



# Rotary District 6840

Milton Wheeler, DG6840  
2311 McInnis Street  
Hattiesburg, MS 39402  
601-268-3126 (H); 601-318-6165 (O)  
miltonlobos1@megagate.com



## Governor's Monthly Newsletter

Volume 17, Issue 11, May 2008

Service Above Self

### Betty Gill Chosen District's Outstanding Rotarian of the Year

Amidst a roar of approval from a cheering crowd, Betty Gill of Franklinton accepted the District's Outstanding Rotarian of the Year Award at a packed Governor's Victory Dinner concluding the district conference in New Orleans. She obviously was taken aback by the surprise announcement (all district-given awards were a complete surprise).

Assistant Governor for the Heartland Territory since 2001, Betty has been a Rotarian for twelve years, the first two in Bogalusa and the remainder in Franklinton. She has also served on the district level as Co-Trainer since 2005 and as a board member of RYLA since 2005.

Betty constantly goes the second mile. She not only attended the Governor's official visits in her own territory, she went to several outside her territory as well. When the Dutch GSE team visited last month she and husband Mike opened the doors of their country place as a rest and relaxation site for the team of engineers. She serves on the HOC for the 2011 New Orleans International Convention and sponsors the Franklinton Interact Club.

In community service, Betty has been Chairman of the United Way, President of the Chamber of Commerce, and Board member of the Red Cross, the Community Theater, the Country Club, and Washington Parish Industrial Economic Development.

In membership development, a top priority for President Wilf Wilkinson, Betty has worked with President Reggie Simmons in lifting the Rotary Club of Franklinton from 19 to 24 "and there are still five minutes on the clock."

Betty and husband Mike personify "the Family of Rotary." She has been President of the Franklinton club twice and he will lead the club next year. Together they have served as the district's Co-Trainers.

The long standing, cheering ovation when Betty's name was announced indicated that she was "the people's choice" as District 6840's Outstanding Rotarian of the Year, 2008.



Betty Gill  
District 6840 Outstanding  
Rotarian of the Year

### District Reaches 100 Net Gain Member Mark

In one of the happiest stories of the year, D6840 reached the 100 mark in net gain of new members, leading the growth percentages of both the zone and the world. Since July 1 the district has climbed from 2306 to 2406.

Quite remarkable is one of the "endangered" clubs, East New Orleans. President Ramiro Guerra's club has DOUBLED from seven to fourteen. The adjective "endangered" may be removed.

The same may be said for St. Bernard, ascending from twelve to sixteen. Pascagoula demonstrated this month why it won the large club membership trophy at district conference. It collected three more net gain members, reaching from 121 to 131.

Others flexing their muscles this month include: Amite, now eight (28 to 36); Biloxi, now seven (79 to 86); Ocean Springs, now seven (69 to 76); and Bay St. Louis, now five (63 to 68).

#### \*Net Gain In Membership\*

Zone 29	1.49%
The World	2.42%
District 6840	4.23%

## Message from the Governor

# To “Do Something Good”

Perhaps you have perused the June issue of The Rotarian by now. A member of my club finds the June issue always his favorite issue because it is a picture book (Sometime I have considered him as a candidate for the Rotary Literacy Project.)

But pictures are great! They tell the story of Rotary and all “the good” we are doing.

GSE Chair Carlton Dufrechou tells of a boyhood memory when the family would be sitting in the den and his father, a member of the Rotary Club of Metairie, would take leave of the family to attend the Rotary meeting by saying, “Well, it’s time to go do something good!”

Yes, the June issue illustrates the good that Rotary does around the world. But in President Wilf Wilkinson’s opening message, another salient fact emerges. The President of Iceland, Olafur Grimsson, remarked to President Wilf, “Rotary has the right answer . . . So what the world must do is have more Rotarians.”

District 6840 agrees. That is why we now have a net gain of 100 Rotarians, virtually one out of four of the net gain of Rotarians in the thirteen districts of Zone 29.

The more Rotarians, the more we can “do something good.”

## Merlin Duke Gains Governor’s Award

President Merlin Duke of the Rotary Club of Bogalusa received the Governor’s Award at the District Conference in New Orleans.

An alumnus of Group Study Exchange to India, Duke has a special Rotary touch in his club and community, something RI President Wilf Wilkinson would call “Rotary magic.” Why not, with a name like Merlin.

In his weekly emails to his club, President Merlin alerts them that “the Secretary of Agriculture will be guest speaker, so be nice.” Or, “We will sing Christmas carols next week, so tune your voices.”

In the community, President Merlin has taken a lead role for Rotary to restore the Louisiana Museum of Indian Culture from its hurricane damages. He urges his city to “put more magic” in Bogalusa.

His constant readiness to serve and to lead his club draws the Governor’s Award to Merlin Duke and Bogalusa.



**Merlin Duke**  
Governor’s Award Winner

## Matching Grant Comes To Plaquemines Parish

Happy news arrived last week from Evanston announcing the approval of matching grant #65875 for the Rotary Club of Plaquemines Parish South.

Engineered by Rotarian Marty Peak Helman of the Rotary Club of Booth Bay, Maine, the grant will give \$8,300 to the middle schools of Plaquemines Parish to help in their hurricane recovery. The two international partners are the Rotary Club of Port of Spain West (D-7030), Woodbrook, Trinidad and Tobago and District 1610 in the Netherlands, with whom 6840 has just concluded a most successful GSE exchange. The Dutch contribution of \$1,000 is in addition to the \$8,300, making a sum of \$9,300.

Rotarian Marty is well known in the district, having also spearheaded a huge grant drive for Rotary Rebuilds Slidell.

### *Top Five Clubs in Attendance*

1. Edgewater Sunrisers	97%
2. Kentwood	90%
3. Edgewater	89%
4. Long Beach	86%
5. St. Charles Parish	83%

**Club Achievement Award forms due June 15!**

## Neil Alford Earns First Ray Hymel Sustainer of Rotary Award

PDG Neil Alford of the Rotary Club of Slidell Northshore received the first annual Sustainer of Rotary Award at the New Orleans district conference.

The new award honors a district Rotarian who energizes Rotary at all times, especially in low moments. The concept of the Energizer Bunny that keeps on going and going explains the award.

PDG Neil was honored for piloting the district through the dark hours of August 2005 to June 2006 when, at one time, 900 Rotarians were missing in D6840. Neil missed many of the joys of triumph that a governor could expect. Instead, he found himself out of his own home and trying to help devastated clubs recover from the historic hurricane. His own district conference was a skeletal one day event with few of the attractions the district expects.

When Neil's name was announced, he was dumbstruck and seemed to need assistance to the front to receive the award.

The emotional barometer continued to rise when Governor Milton announced that the award will have a name to it: "The Ray Hymel Sustainer of Rotary Award." The words "Ray Hymel" electrified the crowd, as they honor the popular late Ray Hymel, Governor-elect 2006-2007 from Belle Chasse for whom the conference and the Rotary year were dedicated.

Ella Hymel, Ray's widow, was touched by the tribute.

Neil has been a Rotarian 36 years, 16 in the Slidell club and the remainder in Slidell Northshore.

Professionally Neil has served as President of the Slidell and St. Tammany Parish Bar Associations and Chairman of the 22nd Judicial District Indigent Defender Board.

Next year Neil will be District Chairman of the all-important Rotary Foundation Committee, continuing as a Sustainer of Rotary.



*Neil Alford  
Ray Hymel Sustainer  
of Rotary Award*

## Dutch Praise GSE Team

Word arrived today from Hans Brader, GSE chair of D-1610 in the Netherlands, that our team of engineers are on their way home from a very successful exchange.

Hans thanks the district for "sending us such a nice team, enthusiastic, well-equipped, with a good sense of humor. All of our hosting clubs had a good time with them, so you can be proud of them."

This was the first time in district history that we had a theme: Levee Construction. D-1610 was the perfect district with which to exchange on such a theme.

District Rotarians here are still raving about the superlative team of engineers that the Dutch sent us and who appeared at district conference.

## Perambulating Clubs Find New Meeting Sites

Three clubs have changed meeting sites and invite Rotarians to visit them for make-ups.

Hammond-Ponchatoula Sunrisers, which has grown from 29 to 44 since July 1, now meets at the Tope La Banquet Room, 104 North Cate Street, Hammond.

Beginning June 2 Gulfport-Orange Grove will meet at Steve's Marina, corner of airport Road and 49, Gulfport.

St. Charles Parish has changed its day as well as its site. Beginning July 1 Governor-elect Greg's club will meet on Tuesdays at Occasions Restaurant, 117 Maryland Drive, Luling.

### Youth Exchange Resumes in District

After two years of hurricane recovery, D6840 has been recertified to sponsor youth exchanges. Two clubs, Petal and Picayune, have become the first to resume the excellent program fostering international goodwill. Clubs should contact long-time Chairman Greg Champagne for details on how to inaugurate a program. [gchamp@stcharlessheriff.org](mailto:gchamp@stcharlessheriff.org)

## Monthly Attendance Report

<u>CLUB</u>	<u>JULY 1</u>	<u>MAY 1</u>	<u>INCREASE</u>	<u>ATTENDANCE</u>	<u>MTGS</u>
Algiers	10	12	2	76%	5
<b>Amite</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Bay St. Louis</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>4</b>
Belle Chasse	23	24	1	48%	4
<b>Biloxi</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>5</b>
Bogalusa	34	34	-	58%	5
Carrollton	28	28	-	60%	4
Columbia	51	48	(3)	70%	4
Covington	24	28	4	63%	4
<b>East New Orleans</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Edgewater</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>(3)</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Edgewater Sunrisers</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>(9)</b>	<b>97%</b>	<b>4</b>
Franklinton	19	24	5	61%	4
Gautier	42	51	9	36%	4
Greene County	20	21	1	71%	5
Gulfport	152	155	3	63%	4
Gulfport-Orange Grove	33	31	(2)	81%	4
Hammond	52	57	5	51%	5
<b>Hammond-Ponchatoula Sunrisers</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>4</b>
Harahan	13	16	3	55%	4
Hattiesburg	112	112	-	51%	5
Hattiesburg Sunrise	36	33	(3)	70%	4
Kenner	16	14	(2)	75%	4
<b>Kentwood</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>(2)</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>4</b>
La Place	36	36	-	72%	4
<b>Long Beach</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>5</b>
Lucedale	47	49	2	71%	3
McComb	100	104	4	79%	5
<b>Metairie</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>3</b>
Metairie Sunrise	20	20	-	70%	4
Moss Point	17	17	-	74%	4
New Orleans	153	149	(4)	56%	5
New Orleans International Airport	20	23	3	75%	5
Northlake/Mandeville	68	68	-	50%	5
<b>Ocean Springs</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Pascagoula</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>5</b>
Pass Christian	24	25	(1)	70%	4
Petal	55	55	-	69%	4
Picayune	33	33	-	51%	5
Plaquemines Parish South	(Looking for a meeting site)				
Ponchatoula	48	44	(4)	55%	4
Poplarville	39	39	-	55%	5
Richton	25	27	2	74%	5
<b>St. Bernard Parish</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>St. Charles Parish</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>5</b>
Slidell	61	62	1	39%	4
Slidell/North Shore	61	66	5	65%	4
Stennis Space Center	20	22	2	70%	5
Summit	10	10	-	68%	4
Tylertown	29	29	-	65%	4
Westbank/Gretna	83	78	(5)	70%	4
Westwego	29	29	-	47%	2
Wiggins	32	29	(3)	71%	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2306</b>	<b>2406</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>66.13%</b>	