

Bloomington Rotary Club

Roundabout

September 21, 2021

Next Week's Program



On Sept. 28 **Beth Cate** will speak about "What's Up with the Supreme Court?" Beth has been an affiliate of IU's Maurer School of Law and a professor in the O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs since 2011. From 1998 to 2011 she worked with the Office of University Counsel. A Phi Beta Kappa graduate of George Washington University, she graduated cum laude from Harvard Law School and has practiced law in Indianapolis and Washington, D.C. A passionate supporter of animal conservation, she has been secretary of the Indianapolis Zoological Society Board of Trustees since 2013. The winner of four teaching awards, Beth is such a popular speaker at Mini University that her presentations on the Supreme Court are standing-room-only.

This Week's News

Rotary Toast 2021. Tick. Tick. Tick. Just **SIX** weeks remain before this year's Rotary Toast honoring Charlotte Zietlow. Tickets for the in-person event are \$100; "view only" tickets are \$25. Register at rotarytoast.com. The *Herald-Times* carried a front-page story on Charlotte and the Toast on Monday, September 20. Read it in your recent email from Jim Bright.

How to Help the 7,000 Afghan Refugees at Camp Atterbury. Students in the IU Central Eurasian Studies program have set up an Amazon wish list. You can order most-needed supplies and they will be shipped directly to Camp Atterbury: <https://amzn.to/3hBF6Wq>.

Congratulations to Rotarian Dr. Phil Eskew, who was honored as an "I Association Honorary Member" at halftime of the IU-Cincinnati football game on Saturday in front of 50,000 fans, for being "an inspirational individual who shows commitment and dedication to IU, the Indiana Athletic Association, and the IU Athletics program."



Trash and a Sweet Reward. Michael Shermis announced a service opportunity on Saturday, October 23. From 1 to 3 p.m, volunteers will scour Pete Ellis Drive, wearing vests and gloves (and your distinctive Rotary hats) and using supplies provided. We'll top off the afternoon at Jiffy Treat. Watch for the online signup or contact Michael at shermism@gmail.com.

Four-Way Speech Contest. President Sally Gaskill is looking for someone from the club who might be interested in coordinating the Four-Way Speech contest for area high school students. “The bulk of the work will take place between now and March 2022 – and it’s fun!” she said.



Welcome, New Members! Membership Chair **Dave Meyer** inducted new member **Ben Pearson**, general manager of Republic Services. His service area includes Bloomington, Terre Haute, and Vincennes. A native of Scottsdale, Ariz., Ben graduated from the University of Arizona. He and his wife have a 13-year-old son. They have fostered numerous dogs. **Jim Sims** introduced three new representatives from organizational member NAACP: **Dianne Shewmaker, Patrick Smith, and Jimmie Torrey.**

Help Our Club. Please use the link to help out by serving as in-person greeter or by giving a reflection or introducing guests either in person or on Zoom: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A044AA5AA2DA3FA7-second1>

This Week’s Program. Available on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/xV7XrF6IHG8>



Michael Shermis introduced this week’s speaker, Rotarian **John Zody**, Director of Housing and Neighborhood Development (HAND) at the City of Bloomington. John began by acknowledging and thanking his predecessor, Doris Sims, and the community and club for so warmly welcoming him back after several years’ absence.

He noted the mission of HAND is to enhance the quality of life in Bloomington, working with private and public partners, to preserve community character, offer safe and affordable housing, and protect neighborhood vitality. His department supports four citizen groups: Redevelopment Commission, Historic Preservation Commission, Board of Housing Quality Appeals, and the Citizen Advisory Committee for Distribution of Community Development Block Grants.

With an annual budget of \$2.8 million and 17 employees, the department inspects 25,000 rental properties and is one of only three communities in the state that does inspections. It also offers housing counseling/homeowner assistance and seeks to expand affordable housing. Most programs are for low-income individuals, those who spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing, as defined in US Housing and Urban Development guidelines.

As a city with a population of more than 50,000, Bloomington is classified as an “entitlement community,” which means it can receive federal funding directly; cities with populations below 50,000 receive funding through the state.

Guiding questions HAND staff ask every day are:

1. How are we assisting those at risk of housing insecurity?
2. How can we increase production of rental and owner-occupied housing for the future?
3. How are we keeping residents in their homes?

A large portion of the \$22 million in pandemic relief funds received through the American Rescue Plan Act has been set aside for affordable housing in our community. Efforts include assisting those who are unhoused or housing insecure, developing rental housing, and increasing home ownership.

John said HAND feels a “great sense of urgency” about its work to sustain and preserve community character, protect neighborhood vitality, and promote safe and affordable housing now and in the future. He noted efforts have to be strategic. Working with the Regional Opportunity Initiative, the city commissioned a housing study in 2020 (<https://bloomington.in.gov/sites/default/files/2020-08/BloomingtonHousingStudy2020.pdf>). The study confirmed that 65 percent of residents live in rental housing.

John concluded his remarks with a request for help in spreading the word to landlords and tenants about the federal rental assistance program, through which up to 12 months of rent can be paid. At this point, he noted, only 11 percent of the funding has been spent, so funds are still available. Landlords and tenants may call HAND at 812.249.3420, visit www.indianahousingnow.org, or contact him at john.zody@bloomington.in.gov.

Questions from Rotarians in the room and on Zoom:

Q: **Meagan Niese** asked for an update on the Housing Development Fund initiated in 2016 to offer incentives to builders. John reported 12 projects have been funded since inception.

Q: **Raj Haddawi** asked how many units of low-income housing has the city built? Since 2016, John said, 950 units have been added. He added that the city works closely with Habitat for Humanity Monroe County; the city recently funded a house in the Osage development; the two organizations are in regular communication.

Q: **Mike Baker** asked if the rental inspection program included student rentals. Yes, replied John.

Q: **Charlotte Zietlow** wondered if the recent conversion of apartments into student dorms has had an effect on rental housing availability for others in the community. John answered that his department has regular conversations with the university about students living in the community, but it is difficult to tell what impact individual decisions have on overall impact. She asked if Ellettsville was growing. John said, yes, Ellettsville is growing. There are not many rental units there, so those moving to Ellettsville will likely be buying homes.

Our Weekly Gathering, September 21

President **Sally Gaskill** welcomed members and guests to Bloomington Rotary Club’s weekly Celebration of Service.

Jim Sims’ reflection begin with a shout-out to Hispanic Heritage Month, September 15 to October 15. He thanked **Dr. Raj Haddawi** and **Past President Earon Davis** for beginning the club’s “bold and intentional” Diversity-Equity-Inclusion initiative. He offered an “unscientific view” of DEI in our community, using the “eye test.” “Look around,” he said, “and see how the community treats its citizens.” He shared an impressive list of

Black leaders in the community, including on the IU Board of Trustees and faculty, in top administrative leadership roles at MCCSC, in city government elected positions and senior staff roles, and in nonprofits.

In the Frangipani, Kevin Craig was guest of **Len Tieman**, and Doris Sims was guest of **Jim Sims**. On Zoom, Anne Bright was guest of **Jim Bright** (who was in the Frangipani).

Sally thanked greeter **Art Oehmich**, producer **Michael Shermis**, Zoom manager **Joy Harter**, remote mic team **Martha Foster** and **Earon Davis**, *Roundabout* reporter **Sara Laughlin**, and CATS, a service of Monroe County Public Library, for recording our meeting for Bloomington's Community Access Television.

Happy birthday to:

- **Ron Jensen**, September 21
- **Joe King**, September 27

Membership anniversaries this week:

- **Cynthia Neidhart**, 1 year
- **Efrat Feferman**, 3 years
- **Joe King**, 3 years
- **Jon Barada**, 8 years
- **Yolanda Treviño**, 19 years

Reporter: **Sara Laughlin**