

## **Bloomington Rotary Club Roundabout**

**May 11, 2021**

### **Next week's program**



Rotarian Glen Steenberger will share a presentation titled “In the Footsteps of Baden Powell.” Glen has been Scout Executive at Hoosier Trails Council, headquartered in Bloomington, since 2010. The IU graduate has worked in Scouting since he became District Executive in the Crossroads of America Council based in Indianapolis in 1994. He has also worked in Scouting in Kansas City, Milwaukee, and Madison, Wis.

### **This week's news:**

#### **Pizza for Teachers Warehouse**

Aver's Pizza at 1285 S. College Mall Road will support Teachers Warehouse on May 20 by donating 20 percent of all delivery and pickup orders to this great cause. If you can, show a local restaurant some love while supporting Teachers Warehouse. Go to [www.groupraise.com/events/187563](http://www.groupraise.com/events/187563) to get event details. If you plan to dine on May 20 (even if you are not completely sure), let them know so they know roughly how many orders to expect. Feel free to forward this invitation to friends and family.

#### **Farewell to Liz Feitl**

After nearly 20 years as the AFL-CIO Community Service Liaison for United Way of Monroe County, Liz Feitl is retiring. She has worked in this job to advocate for and support workers in Monroe, Bartholomew, Brown, Greene, Lawrence, and Owen counties.

According to a United Way news release: “Liz first became involved with United Way when she led a workplace United Way fundraising drive for the Indiana University Department of Religious Studies in the mid-1980s. It was at this department where Liz became involved with labor organizing when she and colleagues formed a union for the support staff of Indiana University.

“The Communications Workers of America Local 4818, formerly Local 4730, took three years of organizing, where Liz served on the organizing committee before it won recognition in 1993. Liz then was a staff representative for nine years and helped bargain 10 contracts.”

United Way will host a drive-thru, socially distanced celebration for Liz at the United Way parking lot at 431 S. College Ave. from 4 to 6 p.m. May 27.

Liz will be ending her membership with Rotary to focus on her life with her husband, Al. You can contact her at [lizfeitl@bluemarble.net](mailto:lizfeitl@bluemarble.net)

Multiple club members donated to Happy Dollars in sums larger than usual to show their love for Liz in her retirement.

## **Our program this week: Scott Elliott, Chalkbeat**

Available on You Tube: <https://youtu.be/qAEG6PUpRpI>



Owen Johnson introduced Scott Elliott from Chalkbeat to present our program. Scott is a former newspaper reporter in Dayton and Indianapolis who in 2013 became the founding bureau chief of Chalkbeat Indiana. He now raises funds for the nonprofit news organization’s eight operations to provide deep, local coverage of education policy and practice. Indiana had one of the first four bureaus, along with New York, Denver, and Tennessee. Four more have opened in Chicago, Detroit, Newark, and Philadelphia.

Scott said the organization is nonpartisan and seeks to hold policymakers accountable for their decisions. By budget size it is the third largest nonprofit news organization. With diminished traditional media, it is crucial that someone fill the reporting gap on public issues. Chalkbeat's goal is to inject independent, fact-based information into what can often turn in discussions driven by advocates from one side or another. He mentioned one story with real-world impact: a story noted that four times more English-language learners were enrolled in Indiana's schools without an additional dollar in funding from the Legislature. After the article was published, more funding was approved before the next school year.

He also talked about where journalism is going in the future. The Internet has broken apart the "bundled model" of broadly representing the news of the day. Advertisers can be more targeted, and digital businesses picked off some of the profitable parts of newspapers (think of classified ads going to Craigslist).

As this has happened, local journalists have been laid off in droves. In this new world, news organizations will have to be different because advertising-supported news is probably a thing of the past.

The American Journalism Project has estimated about \$1 billion a year is needed to hire journalists to adequately cover local news for the benefit of communities. He said it is important that communities value news enough to look for solutions to the decline of local newspapers. The nonprofit approach he sees emerging is one-third revenue from the audience, one-third from corporate sponsorships, and one-third from philanthropy.

Scott encourages communities to bring together civic, philanthropic, and media leaders to start the conversation about preserving and supporting local news. Some questions: Can partnerships be built between existing players? Can others – like Chalkbeat – be brought in to fill the gaps?

During Q&A, Scott called it "crazy" that anyone is still doing a print product. Although he understands that most of the revenue of newspapers still comes from the printed product, he says it's just too expensive to produce. He reiterated his call for new solutions for local news.

## **Our weekly gathering:**

President **Ashley Wesley** presided. **Sandy Keller** discussed the documentary "Kiss the Ground" about a better way to farm. If you want to see it, go to [kisstheground.com](http://kisstheground.com).

Our guests included Randy West, former editor of the *Corydon Democrat* newspaper, and Kate Milliman, a member of the Bloomington Press Club. Both were guests of **Jim Bright**. **Aaron Brewington** introduced his guest, Miles Flynn, former editor of newspapers in Bedford, Paoli, and Springs Valley. Marcus Debro was also a guest.

This week's birthday: **Marcus Whited**, May 17.

This week's membership anniversaries: **Alain Barker** and **Dave Meyer**, each seven years.

Our producers were **Natalie Blais**, **Michael Shermis**, **Sally Gaskill**, and **Earon Davis**.

Roundabout reporter: **Bob Zaltsberg**