



The Cog

**Rotary Club No. 3503
P. O. Box 544,
St. Marys, OH 45885.
www.stmarysrotary.org
October 19, 2011**

Call to Order

President Linda Vogel called the meeting to order and led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance. Susan Pittman offered the invocation. Guests were: Trisha Barnes, prospective member; Pat McGowen and Greg Freewalt – our speakers; Jan Barber, guest of Susan Pittman; Brad Bartlett, guest of John Wale; Jan Heinrich, guest of Jim Heinrich. Also, high school students from Mr. Jay’s government class were: J.D. Meyer, Nathan Michael, Rachel Patten, Lauren Keith, Brooke Slife, Madison Glass, Makayla Couch, Ryan Douglas, Alex Spencer, and Cierra Anderson. Kraig Noble led in singing “You’re a Grand Old Flag.” Tami Sanford, Bob Burke and Fred Wiswell all had birthdays, but only Tami was present, so we sang to her.

Happy Dollars

Linda Vogel, Robbie Burke, Tami Sanford, Susan Pittman, Kevin Lawler, Kelly Kill, Kimberli Rompilla, Jerry Skiver.

Fines

Ellen Hunter was the finer. She fined Kraig Noble, Karl Dammeyer, Derek Vogel, Linda Vogel, and offered some tricky October trivia questions. Chris Wibbenmeyer, Derek Vogel (again), Kelly Kill, Jon Hall, and a group fine –

anyone who is not pregnant (Ellen happily noted that she is expecting! Congratulations Ellen!)

Announcements

- Deb Zvez reminded everyone to be in the library parking lot at 5:00 p.m. next Tuesday, October 25 for the Rotary Halloween Parade. Assignments for the event were distributed again, and all Rotarians need to check their group.

Program

Robbie Burke welcomed Greg Freewalt and Patrick McGowen, the two mayoral candidates. Pam Hobler is also a candidate for mayor who could not attend our meeting, but her answers to questions will be published in the Evening Leader.

Mr. McGowen spoke first and noted he was a St. Marys graduate, a Bachelor of Arts and business and had spent 40 years as a businessman. After a career that spanned the energy industry, Cisco, and the cable TV field, he returned to St. Marys to retire.



Greg Freewalt noted his education in St. Marys, and then returned here as a teacher and coach and was pleased to be joined by Skip Baughman, as well as Bob Priddy and Doug Frye.



When asked about the city’s role in alleviating the issues facing Grand Lake St. Marys, Freewalt noted the good results of alum treatment and supported doing all we can to keep the lake healthy.

McGowen said he hoped St. Marys leaders could have a more visible role in correcting the problems, as the Lake does touch us!

To a question about the fate of old empty buildings in the downtown, McGowen urged dialogue with merchants, not confrontation. Our “window to the past” should be improved via private, state and federal funding opportunities. Freewalt noted that the city has done a good job with these buildings like the Cotton Mill and the remodeling of Ft. Barbee. Uptown may take a bit more time, but all of these owners are being contacted individually.

Regarding attracting new industries, Freewalt mentioned the good work of Todd Fleagle, as well as offering good interest rates and a revolving loan fund. The new school, Krogers, Kohl’s are recent successes that should attract still more business. McGowen suggested that the way to be proactive was to develop a marketing plan, attend trade shows, reach out, advertise and have available land that is shovel-ready.

To a question about improving the quality of housing within the city limits, McGowen stressed the need to force people to maintain their properties and also private industry as well. Freewalt stressed jobs and recent successes but noted that city ordinances had helped clean up 40 buildings in the last five years. As to increasing cooperation with the county, township and school district, Freewalt stressed cooperation with area mayors, keeping township trustees on the CIC, and the good relationship the city had with Superintendent Baker leading to our new school.

McGowen noted he was unaware of concerns but emphasized open and honest communication with no hidden agendas.

To a question about the High Street Bridge and dealing with the old mill, McGowen saw no need to move the mill and no reason to renovate. Freewalt

noted an ongoing legal battle limiting the city’s action currently.

Both candidates saw no local impact of survival of SB5 and supported the efforts of municipal employees in “good faith bargaining.” Both also agreed that renovating the old municipal power plant is a very expensive venture and a generator is not operating properly.

Also both candidates agreed that a walkway to the new school was a school responsibility. A former superintendent did not even favor this walkway. Both wanted to reduce the squirrel population as they endanger crucial power lines to industry. Regarding capital projects, both supported dredging the canal, but McGowen supported a SWOT analysis and a study of energy technology.

In closing, McGowen emphasized his vision for St. Marys and “best practices” management. Freewalt stressed recent successes – bridges, the swimming pool, preserving the downtown bank. He also stressed the significance of working well with the city council.

Queen of Hearts

Kraig Noble won the \$16.00 drawing and also drew the Queen!

Upcoming Programs

10/26 Jim Heinrich and Rick Green – Rotary International Foundation
11/2 Jerry Skiver – MHS Superintendent
11/9 Veterans Day Program – Ralph Dennings (WWII vet)

Upcoming Greeters

10/26 Paige Canfield
11/2 Joe Burke
11/9 Brad Seitz

**Please note: All Rotarians scheduled to greet, please be in place by 11:30 a.m.*

Cog Editor: Alex Pittman