



2019 - 2020 Board Members

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HOW I GOT WHERE I'M AT Jason Otte and Carol Hardison

Charlotte Rotary held its second ZOOM meeting April 21, 2020, and Cheryl Banks presented another always-popular “How I Got Where I’m At” (HIGWIA) program featuring new member Jason Otte and 20-year member Carol Hardison.



Self-described “angry old man,” Jason went first, noting that many in his family consider him a “serial hobbyist.” “I tend to get into a lot of lot of things as soon as they interest me,” he said, “and when I do, I go pretty deep which is a fun thing for me.” Maybe not others.

He’s been married for 26 years to wife Sherry. They met at Penn State. “She is “a wonderful person” but is definitely “a bad judge of character,” he said self-deprecatingly. “We don’t have any kids if you don’t count our parrot. It’s like being stuck at home for 35 years with a two-year-old.”

Jason said he’s a “very competitive person,” and enjoys running, fishing, and sporting clays. “I was an avid cyclist and used to do a lot of racing when I was younger.” He’s always had exotic pets – “cool things like iguanas, poison dart frogs and aquariums.” He’s a dive master, an emergency first response instructor, a photographer (both land and water), and, he says, enjoys cooking.

Jason’s family is from Ste. Genevieve, MO, about 60 miles south of Saint Louis, where the predominate industry was lime mining and home to one of the largest such mines in the world. Ceilings in the mine are 60 feet tall, he said. Both grandfathers worked there.

My father came from humble beginnings, Jason said. He was “one of four children raised in the house that I think would fit in my garage today.” He was the first in his family to go to college. Jason was born while his dad was pursuing a PhD in chemical engineering at the University of Missouri at Rolla, now Missouri University of Science and Technology.

“My parents frequently remind me I’m living proof that birth control is not 100% effective,” he said, and generally that would come up about every time he was causing some problem or another.

The family moved around in the 70s before settling in Newtown Square, a

suburb of Philadelphia, in 1980. "I always had intensity about my efforts and focus – just not always on the right thing," he said. He was in the marching band, wrestling, track, jazz band, concert band lot of other activities.

"That didn't leave a whole lot of time for getting homework done you know. I was one of those kids that I always dreamt big but never really get to work necessary to get there," he continued. "I had all these great plans for my future. I was going to be a chemical engineer with a law degree and run the world. Looking back none of my plans worked out."

He decided to attend his dad's alma mater in Missouri to pursue a chemical engineering degree, but found he wasn't prepared. At Rolla, he "didn't know anybody that wasn't a valedictorian, and I certainly wasn't, I just didn't really have the right perspective going into college." My biggest accomplishment at the time was to flip a quarter into a shot glass from six feet away, and my GPA was in the square root club."

His dad and mom were not happy with his performance, but his dad remembered that Jason had a deferred acceptance to Penn State. They checked and he could attend. He enrolled the next day after a drive from Missouri through a blizzard.

What really happened at that time – aside from not talking to my dad for about three months – was a change in perspective. I became engaged. He graduated from Penn State as an honor and a scholar and "got my life back on track. He also met his wife "who somehow has put up with me for 26 years through all my lunacy."

He began a career in banking "that was not part of the plan," a career that took him to several banks as a result of mergers and acquisitions – MBMA America, PNC, MBMA. Fair Isaac (Consultant to Fleet), then to Bank of America which brought him to Charlotte. He was hired by an old supervisor from PNC days. That same friend hired me at Honeywell. "Oddly enough," he said, "I spent most of my career working with the same small group of people through all these companies."

"I finally decided I'm not going to work for anyone anymore," he said. After six months of study he bought an Instant Imprint franchise and area master license as well and then finally opened my shop about one week before the shutdown. "We're here doing well, and I'm actually having more fun than I ever did my entire life. It's been a wild ride and hopefully it'll continue."



Carol Hardison grew up in Jacksonville, FL, where her father was an Episcopal priest and her mother was a social worker. "All the things you ever heard about PK's are probably true, but we're not going to get into that part."

Later in life she found this background a little out of the ordinary. Her parents were social justice activist. "I just thought that everybody spent spring breaks in homeless shelters and Christmas breaks visiting prisoners." she recalls. An entire bedroom was dedicated to her mother's lobbying on Capitol Hill. "It wasn't until college that I realized that's not how everybody had spent their childhood."

Her parents constantly talked about their college days in the 1950s at Duke University when they managed, along with African American friends at near North Carolina Central College (now University), to desegregate the Duke University Chapel. "Every summer we would have to drive up and look at the school and see the Chapel where they got engaged and hear the story."

When it can time to go to college, she had no idea what she wanted to do. She just wanted to leave Florida and move north to see fall colors and snow. Carol chose Furman University in Greenville, SC. Outside her dorm room she could see a mountain and fall colors and “slide in the snow on a cafeteria tray. It was the greatest thing ever.”

Carol had no idea what she wanted to major in. A counselor suggested computer science because it was going to be a great field for jobs. Sure enough, recruiters from Duke Energy (then Duke Power) came down to the campus and hired me to move further up North. “Now going to be a true northerner in Charlotte, NC.”

“It wasn’t long before I realized I really didn’t care much about electricity, and I cared a lot less about computers, she said.” But there was a problem. She had signed a 12-month apartment lease and there was no going home. “I don’t think my parents would take me back anyway,” she quipped. She decided to stay. There were nice people at Duke, so she started getting involved in the community to fulfill her passion to help people. She began building Habitat for Humanity homes and volunteering at the Men’s Shelter. “I started doing just anything and everything I could do to fulfill his passion I had to serve which had been in me since childhood, I now realize.”

Now in her mid-30s, she was at company meeting at which former Rotarian Ruth Shaw, then chief administrative officer, “gave a phenomenal speech.” At the end, my boss jumped up and said if this does not excite you, you do not belong here. During the speech, I’d been working on a grocery list.

As it happened later that night, she was looking at a back issue of the Junior League magazine when an add on the back cover caught her attention. “It said, ‘Do you know what you want to be when you grow up?’ I had no idea, so I called the phone number about aptitudes tests and finding the right fit. Carol called and registered and showed up and there with her were mostly moms with high school juniors and seniors. “I realized I probably should have taken the class 25 years earlier, but that was OK. I’m going to find out now.”

There were aptitude tests, eight weeks of classes and lots of searching questions about background, passions, skills, and interests. In the end, she said, “I walked in there as a manager of information technology in an energy company and they said I was supposed to be the executive director of a nonprofit agency that helps people.”

She had little experience except as a volunteer. “I started calling everybody that I’ve known for all my years of volunteering and asked them what they thought I should do. The second person I called said. ‘Well I’m on the board of directors of Crisis Assistance Ministry and the founding director has just resigned and we’re looking for someone.’

“Somehow I talked them into it. That was in 2000, and ever since then my job has completely aligned with my interest and my passion. Hopefully, a little bit of my skill, the things that Duke taught me about management and team building and budgeting, and even resources have been helpful.”

“The ministry is the agency in Charlotte where people come to have basic needs met. Actually it’s unique in the nation that our city created this agency so people only have to go to one place when they face eviction from their apartment or having their utilities disconnected or they need a bed to sleep on. That’s been my passion. That’s been my purpose for the last 20 years.”

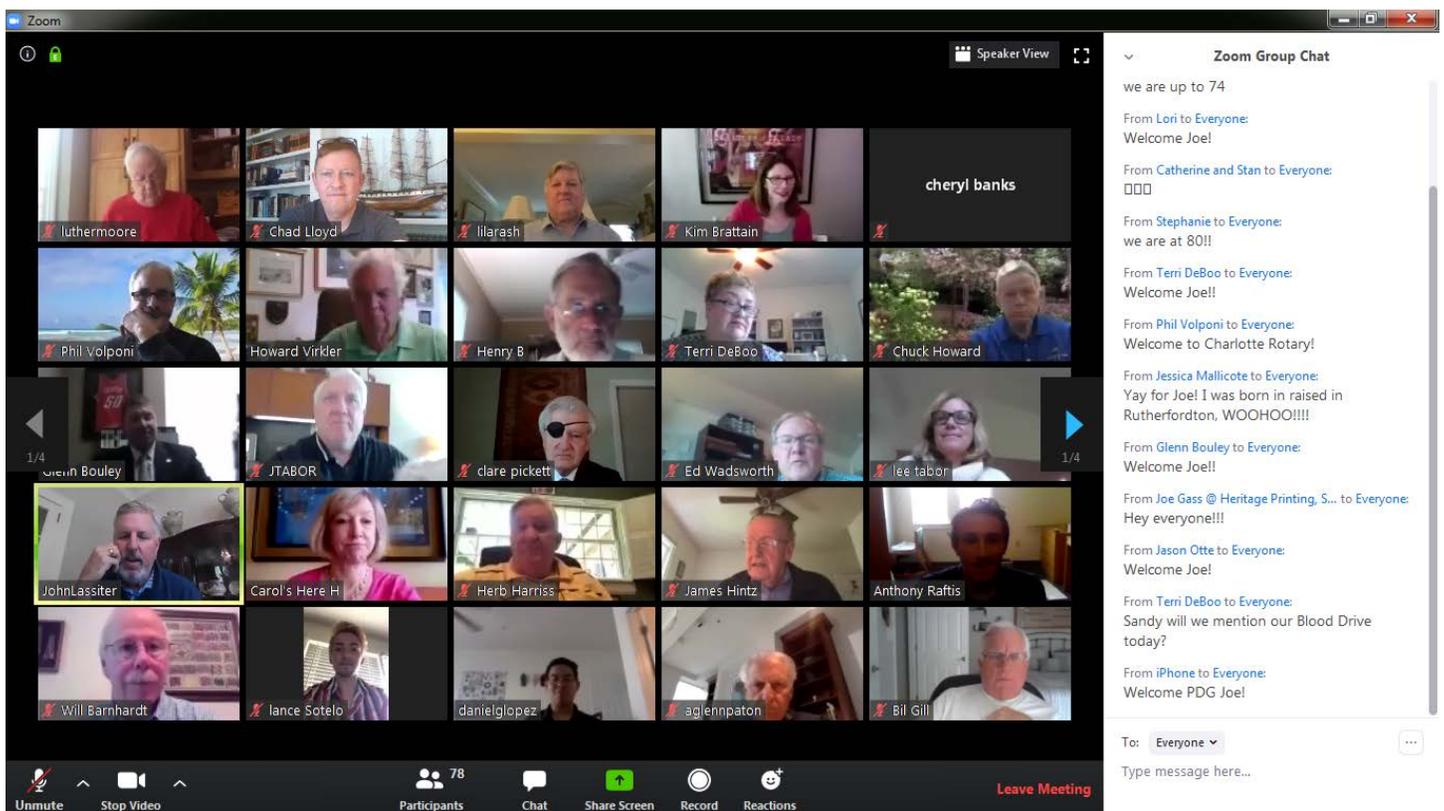
Update on Crisis Assistance Ministry under COVID 19

“What’s happening on the ground right now? Five weeks ago, came the order to shelter in place. All 65 employees were at home with our laptops and our software. We thought we'd have a couple weeks to get ready for how we reengineer our work to see 300 not 100 clients a day facing eviction from apartment or loss of utilities.

That’s when thing blew up. Hotels were evicting people in the middle of the pandemic. People were in the streets or sleeping in their cars. We were asked to make a shift to help them. We’d never worked with hotels before, but we threw together a system to work with people who are already homeless and to figure out how to pay hotels. It was quite different than people who have apartments and leases.

Our team has blown it out of water. Seven days a week ever since the last weekend in March, we stopped hundreds of families from being evicted from 40 or 50 hotels in Charlotte. I just could not be prouder of them.

BY: HENRY BOSTIC



The image shows a Zoom meeting interface. The main window displays a grid of 20 participants in a 4x5 layout. The participants' names are visible below their video thumbnails. The chat window on the right shows a conversation with messages from various participants, including "Welcome Joe!", "we are up to 74", and "we are at 80!!". The Zoom control bar at the bottom includes buttons for Unmute, Stop Video, Participants (78), Chat, Share Screen, Record, Reactions, and Leave Meeting.

CLUB NEWS

Rotary International link to covid-19: <http://on.rotary.org/covid-19>

STAYING IN TOUCH with our Rotary members is important. Please take a minute to check on your friends, report funny stories and updates back to me to share with everyone so we can see who is doing what. The Reporter can be used to share what your company is doing to get through the pandemic, what your family is doing, send me your How I Got Where I'm At....anything to keep our members in the know.



Welcome to the club's newest member – **Joe Morris** – who was introduced during today's Zoom meeting. Joe Morris was born and reared in Rutherfordton, NC and graduated from UNC - Chapel Hill in 1965. He joined the Navy in 1965 and spent some time on a destroyer. He is a retired high end home builder. Joe's Rotary history is notable. He is a Past President of the Dilworth Rotary Club; Past District Governor, District Chair of the Rotary Foundation (twice). Joe has also led or co-led 9 Rotary mission trips to Central and South America. Joe has also been active in Habitat for Humanity for many years and is a former board member. Joe has worked on 116 Habitat houses. He is married

to Sally O'Rourke whose grandfather, Charles Williams, Sr., was a founding member of this club. Joe and Sally have two daughters, Alicia and Jaime. Jaimie is Asst. Principal of Whitewater Middle School. Alicia is the fundraiser of the College of Health and Human Services at UNCC. Photo was taken at the club's 100th Anniversary Celebration in 2016.

LEE TABOR: Thanks to Lee Tabor, who serves as advisor for the Queens University Rotaract Club. Lee introduced this year's club president, Anthony Raftis, who is a proven leader and tremendous asset to the community. Anthony then introduced the club's upcoming officers – (president) Lance Sotelo and (vice president) Daniel Lopez. Lance and Daniel are recipients of the 2020 Rotaract Scholarship (\$500 each) and both are looking forward to another successful year of collaboration.

BILL MOORE: Touched base with Fairfield Inn & Suites General Manager, Bill Moore who said thanks for reaching out. Sadly, not much good news to report and he thinks they are going to have to hang on at least through May, until business starts to come back. He has had to furlough a few more team members, and that is always difficult. It was great to hear Bill say he and all in his family are well. He is trying to be smart about taking appropriate precautions, so he can keep working another 10-15 years. As with everyone, he has a pretty high stress level, and is fortunate to have the best wife in history who is taking good care of him. He and everyone at the hotel look forward to having Rotary back soon!

MARILYNN BOWLER: As everyone wants to support others in some way, *Kids In Need* has launched a campaign to help millions of kids who don't have the technology or connectivity at home and rely on pencils for distance learning. It's simple and quick, for every post, 20 pencils will be donated to underserved students thru Kids in Need, thanks to BIC's generosity. The goal, 50,000 posts between Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and TikTok = 1 million pencils! Please consider posting or re-posting [#PostforPencils](#) on your social media platforms.

DEBB CORBETT and SFTL: In better times, the SFTL (*Seminar For Tomorrow's Leaders*) committee would be working with all of you and your rotary clubs as we finalize our SFTL leadership delegates and put finishing touches on the seminar preparations. However, due to covid19, we made the decision, as DG Beth Trotter announced earlier, to cancel this year's SFTL scheduled at Gardner Webb on June 18-21. We are disappointed and we know you and the students are as well. However, given the uncertainty, we believe it is the best decision for all concerned. We greatly look forward to SFTL in June 2021. Now is an ideal time to explore ways to scale the SFTL experience to reach more students allowing us, as a district, to enhance our support and mentorship for RYLA and youth leadership development.

CHASE SAUNDERS: The City of Charlotte has been working closely with small business partners to develop a strategy around COVID-19. As part of those efforts, the city is launching today an Open for Business initiative. We heard from the community that business visibility to customers is critical during this time. This initiative creates a comprehensive digital platform that will easily connect local small businesses with our residents who want to support them.

We need your help! This dashboard is only as good as the businesses we have listed. If you are a small business owner that is open for business, please complete this [brief application](#). If you are not an owner, please help spread the word – our goal is to have every small business that is currently operating provide their

information. If your business is not currently operating due to the Mecklenburg County Stay at Home order, please complete the application so you can be added when the order is lifted.

The dashboard will be launched on the city's [small business webpage](#), open data portal and the CLT+ mobile app in the coming days. The city will also be promoting this dashboard with our residents on social channels and to the media. We encourage everyone to share this with your personal networks to optimize the usage of this new resource.

HENRY BOSTIC: For When ...not IF... you are bored: [Explore Washington, D.C. From Home With This Free, Smithsonian Scholar-Led Tour](#)

ONE MORE SHOUT OUT...

CHASE SAUNDERS: Good Fellows Club Members would like to provide volunteers to help process families in a safe environment using a Turbo Tax-like tool. If you would like to learn more about how to volunteer, please send an email to goodfellowsclub@gmail.com. Additional details will be provided to those that express an interest.

COLLEEN BRANNAN: The Annual JDRF Walk on April 25 has gone virtual this year so no need to show up at Carowinds at 8am!. Colleen Brannan's son, Nick, a high school senior and Founder of the Providence Day Interact Club, was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes at age 5 and has participated in the Walk ever since. To read Nick's story or donate to his team, "Diabuddies" [click here](#). All funds raised go to research for finding a cure. Maybe this can be your Do Good Week activity!

JASON OTTE: Jason opened Instant Imprints, 800 Clanton Road, in March with a grand opening planned for May/June (Branded Apparel, Signs, Banners, Window and Vehicle Graphics, Custom T-Shirts, Promotional Products and Print Services). He has set up a link (<http://rotary.perkhub.com/offers/10361-instant-imprints-charlotte>) on the Rotary Global Rewards Site and he is offering a 5% discount to anyone identifying as a Rotarian, and the discount is matched with a donation to The Rotary Foundation. The Rotary Global Rewards program offers Rotary and Rotaract club members discounts on products and services for travel, entertainment, and merchandise.

TERRI DEBOO: Rotary Club of Charlotte and the American Red Cross **BLOOD DRIVE @ SMS Catering (1764 Norland Road)**. May 19, 2020. 10:00am – 3:00pm. To make an appointment, please go online to redcrossblood.org and enter keyword "[UptownRotary](#)." All presenting donors will be provided with a free takeout BBQ meal with drink. You may also purchase additional meals for \$10.

MEMBERSHIP

07/01/2019 276 *New Members:* Joe Morris
04/21/2020 269
Net Increase -7 *Resignations:* Larry Broome

CELEBRATIONS

BIRTHDAYS (04/29/2020 – 05/05/2020)

04/29 - Marcus Lee
04/30 - Jessica Dupree
05/01 - Carla DuPuy

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES (04/29/2020 – 05/05/2020)

05/02 – Devon & Parker Cains
05/02 – Summer & Neal Triompo
05/02 – Suzanne & Louis Bledsoe
05/05 – Tammy & Kevin Loux
05/05 – Ridgely & John Phillips

05/05 – Holli & Keith Nowokunski

ROTARY ANNIVERSARIES (04/29/2020 – 05/05/2020)

01 year – Andy Ross; Bryan McAllister (in this club)

02 years – Frank Mueller (in this club); Linwood Bolles (in this club)

03 years – Robert Salmon; George Gable (in this club)

05 years – Mike Restaino

11 years – Bill Bartee

25 years – Ed Kizer

27 years – Bill Nichols

36 years – Bert Voswinkel; Bob Brietz

47 years – Bob Freeman