

BLOOMINGTON ROTARY CLUB MEETING

August 30, 2022 | Georgian Room and on Zoom

Next Week's Program



We'll meet in the **Georgian Room** again. Past President **Sally Gaskill** will preside (while Alain is at the University of Maryland on a consulting trip about rural engagement). Past President and Past District Governor **Jim Bright** will introduce our guest, **Elizabeth (Liz) Mitchell**, who will talk about the African American history of Bloomington.

Liz has been active in her passion for African American history for more than 40 years. Along with her husband James Mitchell Jr., she has collected "Jim Crow" artifacts. They now own the largest private collection of African American memorabilia in Indiana. This collection is used to educate and stimulate conversations about race in America.

For 20 of her 35 years with the US Postal Service, she answered Santa letters that filtered through the post office during Christmas. She was a big sister in the Big Brother/Big Sister program and a Girl Scout leader. She chaired Bloomington's Soul Food Festival from 2004 to 2007. In 2003, she was chair of the Martin Luther King Jr. Day commission for the City of Bloomington; in 2005 and 2006 she chaired Bloomington's Black History Month committee.

Liz acted in the production of *One More River to Cross*. With Dr. Gladys DeVane and Danielle Bruce, she conceived and created Resilience Productions, which researches, writes, and produces live performances. She is currently working on a documentary about the First Baptist Colored Church of West Baden Springs, built in the early 1900s and just recently restored.

She orchestrated the Bloomington "Colored School" and Banneker School Historic Marker installations and was one of the founding members of "Bring It On," a radio show for WFHB Public Radio.

Elizabeth has received many accolades. Locally, she was Citizen of the Year in 2007, received the Martin Luther King’s Legacy Award in 2010, and was named a Bloomington’s Living Legend in 2012. In 2018, the Indiana Historical Society recognized her with the Hubert Hawkins Award for Local History. In 2019, she received the Indiana Lt. Governor’s Golden Hoosier Award.

This Week’s News

On October 4, we will meet at Mike Baker’s farm for an evening pizza party. No noon meeting that day.

Brown County Rotary invites Bloomington Rotary members to “A Taste of Art,” Friday, September 16, at Seasons Lodge Conference Center, 560 State Road 46, in Nashville. The event begins at 5 p.m. with adult beverages from local establishments, heavy hors d’oeuvres, and time for viewing the fine art in the live and silent auctions. The live art auction begins at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$45 in advance and \$50 at the door.



Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA) returns October 21-23 at Bradford Woods. RYLA is a weekend leadership camp experience for high school students, sponsored by our club and others in our district. **Loren Snyder** is District Chair. **Joy Harter** encouraged members to help get the word out to prospective participants. Our club pays the costs.



The IU Rotaract Club participated in the Student Activities Fair. **Joy Harter** reported there was a big and interested crowd.

Sara Laughlin reported the inaugural golf outing sponsored by Indiana Members Credit Union to benefit Teachers Warehouse yielded \$13,100. Thanks to everyone who volunteered.

Jim Bright regretted missing our meeting because he was driving Bob Hammel to Evansville to speak at Evansville Rotary. Bob shared his memories of the 1972 Munich Olympic Games, which he covered as a 35-year-old reporter for the *Herald-Times*.

This Week's Program. Available on YouTube: https://youtu.be/Hx_kDzXcEmY

Connie Shakalis introduced Khurram Sheikh, currently a PhD student in the IU Media School, to talk about "Reimagining Muslim Identity through the Arts." Before coming to IU, Khurram was a filmmaker in Pakistan. His current research focuses on the impact of trans-national film in Pakistan.

He began with a brief clip from *Dhamaal: An Awaited Prayer*, a documentary film he produced in Pakistan about the Sufi tradition. The Dhamaal is danced by a Sufi who has won the battle with his soul. Since the 2017 ethnic conflict in Pakistan, Sufism has not come back; its continued existence is threatened.

Khuraam described the key features of representation of Muslims in Western media, which "runs on fear," as described by Edward Said:

- "Arab" identity
- Women in hijab, viewed as oppressed and subjugated
- Terrorism, fundamentalism, and extremism
- Orientalism and the Muslim religion

Khuraam posited that art could be a tool to challenge these widely held views. Art, he said, can humanize the "other" and help build a new notion of Muslim identity. He cited Hamid Dabashi, a scholar at Harvard, whose research is on making sense of the post-oriental identity of the Muslim diaspora. Dabashi has asked the important question: "Who gets to represent whom and by what authority?"

He cited three artists whose work exemplified alternate approaches, through art, to Muslim identity:

- Su'ad Abdul Khabeer, scholar/artist/activist, who has defined "Muslim cool" in his work to tell the untold stories of Black women and Black Muslims.
- Burka Band, an all-female indie rock band from Kabul, whose first single was "Burka Blue."
- Riz Ahmed, a British actor and rapper, whose performances question identity, class, nation, and gender.

During the question period, one member asked how social media is impacting the expression of culture in Pakistan. Khuraam felt social media was crossing boundaries beyond nationalities, while film was still more formalized to specific locations.



Another asked what Khuraam planned to do after completing his PhD. He replied he had previously worked in Pakistan as a filmmaker and artist, but now has been exposed to international thought. He introduced his wife, shown above with David Meyer and Khuraam, and said the decision would be made with her. He imagined his work would be focused more locally.

A third questioner asked for recommendations about where to start to study Muslim films. He replied that BFI had a good archives of film before the Indian partition in 1947 (<https://www.bfi.org.uk/bfi-national-archive>). He recommended the 2022 film *An Act of Worship*, by Pakistani-American filmmaker Nausheen Dadabhoy, which, according to its website, “weaves a glorious tapestry of personal stories, verite, archival footage, and home movies together, to open a window into the world of Muslim Americans. Due to their first-hand knowledge and intimate access to the Muslim community, the filmmaking team is able to take charge of the account, which has previously been shaped by outsiders” (<https://tribecafilm.com/films/act-of-worship-2022>).

Our Weekly Gathering, August 30

In light of the recent news of a polio case in New York state, **President Alain Barker** gave a brief update on the progress toward eliminating polio in the world. He noted that two of the three strains of “wild” polio virus have been eliminated. The third strain, the one still endemic, is causing a few cases a year in tribal areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan. The vaccine used is made of a weakened “domestic” strain, which is the cause of the New York case. We are “this close” to ending polio and the efforts have never been more urgent. Our club – and every club around the world – will be celebrating World Polio Day on October 24, a time to raise awareness about Rotary’s commitment to ending this disease.

Alain thanked those who made the meeting run smoothly. **Marilyn Wood** was the greeter. **Tylar Nichols**, under the mentorship of **Michael Shermis**, was producer. Zoom host was **Joy Harter**. **Bill Brown** reflected on “imagination,” in light of Rotary’s 2022 theme “Imagine Rotary.”

Bill Perkins introduced guests in the room:

Megan Gearhart, past president of IU Rotaract
Traci Jovanovich, daughter and guest of **Winston Shindell**

Joy Harter introduced on Zoom three guests of **Trent Deckard**:

Ann Kolb
Dylan Thomas
Emily Roberts

Birthdays this week:

Kevin Hopper-Knutstrom, August 28
Winston Shindell, August 29
Mike Hoff, August 30
Shelli Yoder, August 30

Membership anniversary this week:

Katie Beck, 4 years
Past President Leslie Green, 21 years
Past President Charlie Osborne, 30 years

Sara Laughlin, Reporter