

KIWANIGRAM

The monthly newsletter of the

KIWANIS CLUB *of* SKIDAWAY



JULY 2007

Bethesda Home for Boys An Interview with Bob Caswell

By Bob Milbank

Bob Caswell is our Kiwanis liaison to the school. He and his wife Anita have volunteered there for 16 years, she as school librarian and he in various capacities, including teaching Agricultural Science, serving as President of the Board of Governors and fund raising. Currently, he is working on setting up a golf team and hopes to see the team take the course next year.



Caswell

Some history and facts about the school might help. As probably most Kiwanians know, the school was founded as an orphanage in 1740 via a Land Grant of over 600 acres by King George II. It is the oldest continuously running such orphanage/school in America. There is a total of 115 students. Thirty-five are residents and the rest are day students. The

maximum class size is 10. This is appropriate because most boys tend to be hyper-active and have to have special attention.

What most of you probably don't know is that officially these boys are all wards of the State of Georgia. Most of these boys have been removed from their homes by the State and the State is their official Guardian. Their parents are either dead, in prison or in some sort of rehab and the kids may or may not have been abused. By the time they reach Bethesda, they probably have been in 5 to 7 foster homes. What a daunting task for David Tribble, the Headmaster, and his staff.

Five years ago, Bethesda's budget was 1/3 State, 1/3 Endowment and 1/3 Fund Raising activities. However, these past years have shown that the

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"Help," says Trifecta Chief "We need good leads!"

By Dana Taylor

Emerson Ham has accepted a daunting job. Last year the hard working member chaired the Skidaway Kiwanis "Corporate Sponsor," or "Trifecta," fund raising effort, and did a first rate job. Now he's at it again. This year he will be joined by Vice-Chairs Jeff Heeder of SunTrust and John Hamson of American Home Mortgage.



Ham

The Corporate Sponsor fund raising program was the brain child of club member Sam McLaughlin, who chaired the program during the 2005-2006 club year. With McLaughlin running things the effort grossed \$33,800 for the kids of Savannah. Almost 20% of that was from a single business, a jewelry store on DeRenne whose owner subsequently sold the business and retired.

The stellar first year performance of the Corporate Sponsor program placed it at the top of the Kiwanis of Skidaway fund raising efforts, well ahead of long-time leader, the Chili Cook-Off. After a successful inaugural, year Sam McLaughlin decided it was time to step aside.

Who better to take over the effort from McLaughlin than a man with top flight business and financial credentials? Member Emerson Ham, a Vice President and "Wealth Management Advisor" at the

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President's Corner

Keith Glenn

We are nearing the end of the Kiwanis year and with that come the preparations for the next year.



Our new slate of officers have been elected and will be starting their duties the first of October. Bill Wright and Gene McDonald have structured next years fund raising plan that will be launched in August with the Sponsor Solicitations. In July we will be sending out the letters to renew your membership. We have found it necessary to increase the dues \$10 (new total \$125) to cover our increased administrative expenses. This is the first increase in 3+ years. We have taken steps to hold

down the administrative expenses, but the smaller membership makes it more difficult to cover the expenses that are independent of the size of our club. More members help spread the fixed costs, so keep up the great job of recruiting new members.

Joyce and I are headed to the International Convention (our first), and it caused me to reflect on some of our fellow Kiwanians that I have had the pleasure of knowing the last few years. The first one to come to mind was Dave Saylor, who passed away roughly a year ago. Dave was always willing to help, I never heard him say no to a request. What a marvelous Kiwanian and good friend. The next one that comes to mind is Hazel Brown, the club's corporate knowledge, past Lt. Governor, club secretary and our leading recruiter. An outstanding member and great person to call a friend. I could go on and on and still not name all the members I respect because of their dedication to Kiwanis. Thanks to all of you, keep up the great work and stick with us, we need all of you "next year!"

ered for funding.

The Fund Raising organization had their orientation meeting on June 14th. Mr Wright said all event personnel were identified, and during the meeting plans and budgets were discussed.

Tim Goodman, Division 22 Lt. Governor, attended the Board Meeting, and said membership is the most pressing issue for Kiwanis, at all levels. He said Debbie Kittrell from the Vidalia club will succeed him for 2007-2008.

State, having budget problems of its own, has been slow with the money. Also, board members were beginning to get the impression that people in the Department of Family Services of Georgia were beginning to change their thinking, ergo, that Residential Care like Bethesda is not appropriate--they would "prefer" Foster Care. But, historically, less than 30% of kids in Foster Care EVER get a high school diploma. Also, it is common knowledge that the DFSG has not always lived up to its promises to these kids; in fact, about 3 years ago, the Federal Government took the DFSG to Federal Court citing lack of care--and won.

By that time, the Board realized that they had better start thinking of cutting themselves loose from the State of Georgia and becoming financially independent. That's where they are headed and believe they can make it happen. Not only is the Board concerned with State funding (or lack thereof), but it is a true fact that these kids, as

Memorial and also formed his own company, Briggs Associates, which was later sold, before he came to the Landings. Cooper and his wife, Pat, live at 31 Black Hawk Trail.

Board of Directors Meeting

At the June meeting Directors approved a charitable contribution level of \$80,000 for the year 2007. These funds will be distributed to our funded agencies during the months of August and September. The allocation decisions will be made at the July Board meeting.

Several agencies have not submitted their requests, and we have others asking to be consid-

Welcome New Member

David Cooper is not a newcomer to the Landings—here since 1989, but he is a new member of our Club, thanks to our President, Keith Glenn. Keith convinced David that Kiwanis was a worthwhile investment of his time, maybe while playing golf with him, which he does regularly. Our Club gets more erudite all the time, as David holds a PhD. From the University of Texas, and a B.A. from Lawrence College. His work was in chemical engineering, and specializing in grain agriculture. He worked for Battelle



Cooper

Memorial and also formed his own company, Briggs Associates, which was later sold, before he came to the Landings. Cooper and his wife, Pat, live at 31 Black Hawk Trail.

wards of the State, could be arbitrarily yanked out of Bethesda for any reason by the State. Once financial independence were achieved, the State would be able to assign a boy there, but it would have to sign an agreement that he would stay there.

Bob Caswell remarked that "a boy who comes to Bethesda— if he's got the mental aptitude— we'll send him to college. We've got the monies in our endowment that are set aside for college. We never abandon these kids. If they need money while in college we'll help them out.

"We teach on our campus a Savannah Tech program for the TV/Video Production. It is a college eligible course. The Bethesda boys film all the Planning Commission meetings".

Bethesda gets a good deal of financial support

from corporations such as Comcast, Coca Cola, etc. Without these corporations, times would be tough. They look for more such support to hopefully reach their goal of independence.

Many Kiwanians volunteer at the school. Dave Smith works in the Film Program and the Barn Builders, which has several Kiwanians, work a lot with building and repairing. Two of our members work with the Science Club and, if you remember, they brought their project to our breakfast meeting. Kiwanians also contribute to Bethesda School and grants a \$10,000 scholarship.

Bethesda has a \$3,000,000 budget. Fortunately, fund raising is getting better and, hopefully, their goals will be reached. Our society must have places like Bethesda where kids caught in a bad deal can go to have a chance!

Sponsor Program (from page 1)

Skidaway Island Merrill Lynch office, took on the challenge. However, a tough job it appeared to be due to the generous jeweler's retirement.

Despite the 20% set-back that resulted from the jeweler's retirement, the Corporate Sponsor Committee's efforts during the 2006-2007 campaign resulted in the collection of \$37,500, a new high for the club's fund raising programs.

Emerson has now agreed to chair the program again for the 2007-2008 year.

"But we need help," he said. "Lots of help!

"Obviously we need Kiwanis Solicitors to contact potential donors, but not everyone feels comfortable in that role. Another important way Skidaway Kiwanis members can get involved is to be on the lookout for names of people and companies we should be approaching. Every member can help with that.

"Don't forget that many Savannah businesses consider the Landings to be a target market. Where you can help is to think about our program with regards to each place with which you do business in Savannah. 'Does this business get customers like me, from Skidaway Island?' If so, let us know about them. Those are the ones we want to tell about the Sponsors Program and all that our Club does. We can take it from there.

"Better yet if you feel comfortable talking to the business owner or manager about becoming a Sponsor— we can always use more committee members. We'll welcome you to our committee and give you all the information you need to talk with the owner or manager."

Kiwanis regulars probably know Ham's two vice chairmen, John Hamson and Jeffrey Heeder better than they know the committee chairman himself.

John Hamson has been a Skidaway Kiwanian for two and a half years. His wife, Nancy is also a member. The Hamsons live on Joshua's Retreat, in the Landings. John handled Public Relations for the club for a year. The couple have two grown children. Daughter Meghan works in Rhode Island and son Scott is in college in New Hampshire. John and Nancy are both golfers. They also have two temporary lodgers, both canine, at their home. Nancy is associated with Dogs of Deployed Soldiers. The Hamsons are currently taking care of two such dogs themselves, and have placed ten others for currently deployed soldiers.

Hamson is a Mortgage Planner with American Home Mortgage, on Hodgson Memorial Drive in Savannah's Southside.

Jeffrey "Jeff" Heeder also has a wife named Nancy. The Heedeers own a home on Pettigrew Drive, having come to the Landings three years ago from Rochester, New York. They have three grown children, Jennifer, Melanie and Jeffrey, II. Vice-Chairman Heeder is one of our newer members, having joined Kiwanis of Skidaway late last year. Jeff golfs, plays tennis and likes to bike and walk.

Heeder is a First Vice President in the Village Office of Sun Trust. He is a Certified Financial Planner, and worked for the IRS, and later for Chase Manhattan Bank, before coming to Savannah.

Other responsibilities frequently prevent Emerson Ham from attending our early Thursday morning Kiwanis meetings. For those members who have not met him, Emerson is a native and life-long resident of Savannah who attended S.C.D.S. and the University of Georgia. He lives on Whitemarsh Island with his wife, Jennifer, sons Emerson and Harrison, and daughter Isabelle. Alongside his Kiwanis responsibilities, Emerson is also a U11

