significant implications for office seekers. Party means much less than issues. Voters can, like the weathervane change with the wind.

Stewart said millennials are spearheading the shift to unaffiliated but the implications of this shift are unclear. He noted that perhaps the state Council of State races in 2016 offer a glimpse. In 2016 there was not more straight ticket voting allowed for offices other than president and vice president. But the expected fall off in voting for down ballot candidates did not occur. Victors represented different parties and did not necessarily follow the presidential vote.

The governor's race may have been more illustrative of a coming trend, Stewart explained. It appeared that Pat McCrory lost his reelection bid based on different issues in areas throughout the state. This he said, may be a harbinger of how races will be decided in years to come where candidates will be addressing a myriad of issues throughout the state.

Stewart attributed Trump's victory in North Carolina, and in the other states he took unexpectedly, to white voter turnout, especially during early voting. Black voters did not support Clinton as they did Obama in 2008. He also noted a majority of voters live in only 13 NC counties. It may not be necessary in coming years to visit all 100 counties, Stewart said.

Stewart pointed out one fact of the 2016 election nationally that shows the state politics mirrors the national urban-rural divide. The 2 million votes by which Clinton won the popular election vote basically came from her overwhelming victories in three cities: New York, Los Angeles, and the District of Columbia.

The executive director offered some thoughts concerning the state's elections in 2018:

- The first midterm election following election of a new president historically goes against the party of the president.
- The election will probably come as the nation begins the next economic slowdown.
- In North Carolina, there will be new legislative district maps with the possibility of a special election in 2017. Stewart noted that there are many factors, including a new U.S. Supreme Court justice, which might affect redistricting.

- There is only one statewide contest in 2016, for one seat on the NC Supreme Court. There will be no Senate race to drive partisan election turnout.
- The governor vs. the legislature will be “Bar Fight,” and like all bar fights it will be nasty and bloody and pull in unsuspecting onlookers. Stay tuned.
- Civil discourse will continue to be driven by demonstrators pushing points of view; there could be incidents of terrorism all of which could have significant electoral consequences.

Speaker Write-Up: *Henry Bostic*

Head Table: *John Powell, Tom Bartholomy, Vanessa Stolen*; Invocation: *Cheryl Banks*; Visitors & Guests: *Hank Donaghy*; Health, Happiness & History: *Colleen Brannan*; Photos: *Bert Voswinkel*; AV: *Jessica Dupree, Nikki Keith*

CLUB NEWS

Chris Kemper's father, James Edward Kemper, Sr. passed away February 27, 2017. The club extends deepest sympathy to Shelley, Chris and the family. Visitation will be Friday, March 3, 2017 at Hickory Grove Baptist Church North from 11-12:30 with the service starting at 1pm.

Bob Webb will step down as CEO of Myers & Chapman in June. Bob will remain as Chairman and **Rick Handford** remains President. Email update: Randy Robinson: scrandal67@gmail.com.



Busy week for several of our members. **Phil Volponi** did a great job co-chairing the District's 4th year of partnering with TreesCharlotte on a planting project. Over 200 volunteers across the District planted 198 trees at Winding Springs Elementary in just 48 minutes this past Saturday. A few of the hard workers are pictured above.



Martin Waters was on hand to congratulate **Hank Donaghy** as he received the “Outstanding Eagle Scout Award” by the National Eagle Scout Association. The presentation came through the Mecklenburg County Council of the Boy Scouts. There were 5 other recipients last Thursday at the Quail Hollow Country Club where the annual Eagle Scout Banquet was held.

100 SERVICE PROJECTS (80 completed; 203 participants; 2347 volunteer hours)

The idea behind the commitment to complete 100 service projects is to TOUCH 100 organizations. We are starting to lap ourselves and although we can count the community service hours, we can't count the organization if we've already provided a service for them. Example: Christmas breakfast at Charlotte Rescue Mission, coat collection for Crisis Assistance, bell ringing. Do not read into this that we will not continue supporting these projects. Just that we need to identify new organizations that need something done...manpower, no funding, prefer minimum of 2 Rotarians (can be more) volunteering to make it count. I'm looking forward to your new ideas.

NEW PROJECTS *in red*

- **The Jamie Kimble Foundation for Courage** will be hosting the "Women for Courage" luncheon on April 5, 2017. Table hosts are needed; sponsorships are available. Contact: **Terri DeBoo**: terri@terrideboo.com

- **2017 PGA Championship**, August 7-13, Quail Hollow Country Club. Volunteers needed to help in their concession areas. Several schedule options range from 6am-1pm, 7am-2pm; 8am-4pm, 9am-4pm, 10am-close, 11am-close. I have additional information if anyone is interested.

ONGOING

-**Allenbrook Elementary School**: North Star Reading Partners with a commitment to read to a 3rd grade student one hour a week. **Eric Davis**: eric.davis@wellsfargo.com

-**Platelet Donation**: Register at the American Red Cross or Community Blood Center of the Carolinas to donate platelets. **63 donations to date!** **John zumBrunnen**: jzumbrunnen@zumbrunnen.com

-**American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO)**: Coach, referee, board member, linesman, snack shack worker, etc. Kathy Riley at rc@ayso05.com or **Carolyn Carlburg** c.carlburg@gmail.com

MEMBERSHIP

07/01/2016 318

02/28/2017 321

Net Increase: +3

New Members:

Resignations:

PROPOSED FOR MEMBERSHIP (comments to the Rotary office by 3/7/17)

Carla E. DuPuy

Retired (Real Estate, Environmental Affairs)

Sponsor: John Nicolay

Endorsed: Lee Tabor and Ed Pickett

Visitors & Guests 9

Club Members 148

Total 157 (54%)

Guests: Rob Snowden, Doug Barr, Seth Firguin, Paul Korten, Lynn Lee, Mark Walter, Jennifer Braun, Tim Newlin

UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS (03/09/17 – 03/15/17)

03/10 David Veach, Luther Fincher

03/11 Tim Chappell, Ranjay Sarda

03/12 Bill Bartee

03/13 Dumont Clarke, Sam Ryburn

03/14 Fred Wagner

03/15 Tony Lathrop

UPCOMING ANNIVERSARIES (03/09/17 – 03/15/17)

03/11 Bonnie & Wes Jones

03/14 Sandi & Hank Donaghy

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

03/07 – Excellence in Leadership Award (**Charlotte Country Club**)

03/14 – Dr. David Belcher, Chancellor, Western Carolina University

03/21 – Mirsad Hadzikadic, College of Computing & Informatics, UNC Charlotte

Photos from our luncheons and other events can be found on **Flickr** [Click here](#)



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