JOHN LASSITER: Native Kentuckian; Wake Forest Grad; NC State University Master’s Degree in Public Affairs; LLD from Wake Forest; Charlotte Rotary Club member; Husband of the amazing Beverly Lassiter/Proud Father of two sons/Grandfather of a precious granddaughter … so much for summing up the background of one of North Carolina’s most astute lawyers, a business owner, political negotiator and mediator, community leader, wise business counselor, active civic citizen, plus friend and benefactor extraordinaire.

Introduced at Charlotte Rotary by his longtime friend, Pender McElroy, John Lassiter “owned” the audience packed into the huge ballroom … from his opening sentence through his sign-off. Known for his wit ability to make and his message both interesting and concise, John spoke of his current role as Chair of the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina, a position he accepted when recruited by Governor Pat McCrory. In a nutshell, the EDPNC is charged with creating and retaining high-quality and high-growth jobs with equal emphasis on both facets: creating and retaining. John introduced us to the New Team leadership officially formed in October of 2014: CEO Chris Chung, Sec’y. of Commerce John Skvarla, Economic Development Advisory Council Chair Michael Smith and Business Advisory Council Chair Jim Whitehurst. Along with their 17-member Board ~ comprised of private citizens and business experts ~ this prestigious foursome leads the charge to recruit and retain new business in-and-for North Carolina.

The objective of the Business Recruitment area is to develop a strategic plan overseen by a proactive business development team spearheaded by Vice President David Spratley. At the top of their list is lead generation and project management. John’s own experience as Chair of the (now -defunct) Charlotte Economic Development Board has been invaluable in setting goals and strategies.

With the implementation of the Jobs Plan targeting clusters and branding ~ which set-up a roadmap for what NC needs to do to attract both companies to relocate and employees to fill those jobs ~ the emphasis is clearly on attracting entrepreneurs, establishing an appealing business climate, grabbing the attention of the right workforce including retirees (who are younger than in prior decades and have more-than-adequate funds) and military veterans. Stimulating rural prosperity is an important part of the overall goals of the Jobs Plan along with joining with colleges and universities (i.e.: CPCC and UNCC) to provide education and workforce programs that train men and women of all ages in areas where there are job openings. John spoke of prioritizing using market focus to move NC forward. Wherein manufacturing, bio-pharmaceuticals and furniture/textiles and tobacco are no longer important employment focuses in NC, resources/companies with chemicals, surgical and dental supplies, electronic & catalog shopping are tremendously attractive job-related industries.

Addressing the Global Business Services, headed by VP John Loyack, John reminded us
that Andy Dulin travels ten counties talking to-and-about the EDPNC’s existing business support and workforce development while heralding the creation of Business Link North Carolina (BLNC) for small business support. Of great importance in this current day and age is *Tourism and Marketing* under the leadership of VP Witt Tuttell. This faction oversees consumer advertising and promotions, recruitment of popular markets (i.e.: sporting events, auto manufacturers) and branding of North Carolina as a leader in economic development. We’re losing new businesses to South Carolina in part because of our regulations prohibiting strong incentives. We need incentives to attract new business and we must move from being REactive to PROactive and brand NC as a state which welcomes, endorses and embraces new businesses.

Speaker Write Up: Marilyn Bowler

Head Table: Valerie Truesdale, Hunter Widener, Tony Zeiss, Pender McElroy, John Lassiter, Natalie English, Wil Bosbyshell; Invocation: Will Barnhardt; Visitors & Guests: Denise Hallett, Song: Gray Langley; Four-Way Test: Bill Griffin; Health, Happiness & History: David Erdman; AV: Tom Bartholomy, Phil Volponi, Jessica Dupree; Photos: Bert Voswinkel

**Club News**

*Marilynn Bowler* and *Colleen Brannan* were photographed while attending the Charlotte Businesswoman of the Year luncheon at Queens University of Charlotte;

*Russell Ranson* was caught on camera while attending the Women of Vision Charlotte’s fundraiser; *Jeff Searcy* heads up a Job Hunter Support Group that meets Tuesdays at 7PM twice a month, St. John’s Episcopal Church. The mission is to train job hunters in the skills required to search for a job. If you can volunteer to help with preparing resumes, interviewing skills, etc., contact Jeff at [jeffsearcy@carolina.rr.com](mailto:jeffsearcy@carolina.rr.com); check out the sustainable food project being done at Myers Park High School: [http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/News/Pages/Therippleeffect.aspx](http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/News/Pages/Therippleeffect.aspx)

*Ed Wadsworth* was named the club’s Distinguished Rotarian at the District Conference. Ed has done outstanding work with the youth exchange program and as he was accepting his certificate, he reminded club members that host families are needed for Anna and Radim (Myers Park High & Charlotte Latin), who will arrive from the Czech Republic and Germany in August. [ed@wadsworthgroup.net](mailto:ed@wadsworthgroup.net)

**NEW ADDRESS FOR THE ROTARY OFFICE, EFFECTIVE MAY 11, 2015**

**1850 East 3rd Street, Ste 220**

**Charlotte, NC 28204**

Approve for Membership – comments to Rotary office by 5/12/15

**Joan O’Sullivan Wright**

O’Sullivan Wright, Inc. (Consultant, Organizational Strategies)

Sponsor: Mary Vickers-Koch

Endorsed: Frank Martin, Ken Poe

**Travis W. Vance**

Fisher & Phillips LLP (Law, Labor and Employment)

Sponsor: Luther Moore

Endorsed: Mason Alexander, Bob Phifer

**UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS (5/12/15 – 5/19/15)**

05/12 Gene Williams

05/14 Mac McCarley, Bob Culbertson, John Mahaffey

05/15 Rodney Monroe, Al Allison

05/17 Jill Dineen

05/18 Glenn Paton

**UPCOMING ANNIVERSARIES (5/12/15 – 5/19/15)**

05/16 Scarlett & Jay Westmoreland

05/18 Nancy & David Auger, Mary & David Vickers-Koch
Visitors & Guests   25
Club Members 168
Total 193

MEMBERSHIP
05/05/2015 320
07/01/2014 317
Net Increase: +3
New Members: Mike Restaino
Resignations:

UPCOMING LUNCHEONS (www.charlotterotary.org and click on the events tab)
05/12 – Rotary Youth Exchange Presentation (Raul & Jana)
05/19 – Youth Merit Awards
05/26 – John Allison, Former President & CEO, Cato Institute; Retired Chairman & CEO, BB&T

Photos from our luncheons and other events can be found on Flickr Click here