



Wilton Rotary Drummer
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Guests: District Governor Colin Gershon

Announcements

- Victor asked all members to take time to read the Haiti email and DG Gershon elaborated on the District's commitment to ongoing aid for Haiti. All (100%) donations for Haiti through District 7980 get to where they are needed the most by RI.
- Victor has set aside the last two Fridays in February (19 and 26) for a session with ADG Phoebe Leask's assistance in bringing in a facilitator for a lunch meeting.
- Fun and fines continue to be put aside for the Haitian relief effort

Program: – Hon. Michael Shay – Family Court Judge in Fairfield County.

Having practiced law in Wilton for more than 30 years and dining no doubt in Portofino's since there were nearly no other restaurants in town, Judge Shay gave us a look into the Connecticut Judicial System.

- 1) There are 196 Superior Court Judges in Connecticut with 100 retired judges.
- 2) There were 870,000 filings in the system in 2009. 4,000 employees in the system having dropped 10% or 400 positions via early retirements.
- 3) 9 appellate court judges above Superior Court and then CT Supreme Court judges above the appellate court judges.
- 4) In family court only 5% of cases actually go to jury trial due in large part to alternative dispute resolution efforts.

The court is working on becoming more diverse. Presently there are 70 women judges. Judges are constitutional officers and mandatory retirement is at 80. Unlike Federal judges Connecticut Judges are appointed from a list submitted by a non-judge panel.

Judge Shay noted that continuing educations for judges is essential. He himself works in the family court area and is in his 10th year of service. In 2009 budget constraints forced all judges to take 3-4 furlough days. Dealing with self-represented and people that have English language difficulties are two areas that are of particular concern.

Legal filings have moved to being submitted only electronically. This has helped reduce paper waste and expense. Finally Judge Shay noted that reducing time for research into active cases is a critical focus as the life of a child is often at stake.

See you next Friday at Portofino's Mark