

**Bloomington Rotary Club  
September 10, 2024 Meeting  
Reporter: Grier Carson**

**Next Luncheon**



The September 17 Celebration of Service will feature Raymond Wise, IU Professor of African American African Diaspora Studies and Executive Director of the African American Arts Institute. Dr. Wise earned his Ph.D. and M.A. in Music Education from Ohio State University and a B.F.A in Music from Denison University. His research and teaching interests include the history and performance of African American gospel and sacred music. He is an ordained minister and regularly serves as a singer, pianist, composer, conductor, and teacher for ensembles and opera companies as well as churches and choral festivals around the world.

The meeting will be held in the Frangipani Room [or on Zoom](#).

**News of the Week**

Reminder: Get your Toast Tickets for the big November event [here](#).

Our committee leaders met last Thursday. We have a good plan for our committees to become more active and more inclusive. Be on the lookout for requests to join one.

Lunch Buddies are here. Feel free to connect with your lunch buddy any time.

## Guest Speaker: Chad Rabinovitz



**Sally Gaskill** introduced our guest speaker, Chad Rabinovitz, Artistic Director for Constellation Stage and Screen. Over the course of his career, Chad has produced nearly 300 theater performances across the country. He's been making theater in Bloomington since 2009, when he arrived in town to direct what was then the Bloomington Playwrights Project. With seemingly boundless energy, he also owns a candy store in New York state and has produced and directed magic shows. He covered his personal and family background, how he got into theater through his very first audition (a part he got because no one else showed up), and how both theater and magic are a part of storytelling. He said majoring in theater in college was one of the best decisions he ever made.

In preparation for the presentation, Sally compiled a set of written questions in an envelope that Chad had not seen but was bound to answer. Here are a few choice questions and Chad's answers:

How many facilities does Constellation manage, and why are all of those spaces necessary?  
*Constellation is a merger among three legacy companies. We inherited many buildings, including a film studio, a performance theater, and an education facility. During the merger, the Waldron's future was unknown. We knew we needed to step up and steward that building toward future success. We've done that via a \$1million renovation. We now manage our spaces not only for the performing arts but also for fine arts exhibitions. In that sense, we're truly an arts center.*

How does Constellation define new work, and why is there such a focus on new work?  
*New works have been the focus of my career. Theater is a performance art that tends to see familiar material recycled every few seasons. It takes theaters like Constellation to help develop and support new works. In other words, this is how the next "Hamilton" comes about, with the support of companies focusing on new works. New works in our community can and do spread across other parts of the country and even across the globe. Playwrights are often in the*

*audience with you when you attend, so your reactions to the performances really matter. That's one of the most exciting parts of live performances like ours.*

What does an Artistic Director do, and what are some of your biggest challenges?

*At core, an Artistic Director picks what a season of art will include. There are tons of people involved in every production, and every detail is intentional. From lighting to set design to direction, everything is a choice. It takes lots of people working together, even when the material is familiar. My job is to bring all of these people together to make this happen. Community engagement is also an important part of the job. This includes bringing arts education and opportunities to schools and community centers and helping to spread the word about the magic of live theater. Constellation wants to be a theater company that does more than just put on shows. It wants to be an educator, an economic driver, and an active part of our community.*

**Meeting Updates** ([see full meeting recording here](#))

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President **Traci Jovanovic** welcomed everyone and shared the thought of the day: “One of the lessons that I grew up with was ALWAYS stay true to yourself and never let what somebody else says distract you from your goals. And so when I hear about negative and false attacks, I really don't invest any energy in them, because I KNOW WHO I AM.” – Michelle Obama

In his reflection, **Bill Brown** shared a remarkable experience he had traveling to an out-of-state conference and a lesson he learned in the process. From airport hubs mishaps and narrow layovers to missed flights and angry fellow travelers, the trip was a disaster from the start. He already had missed the conference when a helpful travel agent got him back to Indianapolis by the next day so he could at least return for work. This required renting the last available rental car at the airport. The car happened to be electric, which was exciting (a small ray of sunshine on this otherwise overcast trip), and he enjoyed a nice drive. A few days later, he decided on a whim to visit a local Kia dealer. He bought the very same car he had rented, no test drive needed. A few days later, while stopped at an intersection waiting for the light to change, he realized his new car wouldn't start. He tried to accelerate but with no luck. At the very moment of frustration with what he had thought was a great buy, another car came speeding through the intersection. He realized that his new car's safety sensors had prevented him from moving through the intersection in the face of a potentially fatal crash. He said he probably wouldn't be here today if it hadn't been for that car.

Mistakes can be tickets to places we did not intend to go. They can provide new perspectives and even hindsight into where we were intended to be. And they can be a ticket to a destination even when that destination is a complete surprise

**Guests**

**Winston Shindell** introduced our guests:

- Sayje Jaffe, guest of **Jim Bright**
- Erin Parks, guest of **Jim Bright**
- Elizabeth Hegedus, granddaughter and guest of **Ruth Boshkoff**
- Jun Wong, Rotaract
- Jim Mahady, Zoom guest of Jeff **Richardson**

**Rotary Birthdays**

- **John Whikehart** - September 8
- **Vivien Bridges** – September 11
- **Alain Barker** - September 12
- **Wendell St. John** - September 12

Executive Assistant: **Natalie Blais**

Greeter: **Ruth Boshkoff**

Introductions: **Winston Shindell**

Zoom Host: **Joy Harter**

Reflection: **Bill Brown**

Newsletter: **Grier Carson**

Camera/Mic Operator: **Michael Shermis**

Zoom and Audio Producer: **Tylar Martin-Nichols**

**Grier Carson**, Reporter