

Rotary



WILTON ROTARY DRUMMER

ROTARY CLUB OF WILTON, CONNECTICUT

DISTRICT 7980

www.wiltonrotaryclub.org

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Fifteen Rotarians defied any thoughts of superstition on this Friday the 13th by joining president Pam Brown at Rolling Hills CC to share in fellowship and engage in a frank discussion about the future direction of the Club.

GUESTS/VISITORS

None today, as it was a "closed" meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. **Rotary Carnival Update.** Patrick reported that we all set for the kick off tonight at 6 PM. All shifts have been staffed. Banner sales were a huge success – 29 in all – resulting in a significant contribution to our "take." Weather looks promising too. Patrick thanked everyone for their willingness to support this critical fundraising event. He also expressed concerns about the upcoming Miller-Driscoll carnival. We need to find a better way to co-exist/work with them. *Tuesday update: Despite a little dip in attendance on Saturday afternoon/evening due to the weather, Patrick anticipates that we did very well – maybe even better than last year. The equipment is gone and parking lots have been cleaned – ready for Mink to Sinks!*
2. **Wilton Farmer's Market.** Christene thanked the many Rotarians who came out to staff a Rotary "meet and greet" table at the Farmer's Market on 11 September. We should continue to take advantage of opportunities like this to "sell our brand" and increase our visibility in town.
3. **Blame it on Friday the 13th!** Wrong card drawn again, so the elusive prize continues to grow, now approaching \$600!
4. **Interact Youth Board.** Christene reported that she is serving on this District board and is excited about the possibility of bringing Interact back to Wilton after a 10 year hiatus. I put her in touch with faculty at Middlebrook and WHS.

5. Upcoming Meetings/Events.

- a. *13-15 September: Carnival.*
- b. *15 September: Flag retirement ceremony at American Legion Post 86, noon.*
- c. *20 September: Dr. Michael Crystal, local psychologist, executive coach and wine connoisseur, will lead us in a discussion about the future of our club. CLOSED MEETING – NO GUESTS/VISITORS! This is a very important meeting – please plan to stay until 2:30 if you can.*
- d. *29 September: Maybe the last game of the season for the Red Sox ...*
- e. *18-20 October: RYLA, Camp Hazen, Chester, Conn.*

TODAY'S PROGRAM- CLUB ASSEMBLY

President Pam led a frank and far ranging discussion about the future direction of the club, which will form the basis for next week's session with Dr. Michael Crystal. It was encouraging to see 16 of our 21 active members present for this important meeting. After several years of membership declines and fundraising challenges, it is time to step back and take an honest look at where we are as a Club and where we want to go from here. Everyone was given a chance to offer their thoughts and assessments. Among the key points raised:

- Membership recruitment and retention are essential – how do we attract new members and keep the ones we have? *A meaningful purpose and engagement!*
- What is the benefit to Rotary membership? *Why did you join?*
- What is the Club's Identity? *Are we a fundraising club, a social club, a service club, or a combination of these?*
- What are the financial implications of joining our Club? Meal cost is now \$28, and annual membership dues are \$250. *Not insignificant.*
- We need to do a better job of selling the Rotary "brand." Rotary is one of the most respected and well known service organizations in the world, and we are part of it. *We need to get that word out!*
- The strategic plan from Rotary International does not include fundraising. *But at the local level, we need to raise money to support the many causes in town that depend on us for help.*
- Given the size of our club, should we focus on just one big fundraiser a year? *The Carnival is our only such event at the moment.*
- Should we consider a new approach to our meeting schedule – maybe mornings, evenings, meet once or twice a month as a group and have 1-2 other meetings as part of a community service activity. *RI no longer has a member attendance requirement, or mandates how many times a club must meet.*
- Should we consider a drastic change to the way we do things? *Or should we maintain the "status quo" with more measured, incremental changes?*

Again, please make every effort to come to the next meeting on 20 September at Rolling Hills CC, where Michael Crystal will help us synthesize these and other ideas to strengthen and grow our club.