

The Spoke

Rotary Club of Danbury

www.danburyrotary.org

October 7, 2009

P.O. Box 788, Danbury, CT 06813

President Jim's Corner:

Last Monday we had our golf outing at Beekman CC. Nineteen members and guests participated and it was a marvelous day and event. Many thanks to Dave Santucci for a great job in organizing this fun event. We netted about \$650 for the Club and we can probably build on this activity.

Wednesday's speaker featured our own Dr. Ralph Welsh. My thanks to Ralph--and he was "far out" as I mentioned last week.

Wednesday was also the first meeting of the month and Carole Brown, an attorney, was a guest of Paula Greenberg.

Tickets sales are slow and we need the usual push; please try a little harder this year. Let's be different and sell more this year than in the past few years. Paula and her committee have put in a lot of work, and we should reward their efforts.

At Thursday's Board meeting, we decided to feature our next social as a holiday party. Any ideas where we can host this event? We also were approached by the Brewster Rotary Club to have a joint meeting. We would go to their meeting and, in turn, they would come to ours. They meet on Tuesday's for lunch.

The Board voted in Margaret Ramos-Arnold as a new member. Margaret is Assistant VP and Branch Manager for the Savings Bank of Danbury, Mill Plain Branch. Congratulations to Margaret. She will be inducted shortly.

Since Jane Didona has family matters to attend to, we are going to postpone the cleanup of Rogers Park Pond until the spring. We also need more planning time, and as it turns out it is a better time after winter. Yours in Rotary, Jim

Some dates to remember:

10/14 Speaker TBA

10/18 17 & 28 Public Relations Wkshop, Meridan, CT

10/21 Speaker, Jack Koauchowski, on Lake Kenosia

10/24 Council of Presidents, Graduate Club, Yale, N.Haven

10/28 Speaker, Shawn Stillman on the Blight Task Force

10/31 RI Leadership Day, Graduate Club, Yale, N.Haven

11/7 UN Day, NYC

11/13 Card Raffle, Amber Room, 7 pm; second person, \$50.00

Next year, June 20-23, 2010, RI 101st Annual Convention, Montreal

Amber Alert-

10/17 Reed School, Newtown, 10 am-4 pm

10/24 Trumbull Mall, 11-4 pm

10/31 Gap Kids, Stamford Town Center, 10 am to 2 pm

11/7 St. Pius, Ffld, 10 am to 4 pm

1/10/10 Stihry Ambulance, 68 Georges Hill Rd 11am to 4 pm

1/31/10 Snow Date, Stihry Ambulance, 11 am to 4 pm

Amber Alert Does Well at the Big E: Our Club, with the help of Bob Vetter's family team, registered 4,475 kids at the Big E--that's 475 more than last year.

Thanks Bob, and we're sure the moms and dads who brought their children to the expo thank you, too. Also, Bob has poinsettias from the Women's Club for sale. Remember, they are the folks who have helped us out so generously during the Amber registration sessions--and they are beautiful (the plants are too).

The Card Raffle is Only a Few Weeks Away!

Paula Greenberg tells us to get those tickets sold. We also need gift cards, and door prize baskets. Approach your vendors, dry cleaners, grocery stores, and liquor stores for donations. Explain to the owners that their generosity will be mentioned at the drawing, and it's tax deductible. We need everyone to sell, sell, sell, so get going, going, going!



Happy Birthday, Vince Misca, Wayne Curtis, and Rich Godfrey. The group cruelly had Rich blow out the candles of the cake, when the other two have more wind.



October 7th Meeting-

Ralph Welsh on Are We Alone in the Universe?

Your Editor stepped up to the podium today, and changed hats, from being a clinical/research psychologist, to that of an avid astronomy buff.

When President Jim inadvertently introduced me as a person who would be making a presentation on astrology, I thought of a quote from Maimonides, who in the 12th century said: "Astrology is not an art, it is a disease." But I digress.

A lot is happening in astronomy today. In fact, the day of this presentation the president threw a star party on the White House lawn, with more than 20 telescopes being aimed at the heavens, to emphasize his commitment to the space program, and to science in general.



Moon and Venus over Redding, CT

comet hit Jupiter, imaged every planet in the Solar System, and imaged

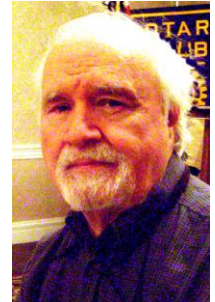


thousands of galaxies outside of it. In March the Kepler telescope was launched specifically to find new planets, SETI (Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence) was founded 50 years ago, and its devoted members, including those at home with personal computers, keep searching the heavens for beings like ourselves. We have received two rather intriguing signals out of billions of bits of data received everyday, but they were not repeated. Still our sampling of the stars is no more than a cup of water taken out of the ocean to see if fish live there. This Friday, a probe will be crashed into the Moon, followed by a second probe that will analyze the dust plume for water and other organics.

The universe is huge. Dr. Carl Sagan pointed out that among the



stars in the universe which is greater than all of the grains of sand on all of the beaches of the world, we have only seen the equivalent of one handful of those tiny grains. When Dr. Sagan



saw the earth as a blue dot on a Voyager photo sent back from the edge of the Solar System, he was visibly moved.

It should be mentioned that the stars we can see only constitute 10% of the matter in the universe. Approximately 90% is dark matter which acts, gravitationally, on the planets and galaxies like ordinary matter. We really don't know what the stuff is.

The universe is 13.7 billion years old, and the light from the outermost edge of the univers left there 7 billion years before the earth was created, 4.56 billion years ago—and life appears to have sprung up very quickly, within the first 100 million years of the earth's existence.

By the way, it was just reported that the near Earth asteroid, Apophis, will not hit earth on in 2036 as predicted. NASA has downgraded the chances of it hitting the Earth to 4 in a million from 1 in 45,000 (whew!). The bad news it could hit the earth in 2068 (rats!).

The question about other life in the universe, remains open. Most planets we have found are too big, too hot, too cold, orbiting the wrong kind of star, or simply unable to support life as we know it, and we will never see any planets in the billions of galaxies beyond our own Milky Way. Will we eventually find a rocky planet like our own orbiting a yellow dwarf star in the Goldilocks zone? Stay tuned on this. Still, I'm left with a recent quote by Dr. Jill Tarter, the Director of SETI. She muses, "If we are alone, it's an awful waste of space." We are like the seemingly lone spectator of a cosmic ball game sitting in a stadium the size of the United States, unable to see the field, or any of the possible other fans in the stands, due to our current low power binoculars.

Luncheon Tidbits-- Our Vistors Comment:



Dr. George Linabury, of the Brookfield Rotary (upper left), thinks the singing needs work. Jane Welsh (upper right), wife of the speaker, thinks he was adequate. Future Rotarian, Margaret Ramos-Arnold and guest Carole Brown, a local attorney, simply enjoyed the day and the fellowship.

Make-ups:

- Mon. 12:15 pm, Norwalk, Norwalk Inn
- Mon. 6:15 pm, Newtown, Inn at Newtown, 19 Main St.
- Mon. 6:00 pm, Brkfld, Mario's Pasta Garden, 174 Federal Rd., Brkfld
- Tues. 12:15 pm, Westport, Inn at Longshore, 260 Compo Rd, So
- Wed. 12:15 pm, Danbury, Ethan Allen Inn
- Wed. 6:00 pm, Ridgefield, Parks and Recreation
- Thurs. 12:15 pm, New Canaan, Roger Sherman Inn
- Fri. 12:15 pm, Wilton, Greens Conval. Home, rear, Wilton
- Fri. 7:30 Danbury Sunrise, The Club at WestConn, Westside Campus

Rotary Club of Danbury Officers 2009-10

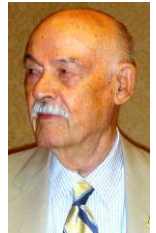
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Miguel Espinosa is a Hero to the Northern Fairfield County

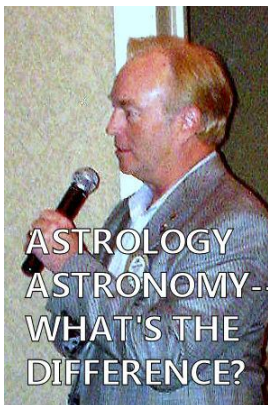
Blue Star Mothers: A plea went out to replace the disappearance of the few Blue Star Banners from their Museum. Miguel came to the rescue, and donated the coveted banner his mother had displayed in her window during his service to our country. The gods are clearly with Miguel, since he won the \$10.00 drawing today, obviously it was a "token" from those vets from above.



Golf Outing Made Money, and it was Fun:



David Santucci,, one of our newest members, ran a very successful and enjoyable golf tournament.—and we made money (about \$650) as well. Ray Kish hit the longest drive, and his foursome had the lowest collective score. Thanks to all who participated, and thanks to David for his efforts in bringing this activity to a very successful conclusion. So how did Dave do? Ask him.



President Jim taunts the speaker with the "astrology" card, and the speaker responds, as any self respecting scientist would—with a choice adjective, "Astrology is bunk!"

The Club members reacted in a more mundane manner. If the food is less palatable on Mars, "why even go there" appears to be the general sentiment.

