



August 11, 2020

We meet on Tuesday at 12:30 pm at Fairfield Inn & Suites – Charlotte Uptown, 201 South McDowell St, Charlotte NC 28202

## 2020- 2021 Board Members

President Jerald Coughter

Pres Elect Carol Hardison

Past Pres John Lassiter

Secretary Bill Bradley

Treasurer Edwin Peacock

Exec Sec Sandy Osborne

### Directors 2020-2021

Colleen Brannan

Kandi Deitemeyer

Stuart Hair

Stephanie Hinrichs

Chris Kemper

Chad Lloyd

Alexandra Myrick

### Directors 2020-2022

Patrick Baker

Bill Bartee

Suzanne Bledsoe

Kim McMillan

Rex Reynolds

Ranjay Sarda

John zumBrunnen

Membership Clyde

Robinson

Foundation John Tabor

Programs Elly Clary

Jeff Atkinson

Cheryl Banks

Bill Bartee

Bill Bradley

Kim Brattain

David Tobin

## BILL RUSSELL President & CEO – LKN Chamber of Commerce Restarting LKN (And the Country)



Cheryl Banks introduced Bill Russell, the President and CEO of the Lake Norman Chamber of Commerce. Bill attended Winthrop University where he earned his BSBA, and currently resides in Huntersville. He serves on the Boards of *Visit Lake Norman*, the Lake Norman Economic Development Corporation, the Ada Jenkins Center, the Hugh Torance House & Store; and he is a former president of the United States Junior Chamber of Commerce and the Lake Norman Kiwanis Club. Bill is a member of the North Mecklenburg Rotary Club, and in 1996 was recognized with the South Carolina *Order of the Palmetto* for his civic involvement.

After thanking the Club for having him speak, he pointed out that back in January and February of this year, the US Economy was doing great, with unemployment at historic lows and the stock market at historic highs. Everything was running on all cylinders, and there was so much promise that they were making plans for all of the new programs that they would be running from the Chamber of Commerce.

Then COVID-19 arrived, and on March 26, Mecklenburg County was the first in the state to issue a stay-at-home order, announcing that all non-essential businesses in the County would have to shut down. The Chamber was immediately inundated with telephone calls from businesses wondering what this would mean for them, and what they could do to cope with the order. While the Chamber of Commerce understands clearly that every business is an essential business, they had to restructure themselves to be a clearinghouse for information about what businesses in the area were doing, and how to make sense of the rules coming from the various levels of government.

They put together a program with Elaine Powell, District 1 County Commissioner and Vice Chair of the Mecklenburg County Commission, and Eileen Joyce, the SBA's Lead Economic Development Specialist for Mecklenburg County, on what the order really meant and what assistance might be forthcoming for businesses impacted by the lock-up. As things were quite murky at the time, they quickly set up another program, with Dena Diorio, Eilene Joyce, and officials from Atrium

and Novant to talk about the specifics of what was going to happen with the order and how to cope with the Virus and its impact.

They continued to pump out information, starting with what restaurants were open for business and for what hours; moving on to which businesses were essential and remaining open for business and then programs to explain the CARES Act, to provide methods to cope with the stress resulting from the shut-down. If dealing with the government reaction to the virus was not enough, the incident with George Floyd being killed in Minneapolis took place and the resultant racial and civic unrest.

The Chamber had created a Diversity Council back in 2008, and they put together a program in conjunction with the Urban League, the Ada Jenkins Center, their 'Unity in Community' volunteer group, and the Huntersville Chief of Police to have an open dialog about the situation. Bill believes that the cooperation between these groups, especially when combined with some excellent work on the part of the police, is why the demonstrations in the LKN area have been peaceful. They have continued to have Chamber meetings via Zoom to discuss the ongoing situation and the impact on the community and its businesses.

He is concerned with the fact that the state is not providing a predictable or level playing field for businesses, with some being allowed to open and others being kept closed; and he is frustrated about the fact that there seems to be limited understanding that people's livelihoods are being impacted in addition to their lives. As a result of the restrictions, many entrepreneurs are losing their capital, which is to say their ability to continue as viable businesses.

The Chamber has put together a guide, *Smart Restart LKN*, to advise businesses how to structure their businesses to operate safely when they are allowed to do so, which can be found on the Chamber's website, along with YouTube videos of many of their meetings and presentations. Bill then asked for questions from the crowd.

In response to a question about how many members had gone out of business permanently, Bill stated that he did not know the number, but expected that it was and would be quite a few. Many people who could have handled a few weeks of no or limited business will not be able to handle six months, which is the current prediction from the governor. In the meantime, the Chamber is doing what it can to assist, and to help people identify what sources of financial assistance may be available. Bill has found that the PPP program had been very helpful, and that they were hoping to have some additional relief on the way.

Also, in response to a question about commuter rail to the northern part of the County, Bill stated that he did not think that Norfolk Southern would make their right-of-way available for that purpose, which would be required if commuter rail to the north were to be affordable. He noted that a rapid transit bus system might make more sense and be more flexible than a rail line.

Bill closed with a quote from Martin Luther King at Selma in 1963, "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy." In this time of multiple challenges and partisan division, we need to come together to resolve these issues, including diversity, and Rotary is the kind of organization that can help that happen.

Written By: Rick Handford

## CLUB NEWS

**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.

**SANDY OSBORNE VENTING:** No one will argue that it's been a tough go over the last few months. Some things have fallen through the cracks – out of sight out of mind - and people are experiencing stress and feeling lonely. YOUR Rotary club is still chugging along and there are things that need some attention. For instance, volunteers for Classroom Central (nope), join the Reporter committee (nope), sign up for golf (22 club members), checking on members of the club (I have been). I have worked on Rotary every day since we stopped meeting in person in mid-March. Every day. Just asking you to think about Rotary, join the zoom calls, check on your buds, find ways to still provide service to those in need. This stellar club has been rocking along for over 100 years and things will be changing around here when I retire in the very near future. My life starts a new experience next week – home schooling our 6-year-old grandson on Tuesday and Friday (8:15am – 2:45pm). I'll miss a few Tuesday zoom meetings while adjusting to the new norm. We all need support and I just needed to vent for a minute.

**(repeat request) CLASSROOM CENTRAL:** Charlotte Rotary has a long history of support to Classroom Central...financially, collecting school supplies, and hands-on volunteers to assist teacher shopping days. The club needs to confirm continued support to provide volunteers the first and last Tuesday of each month, with the most likely job being to load supplies in teachers' cars. **Catherine Bracey** is chairing this committee and there's lots of flexibility to participate every month, every other month, or even once a quarter. Please reach out to Catherine and let her know YOU can HELP. [csbracey@aol.com](mailto:csbracey@aol.com).

**(repeat request) GOLF TOURNAMENT:** Golf registrations are picking up and we're now at 56 confirmed. Once the remaining sponsors confirm their teams, we will be in much better shape. Add Sean Gautam and Larry Huelsman to the golf lineup. And, remember to thank the following for donating items for the auction: **Chuck Howard** (Autobell one-year certificate), **Luther Moore** (Belk gift card), **Bill Bartee** (Jesse Brown's gift basket) and Pine Island Country Club (golf foursome). Please call ((828) 808-4537) or email Mike Wollinger ([mwollinger@localfirstbank.com](mailto:mwollinger@localfirstbank.com)) with questions.

**(repeat request) HENRY BOSTIC:** Henry has chaired the Reporter committee for probably over twenty years. His committee does a wonderful job of writing up the weekly speaker presentations in a very fast turnaround and they are needing 2 to 5 more volunteers. I will admit this is a rather skilled group and if you're up to it, please reach out to Henry. There are grant writers, reporters, historians and lots of other people in this club that do a lot of writing. Please seriously consider this opportunity.

**BOB CULBERTSON:** Bob called the Rotary office last week and we had a chance to talk a bit. Bob's wife, Peggy has been in the healthcare unit at Sharon Towers for about nine months and Bob misses her terribly. He slips out now and then to enjoy his hobby of making pottery. Stay well, Bob.

**MARTIN WATERS:** Guess What?? On August 22, 2020 Martin Waters celebrates his 70th anniversary of being a member of Charlotte Rotary!

**REX WELTON:** Dear Sandy, I began my Rotary interest as a son of Rotarian Dave Welton during the forties. I have enjoyed approximately 50 years of membership ~~ most rewarding in so many ways!! Of recent I have been unable to attend due to changes in my agenda. With a huge amount of regret, I wish to resign effective August 8, 2020. Please convey my appreciation to our Board & to you as a fellow member & a most superb Club Secretary ~~ thanks for the memories!!

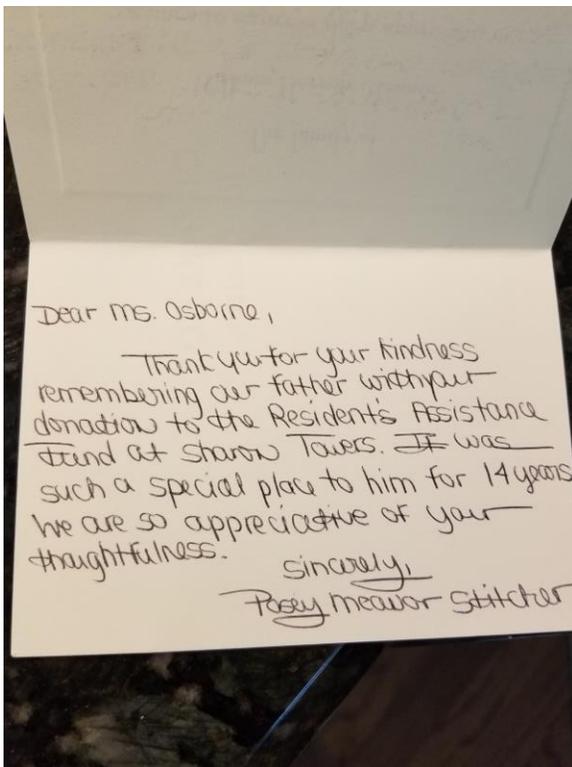
With warmest regards, Rex

**PAT MILLEN:** Friends, all of you on this copy list have been incredible supporters of ours in so many ways. Without your support, E2D would not be able to continue our 8th consecutive annual "Mega Back-to-School D-Day." We are so happy to report however, that we are distributing 400 laptops to families next Saturday (August 15), 2 days before school starts up again.

Covid-19 has provided us incredible challenges. --> Money has been tight.  
--> Staffing has been tight.  
--> Incoming laptops has been incredibly tight!  
--> Our production? Surprising and quietly efficient.  
--> Our resolve? Never stronger.

This community's need for technology? Interestingly, just about the same. What's new is how much more acutely aware of digital inclusion that everyone has become due to school students' needs.

If you're out and about next Saturday morning, swing by AvidXchange and just come and see the magic and the joy. You are directly responsible for the positive life transformations that so often occur when a family gets access to computer technology. You should get to experience the joy first hand!!



Nice note from  
Bill Meanor's family

## MEMBERSHIP

07/01/2020	260	New Members:
08/11/2020	258	
Net Increase	-2	Resignations: Rex Welton

70 members on today's Zoom call

# CELEBRATIONS

## **BIRTHDAYS** (08/19/2020 – 08/25/2020)

08/20 – Dale Halton, Carol Hardison

08/22 – George Edmiston

08/24 – Elizabeth Teagarden

## **WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES** (08/19/2020 – 08/18/25/20)

08/19 – Terri & Jim Guthrie

08/20 – Victoria & Jeff Atkinson

08/24 – Amy & Scott Gakenheimer

08/25 – Laura & Fred Brown; Linda & Rex Reynolds

## **ROTARY ANNIVERSARIES** (08/19/2020 – 08/25/2020)

01 year – Mary Grace Lostetter

06 years – Dena Diorio

07 years – Jennifer Nichols

70 years – Martin Waters

## **UPCOMING PROGRAMS** (utilizing Zoom)

08/18 – Firoz Peera & Carl Davis, Rotary Million Dinner

08/25 – Dr. Willie Griffin, Research into the old Brooklyn neighborhood

09/01 – Mike Hill, Athletic Director, Charlotte 49ers

09/08 – Courtney Layne & Ed Hawes, The Mayflower Society

09/15 – How I Got Where I'm At (*Kevin Poet, Reggie Johnson, Michael Norton*)

09/22 – Michael Kahn, Charlotte Checkers

09/29 – Will not be meeting – golf tournament will be held 09/28