



January 11, 2016

Just like the motto of the U.S. Postal Service (with a slight modification) ... neither snow nor rain, nor heat or gloom of night shall stay us from our appointed rounds of meeting. Fellow Rotarians showed up on Monday through the drizzle and ice of what was to become a week of more typical Michigan winter.

Southwest Michigan Racers On Growth Track



Marianne Groth, Executive Director of the Southwest Michigan Red Arrow Club for Endurance, Racing and walking Sports was here to tell us more about the club.

SWMI Racers was formed in August of 2012 in response to the need to promote running and walking in Southwest Michigan as a means to stay active and healthy while supporting community events. A group of friends and co-workers held an informational meeting to create a club for runners and walkers.

The club decided early on that they wanted to become the “go to” resource for events and everything running/biking/swimming by organizing group runs and walks, creating a comprehensive calendar of running, cycling and triathlon events. They wanted to provide volunteer opportunities and offer training programs.

Creating the comprehensive calendar was perhaps one of their more exciting goals, as this would require researching dozens of websites, collecting information, linking to the website and providing registration information.

By partnering with non-profit groups, the Racers would be able to promote running events internally by creating race series and offering discounts to members. Externally, they would be able to promote events through their website, facebook and St. Joseph today.

Having begun the organization, they then proceeded to host their first event, the Racers Superheroes 5K Run. This run was to benefit the Benton Harbor Boys and Girls Club to specifically raise funds to purchase bleachers for the Fettig Youth Clubhouse. The family event is

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continuing its fourth year in 2016.

One of the most interesting things that sets this club apart from others is the volunteering opportunities they have managed to harness. For instance, members earn points for volunteering at area events. Members have volunteered at youth training programs, at Girls on the Run, at the Steelhead Triathlon from 2013-15, the 13.Wine Half Marathon in 2013 through 2015. They have also provided volunteer opportunities for high school students. For instance, our Interact club has volunteered in their events as a community service project.

The club also offers training programs:

- Kids Run the Nation BGCBH (2013)
- Couch to 5K – Whirlpool (2013-14)
- Pilot Program – Moms of GOTR (2015)
- Walking Program Grant - Michigan Parks & Recreation (2015)

The club is on track to reach their goals. They became an IRONMAN Triathlon Club in 2014 and joined USA Triathlon as a member club. They were race direction.

Their partners include Unite Way, Be Healthy Berrien, YMCA of Benton Harbor-St. Joseph, Boys & Girls Club of Benton Harbor, St. Joseph Today and Berrien County 4-H.

Their club sponsors help to extend their reach into the community and provide financial assistance. They were able to reach corporate sponsors after only four years because of their visibility in the community. They are able to promote their sponsors while promoting their club at the same by placing banners on tables at over 20 events and by having club shirts with corporate logos. Members get bonus points for wearing shirts, which increases their marketing exponentially. Club sponsors also help defray the cost of training certifications and the sponsorships allowed the club to purchase timing equipment.

SW Michigan RACERS help many small events in



the area and provide race direction alternatives. They create and manage online registration, course creation, provide guidance on shirt and medal orders, packet prep and pickup, course marking, volunteer assignments and placement, timing and scoring, announcements and awards. In the future, they hope to be contacted for event guidance from all events and to help people plan their races effectively and so they aren't all on the same date!

UPCOMING EVENTS

1/18: NO MEETING

(But, if you attend the celebration at LMC, let Bob Peirce know about it and you'll get a makeup credit.)

1/25: MEETING

Kris Martin, Southwest Michigan Planning Commission

1/28 BOARD MEETING

7:30 AM at Area Agency on Aging

WILL YOU CELEBRATE ROTARY?

As we approach our 100-year anniversary for the Rotary Club of St. Joseph-Benton Harbor, we want to create the momentum to have a large community celebration at that time. To accomplish this, we have decided to build upon our annual spring evening event and reimagine it.

We've set the date for April 13 and that evening at Shadowland on Silver Beach, we'll be opening the doors to the general public for a prestigious, once-a-year event and inviting the community to learn more about what Rotary does both locally and globally.

You'll be hearing more and more about it as that date draws closer but we wanted to put the bug in your ear now for a few reasons:

1. We want you to put 4/13/16 on your calendar and attend the event.
2. In order to actually raise awareness of our work, we would like to have a number

booths at the event representing some of our various projects such as the Track Meet and Clean Water Project so we may be asking some of you to help support this effort.

3. Because we're inviting the general public to this event, we want to make sure we're making it easy to attend--so we do not want to have to charge a fee at the door. We'll We'll continue to do a cash bar but we want to eliminate that entrance fee. To offset that loss of revenue, we will be seeking sponsorship for this event. We're only looking to raise around \$750 with sponsorship levels at \$100 and \$250 with an additional "member support" option at \$50. See the back of the eWheel for a copy of the sponsorship form and details.

4. And finally, if you are interested in being involved in the planning process for the event or you have any questions about the changes, please email Emily Hosinski at emily_m_hosinski@whirlpool.com.



Students in the St. Joseph-Benton Harbor-Lakeshore areas have set a new high record for membership in their Interact Clubs. A combined total of 183 students are registered. That is a phenomenal number of students and it could not have been done without the guidance of Maria Kibler, Jackie Huie and Mary Frey. These ladies have been instrumental to the development and growth of these clubs. And of course it is all voluntary. Please, give these three ladies a warm thank you next time you see them!



Carol Sizer Gets Ribbonectomized at this weeks meeting!



An upcoming photojournalist, (r) Anne Klusendorf, and an upcoming author, (l) Alexis Harms joined us this week through the Student Rotary Program. Both young ladies, from Saint Joseph High School, informed us of the opportunity they had to be mentored by professionals in the field.

Alexis plans to write novels to share her vision of the world with others, while Anne wants to paint pictures through photography so she can tell stories and others can see them through her eyes. The program, under the tutelage of Jackie Huie, has continued to grow each year, and fantastic stories continue to be told by those students who have been part of this program.

The world is yours ... take hold of it and hold it dear!





Chair of the Day, Whitney Behnke, had a novel approach to introducing speaker Marianne Groth of the SW Michigan Racers. She took a “selfie” of herself and the Rotarians present. Hope to see more of these in the future! As the new Executive Director of St. Joseph Today, she is going to be a fun member to have!

Anyone wishing to contribute to the E-Wheel may do so by calling Debra Trapikas at 861-0718 (cell). We are always looking for writers, contributors and readers. Help us and have fun, while earning Rotary points. If you are in need of a committee so that you may be ribbonectomized, just call!

HAVE A GREAT NEW YEAR IN 2016 – MAY IT BE FIRST OF MAY RECURRING HAPPY YEARS FOR ALL!

The NEW Rotarictionary

Emily Hosinski came up with the word “Ribbonectomy” and as you can clearly see in this issue, we are having fun with that word. How many of you can invent another “ROTARY” word. If you think of something, let us know. We may have to write our own dictionary so Rotarians can speak Rotarianese. It’s a thought

**Remember – NO MEETING this
coming Monday. Go to Lake
Michigan College instead to
remember MLK!**