

Roundabout: August 20, 2024

NEXT WEEK



On August 27, we will meet in the Frangipani Room of the Indiana Memorial Union for our Celebration of Service, featuring Sherene Goatson Ing, Director of Indiana University Bloomington's First Nations Educational and Cultural Center (FNECC). Sherene will describe the purpose, programs, and activities of the FNECC. In brief, the FNECC is a home away from home for American Indian and indigenous students at IU Bloomington. More formally, the center supports American Indian and indigenous students in their transition to and achievement at Indiana University Bloomington with campus programs and an extended network of resources and information designed to inspire, encourage, and empower students for success.

Originally from northern Arizona, Sherene is a member of the Navajo Nation. Her clans are Bitterwater, Manygoats, Water's Edge, and Red Running into the Water. Sherene graduated from IU Bloomington's O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs with a master's degree in public affairs and nonprofit management. She also has a mediation program certificate from Harvard Law School. Before her current appointment at the FNECC, she served as a program director for Monroe County United Ministries (MCUM) Self-Sufficiency Center. In that role, she collaborated with government, private, and nonprofit organizations to create local policy improvements for low-income individuals and communities.

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

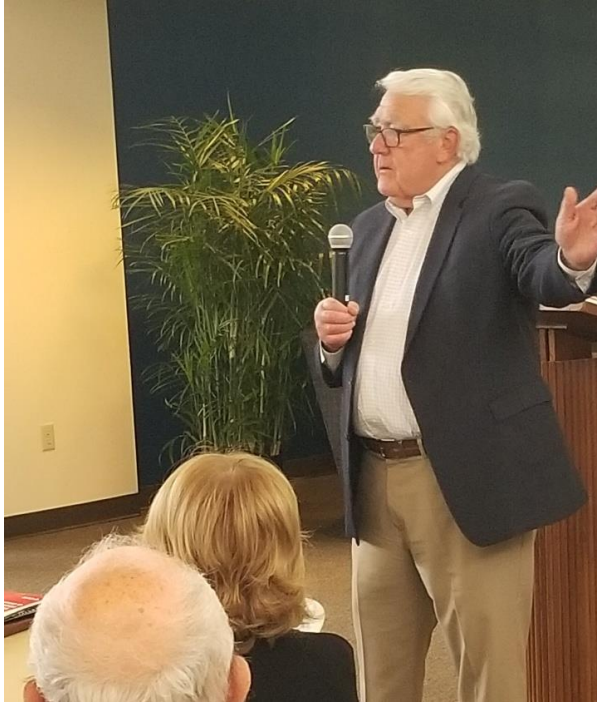
Get your Rotary Toast tickets today by visiting www.rotarytoast.com! The Toast, honoring Doug Bauder, will be held on Friday, November 1, at Ivy Tech's Shreve Hall.

Please continue the fantastic support of bringing guests and sharing our "Service Above Self" mission, but make sure your guests sign in with a legible email address so that we can thank them for attending.

Sibling Cities continues to flourish, and the Bloomington mayor and several Rotarians will be traveling to Palo Alto, Calif., in October for continued partnership and best practice sharing. The mayor has asked for the focus to be on affordable housing. There will also be an economic roundtable as well as "living room conversations." **Alain Barker** is continuing to spearhead this

effort. To participate, please reach out to Alain as there will be California Rotarians involved as well and these topics are important to us all.

AUGUST 20 PROGRAM



Connie Shakalis introduced our program on *pigeon racing*, presented by Dick Mellinger. Dick was assisted by his wife, Lindsey Mellinger, as well as by some cooperative pigeons. Dick is a member of the Bloomington North Rotary Club and a former president of the Rotary Club in South Bend. He is a businessman, dog trainer, pigeon expert, and a really nice guy, according to Connie. He is a charter member of IU's Big Ten Club, president and co-founder of Pawsabilities for Veterans, president of Slice of Life after-school outreach in South Bend, and former chairman of RYLA in California.

Pigeons have been used by the military to communicate at least since the first century CE. In World War II, pigeons were trained to land on naval ships. Today there are around 12,000 members of pigeon clubs in the United States.

The first pigeons in the U.S. arrived from Europe, especially from Belgium. Dick first encountered homing pigeons, when he was chasing his missing parakeet (who flew away from his South Bend home when it was taken outdoors) and got as far as Mishawaka, where he peered over a fence and saw multiple birds – homing pigeons – in the yard. He conversed with the owner of the pigeons – who was from Belgium. Thus began his love of pigeons. He learned a great deal from this man and others about raising and racing pigeons.

To get into pigeon racing, first you need to join a pigeon racing club, and second you need to raise some pigeons. This requires at least one nesting pair of pigeons and a place where they can nest, often called a loft. The female pigeon usually lays two eggs. The incubation period for a

baby pigeon is 17 to 19 days. After birth, the pigeon grows rapidly, with its tail and full feathers completed by day 28. Then the young pigeon leaves the nest, and the male adult pigeon teaches it what it needs to know to survive.

How do you train a pigeon? Initially the young pigeon flies around in the loft for a few hours every day, perhaps an hour in the morning and another hour or so in the afternoon. After several days of this, the bird is taken to a spot three to four miles from the home loft and released. The bird will get back to the loft eventually, but if you are driving, you probably will be back before the bird the first few times. It takes the bird some time to explore the neighborhood and find its way back to the loft.

After a week or so of training, the bird should beat you home every time. Training involves using food as a reward. You increase the distance away from the loft as training progresses, and eventually the bird is ready to race. Its first race might be 150 miles, but the distances will increase as the bird gets older. A racing pigeon can fly 60 miles per hour or more as it races to get to its home loft.

Dick asked the audience what we thought the prize money might be for a pigeon race. Someone suggested \$1,000, and Dick said that might be right for a short race for young pigeons. But the prize money greatly increases for longer races with more mature birds. For example, the Florida Pigeon Derby has prize money totaling \$1 million. Another race has \$325,000 in prize money, with races 100, 150, 200, 250, and 325 miles long.

Most pigeons race well for three or four years and then they retire as they slow down, but there are exceptional pigeons that can race for more years. Dick has partnered with two other pigeon fanciers, and they have a total of about 200 birds. Dick races about 40 birds.



Near the end of his presentation, Dick brought a mature bird out of the cage and showed it to us. Then he introduced us to several younger pigeons, who were very comfortable with his handling them.

UPDATES

August 20 Celebration of Service

President **Traci Jovanovic** welcomed us to the Bloomington Rotary Club's weekly Celebration of Service. President Traci's thought for the day is a quote from Helen Keller: "Security is mostly a superstition. It does not exist in nature, nor do the children of men as a whole experience it. Avoiding danger is no safer in the long run than outright exposure. Life is either a daring adventure or nothing."

Charlotte Zietlow reflected on the state of the world and all its problems. It is essential that we all work together to make the world a better place.

Happy Dollars resulted in quite a few dollars collected to support Teachers Warehouse.

Member birthdays

- **Gene Hurley**, August 22
- **Chris Kroll**, August 23
- **Bill Oates**, August 24

Rotary anniversaries

- **Richard Millunchick**, 1 year

Lori Garraghty introduced our guests:

- Thomas Horrocks, candidate for state representative (District 62), guest of **Jim Bright**
- Diana Hoffman, membership pending, guest of **Liz Feitl**
- Betty Coffey, guest of **Glenda Murray**
- Lynn Giomi, guest of **Len Tieman**
- Dail Jones, guest of **Liz Feitl**

President Traci acknowledged those who helped with today's program, including executive assistant **Natalie Blais**, greeter **James Wolf**, introductions **Lori Garraghty**, reflection **Charlotte Zietlow**, reporter **Bill Perkins**, photographer **Jim Bright**, and mic operator **Michael Shermis**.

Reporter: **Bill Perkins**
Photographer: **Jim Bright**