



The Ratchet



Received Charter No 851 from Rotary International March 1, 1921

Meets Mondays - 6:00 P.M. - Alton Sports Tap Restaurant

www.altongodfreyrotary.org

A Monthly Newsletter

Issue #136 January 2009

Students of the Month

Briana Hightower is the Alton. As a member of the Briana attended the Washington, DC. A member of Alton High, Hightower has been school's Thespians and Gospel choir. She is the YWCA Leadership Good Friend Mentor.



Hightower serves president and is active in program. In her spare time Riverbend Community Salvation Army. She is also a Stars Program tutor at the Lovejoy Elementary School.

After graduating from Alton High, Briana plans to major in Music Business at the University of Memphis

Megan Jo Allen is the Allen of Alton. Allen has been a enrolled at Mississippi Valley active student leader serving as for the past two years. She has music and drama programs athletic program. She has the girls volleyball squad, and receiving MVP junior year.



She has been Honor Roll, Who's Scholars, and was a Democracy contests. She also received the national history and government achievement award and was selected for a DAR Good Citizen award.

Allen has been extremely active with her church and community volunteer activities and plans to attend Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville and major in Mass Communications/English.

daughter of Virgie Willis of National Leadership Forum, inauguration ceremonies in the Talent search program at an active participant in the Voices of Celebration recipient of the Award and serves as a

as Teen Summit the Power of Peers she volunteers at the Food Pantry and at the

Rotary Programs



Feb 2 Alton Sports Tap

Regular Meeting 6:00 p.m. Captain Brad Wells, Chief of Detectives for the Madison County Sheriff's Department. Captain Wells is a graduate of the FBI National Academy and is on the Major Case Squad in the Greater St.Louis Metro area. He will discuss identity theft and what you can do to avoid having your identity stolen. (Bring your credit cards.)

Feb 9 Alton Sports Tap

Board of Directors meeting, 5:00 p.m. Regular Meeting 6:00 p.m. Students of the Month for February will be honored.

Feb 16 Rolling Hills Golf Course

Steak Fry at the Rolling Hills Golf Course Club House 6:00 p.m.

Feb 21 Crowne Plaza Springfield

District Team Training Seminar

Feb 23 Alton Sports Tap

Regular Meeting 6:00 p.m. Third Quarter Club Assembly. The annual budget will be reviewed.

Students of the Month

In this month's issue of The Ratchet, we are again focusing on original compositions by our students of the month.

Unexpected Lessons

by Megan Allen

Sometimes the best lessons are learned when we least expect them. I experienced the truthfulness of this statement in the summer of 2006. My youth group went on a missions trip to Shepherd's in Union Grove, Wisconsin. Shepherd's is a home for mentally handicapped adults. I prepared for this trip fully expecting to be a blessing to others through my ministry, but instead, I was the one that received the blessing. I learned many lessons in just one week.

There were three specific people that taught me



some of the most important lessons of my life. The first person was a man named Joel. Joel was in the group of the lowest functioning adults. The only word I ever heard him say was "hi", but that didn't stop him from showing how he felt. Joel always had a humongous smile on his face. It was one of the most beautiful smiles I have ever seen, just because it was so pure and sincere. Joel taught me just how extraordinary life can be when you share your joy with others.

The second person was Gayle. I helped Gayle wash windows. While we cleaned, Gayle asked me every question she could possibly think of. She wanted to know my birthday and my favorite color. She asked about my siblings and my pet. It was so much fun! Gayle had never even known me until that day, but that didn't stop her from wanting to know everything about me. Gayle taught

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Change

by Briana Hightower



Luke Russert and Briana 12-18-2009

In the transformation to becoming a woman I was introduced to the next level in life, my freshmen year. It was a misty Monday in Smyrna, Georgia when my mom left work early to come and take me to my freshmen orientation. As we began to make a right turn to the school, we were hit by a car on the rear passenger side where I was sitting. We turned three times and we ended across the street in the grass almost hitting a gas pump at a gas station. While waiting for the ambulance, there was a small tape recorder in the background playing a song my mom wrote and all of a sudden I felt as though hope was present but lost. I began to remember a scripture that was always spoken; Faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen.

When the ambulance came, everything felt so surreal. As the firemen tried to pry my door open, they were wrapping a neck brace on my mother, putting her on a gurney and into the ambulance. I began to wonder where this faith would take me now that my life was truly beginning. A friend of ours that was a member at a church we attended together came to the hospital to see about us. My mother suffered a hemetoma on her upper thigh. As I began to observe the hospital room I couldn't see where my faith was leading me. I wanted everything to be perfect again, the way it was before when I didn't have a care or a want for anything.

After we left the hospital our church friend took my mother and me to my high school to get my schedule and try to find where some of my classes were. I had no idea what

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Unexpected Lessons

me that the best way to meet people and to make friends is to show an interest in them and have a desire to learn more about them.

The last person was a very special man named Dennis. Dennis had a very unique story. Dennis was a pastor at a large church. He had once preached to hundreds of people at a time. He was married and had two daughters. Then one day, Dennis had a heart attack. Oxygen was cut off from his brain for too long, and his heart attack resulted in brain damage. After that, Dennis' wife divorced him, and he was sent to Shepherd's. Dennis remembers his days as a pastor. He remembers his wife and daughters, but he's not bitter or resentful. He recognizes that he was mistreated, but that doesn't matter to him. He has a sweet and forgiving spirit. Even though he is mentally handicapped, he realizes that there is a bigger purpose to life than holding grudges. He made me realize that I need to set the example by forgiving others, even when they may not deserve it.

Life can seem so complicated, but during that week at Shepherd's, everything became so simple. I realized that even though these people were mentally handicapped, they were each a better person than I was. That week, I learned what I needed to change and what I wanted to become. What had started out as an opportunity for me to serve, turned into an opportunity for me to grow, and I am so thankful for the lessons I learned.

Change

high school was even about but I knew I wanted to succeed but had no idea where I would find the revolving energy to give me my endurance to make it. After leaving the high school she took my mother and me home.

Shortly after due to my mother's injuries she was released from her job and we didn't have transportation and I was just starting the most important year of my life. A couple of months passed by and my mom still couldn't find another job. I had gotten to the point where I had a counselor to tell me at a meeting "You must be like one of those kids that think that they can come to high school and conquer the world, but not everyone was made to do that." I felt broken down to the last fragment of my being at that moment.

I would have never thought that I would be back in my home town, Alton, Illinois, after nine years of being away. I was unsure of the change. My mom and I packed up everything, and we left that same night, December 1, 2005. I started school two days after we arrived and it was a whole new game and a way to start off fresh. Thanks to an outstanding counselor and the wonderful Alton High School staff, I was able to rapidly become the destiny chaser I am now. So my freshmen year of school may have not been the best but it taught me that the hope that was once present was never lost but it was the very start to my future. The more time moves forward I am beginning to see the evidence unfold before my eyes of all of the faith I had once before. No matter what happens during this narrow (also known as troubled in Hebrew) path of hope will all one day result in the evidence of your faith.



Mar 2 Main Street UMC

24th Annual Chili Chowdown, Serving 11 a.m. - 1 p.m., 4:30 p.m. - 7 p.m.

Mar 9 Alton Sports Tap

Board of Directors meeting, 5:00 p.m. Regular Meeting 6:00 p.m. Students of the Month for March will be honored.

Mar 12-14 Westin Yorktown, Lombard

Land of Lincoln President Elect Training Seminar

Mar 16 Rolling Hills Golf Course

Steak Fry at the Rolling Hills Golf Course Club House 6:00 p.m.

Mar 23 Alton Sports Tap

Regular Meeting 6:00 p.m. Our speaker will be Ray Botterbush. Ray serves as a weather spotter for the Madison County Severe Weather Group. Find out how local authorities are able to monitor severe weather conditions. This program will be just in time for another round of typical spring weather, that hopefully won't make an appearance that evening. (Bring your beanie with the weather vane on top.)

Mar 30 Alton Sports Tap

Regular Meeting 6:00 p.m. Program to be announced.

-Bill Hoagland, Program Director



23rd Annual Chili Chowdown



Important Info

Location

Main Street United Methodist
1400 Main St.
Alton, Illinois

Date

March 2, 2009

Tickets

Adults - \$8.00

Times

11:00 am - 1:00 pm
4:30 pm - 7:00 pm

Sam will mail tickets during the next week.



Club Officers 2008-2009

President.....Scott Neudecker
5212 Richland Woods Dr., Alton, 462-4697
Vice-President..... Ford Phillips
1007 Henry St., Alton, 463-0769
SecretaryRoland Hansen
820 Creekwood Lane, Godfrey, 466-1970
TreasurerMike Tillman
1902 Paris Dr., Godfrey, 466-1928
Executive Secretary.....Melissa Seymour
3026 Edwards St., Alton, 462-7206

Board of Directors 2008-2009

Rod Elias-3rd yr	Ebony Huddleston-2nd yr
Dick Jones-3rd yr	Brian White-2nd yr
Sam Stemm-3rd yr	Dave Walker-1st yr
Ken Spells-3rd yr	Chris Fox-1st yr
Gail Weinrich-3rd yr	Brock Hendricks-1st yr
Jasper Fisher-2nd yr	Michael Osborne-1st yr
Martha Morse-2nd yr	Tom Turpin-1st yr
Alan McBride-2nd yr	Josh Farley-PP