

## President's Ponderances

Happy New Year!

99 years 10 months and the countdown is rapidly increasing until the official Centennial date for Rotary International on February 25. As we approach that date you'll see billboards in Central Illinois and hear public announcements of Rotary's contributions and public service.

Rotary 180 will be publishing an Annual Report in the February edition of the Decatur Business Journal, calling attention to the R.I. Centennial, the 90th birthday for our club, and the impact we have made on the community in the past year.

Speaking of impact, one of the highlights of our Annual Meeting on December 27 was the donation of \$15,000 to the Decatur Park District representing the next to last installment of our \$95,000 pledge for the development of Rotary Park. The final payment will be made at the end of 2005, and will

be another element of our Centennial celebration.

A different community contribution is in the works for January 19. Through the initiative of one of our new members, Elizabeth Butler, and with approval of the Board of Directors, Rotary 180 will be sponsoring a blood drive. Our part in this will be to recruit donors, help with some of the details associated with the blood collection, as well as rolling up our own sleeve and donating a pint. Since the blood supply in the US is at a precariously low level, you are encouraged to help in some way. Your donation is important, but if you can't donate, recruit a co-worker or friend, and sign up to help for a time that day. Mark your calendar for January 19.

May the spirit of Rotary be with you throughout all of 2005.

Stu Ellis

## Teacher of the Month

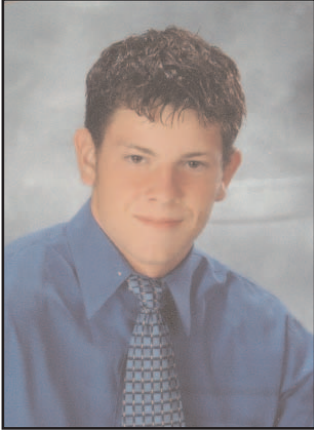
Carol Myers, December's Outstanding Educator of the Month, is a Health Occupation Instructor with the Decatur Area Technical Academy. She receives the recognition which included a plaque and donation of Metro Money provided by Soy Capital Bank and Trust Company.

Carol has taught the adult LPN nursing program prior to transferring to her current position as Health Occupations Instructor. In the two years under Carol's leadership the program has increased in three distinct areas: Community Support, Student Interest, and in the Learning Environment. Carol has worked closely with both hospitals and

several doctors in the community in developing partnerships and/or intern sites. The Health Occupation program will be starting a pilot program next year in the field of Medical Terminology; this class was the outgrowth of Carol working with Richland Community College. The expansion in partnering and intern sites has led to higher student interest and the overall environment as the students are immersed in the real-world experiences and are expected to perform certain duties. When the student finishes Mrs. Myers class they not only have some certifications, but also have a deep understanding of what a future career in the medical field entails.



**Carol Myers**



## Excellence in Our Youth

For the month of December the Decatur Athletic Council (DAC) honored Emily Sotiroff and Tim Daugherty from St. Teresa High School. Tony Wilkins presented both with a certificate of recognition plaque and a monetary donation from Ameren IP. Each month Ameren IP, The Decatur Athletic Council, and the Rotary Club jointly sponsor the Scholar/ Athletic Award to one female and one male student from the Decatur area high schools that are outstanding in sports as well as in the classroom.

Emily, the daughter of Mike and Marge Sotiroff, is a valuable member of the St. Teresa Cross Country Team. She has been Varsity for all four years and as a senior she was the captain of the team. She competed at the state level her junior and senior years finishing 5th in the state this year. She is ranked 9th out of 69 in her class with a GPA of 4.17 on a 4.0 scale. Her other activities include National Honor Society, High Honor Roll for three years while at St. Teresa, and Students Against Destructive decisions. Todd Vohland, the head track coach at St. Teresa had this to say about

her, "Emily is one of the best examples of a scholar/athlete I have been around during my 20 years in education. She gets the most out of her abilities, while at the same time making sure those around her stay positive and motivated." She plans on attending a four-year university in the fall and pursuing a degree in nursing.

Tim, the son of Mike and Chris Daugherty, is ranked 7th out of 69 in his class with a GPA of 4.22 on a 4.0 scale. His athletic involvement includes four years of football with three years on the Varsity team. His senior year he was one of the captains. He played line backer and center. While playing on the Varsity team, it was undefeated all three years. Tim's other activities include National Honor Society, High Honor Roll all four years at St. Teresa, Serviam, and Students Against Destructive Decisions. Tim is a very hard worker, great leader and a tremendous competitor. He is very deserving of this award. He plans to attend the University of Illinois as a Biology, Pre-medicine student in the fall. This will be in preparation for his plans to be a doctor of pediatrics.

## Penny Fund

As you know, we support our Penny Fund by donating our spare change at our weekly meetings. To further grow this fund, every month we add the proceeds from Happy Bucks, where members pay a buck to share good news at our



meetings. Our December donations to the Penny Fund and Happy Bucks totaled \$280.20. This was donated to the Decatur Club wait staff. The December Penny Fund proceeds will go to the Homeward Bound Homeless Shelter.

## Chamber of Commerce for Decatur & Macon County

Look around. Can you see it?

It's success. It swirled around Macon County in 2004 with the prospect of stirring up even more in the coming year.

Everywhere you look, good things were happening.

It was a year for marking milestones. Macon County and Decatur celebrated 175 years of existence, the Chamber's Decatur Leadership Institute marked 20 years and we celebrated 19 years of the greatest street party in the world, Decatur Celebration.

Into numbers? How does 1 million grab you? As in the Million Flower Project, which garnered volunteer support to beautify the entrances to the community and its major thoroughfares.

Projects like the Madden Arts Center, long-time in the making, proved they were worth the wait.

Then there was the expansion of the educational opportunities. The Niantic-Harristown School District consolidated with its counterpart in Illiopolis to form the new Sangamon Valley School District.

We saw the opening of a new Maroa-Forsyth High School, the Lutheran School Association's gymnasium and the new Oreana Grade School. At the same time, construction began on the St. Teresa's Science Center and the Decatur School District's Hope Academy.

Richland Community College continued to expand to meet the training needs of area employers and students alike. The new state-of-the-art patient simulator offers our community world-class training. And RCC's partnership with Millikin is a shining example — and there are plenty of them in our community — of working

together for the common good.

It was this can-do, working together spirit that led Decatur to be chosen as the semi-permanent site for the Farm Progress Show. I see the event like an anchor store for a mall, with Farm Progress anchoring our new outdoor convention center, Progress City. Progress City, to be located near Richland, will bring construction jobs, economic development, visitors, new businesses and special events to the area.

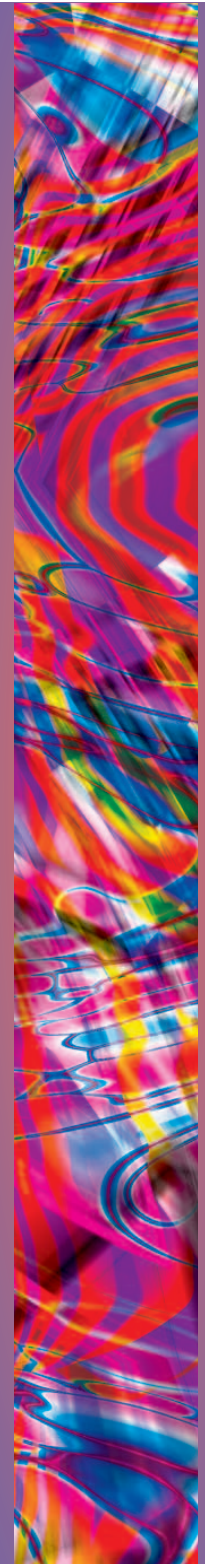
Mayor Osborne likes to talk about "Team Decatur." That is the best way to describe what is happening when it comes to the Chamber working with the community and those who represent us. From the city council to county board, Springfield to Washington the Chamber has been involved in efforts to bring jobs to the area — like pushing for the continued expansion of U.S. 51.

Through the efforts of groups like the Economic Development Corporation of Decatur and Macon County, Decatur's unemployment rate has declined — one of only two downstate communities that can make such a claim.

We also have been shown the entrepreneurial spirit by several people who have chosen to take the risk and open a new business when they could have taken a much safer route. Retail businesses like Pazazz, The Fox's Den, and The Blvd. Market, all located downtown, and Woodstock and The Art Shop provide new choices for shoppers and exemplify the entrepreneurial spirit and provide additional reasons to celebrate.

The Hope VI-Wabash Crossing project has risen from the dreams of similar entrepreneurs.

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## January 3, 2005

Dr. David Fletcher is an expert on preparing injured people to return to work. Dr. Fletcher is also an expert on workers compensation issues. He will talk with us about the crisis in Illinois Workers Compensation.

## January 10, 2005

A number of Rotarians participate in the Rotary Foundation Program. Two of our members, Larry Foster and Bill Welch, will fill us in on the benefits and opportunities that are available through our involvement in the Rotary Foundation.

## January 17, 2005

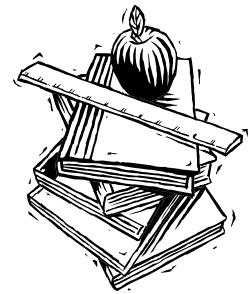
Many of us are familiar with today's speaker. Ann Chambliss (former President of the Decatur School Teacher's Association) will help us commemorate Martin Luther King's birthday. Ann will speak about the values that were important to the late Reverend Dr. King and will relate them to our everyday life.

## January 24, 2005

Skip Huston loves movies! He has made a career of bringing his love of film to Decatur. He has made a success of the Avon Theater and now has a new venture – two new theaters. Skip will join us to let us know what is occupying his interest these days.

## January 31, 2005

Spring is coming and soon the State Legislature will be in session. Before activities heat up in that arena, it would be good to get a picture of economic development in Illinois. A representative from Illinois Economic Development will provide us with an update. Watch the web site for the name of our speaker.



## 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 previous speakers, a \$60 Speakers Honorarium went to Enterprise Grade School for the purchase of library books.

Forsyth Grade School will be the recipient of our January's gift



## Chamber of Commerce (Cont.)

All of these fantastic things didn't happen by accident or luck. It takes hard work, collaboration and planning to have such outstanding success.

I look to the future and can see only continued good news and improvement across Central Illinois and, especially, in Macon County.

It sounds like such a simple concept, but community pride is a major key to our future. I can't understand why this issue continues to be such a challenge with all of the wonderful things that are happening for our community.

I suggest that during 2005 all of us CHOOSE to do what we can to help others with the image question. Not everyone will be on board but we cannot let those few hold the community from its potential. I suggest they do as our mothers suggested, "If you can't say or see anything nice ...

## Rotary 180 Officers

**Stu Ellis - President**  
**Dave Brandon - President Elect**  
**Heather Stoa - Secretary**  
**Steve Furrow - Treasurer**  
**Miley Palmer- Immediate Past President**

For a list of board members and committee chairs visit our website at:  
[www.decaturotary.org](http://www.decaturotary.org)