



## Wilton Rotary Drummer

Wilton, Connecticut

[www.wiltonrotaryclub.org](http://www.wiltonrotaryclub.org)

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Approximately twenty members of Wilton's finest service organization (by my count, Boucher, Brown, Burnham, Dephtereos, Edwards, Freedman, Garcia, Goldman, Hafter, Johnson, Kent, Khouri, Lavin, Mais, Mills, Nigro, Russo, Tai-Lauria, Tenore, White but I may have added or subtracted one or two) found their way to Marly's on a cold March morning. We were joined by our friend and prospective member Heather Borden Herve, several other members of the press, our Congressman Jim Himes, and his driver/scheduling assistant.

Announcements – Weekly fundraisers at Bogey's, see Bud for details. Hot dog sales for the Wilton Library coming up on March 22. Beth has an open house on May 18<sup>th</sup> at her new offices in conjunction with the Chamber's after hours series.

Carol reminds us again that the police awards ceremony will be held on Monday, March 13 at Trackside at 6:00 PM.

Christene advises that you can see her put her toes in the lake at the Y on the 10<sup>th</sup> to support the Y's initiative to bring swimming lessons to the un-aquatics amongst us. If you pledge \$500 she'll go in head first. Answering my question from last month, she promises a cannonball for \$1,000. Then she's off to PETS.

Bud introduced Jim who spoke for several minutes on the current situation in Washington – strange, he says – Congress is not a comfortable place for anyone these days, Democrat or Republican. It seems Congressional leadership can only guess what will be coming out of the White House overnight, each and every night, and it is becoming more and more difficult for all.

Jim says there are some policy objectives that Candidate Trump espoused that Jim can support – a substantial investment in infrastructure, tax reform and simplification – but the President seems instead to be sidetracked into picking fights with the media (the President terming the media, which is essential to a functioning Democracy, an "Enemy of the State" is deeply troubling to Jim), and his trotting out executive orders without any particular thought, it would seem, as to the immediate consequences let alone the collateral consequences.

Jim serves on the Financial Services Committee on the House, which Jim reports is “highly partisan” and the Intelligence Committee – which he finds much less so. There is much important work that needs to be done there at this very moment, and the members are by and large pretty serious about it.

Questions from the Floor – On insurance, Jim thinks that there may be solutions but such would involve co-operation from the 50 state insurance commissioners – each with an interest in protecting her or his own turf. Cross-border co-ordination will take a monumental shift in current attitudes. On infrastructure, especially regarding Fairfield Country’s transportation woes, Jim is a skeptic as to tolls, he sees no chance that I-95 could be widened, and decking it would be prohibitively expensive. On education, Jim reports that the Federal government contributed very little to local education – maybe a little from Title I, but nothing of consequence to our area. He sees the federal Department of Education as becoming even less of a presence with the appointment of Ms. DeVos as secretary. On the issue of the Russian involvement with the Trump campaign – a hot topic at the time of the meeting and at the time of this writing, it is now quite clear that Russians attempted to influence the results of the election, but at this time at least there is no evidence that this got to the point of actually disturbing the counting of votes. Stay tuned as the investigation continues. On the issue of the future of the attorney general – Jim is not (or was not at the time) willing to accuse Mr. Sessions of lying, but after the resignation of Michael Flynn, there is something bizarre going on that warrants investigation. Many questions, few answers.

Within two hours of our meeting, perhaps ruing his somewhat tepid response to this question, Jim issued a press release calling for Mr. Sessions’ resignation.

Whether you like Jim’s policies or not, you have to admire a man of considerable ability who chose to leave Wall Street as well as for many days of the year his family, to serve us in Washington. He takes the job seriously, and is never reluctant to engage with his constituents whether they agree with his views or not. We are fortunate.

***Andy will be asking for your money on Friday without me – I’m off to mid-America in the morning.***