

Bloomington Rotary Club

Roundabout

April 20, 2021

Next Week's Program



Marjorie Hershey, professor emerita in the IU Department of Political Science, will speak about “The Filibuster and the Biden Agenda: What’s Happening Now?”

Professor Hershey's research and teaching interests focus on political parties, campaigns, and elections. Her research examines the characteristics of party activists, media coverage of political campaigns, and the commonalities among lobbying, framing, persuasion, and the creation of organizational histories by advocacy groups. Her widely used textbook on political parties, *Party Politics in America*, is now in its 18th edition, and she updates its associated blog posts. She has published three other books and articles in professional journals.

She regularly taught undergraduate courses on Political Parties and Interest Groups and on Environmental Policy and graduate courses on American Political Behavior. She is the founding director of the department's program to prepare its graduate students to be excellent teachers and continues to teach a course on Teaching Political Science. Marjorie has received 17 teaching awards from the Indiana University College of Arts and Sciences, the Department of Political Science, the IU Student Alumni Council, Golden Key, Mortar Board, Blue Key, the Indiana University Student Association, IU Continuing Studies, the American Political Science Association, and the AMOCO Foundation. She won the 2019 Sylvia E. Bowman Teaching Award that honors exemplary faculty members in areas related to American civilization.

She is extensively involved in community service, including volunteering with the Hoosier-to-Hoosier partnership, now in its 12th year, and the new Monroe County Foster Closet, which she organized in 2021. She also serves as a frequent speaker on American politics and source for journalists writing about election campaigns.

This Week's News

Von Welch is participating in the Solidarity Sleepout, hosted by Beacon, our club's speaker recognition recipient from last quarter. Teams will sleep out on April 30 to raise funds to support A Friend's Place to provide overnight shelter for those without. Sign up or contribute at <https://givebutter.com/sleepouot2021>.

Eight members participated in the District 6580 virtual conference on Saturday, April 17 – **Ashley Wesley, Joy Harter, Alain Barker, Sally Gaskill, Owen Johnson, Jim Bright, Raj Haddawi, and Kate Cruikshank.**

This Week's Program. Available on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/OtbKvzOIs1A>



Leslie Green introduced Wil Burns, professor of research and founding co-director of the Institute for Carbon Removal Law & Policy at American University and adjunct associate professor in Northwestern University's Master of Science in Energy and Sustainability program. He is also a senior research fellow for the Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI) and co-chair of the International Environmental Law Committee of the American branch of the International Law Association.

He served as the founding co-executive director of the Forum for Climate Engineering Assessment, a scholarly initiative of the School of International Service at American University. He was also the director of the energy policy & climate program at Johns Hopkins University. Prior to becoming an academic, he served as Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs for the State of Wisconsin. He holds a Ph.D. in International Environmental Law from the University of Wales-Cardiff School of Law. His current areas of research focus are climate geo-engineering and climate loss and damage.

On Dec. 20, 2020, his opinion piece appeared in the *Indianapolis Star*, "Op-ed: A trillion trees to fight climate change sounds nice. Here's what it misses." (<https://www.indystar.com/story/opinion/2020/12/20/op-ed-fixing-climate-change-trillion-trees-can-create-problems/3938962001/>)

Burns summarized the current status of climate change and policy. In the Paris Agreement, countries pledged to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in order to hold temperature increases to below 2 degrees Celsius. When the increases are more than that, the world faces massive loss of biodiversity, with 40 to 50% of species becoming extinct, sea level rise as a result of melting of polar ice caps, catastrophic economic disruption, and increases in disease and death related to heat. Pledges have not been enough to get below the target amount; the current rate of increase is between 3.0 and 3.7 degrees.

He described two options for "decarbonizing" the atmosphere: reducing emissions from fossil fuel sources and increasing absorption of carbon dioxide through planting trees. He concluded it would take both strategies to achieve the Paris Agreement goals.

He disputed projections of 25% reductions of CO² from planting a trillion trees as some, including the World Bank and Indiana Sena. Braun and Young, have proposed. He cited several issues:

Methodological issues. He noted that projections are overly optimistic and do not take into account that in many areas tree planting might actually reduce reflection or sequestration that is already occurring. For example, in northern regions, planting trees would reduce the natural reflectivity from ice-covered areas and create darker, more absorptive areas. Planting trees in marginal agricultural areas could displace crop production there and move it to adjacent areas. As a result of these complications, Burns said the projection that tree planting could contribute 25% reduction is unrealistic.

Permanence. The model assumes 30, 40, or 50 years of sequestration performed by the planted trees. Burns noted that many would be prone to "stand displacement" from forest fires and proliferation of pests due to the warming environment.

Environmental and social justice. Burns worries that, in the rush to plant a trillion fast-growing trees, there will be pressure to resort to monoculture, e.g., planting eucalyptus trees, thereby endangering biodiversity and requiring more water than native trees. Large multinational companies seeking to earn carbon credits might buy up large tracts of land, with little concern about disrupting local populations or disturbing local environmental balances.

As a result, he believes that planting trees could result in 1-2 gigatons of carbon reduction, far less than the projections.

What else should we do? Burns suggested three strategies:

1. Continue to decarbonize the economy by accelerating electrification and increasing fuel economy.
2. Plant trees in areas other than boreal regions, savannahs, and prairie grasslands. Use mixed species and think creatively about “agroforestry” – planting between fields.
3. Conduct more research on alternate decarbonizing strategies, including using ground-up minerals to absorb more carbon.

As usual, members asked penetrating questions:

Q: What is the impact if local, state, national, and global governance don't agree?

We clearly need national strategies, at a minimum, and it will take coordination at the global level to address this problem that affects every country and region.

Q: Are Sens. Braun and Young aware of your concerns?

Burns has been in touch with their aides but has not heard back from either senator.

Q: Could we actually plant a trillion trees?

Burns does not believe so. Too many sensitive issues are involved.

Q: Does reducing tilling improve carbon sequestration?

Burns said the research is not conclusive. Some studies suggest that, although sequestration in the top levels of soil improves, there may be less sequestration in the lower levels.

Q: Which of the two strategies – “preservationist” (e.g., preserving rainforests) or “interventionist” (e.g., planting trees) – do you support?

Burns believes both will be necessary if we are to reach the reduction in carbon dioxide needed.

Q: Currently pending legislation would authorize studying the carbon market. Is carbon trading a good strategy?

Burns cautioned that a way to verify and measure outputs would be necessary to monitor compliance. He noted it is easy to measure the cost of fossil fuels in the marketplace but much more difficult to calculate the cost of species loss, displacement of people, and other social costs of global warming. He believes the current carbon pricing is dramatically undervaluing these longer-term social costs.

Our Weekly Gathering, April 20

President **Ashley Wesley** welcomed members and guests to Bloomington Rotary Club's weekly Celebration of Service. She thanked producers **Natalie Blais, Michael Shermis, and Earon Davis**.

Charlotte Zietlow reflected on our club's tradition of giving scholarships. She noted that her daughter, Rebecca, spent a year in Brazil as part of Rotary Youth Exchange, an experience which changed her life. Charlotte recently participated in the selection of our district's fourth Global Grant Scholar, Cameron Davidson, who will receive a \$40,000 scholarship to pursue a master's degree in Global and International Studies with a focus on nationalism and conflict management at the University of Salamanca, Spain, the oldest university in Europe. Previous Global Grant Scholars include Aubrey Seader (2018-19), Alex Starry (2019-20), and Clarice Cross (2020-21). Charlotte is also a member of our club's scholarship committee, which annually awards \$1,500 scholarships to four high school seniors and \$500 scholarships to three Ivy Tech students. “For me,” she said, “it has been a wonderful opportunity to meet young people who are smart, hard-working, and enterprising, and who care about the environment, gun control, and other things.” She thanked district Global Grant Scholarship chair Jim Bright and club scholarship committee chair Matt Stitsinger for their leadership.

Birthdays this week include:

Joe Darling, April 20

Peggy Frisbie, April 21

Mike Baker, April 23

Connie Shakalis, April 23

Glen Steenberger, April 26

Bloomington Rotary Foundation Annual Meeting

BRF president **Mike Baker** gave a brief update on the Foundation's activities. He reminded members that the Foundation manages funds received from the Bloomington Rotary Toast on behalf of all three local clubs, as well as contributions to the 80/20 fund and memorial gifts honoring deceased Rotarians and spouses. The current balance held by the Foundation is slightly more than \$93,000, with \$71,162 in our club's lines.

He reported the board held a discussion of memorial gifts. He invited members to sign up for automatic deductions for deceased members (\$20) or spouses (\$10). When other family members pass away, the Foundation will invite members to make one-time memorial gifts in their honor.

Mike thanked retiring board members Craig Spence and Joy Harter. He announced the slate of officers for 2021-22:

President: Sara Laughlin

President-elect: Loren Snyder

Treasurer: Kyla Cox Deckard

Secretary: Ashley Wesley

Continuing on the board will be Katie Beck, Jim Capshew, and Gil Souza. Beginning new terms are Mike Baker, Kate Cruikshank, Alain Barker, Amy Osajima, and John VanderZee. Mike thanked all for serving. Members will receive a SurveyMonkey ballot. Or click here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BKKWTSM> . Ballots are due Monday, April 26.

Reporter: **Sara Laughlin**