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Dixie County Rotarians greet district governor



District Governor Lisa Weeks and Assistant District Governor Chris Cowart watch the video *People In Action*, which shows Rotarians how the international theme this year (July 1, 2017-June 30, 2018) is 'Rotary: Making A Difference' can be applied locally. Cowart is one of 10 assistant governors in this district of Florida. The five clubs where he assists Weeks are Chiefland, Dixie County, Suwannee Valley, Trenton and Williston. (Check out those amazing cookies on the table on the foreground, and although the watermark as a copyright protection method obscurs them from a better view here, there are sealed turkey and chicken salad dinners in plastic containers in the background.)

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Story and Photos

By Jeff M. Hardison © Aug. 24, 2017 at 10:27 a.m.

CROSS CITY – Members and guests of the Rotary Club of Dixie County enjoyed a wonderful lunch and learned about Rotary as International Rotary Club District 4069 Governor Lisa Weeks presented the program on Wednesday afternoon (Aug. 23).

This was the first meeting of the club at its new location for weekly meetings, which are each Wednesday starting at noon and lasting until 1 p.m.

The Dixie County Rotary Club now meets at the Dixie County Woman's Club, located right behind the Dixie County Courthouse in Cross City. The address is 236 N.E. 134th St., Cross City. The Dixie County Woman's Club is part of the General Federation of Women's Clubs of Florida, and it is spelled with the singular possessive form, just as the other clubs in the GFWC spell their names.

Laura Fowler Goss caters the Dixie County Rotary Club's weekly lunches.

On Wednesday, turkey or chicken mixed salads -- complete with lettuce, tomato, cucumbers, feta cheese, olives and dressing containers -- were the main course. They were each individually wrapped in a plastic container with a seal that had to be broken before they could be eaten. They were extraordinarily delicious.

Plenty of fresh fruit was available for diners, and the members of this Rotary Club assured that guests did not miss the opportunity to enjoy either the fruits or the wonderful assortment of desserts.

Dixie County Rotary President Heather Smith said "We are excited to be supporting a local chef."



Rotary Club District Governor Lisa Weeks pins Dixie County Supervisor of Elections Starlet Cannon with a pin designating the 30th anniversary of Rotary Clubs in America accepting women as members. In the distance, Assistant District Governor Chris Cowart prepares to present pins to other women at the meeting on Wednesday (Aug. 23) in Cross City. Some of the fruit available

that afternoon may be noticed on the table too.

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While District Governor Lisa Weeks (of the Pace Rotary Club, in the Pandhandle of Florida) presented pins singularly (with assistance of Assistant Governor Chris Cowart), the Women of Rotary pin recipients in Dixie County on Wednesday granted a request from *HardisonInk.com* for a group picture of them as one set of people. Here there is the power of this one subset of the entire Rotary Club of Dixie County, which is a part of the District 4069 group, which is part of the Florida group, the United States of America group and the entire International Rotary Club. In addition to the continuing international effort to eradicate polio from the planet, International Rotary Club President Ian H.S. Riseley (of Australia) is asking each club to plant a tree.

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Rotarian leadership present at the meeting in Cross City on Wednesday afternoon (Aug. 23) included (from left) Dixie County Rotary Club Secretary Rebecca Fusco; Dixie County Rotary Club Board of Directors Member Anne Hodges, CPA; Dixie County Rotary Club Sergeant-At-Arms Holly Houghton; Dixie County Rotary Club President Heather Smith; Rotary Club District Governor Lisa Weeks; Dixie County Rotary Club Board of Directors Member (and Dixie County Clerk) Dana Johnson; Dixie County Rotary Club Board of Directors Member Katrina VanAernam; and Assistant District Governor (and Levy County School Board Member) Chris Cowart.

While the meeting on Wednesday was jam-packed with information, President Smith mentioned before the meeting that the club is anticipating an exciting upcoming year with the club's student guests starting in September.

That is when these Rotarians will host three students each month. The trio of students will attend the last Wednesday Rotary meeting each month, and then give a 5- to 11-minute speech.

The Dixie County Rotary Club anticipates awarding two or possibly three scholarships this year, President Smith said.

"We are excited to have our students learn what Rotary is about," Smith said. "We also will be starting to plan our 7th Annual Daddy-Daughter Dance that is typically the last week of January each year, located at Camp Anderson."

During the meeting on Wednesday, District 4069 Governor Weeks presented each of the women with a pin to celebrate 30 years since Rotary Club in America was required, like the Kiwanis Club and similar clubs, to allow women to be members.

It was May 4, 1987 when the United States Supreme Court made that ruling.

While there is not a 50-50 mix of men and women in the Rotary Clubs throughout the 4069 District in Florida or throughout America, with men being the dominant gender in the club, the club in Dixie County shows a majority of female members.

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As for “The Power Of One,” which is a theme District Governor Weeks shared, the one international club with significant help from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is winning a worldwide war against polio. Weeks sees complete eradication of the disease from the planet in the year 2025.

So far, the lives of 2.1 billion children have been spared from polio as a result of this vaccination program, she said. There are 200 countries acting as one force in this regard. Some people have died, she said, because they were volunteers in countries that resisted the effort to help save children’s lives from polio.

The Dixie County Rotary Club Officers who accepted their responsibilities on July 1 are President Heather Smith, Treasurer Tonya Howell, Secretary Rebecca Fusco and Sergeant-At-Arms Holly Houghton. The Board of Directors members are Hayward Anderson, Fusco, Anne Hodges, Houghton, Dana Johnson, Smith and Katrina VanAernam.

For more information, including how to become a member of the Rotary Club of Dixie County, please contact Katrina VanAernam at 352-356-0306, or Rebecca Fusco at 352-210-6110 or Anne Hodges, CPA, at 352-498-7067.