



Rotary Club 99: Tuesday, August 22, 2023

Artificial Intelligence in Education

Join us Tuesday, Aug. 22, for a lively discussion on the role and use of artificial intelligence in our high schools. Moderated by Club 99er **Rajesh Chokhani** of [BOND.AI](#), the panel will feature **Nancy Rousseau** of Central High School, Club 99er **Steve Straessle** of Catholic High School and Club 99er **Cherie Labat** of eStem Public Charter Schools. We'll learn how three of our local high schools are using artificial intelligence to enhance the learning experience and how these administrators are managing the challenges AI brings to the classroom.



Moderator **Rajesh Chokhani** is president of [BOND.AI](#) in Little Rock and the 2023 chairman of the Little Rock Chamber of Commerce. Rajesh moved to the U.S. from Mumbai, India, in 2007 to establish Welspun Tubular's first factory outside India. During his tenure, he grew the facility to more than 800 acres with 1 million square feet and 1,000 employees. His passion for improving the financial well-being of hard-working individuals led him to pivot from his 28-year career to lead [BOND.AI](#), one of the

top 100 fintech companies in the country, and launch The BOND Network, the world's first network of banks, credit unions, employers and fintech companies.

Nancy Rousseau has been the principal at [Little Rock Central High School](#) for 21 years. A lifelong educator and former English teacher, she works tirelessly to ensure that her diverse student body of 2,400+ students receives the best possible education while developing a deeper understanding of the social issues connected to Central High's unique cultural heritage. Central High is the only functioning high school in America within the boundaries of a National Park Historic Site as a result of its connection to the events of 1957 when the Little Rock Nine attempted to integrate the school. One of Nancy's proudest moments came in 2007 when she, along with community leader Virgil Miller, co-chaired the 50th Integration Anniversary Commission for the City of Little Rock.

[Catholic High School's](#) Head of School **Steve Straessle** is a 1988 graduate of CHS and has been a teacher there since 1992. In 2005, he took the helm as principal and just this summer moved to the newly established role of Head of School. In this new position, he serves as the voice of the school, while overseeing the school's operations and faculty recruitment and professional development, along with his continued teaching of senior government classes. He and the faculty and staff of CHS remain committed to challenging their students academically while developing the qualities of faith, integrity and duty. Steve was named DAR Social Studies Teacher of the Year in 1995, was a 2010 finalist for Arkansas Business Non-Profit Business Leader of the Year, Arkansas Scholastic Press Association (ASPCA) Administrator of the Year in 2016 and was a member of the inaugural class of the Arkansas Top Influencers by Arkansas Money and Politics magazine in 2020. Steve has also been honored as the Junior Achievement of Arkansas Educator of the Year and listed in Arkansas Business "Arkansas 250," a list of the state's top 250 leaders as noted by the publication. He also writes a bi-weekly human interest column for the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette highlighting the mountains and valleys of life.

Dr. Cherie Labat is Chief Executive Officer of [eStem Public Charter Schools](#). Before coming to Arkansas, Dr. Labat served in various educational roles in Mississippi, including as a teacher, coach, adjunct professor, assistant principal, assistant dean, principal, assistant superintendent and superintendent. An avid writer, she has been published in several publications, including recently in the Wiley Handbook on National Policy for her research on gun violence. She also authored the Cybersecurity Labor Market Analysis for the University of Southern Mississippi in collaboration with a grant from the Department of Defense. As an innovative leader she served on the Mississippi Computer Science Task Force, implementing coding and artificial intelligence. She was an active community member in Mississippi, serving on many boards and committees, including as a Rotarian. Dr. Labat attended Jackson State University on volleyball and academic scholarships and received her Master of Arts in Higher Education from the University of Mississippi, a doctorate from the University of Southern Mississippi and is a graduate of the Harvard Leadership Institute.

Zoom Login for August 22, 2023

Topic: RCLR Weekly Meeting 8.22.23

Time: Aug 22, 2023 11:30 AM Central Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86132255727?pwd=VU1yZ3hSUG50MjNNM0lBbUhZRmpsZz09>

Meeting ID: 861 3225 5727

Passcode: 768463

One tap mobile

+13126266799,,86132255727#,,,,*768463# US (Chicago)

+16469313860,,86132255727#,,,,*768463# US

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Passcode: 768463

This Week at Club 99

A Taste of Arkansas: Panel of Local Owners on the Growth of Homegrown Spirits + Sake

Matt Bell, Origami Sake; Phil Brandon, Rock Town Distillery; and Harvey Williams, Delta Dirt Distillery



We're truly sorry if you missed Tuesday's meeting because it was so good!! But don't forget you can always visit our [YouTube channel](#) and check out all of our past meetings.

Club 99er **Courtney Little** led a lively discussion on Arkansas' growing and award-winning spirits and sake scene. Courtney was joined by **Matt Bell** of Origami Sake in Hot Springs, **Phil Brandon** of Rock Town Distillery in Little Rock and **Harvey Williams, Jr.** of Delta Dirt in Helena. This trio gave us great insights into starting businesses in this often challenging industry, yet finding paths to success.

Matt helped us determine that we have all been saying sake wrong and have little reference for what a "good" sake is. We can now all confidently say we know how to choose our sa(kay) wisely!

Harvey told us about his family's farm that goes back generations and how he is now using the sweet potatoes grown on it to make an award-winning and unique vodka. And Phil shared his ground-breaking work to change the state laws to better accommodate distillery growth in the state and support consumers who want to purchase Arkansas-made spirits.

To top it all off, Club 99ers were able to taste these fantastic Arkansas products later that evening at a special Rotary Club of Little Rock tasting held at Rock Town Distillery! Check out the pictures below.

Welcome New Members



Erin Hohnbaum, Owner/Founder/CEO of E. Leigh's Contemporary Boutiques and Co-Founder of The Nest
Sponsored by Natalie Ghidotti

Sara Jones, Head of School, Mount St. Mary Academy
Sponsored by Greg McCarroll

Members "Caught" Having Fun at This Week's Meeting



The 5th Test: Is It Fun?

President Ghidotti's Power of Fun Tip of the Week

This week, I have been listening to a lot of Brene Brown, and, as you know, Brene is all about talking about vulnerability and why being vulnerable in life leads to a greater purpose, more happiness and better relationships.

Vulnerability also leads to more fun. One of the key things that author Catherine Price talks about in her book, *The Power of Fun*, is being able to let go and experience the freedom of fun. That often means us letting down our guard, our self-judgment and our inhibitions to be able to experience True Fun.

This vulnerability can often lead to what Price calls playful deviance – basically breaking some rules - but not too much - and behaving in ways that are unexpected, unusual or mildly taboo.

A good example of this is last summer when my bestie group chartered a boat together in the British Virgin Islands to celebrate my husband's 50th birthday. Before we got there, we drew names out of a hat, and each person had to purchase an outfit for the name they drew. Catch was, that person **HAD TO WEAR THE OUTFIT** no matter where we went that day. As you can imagine, this led to some truly hilarious and True Fun moments as each of us had to wear our outfits to the legendary floating bar, Willy T's.

I'd love to show you a photo of this, but we all had to promise we would never share the evidence beyond our group. Though I'm pretty sure there is a video out there somewhere from the other patrons who were awestruck when we walked onto that boat!

So, we're not talking rebellion that is going to hurt someone or put someone in jail ... it's harmless rebellion in which you deliberately step outside the bounds of your "normal" life and do something different just for the fun of it.

If you look at what has been written about play out there, you will notice a lot of overlap between the deviance that is associated with rebellion and the escape from "normal" life that's associated with play.

If you're reading this and you're thinking ... this sounds irresponsible and indulgent, here's the thing: In the proper doses, responsibility and indulgence (and pushing ourselves out of our comfort zones) are VERY good for us. In fact, they are essential. Having too many responsibilities makes us feel heavy and burdened. Always prioritizing others' needs over ourselves leads to resentment and burnout.

If you haven't picked up the book yet, definitely do so. The chapter on rebellion is really good. She discusses how dopamine – which is a tool our brains use to form

memories and record things that are worth doing again and keep us focused on the present moment – is often fueled by novelty. And rebellion is often about trying new things.

So I'm hopeful a lot of you will work some playful deviance into your lives in the coming weeks. Just please don't go to jail ... UNLESS you are Brad Burleson who we learned in his fun video has a free get-out-of-jail card for the Hot Springs Jailhouse!

Who's Having Fun This Week?

Each week we will feature a member and what they do for fun! **Courtney Little** is in the limelight this week as he shares his love of whiskey, and specifically how he plans to share that love to benefit something near and dear to his heart - recycling in The Natural State. Check it out [here](#)!

Information: Committee, Service and Social Events

Super Fun Tuesday in the Books!



It was a double-header of FUN this past Tuesday with a special tasting of Origami Sake, Rock Town Distillery and Delta Dirt products at Rock Town's SoMA location. Members enjoyed tasting award-winning spirits and sake while networking.



It was then off to T. Martin Davis' beautiful Capitol View AirBnB home for a reception welcoming our Ottenheimer Scholars from Germany. Members met and toasted (with German wine and beer, of course!) students Robert Quack and Florian Ketterl while enjoying conversation with fellow Club 99ers. Special thanks to Ottenheimer Co-Chairs **T. Martin Davis** and **Cindy VanVeckhoven**, the Ottenheimer committee, host members and T. Martin and his wife, **Bev Foster**, for hosting a wonderful party for our visitors.

And bonus ... a few Club 99ers continued the festivities (and MORE sake tasting) at The Fountain for a late-night cap!



Dunbar Back-to-School Bash

Huge shoutout to all our volunteers who made Dunbar Magnet Middle School's Back-to-School one of the largest it's held in recent years! Club 99er and Principal Quintin Cain and his team handed out 400 backpacks that night, while club volunteers served hamburger and hotdog meals to families and students.

Special thanks to **Don Cole** for his grilling perfection and to **Patricia Blick**, Dunbar Magnet Committee Chair, for organizing a fabulously fun event for our Dunbar family!



Upcoming Programs

August 2023

22 Artificial Intelligence in Education with Principal Nancy Rousseau of Central High School, Head of School Steve Straessle of Catholic High School for Boys and Principal Cherie Labat of eStem Public Charter Schools
29 Ottenheimer International Scholars Program Participant Panel

September 2023

5 No Lunch Meeting; Evening Event To Be Announced Soon
12 Marijuana in Arkansas: Big Business, New Laws
19 Paul Oakley Stovall, Tony Award-winning Actor and Former "George Washington" in *Hamilton*
26 Author Eli Cranor and CALS Six Bridges Book Festival

2023-2024 Club Leadership

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