

# the HELICOPTER



**The Rotary Club of Pensacola District 6940 Club 4248**

## WEEK IN REVIEW 10/06/2020

President Sally welcomed members to the October 6, 2020, meeting of the Pensacola Rotary Club at 12:03 pm by leading the Club in the 4 Way Test. She then reminded those in attendance of the 2020-2021 guiding theme of recognition, education, engagement fellowship and service.

Rotarian Verdel Hawkins led the gathering in Prayer and Pledge before handing the baton to Rotarian Chris Kelly, who introduced the meeting's speaker, Gulf Breeze Mayor Cherry Fitch.

Mayor Fitch spent 30+ years as an educator in the Gulf Breeze school system first as a teacher, guidance counselor, Assistant Principal, and retired as Principal of Gulf Breeze High School. Now full-time real estate agent, Mayor Finch has served on the Gulf Breeze City Council since 2012 and as Mayor since January 2019. Mayor Finch is a member of the Gulf Breeze Rotary Club.

Mayor Fitch began her talk by discussing the impact of Hurricane Sally on Gulf Breeze. A year ago, Gulf Breeze City Council adopted new emergency operation plan meant to focus on flooding. A good portion of Gulf Breeze is bi-coastal and other parts are in a bowl. Any amount of rain can create problems related to flooding. The emergency operation plan was revisited in Spring of 2020.

As Sally was churning in the Gulf, emergency team began preparations. Pumps designed to relieve flooding were checked and began to be prepared for placement and the City began checking with contractors it works with to remove debris.

On Tuesday, a command center was established in the Gulf Breeze Rec Center. A large room with blow up air mattresses, sleeping bags, toiletries and food for employees working with utilities was maintained. As soon as safe to be outside, city crews began work. Other team members were positioned at the City's water treatment facility and also readied to begin work when conditions permitted.

To understand how the emergency operation plan abated the effects of flooding, Mayor Fitch reference the flood of 2014. The 2014 flood brought 27' of rain and flooded 300 homes. Sally brought 21.5 inches and only 21 properties flooded. Part of the City's emergency operation plan included distributing a map to show vulnerable areas and alerted residents they were in vulnerable areas. Unfortunately, a significant number of residents did not get boats out of water. Several boats were displaced in yards and docks damaged due to Sally.

A ferry system has drawn a large amount of attention due to the damaged Pensacola Bay Bridge connecting Pensacola and Gulf Breeze. Expedited approvals from FDOT and Army corps of Engineers are needed to help bring the ferry system to fruition. Gulf Breeze will have to extend it dock two hundred feet because of the ferry requiring eight feet of water. Extending pier would get to 11 feet of water. The pier expansion will cost \$450,000. Ferry would go every hour and the ride itself would take 16 minutes. Note of interest is that of the 2700 roofs in Gulf Breeze and 1200 of those roofs work in Pensacola.

Mayor Fitch highlighted that Garcon Point Bridge normally has 33,150 travelers a day and that number has exploded since Sally. An ECAT bus has started to make a hourly run from the Pensacola Bay Center to the Tiger Point Community Center in an effort to provide transportation and help alleviate the traffic woes.

In terms of financial impact, Sally caused \$2.4 million in debris removal; \$1.65 million in utility & stormwater repairs; \$1.8 million in parks & recreation damage; and underdetermined damage to Golf Course. The City also experienced \$5.8 million in uninsured expenses. Both Escambia county and Santa Rosa county received individual assistance status from FEMA for its residents.

Both Sally and COVID have hurt local economy of Gulf Breeze. The Gulf Breeze Office Depot is closing in December. Lack of access to travel has caused folks to make changes based on proximity. Mayor Fitch mentioned that the City is working with AppRiver to ensure it doesn't lose power during another weather event. A Gulf Breeze resident has started a "Save the Breeze" in an effort to determine events that can bring back business to local economy.

Gulf Breeze strives to be the most livable city where residents can live, work and

play. Travel & Leisure magazine ranked Gulf Breeze as one of the top 10 place in Florida to retire and number 11 to raise a family.

With 85 storefronts, Gulf Breeze is almost built out with respect to housing and building space. Strategies to encourage economic development are being developed and reviewed, with an emphasis on medical and technology industries.

Other economic projects mentioned was a forthcoming announcement concerning a major asset tenant for the uninhabited portion of the CVS building across from Gulf Breeze High School. Home 2 Suites and Holiday Inn Express are two hotels that are near completion.

As Mayor Fitch began to wind down her remarks, she mentioned the 5 keystones of Gulf Breeze: responsible city government, city investment in today & future, quality of life, premier community in northwest Florida and growing local economy.

While Mayor Fitch mentioned Gulf Breeze's Stormwater Project. Septic Tank Elimination Program and Underground Utilities Project, she highlighted the Multi-Use Pathway, Wetland Trail Boardwalk and Pavement Rehabilitation efforts. The project is a nice complement to the enhancements Pensacola has created from Wahoo Stadium to the Pensacola Bay Bridge. By the time the project is complete, an individual will be able to go to Navarre along the pathway.

Another aspect of the project focuses on making the city safer while encouraging people to get out more. Over the past five years, 300 accidents have occurred at double stops within the city. There will be a sidewalk for walking & jogging and a separate peddle path. Each will have safety crossing and change face of community. Members of the community were able to provide feedback by walking a map of the project that was laid out on the gym floor of the Recreation Center. Changes in design were made based off feedback.

Mayor Fitch concluded her remarks by answering a question concerning the traffic flow through Gulf Breeze. The City is working with FDOT to change access to Beach access because 6 lanes of traffic will be coming into Gulf Breeze,

Quite a day for Rotary Club of Pensacola because not only was the Mayor of Gulf Breeze part of the program, but members were also treated to Pensacola Rotary Club member Mayor Grover Robinson, who served as Sunshine for the meeting.

After recognizing guest and Rotarian birthdays, Mayor Robinson commented on how much he has enjoyed working with Mayor Fitch. The Club was provided an update on Pensacola's preparedness for Hurricane Delta. Part of the preparations included speaking with both Shanska and Florida Department of Transportation. Just prior to the Rotary meeting, Mayor Robinson had been at the Escambia County Emergency Center; 50% chance that Pensacola will see tropical storm force winds. Potential issue is hanging trees from Sally that will be pushed over. Rain and winds likely. The debris pick up from Sally was 80% complete and on schedule to be completed by Friday. For perspective, Escambia County has picked up over 1 million cubic yards of debris and is only a third of the way complete. A meeting concerning the bridge repair progress is scheduled for Wednesday.

Next up was Rotarian Vicki Campbell, who highlighted the Family of Rotary Wine Tasting Event. The event will take place Friday, October 16 from 6:00-7:30 at Nancy's Haute Affair located at 555 Scenic Hwy. Rotarian Ray Jones will be presenting fine wines from Italy paired with Mezze Tapas prepared by Chef Gus Silivos. Cost is \$50. per person and reservations deadline is October 13. Reservations required and event is limited to 65 participants. Proceeds to go to the Rotary Club of Pensacola Foundations.

Rotarian Lori NeSmith then provided the Club a preview of Thursday's presentation to Oakcrest Elementary School. The Rotary Club of Pensacola will be presenting 25 teacher desk shields and a check for \$1,000. to purchase reading books for each student. Public school libraries are closed due to COVID. The books will be presented in honor our weekly speakers.

-Scott Grissett

## WHAT'S HAPPENING IN ROTARY

On-Line Zoom Meetings every Tuesday at noon. You will receive your invitation to join the meetings on Monday's. The meetings can be accessed with your computer, tablet or your smart phone. If you have any questions please feel free to give me a call. 850-619-0679. Chris

REMINDER, TODAY TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13, LAST DAY TO RSVP. The Family of Rotary Wine Tasting Event will take place Friday, October 16 from 6:00-7:30 at Nancy's Haute Affair located at 555 Scenic Hwy. Rotarian Ray Jones will be presenting fine wines from Italy paired with Mezze Tapas prepared by Chef Gus Silivos. Cost is \$50. per person. Reservations required and event is limited to 65 participants. Proceeds to go to the Rotary Club of Pensacola Foundations. RSVP at rcopens@bellsouth.net or call Chris at 850-619-0679.

Promote your business by placing an ad in the Helicopter. The Rotary Club of Pensacola will advertise your business in our weekly newsletter with ads running for a full month. Business cards \$250. 1/4 page \$500. 1/2 page \$750. To place your ad send prepared document to rcopens@bellsouth.net stating the size ad you wish to place. Proceeds to benefit the Rotary Club of Pensacola Foundation.

Thank you to President Sally Fox, Sorna Khakzad, Betty Roberts, Julie Tippin Parker and Lori Nesmith, who volunteered this week delivering 25 teacher desk shields and a check for \$1000. to Oakcrest Elementary School.

Also thanks to President Elect Ed Wonders, Sorna Khakzad and John Shaffer with distributing items to Littles at Big Brothers and Big Sisters made possible from Rotary District 6940 Grants.

Due to Hurricane Sally damage, resuming to in person meetings at New World Landing has been postponed for 6-8 weeks. Projected return date mid-November.

It is that time of the year again to make your annual pledge to our local Foundation and Rotary International. You should have received your 2020-2021 pledge form last week.

In an effort to raise funds for our Rotary Club's Foundation, Sergeant of Arms Scott Grissett is looking for Rotarians to participate in Member Moments. He is providing a two minute platform for a member to share such facts as occupation (now/in the past), hobbies, community passion and something no one knows about the Rotarian. In order to get the opportunity to participate in what surely will be a fun and informative activity simply make the winning bid in the Member Moment auction. The winning bid will go to our Club's Foundation. The bid begins at \$20. for each auction. If you are interested in participating, please e-mail Scott Grissett (sjgrissett@gmail.com) with your bid by 5 pm on Fridays.

2020-2021 Club Officers

- President Sally Fox
- Past President John Trawick
- President Elect Ed Wonders
- Secretary Lisa York
- Treasurer C. Ray Jones
- Sergeant At Arms Scott Grissett
- Historian John Appleyard

Bulletin Information

Joe Vinson email: joe@akabaka.com  
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Chris Bridwell, Executive Secretary  
Office, Room 323 Brent Building  
P.O. Box 528•Pensacola, FL 32591-0528  
Phone: 434-0684

Clubs Available for Makeup

Five Flags	New World Landing	Mon.	12:15 pm
Gulf Breeze	Legends Restaurant	Tues.	7:00 am
	Andrews Institute		
Milton	Red Barn on Hwy. 90	Tues.	12:00 pm
Seville	Seville Quarter	Tues.	4:15 pm
Perdido	13660 Innerarity Point Road	Wed.	7:15 am
Cantonment	Scenic Hills Country Club	Wed.	12:15 pm
Cordova	Gulf Coast Kid's House	Thur.	7:00 am
Pace	Stonebrook Village	Thur.	7:00 am
Suburban West	Pensacola Yacht Club	Thur.	12:00 pm
Navarre	The Tuscan Grill	Thur.	12:00 pm
	Hidden Creek Golf Course - Check navarrerotary.org		
Pensacola North	Asbury Place	Friday	12:00 pm
	Cokesbury Methodist		

District Governor

Jan Pooley  
<http://www.rotary6940.org>

Assistant District Governor

Daniel J. Sulger

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Birthdays for the week of  
October 13th through October 19th

- Robert Overton** – October 14 – born in Jackson, AL, in Rotary 4 year
- Lisa Minshew** – October 14 – born in Pensacola, FL in Rotary 2 year
- Chris Bridwell** - October 14 - born in Pensacola, FL with Rotary 3 years

Prayer/Pledge And Sunshine

October 13

Prayer/Pledge: Jimmy Jones      Sunshine: Dale Jordan

October 20

Prayer/Pledge: Allison Hill      Sunshine: Richard Sherrill

Program Schedule

October

- 13 - Brian Wyer, Gulf Coast Minority Chamber of Commerce  
20 - Strider Ellass Senior Economist - First Trust  
27 - Todd Thomson, Pensacola Chamber of Commerce

What's Happening in Rotary

October - Community Economic Development Month

- 13 - Noon On Line Virtual Meeting  
20 - Noon On Line Virtual Meeting  
1:00 Board Meeting  
27 - Noon On Line Virtual Meeting



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