

The Mecklenburg Missile

Comin' Atcha

Kiwanis Club of Mecklenburg, Charlotte, Inc.

P. O. Box 33573, Charlotte, NC 28233-3573

Organized August 5, 1952

Missile Launcher: Bob Swanson

Meeting Monday, May 6, 2013

Attendance: 10 Members

Next Meeting: Monday, May 20

TODAY'S MEETING

This topic is of such importance that it deserves the entire Missile.

After a few reports about work in progress - particularly concerning our 2013 "Cow Chip Festival" - President Candi recognized Past President John Downey, who then took the floor.

John began [editor's paraphrasing & editorializing]: For several years our numbers have been dwindling. Many years ago we had about 150 members. We now have just 16 dues-paying, whose aggregate average age is 59-1/2. Six are over the "retirement age" of 65 (two of them well over 80). That's about 38% (more than 1/3) of our Club. Of the 16, 11 (69%) are Past Presidents.) We now regularly get just 8 - 10 members to meetings.

The question of merging with another Kiwanis Club was brought up. And that certainly is a viable solution. There is one Club remaining in the vicinity of "Uptown" Charlotte, and that is the Kiwanis Club of Charlotte - which meets at noon every Thursday. The "Charlotte Club," incidentally, is the 2nd oldest in the Carolinas District, having been organized in 1919, and having sponsored ("built") our Club in 1952..

The "scrap heap" of Kiwanis Clubs in Charlotte is overflowing. Recent years have seen the demise of:

- Charlotte-Eastern
- Central Charlotte (merged with Charlotte Club)
- Charlotte Golden K
- Charlotte at University City (still on the active roll, but not meeting)
- Uptown (now a "Satellite" of Charlotte Club)
- Young Professionals
- Hornets Nest
- Pineville-South Mecklenburg
- Ballantyne (Pineville-South Mecklenburg reorganized and renamed)
- Matthews (Existing Club was organized as a new Club after original Matthews Club failed.)

As we all know, "times" have been merciless to Civic Clubs, as well as other organizations and many main-line churches. We can speculate on numerous reasons, but nobody really knows for sure.

Several years ago I sat for two years on a Kiwanis International Committee known as "Member Retention and Kiwanis Education." One of our major questions was "Why do members leave Kiwanis?" We never did find a satisfactory answer. More often than not it's something like "I don't have time." In isolated cases that might be true; but usually it's a cop-out. What is the REAL reason? (after all, they had time - and money - to join.)

Lest you think that the problem is isolated in Mecklenburg Kiwanis, consider that some years ago the Carolinas District numbered over 12,000. Now we hover around 6,700 (+ or -). Kiwanis International once had about 325,000. Today the number is something like 226,000. Key Clubs now have more members than Kiwanis Clubs! A goal once was to have one million members by 2015 (our 100th anniversary). Needless to say, that won't happen.

So where do WE go from here?????

Meets 12 Noon, 1st and 3rd Mondays: Villa Antonio Ristorante, 4707 South Boulevard
Web Site: <http://www.mecklenburgkiwanis.org>