

**Rotary**  
Club of  
Charlotte



# REPORTER

October 31, 2017

## **SUZIE FORD** **NoDa Brewing**



Today we had the pleasure of hearing from Suzie Ford, co-founder of NoDa Brewery. Suzie is a California native, loves diet Coke, is a closet Vanilla Ice fan and has no use for power point slides! Suzie arrived in Charlotte in 1996 with her banking job, met 2<sup>nd</sup> husband Todd (international pilot) in 2003 and married in 2004. They have four children between them. Suzie left her banking job and joined a sports marketing business and for the next five years learned all about the business of marketing. She returned

to banking in 2008. Todd, the chemistry major, had been a home brewer since the mid 90's but his pilot job travel in the early 2000's kept him from brewing. Ron later began flying two weeks on and two weeks off. One day Suzie arrived home from work and smelled the aroma of beer brewing and asked, "what's that smell Todd?" Todd could not tell from her inflection if she was happy or mad. "Uh, honey its beer that I am brewing"....Suzie "it smells great like perfume, good going!" Well he eventually moved his brewing from the kitchen to the garage and before long they were bottling beer and then went to kegging with two taps, then four and then six taps in the garage. Todd really enjoyed his hobby of brewing beer and he often experimented on his friends when they had parties. Well the story goes, the parties got bigger, folk's really liked the beer (free beer is always the best). When not flying, Todd was spending a lot of time "crafting" his beer.

In 2010 Suzie's bank and Todd's airline were both acquired and big changes came. Todd's seniority went away and he was now based in Cincinnati flying the globe. This schedule was difficult and the two of them decided on a trip back from Cincinnati that brewing was their future. They traveled to Portland, a huge craft brewing city, to educate themselves on brewing equipment. After some back and forth between them, they decided on purchasing a 15 barrel system that could make up to 100 gallons. They both left their jobs and thanks to an RBC banker and the SBA taking a risk on them, they had the down payment to purchase the 15 barrel brew house equipment. So their last house party, in early 2011, Todd had brewed like crazy for the friends and family. It was then that Suzie and Todd told of their plans to open NoDa Brewing Company, named for the neighborhood where they would start at 2729 North Davidson. This would be Charlotte's 2<sup>nd</sup> craft brewery business after Old Mecklenburg Brewery (OMB).

On October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2011 they opened the doors and anticipated maybe a 100 patrons. They served over a 1000 folks and they were lined up outside the building much of the day. Suzie recalls it a crazy, exhausting, perfect day! They began by brewing just 3 beers for sale and now that has reached 30 beers. They began to enter contests and in 2012 their CoCo LoCo Chocolate beer won Silver Medal in the prestigious Great American Beer Festival. This gave them the attention they deserved and needed. In 2014 their American IPA beer Hop Drop and Roll was awarded the Gold Medal at the World Beer

Cup Festival as the world's best IPA. This was unprecedented as no east coast brewer had ever won a medal here, much less gold. This has solidified NoDa as a top craft brewer, not bad for this couple as Suzie said..."we did not know what we were doing"!

Since then they have opened a 60 barrel/2000 gallon 2<sup>nd</sup> facility. They got away from using a 3<sup>rd</sup> party canner to now canning up to 120 cans per minute at their location. The NoDa location is strictly production now and will reopen as a tap house once the light rail is operating. Suzie said the next craft craze could be the emergence of sour beer, the millennials love it! There are now 22 local breweries in Charlotte and growing. The big issue with the industry is once a brewer gets to producing 25,000 barrels annually, they must turn over their distribution to a 3<sup>rd</sup> party distributor per NC law. NoDa is suing the State along with OMB brewery through their organization The Craft Freedom Movement to remove this as a requirement.

Today they have two locations, 45 employees, 600 accounts that sell their beers and the future looks very bright for this entrepreneur couple!

*Speaker Write-Up:* George MacBain; *Head Table:* John Shell, Katie Tyler, Colleen Brannan, Frank Watson; *Invocation:* Mac McCarley; *Visitors & Guests:* Ken Poe; *Photos:* Bert Voswinkel

## CLUB NEWS

**Herb Harriss** introduced long-time Rotarian, **Jim Hintz** as the club's newest member. Herb asked for a show of hands if you knew Jim and lots of hands were in the air. Jim was past president of the Charlotte University City Rotary Club twice, received Rotary International's Service Above Self award in 2014, has successfully expedited some twenty grant projects through The Rotary Foundation, and works tirelessly in Alta Cayma Peru six months out of the year. Jim, welcome to your new Rotary club.

**Em Syrewicze** thanked the club for supporting the Catawba Riverkeeper Environmental Education and Kayaking program (CREEK) with a \$4000 donation authorized by the club's Environmental committee. The program works with 7-17 year olds to learn water safety, water conservation, basic ecology and paddling. As chair of the Environmental committee this year, Em encouraged more members to step up and join this committee for their first meeting on November 14. Contact Em: [Emilee@catawbariverkeeper.org](mailto:Emilee@catawbariverkeeper.org).

### Important projects over the next two months....

**Clothing drive for Crisis Assistance Ministry** will be held during the month of November. Thanks to **Daryl Lerner** and **John Cantrell** for their work with this project. Warm clothing for men, women and children can be dropped off at tables set up in the hotel's parking deck starting **NEXT** Tuesday.

**Salvation Army Red Kettle campaign** begins November 17 with the kickoff at the Square (Trade & Tryon). **Mark Norman** and **Mike Crum** are coordinating this project which marks the club's 24<sup>th</sup> year of ringing the bell to provide Christmas gifts for children and families in need. The Salvation Army anticipates serving in excess of 13,000 children this Christmas. Last year's total of \$5,000 raised by Charlotte Rotarians supported approximately 175 children. If interested in ringing the bell, please contact Mark at [mark.norman@jwu.edu](mailto:mark.norman@jwu.edu) or 980-598-1018. Sign up boards will be available at our November 7 and 14 meetings as well.

**5<sup>th</sup> annual Christmas Breakfast at Charlotte Rescue Mission** will be coordinated by **Bob Webb** and **Joe Penner**. They ask that you consider adding this event to your holiday planning and encourage family members to participate with you. Be on the lookout for the sign-up sheet in mid-November. If you are interested in being the volunteer photographer, please let Bob or Joe know.

**Foundation Banquet** on Friday, November 17, 2017 at the Ballantyne Hotel. Reception at 6PM; dinner at 7PM; keynote speaker is Richard King, Past RI President; cost is \$65/person or \$110/per couple (\$55 for 3<sup>rd</sup> person/guest). Sign up is required through DACDB (Sandy can help with this part).



Long-time Rotarian, Charlie A. Williams, Jr. passed away today, November 1, 2017. His grandfather, Charles A. Williams, Sr., was one of the founding members of the Rotary Club of Charlotte. You could always count on Charlie to take a minute to thank and chat with the speaker. He never left the hotel until he was certain everything was properly put away. He was so proud to have sponsored Luther Moore and when Luther became Governor in 2013, Charlie absolutely beamed with pride. Funeral arrangements are incomplete at this time.

## **100 SERVICE PROJECTS** (99 completed)

**99 PROJECTS HAVE BEEN COMPLETED!** Someone, please come up with a new project to cap off the club's commitment to complete 100 Service Projects!

- **Platelet Donation:** Register at the American Red Cross or Community Blood Center of the Carolinas to donate platelets. UPDATE - 76 donations to date. Donations have fallen off in the last 3 months and not meeting the goal of 100 donations will jeopardize this effort. Contact: **John zumBrunnen:** [jzumbrunnen@zumbrunnen.com](mailto:jzumbrunnen@zumbrunnen.com).

## **MEMBERSHIP**

07/01/2017 309

10/31/2017 300

Net Increase: -9

New Members: Jim Hintz

Resignations: John Laub, Bob Fuzy, Rob Hayden, Amy Burkett, Robbie Kirk, Meg McElwain

Visitors & Guests: Howard Hoyle, III, Stephen Guardipee, Kenny Smith, Carlie Houchins, Lynn Lee, Todd Ford, John Casson

Visitors 8

Club Members 126

Total 134 (50.2%)

## **UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS** (11/09/17 – 11/15/17)

11/10 Mike Rash

11/13 Jonathan Schulz

11/14 Frank Martin

## **UPCOMING ANNIVERSARIES** (11/09/17 – 11/15/17)

11/10 Jan & Ron Kimble

11/13 Kathy & Brian Boone; Leah & Luke Maybry

11/14 Sherry & Van Hall

11/15 Valerie & Phil Truesdale; Dale Halton & Fred Wagner

## UPCOMING PROGRAMS

11/07 Rotary District Governor Scott Van Der Linden

11/14 Kandi Deitemeyer: CPCC

11/21 David Chadwick: Forest Hill Church

11/28 Dianne Bailey: Robinson, Bradshaw & Hinson

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

