What’s New ...

New leaders, new clubs, new projects this fall

By Patrice Stewart
Kiwanis Kourier editor

What’s new this fall in the Alabama District of Kiwanis?
A lot. Keep reading.

New officers in charge


Mark Kellerman of the Fairhope and Eastern Shore Kiwanis Club stepped up to governor-elect. Scott Sims of the Homewood-Mountain Brook club took the position of vice governor after being elected at the District Convention Aug. 2-4 in Huntsville, where the new district board was installed.

After finishing his term as governor with a club-building blitz, Ben Taylor of the Kiwanis Club of Montgomery will be immediate past governor for the 2019-20 year. District Secretary Tammy Driskill will continue in her role this term. Lieutenant governors for 2019-20 are listed on Page 20.

Two new clubs built

New Kiwanis clubs in Pike Road and Wetumpka were organized during a membership blitz Sept. 16-19.

This was a goal of 2018-19 Governor Ben Taylor, who is a member of the Kiwanis Club of Montgomery, which sponsors the new clubs.

The new Kiwanis Club of Pike Road is now meeting on the first and third Tuesday of each month at noon at Cuco’s Mexican Café, 11123 Chantilly Parkway, Pike Road. The new Kiwanians in Wetumpka have chosen to meet on the second and fourth Thursdays at Frankie’s Sweet Shoppe, 617 S. Main St., Wetumpka. Each club got an initial 25 members, with more still being added.

Participating in starting the clubs were several experienced new club openers from around the country, along with Alabama leaders and some Kiwanians from the Montgomery club.

(See WHAT’S NEW, Page 2)
What’s new in Alabama Kiwanis
(From Page 1)

3 regional meetings scheduled in February

Three regional midwinter training meetings are planned in February 2020, instead of the one statewide conference usually held in Prattville.

Governor Bob Brown hopes that holding sessions in north, central and south Alabama from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at a cost of just $25 will encourage more Kiwanians to attend. Here’s the lineup:

- North region (Divisions 1, 2, 3, 6, 7) in Cullman on Saturday, Feb. 8, 2020
- Central region (Divisions 4, 5, 8, 9, 10) in Montgomery on Saturday, Feb. 22, 2020
- South region (Divisions 11, 12, 13, 14) in Monroeville on Saturday, Feb. 29, 2020

Foundation takes on spelling bee

The Alabama Kiwanis Foundation has agreed to become the official sponsor of the Alabama Spelling Bee, an affiliate of the Scripps National Spelling Bee.

Past Governor Ernest Hulsey of Huntsville, foundation president for the past two years, announced this new project at the District Convention. It will be headed by Susan McDougal, a member of the Kiwanis Club of Huntsville, which sponsors the local bee that this year produced local, state and national winner Erin Howard.

McDougal has been coordinator of the local spelling bee for 18 years and the state bee for 12 years. Winter is generally spelling-bee season around Alabama; check spelling bee information on the district website, alabama.kiwanis.org.

The new Alabama Kiwanis Foundation president beginning Oct. 1 is Roger Williams of Tuscaloosa. He and his board also will oversee the 30th and final year of the Jean Dean Reading Is Fundamental program, a longtime signature project of the foundation.

Key position changes

Pam Schisler of Ozark is the new coordinator for the Kiwanis-sponsored Key Leader program, as Jamie Brabston of Homewood leaves the post to become Division 6 lieutenant governor.

Also, Karla Moons of Mobile has retired as K-Kids administrator; her replacement is Mary Hoerlein of Auburn, who just completed two terms as lieutenant governor.

Schisler has scheduled Key Leader weekend for April 24-26 at a camp on Lake Martin and wants clubs to sponsor teens from their cities to attend (read more at key-leader.com). She has volunteered with Key Leader for two years as a chaperone and has been a Key Club advisor for two years with Northside Methodist Academy.

A past president of the Kiwanis Club of Ozark, Schisler has been a Girl Scout leader for 19 years. She has taught archery for six years and is a National Archery in the Schools Program instructor.

Alabamian joins Kiwanis Children’s Fund board

Past Governor Armand St. Raymond of Birmingham was invited to take a seat on the international Board of Trustees for the Kiwanis Children’s Fund beginning Oct. 1. He attended training sessions and his first board meeting in Indianapolis Oct. 22-26.

St. Raymond, who works as a financial advisor, also is continuing to serve as the Alabama District’s chairman for the international Children’s Fund.

As Kiwanis International’s fundraising arm, the Kiwanis Children’s Fund elects a Board of Trustees to implement its mission of serving the children of the world, growing the fund and soliciting financial gifts from Kiwanians and friends, businesses, and foundations, and distributing funds for grants worldwide.

Have Kiwanis questions? Call Alabama District Secretary Tammy Driskill at 205-945-1334
Bad math, but good plan to serve thousands of additional children

Some say I was just nervous and misread my speech notes. Others say there must have been a typo in my script. But the prevailing theory seems to be that I never mastered third-grade math skills.

Whatever the reason, I made a mistake near the end of my speech after being installed as the 2019-20 Alabama District Governor at our District Convention in Huntsville.

I was making the point that we must generate positive, net, year-on-year membership growth. I listed several reasons why this was our No. 1 strategic imperative for the coming year, the main one being that statistics show that every active Kiwanian positively impacts 206 children each year. I made the point that an increase of 100 members would mean that the Alabama District would be able to serve an additional 2,000 children.

Nice thought, except for the fact that I was off by a factor of 10! The impact of gaining another 100 members would be over 20,000 more children being helped … 20,600 to be exact. That’s a worthy goal. So, how do we achieve it?

Over the past several months, District Membership Chair Elise Hearn and I have been working with both the 2018-19 and 2019-20 District Boards to develop a plan to drive membership growth not just this year, but over the next three years. We will focus on four areas of opportunity.

■ First, we will add new clubs. Every new club we charter adds a minimum of 15 new members and gives Kiwanis a presence in another community that was previously unserved. Just last month, 2017-18 Governor Ben Taylor led the effort to open new clubs in Wetumpka and Pike Road. Each club had 25 new members at the organizational meetings on Sept. 19. What an awesome way to finish one year and start the next!

■ Second, we will work to build up those clubs whose membership has fallen below charter strength (15 members). This is a priority for 2019-20 Kiwanis International President Daniel Vigneron, and it provides a significant growth opportunity for the Alabama District. Most of these clubs are still doing great work and significantly impacting their communities. We want to do everything possible to ensure their great work continues.

■ Third, we will explore opportunities for "satellite" membership in select areas where people support Kiwanis and would like to join but are not in a position to attend weekly breakfast or
Alabama’s 200th birthday celebration is planned for Saturday, Dec. 14, in downtown Montgomery, and Kiwanis help is needed to pull off the events.

The Alabama District of Kiwanis last year was named a Bicentennial partner. The grand finale will be a massive undertaking, and Immediate Past Governor Ben Taylor of the Kiwanis Club of Montgomery is asking for volunteers.

Taylor, who has been the liaison between Kiwanis and the state Bicentennial Committee, needs about 30 Kiwanis family volunteers for Dec. 14 to handle duties such as parade lineup, dignitary escorts and information booths. Many university and high school bands are expected.

“This is an all-day event, but work shifts are usually two- to four-hour shifts,” Taylor said. “It could be a great volunteer time for our Key Club and Circle K members, too.”

Increasing our membership will pay big dividends. We will lower our meeting costs, provide better support to our amazingly hard-working Service Leadership Programs, and ensure the continuation of the long and powerful legacy of the Alabama District of Kiwanis.

And the most important benefit of this growth is this … every new member we add will impact another 206 children.

You don’t even need third-grade math skills to understand the significance of that. Kids need Kiwanis!

From left, 2018-19 Kiwanis Governor Ben Taylor hosted 2019-20 Governor Bob Brown and others for a Kiwanis Club of Montgomery meeting where Alabama Governor Kay Ivey spoke. Law enforcement officer Raymond Castillo was recognized with a certificate through the CCOPS program (Concerned Citizens Organized for Police Support). Douglas McElvy, right, was 2018-19 president of the Montgomery club.

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Kiwanis help needed Dec. 14
for Alabama’s 200th birthday

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He called it “a once-in-a-lifetime event” To sign up as a volunteer, contact Taylor at 334-991-2345 or bptaylor@southernco.com.

The parade will begin at 10 a.m., and the Alabama Bicentennial Park at the foot of the State Capitol will be dedicated at noon. The festival beginning at 1 p.m. will showcase art, crafts, performances, historical re-enactors and children’s games plus tours and exhibitions in buildings and museums. The 4 p.m. Bicentennial concert and light show will feature a surprise finale. For details, check alabama200.org.

Deadline for the next edition of the online Kiwanis Kourier is Jan. 3, 2020
First meetings of new year

Alabama Kiwanis leaders gathered in Opelika on Saturday, Oct. 5, to talk about goals and plans at their first board meetings of the 2019-20 year. The large group photo shows officers and members of both the Alabama District of Kiwanis Board and the Alabama Kiwanis Foundation Board, which shared ideas on increasing membership, starting new clubs and strengthening existing clubs.
Alabama Kiwanis Foundation projects merit support from you and your club

First, let me introduce myself. I am Roger Williams, the current president of the Alabama Kiwanis Foundation. I am a longtime member of the Kiwanis family: I was a charter member of the Key Club at Tuscaloosa High School in 1959, a member of the Circle K at the University of Alabama in the early 1960s, and a member of the Kiwanis Club of Tuscaloosa since 1971. I was club president in 1999 and lieutenant governor of Division 4 in 2001. I and everyone on the Alabama Kiwanis Foundation (AKF) Board of Directors are excited to enthusiastically serve the Alabama District, and I encourage all of you to be an active part of the worthwhile work which the foundation does.

What does the Alabama Kiwanis Foundation do?
- In partnership with local clubs, the AKF conducts Jean Dean Reading Is Fundamental statewide. The current school year will be the last one for RIF in its present form, and it is important for all clubs in the Alabama District to support the AKF and RIF so that the program’s last year is the best year ever for RIF and the agencies and at-risk children RIF has served so well for the past 29 years.
- Provides matching grants to Kiwanis Clubs for worthwhile projects, with particular emphasis on smaller clubs with limited resources.
- Awards college scholarships to deserving members of Key Club and Circle K.
- Provides clubs with a vehicle to provide tax exemptions for their donors.
- Sponsors the statewide Spelling Bee.

These activities merit your club’s financial support through: participation in the Annual Club Giving Campaign (if your club budgeted a donation for the 2018-2019 fiscal year but has not made the donation, please do so at your earliest opportunity; if your club has budgeted a donation for the current 2019-2020 fiscal year, please make the donation as soon as you can during this Kiwanis year), and by awarding J. Mercer Barnett Fellow awards to members who are worthy of this recognition.

These activities also merit individual Kiwanians’ support through individual donations to AKF, by purchasing J. Mercer Barnett Fellow awards, or by making gifts or bequests to the Joe Dean Legacy program.

I look forward to working for you and with you for the next two years. Please feel free to contact me with questions, ideas, suggestions or any other input at:
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Foundation Notes
By Roger Williams

Joe Dean Legacy
Mary Hoerlein of Auburn, left, and Ernest Hulsey of Huntsville are the two newest members of the Joe Dean Legacy, recognized at the District Convention. Named for late Past Governor Joe Dean, who founded Jean Dean RIF, it recognizes individuals who have named the Alabama Kiwanis Foundation in their estate plans. Membership is offered to those who signify their intent to provide a planned gift of $5,000 or more or who make an outright gift of $5,000 or more. Past Governor and foundation board member Sidney Lanier was the first member. Hulsey just completed two years as president of the Alabama Kiwanis Foundation, and Hoerlein serves on the foundation board.

See alabama.kiwanis.org/foundation for more ways to give in support of Kiwanis clubs, service leadership, and at-risk children.
Daniel Vigneron of Howald, Luxembourg, is the 2019-20 president of Kiwanis International and challenges every Kiwanian to let their actions speak louder than words and positively impact others in the year ahead.

“People can talk so much without saying anything. It is when you are part of a team and putting in the hard work that you make visible results,” he said. “That, to me, defines a good Kiwanian.”

His personal motto is “Res, Non Verba,” which means action, not words. “Let your actions speak louder than words, and let those actions have a positive impact on the lives of others,” Vigneron said in a video emailed to Kiwanis members on Oct. 1, the first day of his one-year term.

“I challenge each of you to lead by example,” he said. “It takes every Kiwanian working together to create more opportunities for children. Thank you for what you are doing.”

Kiwanis members around the world are mourning the Sept. 18 death of 2018-19 Kiwanis International President Florencio C. “Poly” Lat.

A resident of the Philippines who battled cancer for several years, he died just 12 days before the end of his year as president. He was 62.

Lat joined Kiwanis in July 1988 and was a charter member of the Kiwanis clubs of Inter-City Homes, Muntinlupa, Metro Manila; Manila Bay and Fort Bonifacio Global City.

He became president of the Kiwanis Club of Inter-City Homes, Muntinlupa, Metro Manila, in 1991; lieutenant governor in 2000; district governor in 2011-12 and Kiwanis International trustee from 2013 to 2016. He was elected president at the 103rd annual Kiwanis International Convention in Las Vegas, Nevada, in 2018.

He was one of the distinguished district governors honored at the 98th annual Kiwanis International Convention in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. He was a recipient of the Presidential Inspiration Award and Legion of Honor.

The Kiwanis Asia-Pacific region conferred awards as a Champion in New Kiwanis and Service Leadership Programs Club Building in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The Philippine Luzon District also won the Asia-Pacific region’s Best Service Project Award during his term as district governor.

Under Lat’s leadership, Kiwanis received The Outstanding Philippine Leadership Excellence Award in Philanthropy for environment from a joint project of the Rotary Club and Jaycees International. At the 2015 Kiwanis Asia-Pacific Convention, he was presented the Centennial Award, the first for members in that region.

He is survived by his wife, Susan; three children, Diane, Dan and Geline; and three grandchildren, Iñigo, Nica and Lia.

Daniel Vigneron of the Belgium-Luxembourg District of Kiwanis, who is serving as 2019-20 president of Kiwanis International, said Lat would be remembered for the joy and compassion he brought to Kiwanis.

“Poly was a true servant leader, and Kiwanis is a better organization for his membership and leadership,” Vigneron said. “As the organization moves forward, we will continue to realize Poly’s dream of making Kiwanis a great organization.”

Other Kiwanis members worldwide shared memories and condolences with KI headquarters in Indianapolis, Indiana, after Lat’s death.

“His departure is a great loss to all Kiwanians,” wrote a club from India.

“Let’s take his spirit and wishes and will to the next level, to do what we believe he would want us to do,” an Indiana member wrote.

A collection of these messages was compiled into a video tribute to a man who enjoyed life.

New president: Let actions speak

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Vigneron has been a member of the Kiwanis Club of Vielsalm for 33 years and served as club president twice and as governor of the Belgium-Luxembourg District. He then was elected Kiwanis International-European Federation president and a Kiwanis International trustee.

He is technical manager for a real estate company and holds a master’s degree in economics from the University of Liege.

His wife, Faby Gregoire, is a member of the D Kiwanis Club of Bastogne. They have three children and four grandchildren.

Beginning Oct. 1, Arthur N. “Art” Riley of Westminster, Maryland, moved up to Kiwanis International president-elect for 2019-20. He is a member of the Kiwanis Club of Westminster.

Elected 2019-20 vice president during the June KI convention in Orlando was Peter J. Mancuso of North Bellmore, New York, a member of the Kiwanis Club of East Meadow.

Clubs, plan now to sponsor teens from your area for Key Leader Weekend April 24-26, 2020
We must set goals, share them, and use them to achieve success

Hello, and Happy Kiwanis New Year!

I am very excited to be the Kiwanis International Trustee for the Alabama District. For those who did not meet my husband, David, and I during your District Convention in Huntsville, here is little bit about me.

We have been married 25 years this month. We have two Dachshund puppies: Oscar, who is 7, and Bob, who is 1. We also have Roxie, our 12-year-old cat who runs our house.

I own a managed technology services company and work with the most amazing guys ever. My hobbies are traveling, flowers, orchids, family and reading.

I have been a Kiwanian for 25 years, and I love our Service Leadership Programs. I love almost everything about Kiwanis; however, our Service Leadership Programs truly inspire me.

I can’t wait to visit with all of you again this winter. First of all, it will be nice to get away from the winter weather in Erie, Pennsylvania. But most importantly, I want to come visit and work with your district on helping grow existing clubs or working on a new club. Governor Bob Brown and I will be working on a time to come visit and how to best utilize me while I am visiting.

As you know, the Kiwanis International new year began Oct. 1. Just like the new year’s goals you set in January, if you don’t share them, unfortunately they don’t last long.

In order to make sure your goals last more than a few weeks, they need to be written down and shared. This will keep you accountable. One goal/challenge I have for you is to bring in one new member each to help your Kiwanis club make an impact in your community.

Many of us have issues setting goals for the upcoming year. Some don’t feel they need to. I can assure you that you will greatly appreciate having goals to refer to during your meetings and board meetings.

Goals are important. If you don’t know where you want to go, you won’t know when you get there.

Kiwanis International has a strategic plan for mission, vision, core values and goals. You can view it at Kiwanis.org/strategic-plan.

The priorities include:

- Build, retain and support a growing Kiwanis membership
- Perform meaningful service, with service to children as our priority
- Enhance the Kiwanis image worldwide
- Ensure financial viability and responsible stewardship.

Governor Bob and I have had a few phone calls, and as you know, the Alabama District is in good hands. Not only is he a very good Kiwanian; in my book he is an amazing human with a very kind soul. I know that the Alabama District not only is going to start strong, but finish strong, too.

Thank you all for what you do, continue to do, and will do, to keep the legacy of Kiwanis strong. I am looking forward to seeing many of you very soon. If there is anything I can ever do, please don’t hesitate to reach out to me.

Take care, and have an amazing Kiwanis year.

Cathy Szymanski

You are invited to head for the city and then the beach!

June 18-21, 2020
Kiwanis International Convention
Indianapolis, Indiana

Aug. 14-16, 2020
Alabama District Convention
Gulf State Park Lodge — on the beach in Gulf Shores, Alabama

Midwinter x 3: Check the schedule in this issue for your region’s training day in February
The Kiwanis Family Service Day held Oct. 5 at the Jean Dean Reading Is Fundamental warehouse in Opelika helped prepare almost 10,000 books for shipping to Head Starts and other classes around Alabama. “Many thanks to the over 60 Circle K, Key Club and Kiwanis members who helped inventory and put bookplates in close to 10,000 RIF books,” said Cathy Gafford, JDRIF executive director. “Circle K brought well over half our volunteers, and we really appreciated it. Members of the Kiwanis Family came from all over the state to help us get ready for the 30th and final Jean Dean RIF year of service to close to 20,000 at-risk young children across Alabama,” she said. Among those helping out (see photo by Glenn Buxton at top left) were Circle K Administrator Peck Fox, Circle K Governor Zarien Morris, Kiwanis Governor Bob Brown, Key Club Governor Luke Reed and Key Club Administrator Paul Sexton.

Help Jean Dean RIF finish strong by continuing to support the program in 2019-2020
While the Jean Dean Reading Is Fundamental program will be ending in 2020 after a successful 30-year run, there is still a need for funds to buy books and fund other program needs until the end of the 2020 school year.

Cathy Gafford, executive director of Jean Dean RIF, described some fundraisers and other events now under way or planned for 2020.

**Shoe collection**

How can you clean out your closet and improve literacy? **Shoes4Books!**

Join the Jean Dean Reading Is Fundamental shoe drive. Try to collect at least 25 pairs to donate; help family, friends and neighbors clean out closets. Put 25 pairs of shoes into a bag if possible.

Shoes that are gently worn, new or used can be collected and delivered to the RIF warehouse, 1105 Fitzpatrick Avenue in Opelika, between 2 and 5 p.m. on Nov. 18 or Dec. 9. Call JDRIF at 334-750-9974 for other delivery times or more information.

The donated shoes go to support micro-enterprise vendors, or small businesses in developing countries. JDRIF gets funds for the number of shoes donated and buys books for children.

**Checks always welcome**

Gafford says checks and cash donations are always welcome. She has longtime supporters like Past Governor and foundation board member Sidney Lanier, who says that at his age, he can’t help with a run or collect shoes, but he can and does write a check.

That is a real help when ordering and shipping thousands of books for preschoolers, so Gafford hopes more people will remember RIF as the calendar year nears an end.

**Breakfast for Books**

Pancakes will be featured at the “Breakfast for Books” scheduled Feb. 1, 2020, at First Presbyterian Church in Opelika by Jean Dean Reading Is Fundamental supporters.

**‘Open Books — Open Minds’ gala**

Plan now to attend a March 7, 2020, luncheon in Montgomery celebrating 30 years of the Jean Dean Reading Is Fundamental program.

Longtime JDRIF supporters Russ and Carol Grimes are planning this event.

It will include Kiwanians and members of the Kiwanis and Alabama Kiwanis Foundation boards, as well as representatives of the 30 programs in the state supported by JDRIF.

The “Open Books — Open Minds” celebration is scheduled for 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, March 7, at the RSA Activity Center in downtown Montgomery.

Support your Alabama District Foundation and Kiwanis Children’s Fund with donations
Alabama Kiwanians publish novels and their inspirational life stories

A few weeks before becoming Alabama’s current Kiwanis governor, R.K. “Bob” Brown published his sixth novel — the second in a trilogy about people who live for centuries by jumping into others’ bodies.

And two other Alabama Kiwanians have written books with themes of hope and inspiration and having the courage to follow their faith.

‘Riders’ and ‘Storm Riders’

Brown’s newest book is “Storm Riders,” a sequel to “Riders.” The next one will be “Spirit Riders,” to be published in the fall of 2020.

“Riders” takes place in modern times, mostly in Birmingham. That’s where Peter and Miriam (who have been lovers for almost 700 years but in a succession of bodies) meet another rider: Anwar, a ruthless psychopath with a sinister history.

Anwar has become a top associate of a man who wants to become president of the United States, but Miriam and Peter help thwart Anwar’s plans. In “Storm Riders,” the action shifts to Mobile and then New Orleans as Anwar seeks revenge on Peter and Miriam in the midst of a hurricane.

“Many people ask me if I get any of my book ideas from my experiences in Kiwanis,” Brown said. “Since my books typically deal with murder and mayhem, I am happy to say that is not the case. However, I have modeled a couple of characters after Kiwanians I know, and have even gotten permission to use their names. That’s always fun.”

Brown is a member of the Hoover-Metro Kiwanis Club. At the end of “Storm Riders,” he expresses appreciation for help from many people, including his wife and fellow Kiwanians.

“My eagle-eyed wife, Mary Lynn, helps me eliminate misspellings, grammatical errors, and misleading or otherwise awkward sentence structure,” he writes. “… Fellow Kiwanians Gene and Camille Maier made numerous helpful suggestions …”

The “Riders” trilogy is bylined R.K. Brown. Previous books — “The Neighborhood,” “Sonnets,” “A Stone of Hope” and “Blind Luck” — were published under the name Robert K. Brown.

“Sonnets” won an honorable mention at the 2008 London Book Festival.

Information, as well as links to purchase paper copies and e-books, is available at rkbbooks.com.

‘To the Ends of the Earth’

Tore Haavik, a member of the Kiwanis Club of Decatur, recently had a book-signing after a club meeting for his 2019 book, “To the Ends of the Earth.”

(See WRITERS, Page 12)
Kiwanis night for soccer

Kiwanians, friends and family members enjoyed the first “Kiwanis Night at Legion Soccer” in Birmingham Sept. 20. The $15 advance tickets were purchased through Alabama Kiwanis District Secretary Tammy Driskill and featured a game between the Alabama Legion FC and the Indy Eleven from Indianapolis, headquarters city for Kiwanis International. Birmingham Legion FC soccer is a Birmingham-based club that began its first professional season in March. The professional team plays at the downtown BBVA field, also home to UAB Blazers soccer.

Haavik, who was born and raised in Norway, heard a call to ministry at 17 and headed out as a missionary the next year. After four years of full-time ministry on four continents, he found himself back in Norway with a crippling back injury. But God had one more assignment for him to complete — at the “ends of the earth.” He left his factory job and helped plant a church in China. One Haavik acquaintance says this is not a book about religious rules and practices but “a story about passion, purpose, fearlessness and faith.”

To the Ends of the Earth” can be ordered through Amazon.com.

‘Healing through Hope’

Dee Dee Graham, new president of the Azalea City Kiwanis Club in Mobile and wife of Past Governor Keith Graham, had to limit her activities in life before 2016 because of her epilepsy and seizures. In 2016, she underwent surgery that healed her of epilepsy, and she has now been seizure-free for three years and seven months. This has enabled her to do things most people take for granted: get a driver’s license, travel, and take on leadership roles in church and Kiwanis. Her biographical book, “Healing through Hope,” tells of the journey of faith that the author lived for 40-plus years. She elaborates about facing many struggles and disappointments, but with the constant hope that God would heal her.

Writers (From Page 11)

Cathy Gafford of Opelika talks with Kiwanians at the District Convention about ways clubs can continue to offer reading programs. She expects to go into more detail before the Jean Dean Reading Is Fundamental program she directs ends in 2020. The Kiwanis Club of Huntsville has already partnered with a school that needed reading help, and 24 Kiwanians began serving as reading coaches Oct. 15.

The future of reading
Inverness pecan sale

The Inverness Kiwanis Club has begun its annual pecan sale to raise money for holiday children’s charities. Club members sell 1-pound bags of fresh pecan halves for $12 each. They order the pecan halves, which freeze well, from Atwell Pecan Co. in Wrens, Georgia.

The club puts an Inverness Kiwanis Club sticker with reorder information on each bag. One of their sales techniques is to advertise the pecans on Facebook Marketplace, telling potential customers to call 205-992-6100.

Fairhope-Eastern Shore: Back to school in red, white and blue

The Kiwanis Club of Fairhope and the Eastern Shore recently participated in the Red, White and Blue Back to School event in Fairhope. The event, sponsored by the Fairhope Police Department, provided school supplies, backpacks, school uniforms, medical exams and haircuts to students. The fun included water slides, water balloon fights, art projects, snow cones, fire and drug safety, and lunch for all who attended. More than 200 children participated and got ready for school. Individuals in these pictures include Rick Miller, Ashley Bell, Terry Nobles, Stevi Pearce, Mindy Dees, Tim Kant, Tony Pritchett and Jeanette Krakes.

The Fort Payne Kiwanis Club held its annual Pancake Breakfast from 6 to 11 a.m. Sept. 21 in conjunction with the city’s annual Boom Days festival.

Plates were $5 each, with the serving line set up in a downtown parking lot.

Scottsboro game tickets

The Kiwanis Club of Scottsboro is raising funds this fall by offering two seats at the Iron Bowl. Alabama and Auburn fans can donate $10 for one opportunity to win, or $25 for three. The drawing will be Nov. 12. This annual event, a big rivalry, is scheduled for Nov. 30 at Auburn University’s stadium.

The Scottsboro club also recently supported the Veterans Memorial Park of Jackson County by purchasing brick pavers. One brick reads “Scottsboro Kiwanis Club — Serving Children,” and the other says, “Scottsboro High School Key Club Honors Veterans.”

Rogersville school funds

The Kiwanis Club of Rogersville recently presented a check to be used toward funding a Resource Officer at Lauderdale County High School.

The club sponsors Key clubs at Lauderdale, Lexington and Clements high schools.

Kiwanis members planned to participate in Trunk or Treat at the Rogersville Volunteer Fire Department starting at 6 p.m. on Oct. 28.

Alex City’s ‘Best Civic Club’ raises funds with skeet shoot

The Kiwanis Club of Alexander City has been honored as “Best Civic Club in the Lake Martin area” by people voting in the 2019 “Best of the Best” contest. The competition was sponsored by Tallapoosa Publishers and The Alexander City Outlook newspaper, with winners announced in September.

Alexander City Kiwanians sponsored an annual Sporting Clays Competition at Five Star Plantation Sept. 27 from 2 to 6 p.m.

Proceeds from the skeet shoot will support the Kiwanis club’s mission to help children in the Lake Martin area through schools and kid-based community initiatives.
Hixson for Decatur’s Mindy Thwing

The Kiwanis Club of Decatur presented member Mindy Thwing with a Hixson Fellow honor for her years of commitment and service to the club and community. She held several offices and served on the board before leading the club as president in 2008-09. The Decatur resident worked as executive director of Habitat for Humanity before retiring. The George F. Hixson Fellowship is named for the first president of Kiwanis International. The club’s $1,000 donation in her honor benefits the Kiwanis Children’s Fund and is a way clubs can recognize members and others for generosity. At the same meeting, five new members were welcomed, and longtime club secretary Bill Stone was recognized for the longest stretch of perfect attendance: 53 years.

Azalea City club throws a party for sponsored youths and parents

The Azalea City Kiwanis Club in Mobile held a fall party, inviting Kiwanis sponsored-youth club members and their parents.

President Dee Dee Graham credited Past Governor Karla Moons for the vision for this “SLP Dessert Luck,” rather than potluck. SLP stands for service leadership programs.

Graham said they had a great time meeting about 50 parents and students in their Builders Clubs and Key Clubs.

“Several people said they might visit our club, and we sold some raffle tickets, have a possible new sponsorship and several new items for our auction,” she said.

Indian Springs: More Chromebooks

The Kiwanis Club of Indian Springs Village recently made another delivery of Chromebook computers to its local high school. Club Secretary Rick Harley, left, and Past President Dr. Dale Elliott, right, deliver 78 more Chromebooks to Oak Mountain High School Principal (and Kiwanis Club member) Dr. Kristi Sayers. This brings the club’s total donation to 178 Chromebooks. In addition, the club donated $13,000 to the school for this project.

Daphne-Spanish Fort: 393 books

The Kiwanis Club of Daphne-Spanish Fort turned a district-wide service project of collecting books for children into an opportunity for their club to conduct its own project first and then donate to the statewide one. Eastern Shore Center Barnes and Noble employees Samantha Hallford and Stephanie Gardner, left, present Kiwanis Club of Daphne-Spanish Fort member Marcia Gifford, right, with 393 donated children’s books. Barnes and Noble asked community shoppers to donate an amount at checkout to support this project, and the community responded. Those books were brought to the Alabama District Convention in Huntsville, where the district service project collected a total of 2,180 children’s books to be donated to the St. Jude’s affiliate hospital in Huntsville.
Scholarships in Monroeville

Sam Schjott, the Kiwanis Club of Monroeville’s 2018-19 president, presents Jesse L. Blankenship Memorial Key Club Scholarships for 2019 to Lauren Moore, center, and Kaylee Knight, right, both recent graduates of Monroe Academy in Monroeville. Students in local schools can apply for the scholarships, which recognize outstanding leadership and service and are named for a past Kiwanis president. This year his widow, Janice Blankenship, was unable to attend the presentation.

Hoover-Metro: Camp Smile-a-Mile

The Hoover-Metro Kiwanis Club conducted its annual cookout for the courageous kids at Camp Smile-a-Mile on Aug. 17. Among the many Hoover-Metro Kiwanians helping serve food to children and parents were Mary Lynn and Bob Brown. “So proud to be a part of this long tradition of serving kids who defied cancer,” said Brown, who is governor of the Alabama District of Kiwanis for 2019-20. Camp Smile-a-Mile reaches out to children and their families during and after cancer treatment and provides summer camp sessions using the facilities of Children’s Harbor on Lake Martin.

Tri-Cities projects cross Florida line

This Kiwanis club knows how to cross the state line to have fun.

The Kiwanis Club Tri-Cities (Florala and Lockhart, Alabama, and Paxton, Florida) plans at least one project in each town annually.

Coming up is “Fun in the Park” beginning at 6 p.m. Oct. 31, with booths for children’s activities and candy at Longleaf Yellow Pine Park in Lockhart. After that, the club will turn its attention to planning “Cookies with Santa” in Florala.

The club recently completed its second annual “Skeet Shoot & Pancakes,” held at the Paxton Agricultural Building Complex beginning at 7 a.m. on Sept. 21. The pancakes-and-sausage breakfast cost $5; it was free for those paying the $40 registration fee for the Skeet Shoot, which attracted many gold-, silver- and bronze-level sponsors.

Plan to attend the Kiwanis International Convention in Indianapolis June 18-21, 2020
Clubs in Action

Indian Springs Village booth at National Night Out

The Kiwanis Club of Indian Springs Village put up a booth at the Shelby County National Night Out held at Heardsmont Park Oct. 1. Shown with their display are Past Alabama Kiwanis Governor Brian Rodgers, left, and club Past President Keith McKendall, who ended his first day as division lieutenant governor at this event. The National Night Out event, hosted by the Shelby County Sheriff’s Office and North Shelby Fire District, was planned to enhance the relationship between neighbors and public safety while bringing back a sense of community. Many law enforcement and fire department vehicles were on site for children and parents to explore, including the sheriff’s department helicopter. Families attending enjoyed free hot dogs, chips and drinks, two bounce houses, Sparky the fire dog, fire helmets for children and more.

Decatur club leader creates ‘Kiwanis Kindness,’ named RIF Barnett Fellow

Past President Leissa Chittam was presented a J. Mercer Barnett Fellow award by President Bruce McLellan and her Decatur Kiwanis Club in recognition of her leadership during 2018-19. Along with overseeing contributions to local charities from funds raised on Pancake Day and advance planning for the club’s 100-year project, she created a new mini-project called “Kiwanis Kindness.”

She asked members to bring specific items to meetings throughout the year, and then they were donated to charities: more than 117 pounds of food; 50 bars of soap; 50 bottles of lotion, shampoo and body wash; 54 rolls of paper towels and toilet paper; 23 pairs of gloves; more than 200 pairs of socks; $131 for Easter candy; and at least 10 grocery bags filled with school supplies.

To obtain a Barnett In Chittam’s honor, the club donated $500 to the Alabama Kiwanis Foundation to be used for the Jean Dean Reading Is Fundamental program.

Mercer Barnett was a Birmingham businessman who played a prominent role in establishing Kiwanis International as a service organization and was the first Alabamian to serve as Kiwanis International president.

What is your club doing this fall and winter? Share your awards and projects with Kiwanis clubs around Alabama. Remember to post on Facebook and also send photos and details to the Kiwanis Kourier at kiwaniskourier@gmail.com.
Kiwanis International Executive Director Stan Soderstrom (right photo) talks about the Alabama District’s impact during a luncheon address; other guests from KI included Aaron Ketzenberger for the Children’s Fund; Trustee Cathy Szymanski and husband, David; and Rhonda Vrell (bottom left in group photo below).

Kiwanis International Executive Director Stan Soderstrom from the Indianapolis headquarters and three other KI representatives joined Alabama Kiwanians for the District Convention in Huntsville.

Soderstrom was the keynote speaker at the Saturday Interclub Luncheon at Embassy Suites in downtown Huntsville, where the Aug. 2-4 meetings were held.

Kiwanis International Trustee Cathy Szymanski from Pennsylvania, who is counselor to the Alabama District for 2019-20, installed officers Saturday night. Aaron Ketzenberger, associate director of development for the Kiwanis Children’s Fund, and Rhonda Vrell, KI area director, also spoke and offered resources during the convention.

In his talk, Soderstrom reviewed the history of Kiwanis International and key meetings held in Birmingham. “That’s where today’s Kiwanis story truly begins,” he said, noting that the Alabama-Florida District was formed first. As more clubs were built in Alabama during 1919 and afterward, Alabama became a one-state district.

“When I look back at what Alabama has done, two other things come to mind: the Jean Dean Reading Is Fun-damental program, and our K-Family. Not every district understands K-Family like Alabama.”

Soderstrom mentioned the late Governor Andy Cahun of Gadsden (father of Glenda Selman), who worked tirelessly to make Builders clubs known around the world and increase the number of clubs available to middle-school-age students.

“Key Club has a very rich history in Alabama, too,” he said, noting that 12 Key Club International presidents have come from Alabama. And he has (See K.I. EXECUTIVE, Page 23)
Kiwanis International Trustee Cathy Szymanski visited Alabama to install new officers during the District Convention in Huntsville Aug. 2-4 and to offer her help and advice to Governor Bob Brown and others.

The trustee said she and her husband, David, enjoyed their visit to Alabama, which included visiting several Huntsville area club meetings and touring Huntsville with Lt. Governor Mike Roddy, as well as attending and speaking at the District Convention.

“I love the Alabama District,” she said. “And I know there were many new seeds planted this weekend. The question is how do we go back to our clubs and explain what we learned this weekend?”

“We must continually care for our membership.”
—Cathy Szymanski, Kiwanis International board member

“I challenge each of you to go back, talk to your clubs and your community,” Szymanski said, and use this as a bridge to bring in new members and do more service. Go back and ask one person to join.

“What is your passion? What can you achieve?” she asked. “Mine is plants, especially growing orchids. I care for my orchids and nurture them.

“In the same way, we must continually care for our membership. Our members need to know that we care that they are nurtured. Call them, send messages, engage them in conversation, and listen to them.”

“Look around and find those future leaders in your district, and nurture them, because if they are not growing, they are dying.”

As she retired one board and installed the new one, Szymanski noted that leaders like Immediate Past Governor Armand St. Raymond, who leaves the Alabama board this fall, “can share a legacy of experience.” He is joining the Kiwanis Children’s Fund international board, while continuing to serve as its liaison with the Alabama District.

She advised incoming Governor Bob Brown to “set goals, and invest time in each of your leaders.” She also installed Mark Kellerman as governor-elect and Scott Sims as vice governor.

Szymanski and Tammy Driskill served as governors at the same time. She told Driskill, now Alabama District secretary, that “your leadership and involvement will be vital in the year ahead.”

Outgoing Governor Ben Taylor agreed, saying, “I could not have done this without Tammy.”
Officers and board installed

New officers and board members for the 2019-20 Kiwanis year were installed at the evening Governor’s Banquet during the District Convention by visiting Kiwanis International Trustee Cathy Szymanski from Pennsylvania. First, outgoing Governor Ben Taylor and his board were recognized (right photo). Then incoming Governor Bob Brown (below) and his lieutenant governors (top left photo) were installed, along with Governor-elect Mark Kellerman and Vice Governor Scott Sims, who was elected during the business session that morning. Past Governor Armand St. Raymond was officially retired from his duties with a crystal trophy presented by Taylor. District Secretary Tammy Driskill continues in that role and assisted Szymanski in distributing pins.

Photos by Patrice Stewart
Governor: 3 steps to adding members

Governor Bob Brown, in his speech after the installation of officers, talked about three “strategic imperatives” that Alabama District of Kiwanis members must tackle.

That’s different from a goal, which is something you want to achieve, he said. An imperative is something you must achieve.

“We must generate positive, net, year-on-year membership growth,” Brown said. “I know what you’re thinking … every incoming governor says this exact same thing. But do you know when was the last time the Alabama District experienced year-on-year net membership growth? 1999-2000, under leadership of Past Governor Steve Cragon.”

Brown noted that every governor and district board has worked hard on this, and Past Governor Sidney Lanier had a net loss of only one member during 2005-06, “but the headwinds of demographic and other social changes have been daunting. But the time has come that we must renew and re-energize our growth efforts if we are to remain a strong Kiwanis district.”

Bob Brown: “Do you know when was the last time the Alabama District experienced year-on-year net membership growth?”

He said to do that, we must define our target audience, develop a really compelling story of what Kiwanis is doing in the community, “and then tell that story in as many ways as you can. don’t let Kiwanis be the best-kept secret in town.

“If we do these three things better than we ever have before, I am confident that we can make a positive impact on our membership trend,” said Brown.

The workshops at the District Convention were designed to share ideas to help make that impact. Some information is in this issue of the Kiwanis Kourier, and some workshop suggestions are posted online.

If your club’s service projects are no longer relevant, it may be time to add some new ones, Brown said. Or perhaps you need to update your methods of telling your club’s story.

“But the main reason we must grow, the reason that trumps all the others, is this … Kids need Kiwanis,” Brown said. “All across this state and across the globe, there are children that are depending on us to make a difference in their lives.

“Working together, we can make that difference.”

Outstanding Lt. Governor

Governor Ben Taylor presented the David Womack Outstanding Lieutenant Governor Award to 2018-19 Division 5 Lt. Governor Scott Sims, left, of Homewood. Womack, longtime Circle K administrator for the Alabama District, had just retired from that post and agreed to serve as one of Taylor’s lieutenant governors for 2018-19 when he died July 11, 2018, at age 65. Taylor decided to honor his memory and service with this award; Sims was elected vice governor at this District Convention.

Alabama Kiwanis District 2019-20 officers and board members

Governor Bob Brown, Hoover
Governor-elect Mark Kellerman, Fairhope
Vice Governor Scott Sims, Homewood
Immediate Past Governor Ben Taylor, Montgomery

The 14 regional divisions in the Alabama Kiwanis District are led by lieutenant governors who serve, along with the officers, on the District Board:
Division 1, Mike Roddy, Huntsville
Division 2, Andy Palys, Cullman
Division 3, Steve Thomas, Jasper
Division 4, Terry Tittle, Tuscaloosa
Division 5, Keith McKendall, Hoover
Division 6, Jamie Brabston, Homewood
Division 7, Jerry Ware, Gadsden
Division 8, Sonia Dale, Cropwell
Division 9, Donnie Robinson, Montgomery
Division 10, Marvin Wagoner, Alexander City
Division 11, Critt Snellgrove, Dothan
Division 12, Sam Schjott, Monroeville
Division 13, Benjie Hughes, Daphne
Division 14, Darrell Butler, Theodore

Do you want your club to be ‘Distinguished’ for 2019-20?

In order to achieve “Distinguished Club” status in the 2019-20 Kiwanis year, a club must achieve ALL THREE of the following:

■ A net gain in membership of at least one member.
■ Representation at either the midwinter training or the annual District Convention.
■ A club donation of $10 or more per member to the Alabama Kiwanis Foundation.

The new qualifications were approved by the Alabama District board at its Oct. 5 meeting.

Email news and photos of club projects to the Kiwanis Kourier, kiwaniskourier@gmail.com
‘Vibrant, current, fun and adventuresome’

Speakers at the general session in Huntsville offered advice for use around the state:

**Glenda Selman**, Aktion Club administrator: “Aktion members love to do service and want to be included in the community. We are where the real action is. Kiwanis is the only civic group that has Aktion type clubs.”

**Paul Sexton**, Key Club administrator: “Invite Key Club members to your meetings. Be involved, and know what’s going on. Some new faculty advisers don’t know who to contact in Kiwanis.”

**Peck Fox**, Circle K administrator: “Alabama had the fourth largest delegation at the CKI convention in Orlando. We will come speak to your club anywhere in Alabama. We can be that foothold Kiwanis needs in reaching the younger generation.”

**Mary Hoerlein**, new K-Kids administrator: “My role is to generate interest in new K-Kids clubs. Let me know if your club would like to start one.”

**Philip Selman**, Builders Club administrator: “Be involved with the clubs you sponsor. Make sure they know Kiwanis is there and can be called on.”

**Pam Schisler**, new Key Leader coordinator: “I’m in the process of taking over Key Leader … my daughter attended and loved it. But it’s not about me … it’s about how community service will help us all.” **Mike Winstead**, who has helped with Key Leader for several years, challenged each club to send two students to the April weekend. “They can’t attend without you; they need your help.”

**Troy Whisenant**, Youth Protection manager: “Make sure you follow guidelines by doing background checks through Kiwanis International.”

**Pam Fleming**, Risk Management: “Your club is not covered for a bungee-jumping project off a bridge in Mobile … and you’ll need additional coverage for balloon races and air shows, too. Parades and pancake days all need to be covered. Call Kiwanis International and they can help you get an affordable policy.”

**Elise Hearn**, Membership Coordinator: “It’s important to reach out and recruit … we need to be vibrant, current, fun and adventuresome. You may not need another 68-year-old member; you may need a 28-year-old.”
Midwinter x 3: Check the schedule in this issue for your region’s training day in February

Convention workshop topics include growth, service, social media strategies

Three workshops by district officers and committee chairs were offered three times each, providing food for thought to those attending the District Convention in Huntsville.

Sustainable membership growth, featuring proven member recruitment campaigns used by several Alabama Kiwanis clubs, was led by Elise Hearn and Brian Rodgers.

Service projects with impact, including “pop-up” projects that can be done at a club meeting, was led by Keith McKendall and Scott Sims.

Communicating your message — learn new public relations methods to help better communicate what your club is doing in your community — was led by Mark Kellerman and Taylor Means.

A recurring theme in these workshops was the need to attract more younger members to Kiwanis, with more use of social media a key tool.

“There’s a lot of clutter online, so you need to be intentional with your messages,” Kellerman said, noting that the cellphone is the key to reaching many people today.

Clubs should make sure their Facebook pages are updated regularly, and Kiwanis International has made a lot of tools available for that. Means said his club has about 20 Facebook page administrators to help with that updating. However, Facebook is outdated for reaching those under 35, he said.

Choose your social media tools after determining what groups you want to receive your messages, said Kellerman, mentioning Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp and TikTok, along with some differences in Baby Boomers, Generation X and Millennials.

While one generation may enjoy the traditional song at a meeting, another might prefer to concentrate on service. “Remember what is more important — your traditions or your mission,” Kellerman said.

“If your club went away, would the community mourn it?” he asked Kiwanians.

“We have an incredible organization and a good message,” Kellerman said. “But what will this room look like in 20 years?”
While Governor Bob Brown wants to open five new clubs this year, he also wants to build up small clubs.

“A significant portion of our growth for 2019-20 is likely to come from our efforts to strengthen our clubs that have fallen below ‘charter strength.’ We finished last year with 19 of our clubs having less than 15 members. That is a full quarter of our existing clubs,” he said.

“Increasing the membership of those clubs would likely be enough to offset all losses we would have during the year, thus delivering positive net growth,” Brown said.

However, he still plans to open five new clubs this year.

“The first of those, the Kiwanis Club of Wetumpka, goes onto our roster in October after a highly successful club opening effort in late September. We have also identified possible club opening targets in Divisions 5, 7, 13 and 14, and continue to search for more opportunities,” the governor said.
Mike Winstead, Russ and Carol Grimes selected for Jean Dean Courage Awards

Three Kiwanians who have worked tirelessly for the Alabama Kiwanis Foundation were honored with Jean Dean Courage Awards Aug. 3 during the District Convention in Huntsville.

Mike Winstead and Russ and Carol Grimes were selected by a committee headed by Past Governor Sidney Lanier. The awards were presented by Cathy Gafford, executive director of Jean Dean Reading Is Fundamental, the foundation signature project named for her late mother.

“I believe courage comes in lots of different forms,” said Gafford, noting that some people battle physical handicaps daily, while others, like these honorees, face quieter challenges.

The late Jean Torbert Dean served through Scout and Sunday School leadership and Kiwanis though she was a lifelong asthmatic who suffered a heart attack and a debilitating stroke before age 40. Years later, just before her death, she helped her husband, the late Joe Dean, make plans to help children during his term as Alabama Kiwanis Governor in 1990-91.

Here’s what Gafford said while honoring Winstead, Alabama Kiwanis Foundation treasurer and longtime member of the Good Morning Montgomery Kiwanis Club:

“Our first Jean Dean Courage honoree today is someone most of you have met and know as a positive man with a great sense of humor and a forgiving heart, who for more than 30 years has put thousands of hours into helping children and others in his community and across the state. What you probably don’t know about this man is the many challenges he has faced and continues to face every day, with perseverance and dignity.

“He has been a Kiwanian for many years, first in his native state and for the last 20-plus years in Alabama. He was befriended by a Kiwanian at church before his family ever moved to Alabama and recruited by a Kiwanis club. Over the next two decades, his wife faced several serious health issues, and in the last five years, so has he — yet he continues to provide outstanding service to people in need locally and across the state. He is always a calm force for right.

“Through all challenges and trials, our honoree is pleasant, responsible and helpful. He works full time as a financial officer who finds the time to be an attentive husband, father and Kiwanis member. He is also an active member of a very large church. He lives what he believes. If you don’t know him well, you are never aware of any difficulties in his life.

“He has served in every office of his home club and continues to be their RIF team captain, yet has found time to be active on the local and district level as well. He has been president of the Alabama Kiwanis Foundation, and twice served as its treasurer. He also is his division’s lieutenant governor and an adult leader for Key Leader. He never complains but ‘soldiers through’ any and all difficulties with determination backed by genuine courage and caring.

“He is active in what he believes in, regardless of personal or family challenges. He puts his time and money ‘where his mouth is’ in all that he does. Regardless of what comes his way, he meets it with gracious, ever-steady courage.”

Gafford’s second plaque went to members of the Huntsville Metro club, “a popular Kiwanis couple who always make life appear to be running smoothly — Past Alabama Kiwanis Foundation President Russ Grimes and Kiwanian Extraordinaire Carol Grimes.” She told of their help with everything from keeping the RIF warehouse heating and cooling running to helping run the AKF auction fundraisers.

“Most of you have met and know him as the man with a ready smile and very big heart who for more than 30 years of helping the RIF program.”

COURAGE, Page 25
Dothan student wins RIF scholarship

Nyah Vincent, a spring graduate of Northview High School in Dothan, is the Alabama Kiwanis Foundation Jean Dean RIF scholarship winner for 2019.

She was honored during the Aug. 3 luncheon at the Alabama District Kiwanis Convention in Huntsville.

Foundation Treasurer Mike Winstead presented the scholarship, which was started in honor of the 25th anniversary of Kiwanis service to children through the Jean Dean Reading Is Fundamental program, the signature service project of the Alabama Kiwanis Foundation.

Annual scholarships

This RIF program will turn 30 next year, and one or two scholarships have been given every year.

Jean Dean RIF Executive Director Cathy Gafford said Vincent was once a “RIF kid” who received RIF books through her Head Start preschool program at Dothan City Schools.

Now a National Honor Society member, she graduated from Northview in the top 20 percent of her class while also tutoring students with disabilities, helping with the yearbook, and serving as varsity cheerleading captain and Student Government Association communication officer.

Still has her RIF books

Vincent said she enjoyed reading to children at Slingluff Elementary School and working to “make the book come to life” for them.

“I still have the three books I received at Head Start … they started my library,” she recalled. She also remembers the Kiwanis men and women who came to her Head Start class three times a year, read the books to them and gave each child one to take home.

“Reading stimulates your imagination and expands your knowledge of the world around you,” she said. Books in the home help build vocabulary, increase awareness and comprehension, and expand horizons.

“Having books at home had a big impact on my academic ability,” said Vincent, “and it all started when I was given those three books at Head Start.”

Her plans include attending the University of South Alabama and majoring in speech pathology.

Courage (From Page 24)

years has put thousands of hours into helping children and others in his community and across the state. You know her for her staunch support of whatever they want done. What you probably don’t know about this team is the many challenges they have faced and continue to face every day with perseverance and dignity.

“This team is a ‘well-oiled machine,’ each with separate and extraordinary talents but together able to ‘move mountains.’ Together is a word that describes them well. No matter what is happening for them in their business, their family or their personal health, their service to others is seamless. Publicly, there is no complaining. They just go forward.

“He has served his Kiwanis club as president and in other offices and assists as its RIF captain. They are in a relatively small club, which, with this team leading the charge, raised several hundred thousand dollars to build a special-needs playground. Like everything they are a part of, there were no corners cut, and a wonderful area for all children was built and is maintained.

‘Above and beyond’

“They have gone above and beyond for the Jean Dean RIF program since he served as a RIF team captain, personally providing a heat pump for the RIF office areas and making sure many warehouse repairs were done and done correctly. He served as president of the Alabama Kiwanis Foundation and is currently the chair of its RIF Committee.

“In addition to her other efforts, she has worked tirelessly to help improve the AKF annual auction, producing software to make it run more smoothly and giving hundreds of hours of volunteer time before and during conventions to ensure its success.

“Courage is something you don’t get to observe often. Courage is a word with a lot of connotations — strength, the ability to go on in the face of difficulty, integrity, the willingness to stand up for what you know is right, and that mighty force that makes it possible to put someone else’s needs above your own, regardless of personal cost. These honorees embody each of those important facets of courage.

“They are active in what they believe, regardless of personal or family challenges. They put their time and money into all that they do. Regardless of what comes their way, this team meets it with gracious, ever-steady courage.”

All three honorees were presented plaques for their ability to “persevere in the face of life’s challenges and for their personal courage along life’s way.”
The Alabama Kiwanis Foundation recently honored clubs that met the $10 per member annual giving goal to the Alabama Kiwanis Foundation (AKF). Ernest Hulsey, president of the Alabama Kiwanis Foundation for 2018-19, presented annual club gift campaign recognition letters and banner patch annual tabs to representatives of these clubs during the District Convention in Huntsville.

“Club participation in the annual club gift program enables the Alabama Kiwanis Foundation Inc. to further the ideals of Kiwanis throughout the District of Alabama,” Hulsey said. “Each year your foundation provides funding for club matching grants, Key Club and Circle K scholarships and Key Leader, among other worthwhile projects,” he said. “Thank you for your continuing support and generosity.”

The following Kiwanis clubs received recognitions:

- Anniston
- Auburn
- Azalea City
- Chelsea
- Chickasaw
- Citronelle
- Clanton
- Daphne-Spanish Fort
- Dothan
- Fairhope
- Florence
- Gadsden
- Good Morning Montgomery
- Greenville
- Helena
- Homewood-Mountain Brook
- Hoover Metro
- Huntsville
- Huntsville Golden K
- Huntsville West
- Indian Springs Village
- Jasper
- Metro Huntsville
- Millbrook
- Monroeville
- Montgomery
- Ozark
- Sheffield

Many Kiwanians picked up recognition letters and banner patches for their clubs’ annual gifts to the Alabama Kiwanis Foundation of $10 per member or more.

100-year clubs

Several Kiwanis clubs turning 100 this year received “100 Year Club” banner patches at the District Convention in Huntsville. At left, 2018-19 Governor Ben Taylor (left) presents one to Marc Byers, 2018-19 president of the Kiwanis Club of Huntsville, whose board wanted to host the state convention Aug. 2-4, just after it turned 100. At right, Taylor presents a patch to District Secretary Tammy Driskill, who was serving as president of her Gadsden club when it celebrated 100 years in July. The official charter day for Gadsden and Huntsville was July 14, 1919. Taylor’s club, the Kiwanis Club of Montgomery, turns 100 on Oct. 31.

Now there are more opportunities for more kids to thrive.

Kiwanis International reported Oct. 5 that 434 new Kiwanis clubs opened in the 2018-19 administrative year — the second-highest number of clubs opened in a year in the 104-year history of Kiwanis.
Circle K, Key Club leaders attend District Convention

Leaders in the Kiwanis-sponsored Circle K and Key Club organizations joined Kiwanians in Huntsville for the District Convention Aug. 2-4, attending many of the Kiwanis programs.

Several gave talks, the Circle K District Board met, Key Club leadership talked with Key Club District Administrator Paul Sexton, a couple received scholarships, and Circle K Governor Zarien Morris led the convention in a patriotic song.

Morris reported that Circle K had raised more than $30,000 for a clean water project and spent more than 4,000 hours in community service. “And we gained not one, but two, seats on the CKI Board.”

The Troy University chapter won a GEM (Growth Enhancement Membership) award at the International Convention last summer.

Reed told Kiwanians what he had learned at this Kiwanis convention. “We need to all be rowing the boat together,” he said. “It’s not all about me.”

The Key Club governor said that to him, service is putting someone else’s needs before his own. “It’s about people who need us.”

And when you do all that, “Nothing is impossible.”

Winners of Key Club, Circle K scholarships

Ben Taylor, 2018-19 Alabama Kiwanis governor, presented two scholarships to young women in recognition of their academic and service achievements during the District Convention luncheon. In the left photo, Ashley Anne Sizemore receives the 2019 Alabama District Key Club Scholarship from Taylor; she was on the Alabama District Key Club Board and planned to study sports medicine at Samford University. In the right photo, Wamia Samed receives the district’s Circle K scholarship. She is a senior majoring in accounting at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa and has been district communications officer for Circle K.
Kiwanians from around the state brought books to the Aug. 2-4 state convention in Huntsville, where they put labels in books and boxed them for delivery.

This "pop-up service project," planned by the Kiwanis Club of Huntsville, far exceeded the goal of 1,000 books.

The Daphne-Spanish Fort club brought the most books, 460; see how they did it in the Club News section. The Huntsville club was next with 337 books. The Montgomery, Dothan and Ozark clubs also made the top five.

"The number of books exceeded all expectations, thanks to the generosity of the Kiwanians of the Great Alabama District," said Division 1 Lt. Governor Mike Roddy of the Huntsville club.

"We printed 1,800 bookplates thinking we would have more than enough. What a pleasant surprise when we ran out of bookplates!"

The Kiwanis Club of Huntsville planned to print additional bookplates and put them in the remaining books before delivering them to the hospital.

"This was a fabulously successful project that bears testimony to the commitment and generosity of the Alabama District," said 2019-20 Governor Bob Brown. "Well done!"

2,150 books collected for hospital

Kiwanis is an Alabama Bicentennial partner; come to the celebration in Montgomery Dec. 14
District convention

Aug. 2-4, 2019, Huntsville

Photos by Patrice Stewart

Email news and photos of club projects to the Kiwanis Kourier, kiwaniskourier@gmail.com
District convention
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Deadline for the next edition of the online Kiwanis Kourier is Jan. 3, 2020
Plan to attend the Kiwanis International Convention in Indianapolis June 18-21, 2020

District convention
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Clubs, plan now to sponsor teens from your area for Key Leader Weekend April 24-26, 2020

District convention
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