

President's Ponderances

Happy Spring to you all!

As Rotary begins its 101st year internationally and 91st year in Decatur, we look forward to new opportunities to serve our community.

Rotary 180 and Decatur Metro will be collaborating with the Decatur Park District to build a Rotary Pavilion at the east-end of the refurbished Dreamland Lake in Fairview Park. This structure will be duly noted as a Rotary project, and will involve a financial contribution from both clubs as well as a volunteer opportunity for Rotarian carpenters.

Another collaborative project involving Decatur 180 and Metro, along with Forsyth Sunrise will be the establishment of a Rotaract Club for the benefit of Millikin and Richland Community College students. The purpose of this organization will be to involve young

people in community service through Rotary, and carry on the precepts of our organization beyond our individual involvement. Leadership for this initiative will include Dean David Womack of Millikin (Metro member) and Carol Condon (Decatur 180 member) who is Executive Director of the Richland Foundation.

As our Centennial year brings the RI Convention in Chicago, consider all of the contributions that Rotary has made locally and around the world, and celebrate the fact that you are part of a worldwide organization that has also included the likes of Thomas Edison, Winston Churchill, and John F. Kennedy.

Bring a friend or business colleague as a visitor, and help them benefit from the Rotary experience.

Stu Ellis

President
Stu Ellis

President Elect
Dave Brandon

Secretary
Heather Stoa

Treasurer
Steve Furrow

Immediate Past President
Miley Palmer

Honoring One of Our Own

To exemplify the Rotary motto – Service Above Self – many Rotarians contribute additional monies to The Rotary Foundation's Annual Programs Fund. Anyone who contributes – or in whose name is contributed – a gift of \$1,000 or more becomes a Paul Harris Fellow. This month our club had the honor of bestowing this distinction on yet another of our members, Mike Gibson. As a new Paul Harris Fellow, Mike received a commemorative certificate, a Paul Harris Fellow pin, and a medallion.

The Rotary Foundation's Annual Programs Fund helps support the educational and humanitarian programs of the Foundation. For additional information on how you can make a gift, simply complete the Recognition and Contribution form on Rotary International's web site at www.rotary.org
Congratulations and Thank You Mike!





Penny Fund

Each month a different local charity is chosen to receive our Penny Fund. We support this fund by donating our spare change at our weekly meetings. To further grow this fund; every month we add the proceeds from Happy Bucks. The total collected for the March Penny Fund was \$200.07. This amount will go to the Old King's Orchard Community Center for funding towards the Merlin Mobile - a van to be purchased in honor of longtime, former member, Merlin Outcalt.

The April Penny Fund will go to the 4-H.



“Playing” his way to Excellence

During our March 14th meeting Martin Getty had the privilege of introducing Rotary’s Outstanding Educator of the Month, Mr. Peter Harris. Mr. Harris is the instrumental music teacher at Brush College, Muffley, Baum and Parsons elementary schools. He brings to his students a kind, gentle rapport with a soft-spoken voice and patient demeanor. These traits motivate each student to reach his/her ability and to build self-esteem.

Mr. Harris has the ability to take a group of beginning band students and, in a few short months, have them ready to perform during the Winter Music Program. One would never guess that the students had only taken lessons since September. Mr. Harris is able to obtain this success only because he is a master at instructing his band and orchestra students. He models his expectations by playing

along with each class on musical instruments or by accompanying students on the piano. This makes even the smallest, most inexperienced group sound great.

According to Mr. Harris’ coworkers, his professionalism is very much admired and appreciated at Brush College. “Each new school year we enjoy hearing the familiar ‘noise’ coming from the music room but do look forward to hearing that noise turn into beautiful music as Pete works his magic.”

Mr. Harris was presented with a plaque and donation of Metro Money provided by Soy Capital Bank and Trust Company.



Excellence in Our Youth

In March the Decatur Athletic Council, Ameren IP, and the Rotary Club honored two outstanding Scholar Athletes from St. Teresa High School. On March 28th, in Tony Wilkins’ absence, Stu Ellis presented Katie Samuelson and Stephan Burtschi with a certificate of recognition plaque and a monetary donation from Ameren IP. Both of these students excel in sports and in the classroom.

Stephan Burtschi is the 17-year-old son of Jeanie Burtschi of Decatur. A senior at St. Teresa, he plans to attend the U of I and major in nuclear engineering in the fall. Stephan’s class rank is 3rd out of 69 with a GPA of 4.44 on a 4.00 scale. His sports involvement includes four years of Baseball

and two years of golf. He is involved with National Honor Society, a member of the Scholastic Bowl (ranked 3rd in the state), WYSE state medallist, Illinois State Scholar, a commended student for National Merit Scholarship and listed in Who’s Who Among American High School Students. His Scholastic Bowl Coach, Heather McKay, had this to say about Stephan, “He is an eclectic mix of academic excellence, creative curiosity, and interesting philosophies.”

Katie Samuelson, the daughter of Steven and Sharon Samuelson, is an 18-year-old senior at St. Teresa with plans to attend Southern Illinois University where she will study to become a high school math teacher.

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The Gift of Reading

As a tribute to our weekly speakers, Rotary Club makes a monthly donation to a pre-selected School of the Month. Thanks to the generosity of all our March speakers, a \$60 Speakers Honorarium went to French Academy for the purchase of library books.

Garfield Montessori will be the recipient of our April gift.

YLI Makes a Positive Impact

I am currently in the Youth Leadership Institute for Decatur area high school juniors. Truthfully, when I applied, I thought it would be something interesting to do, but I really did not anticipate learning much. I am an honor student at Eisenhower High School. I used to think, like others, that Decatur was a town going nowhere. After all, I was going to go to a great college out of state and, as many do, leave Decatur.

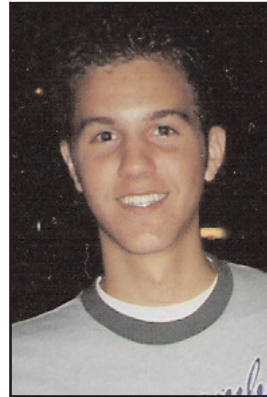
This all changed when I began the Youth Leadership Institute. When we had our government day at the Civic Center, it really opened my eyes to all of the great things that are happening in Decatur. That day I found a new respect for Decatur. I saw that the city council is trying to change Decatur from where our town was going, and it is working! I got to see all the efforts going on in and around Decatur to improve the quality of living here including Wabash Crossing, the downtown revitalization efforts, the Mound business development, and the lake-

dredging project.

Still I read the editorials in the paper with citizens focusing on the negative things about Decatur like what businesses we don't have, the money the city is spending, and how poor our schools really are. What they don't see is Decatur is progressing, businesses are coming to Decatur, the city is spending money for reasons that benefit Decatur, and our schools have great teachers that do the best they can with what they have to work with.

On our government day my outlook on Decatur completely changed. I saw that the city is working hard to overcome obstacles. I also saw that Decatur is a great place and continues to become an even better place. I am glad to say I live in Decatur and *"I Like It Here."*

Stephen Kreher



Excellence in Our Youth (Continued)

Her current sports accomplishments include four years Girls Basketball, four years Girls Volleyball, and four years Girls Soccer. She was a member of the 2004 Illinois Class A State Champion Girls Basketball Team. Other honors include the Defensive Player of the year - Varsity Soccer, Most Improved Player - Varsity Girls Basketball, Honorable Mention All County - Girls Basketball and Co-Captain for the Varsity Girls Basketball & Soccer teams. Her other activities include National Honor Society, High Honor Role, Class President - Junior Year, Student

Council - Senior Year, Prom Committee, Homecoming Committee Chairman, Member of SADD, Senior Leader for Girls Religious Retreat, Senior Leader for Sophomore Religious Retreat, Eucharistic Minister for School Masses, and a cast member of several St. Teresa plays. At the present time she is ranked 20th out of 69 with a GPA of 3.85. Coach Ipsen had this to say about Katie, "She was a very important member of our basketball team, that went 26-3 this year. She is a very hard worker and received our most improved award this year."

March 7, 2005

Kim Sheehan, Curator of the Spurlock Museum in Urbana, will join us to share the story of the Spurlock Museum. The Spurlock Museum has more than 45,000 artifacts. The permanent galleries highlighting Ancient Mediterranean, Africa, Asia, Oceania, Europe, and the Americas, celebrate the diversity of cultures through time and across the globe.

March 14, 2005

Our own Cindy Laegeler will bring several Youth Leadership participants to our meeting to share their experiences with us.

March 28, 2005

Illinois Wesleyan, our neighbor to the north, has a new president. Dick Wilson is a former Associate Chancellor for Development and Vice President of the University of Illinois Foundation. He is in his first year at Wesleyan and will share with us his experiences and his vision for the future of Illinois Wesleyan University.

March 21, 2005

Lori Kerans, Head Coach of Millikin University's 2004-2005 National Championship Division III Women's Basketball Team, and as many of her team members & coaches as are available, will share their recent experience with us. The Coach will talk about what it's like to build a winning team, work really, really hard all year, and then win it all!

2005 Grants Awarded

Rotary is dedicated to serving the greater Decatur area, so we maintain a Grants Program designed to support activities which have a beneficial impact on our community, and which will also improve the quality of life. Each year the Grants Committee accepts applications from organizations requesting funding to support specific programs. To the right are the 2005 Grant Recipients.

Requestor	Program to be supported
Growing Strong	Bullying Curriculum
The Achievers III. Teen Institute DHA	Leadership program 14-17
LSA Drama	Problem solving through drama
Starr Therapeutic	Special needs children taught to ride horses
Camp One Way	Camp for Children – for upgrade to dock and boats
Sister Cities/YMCA	Hosting 21 youth Oct. International exchange through sport and learning
CASA	Children's Court Advocate training
Mexican Orphanage	Renovation Project
Project Success	School supplies for homeless children
Blind Mission Project	Eye care to underprivileged
Easter Seals	EARTH- horticultural program for disabled youth
Decatur Public Library	Update books for children, especially bookmobile or international
Parenting Awareness in Special Ed	Child care for Autism support group
Youth Advocate	Summer Lawn Care youth job skills service provided to seniors and disabled
YWCA	Multicultural library
J.A. Success Skills	Training for those significantly behind and at risk of dropping out
Partners in Education	YLI
Decatur Arts Council	International supplies and collections for supplementing local school programs
YMCA Leaders Club	Supplies and curriculum for team building and community service
Shenamo Girl Scouts	High tech camp partnership w/Richland
Sheriff In Education	Help at risk youth in education with incentives to attend and achieve
Choral Music Program at LSA	Music and travel to music events