

Reporting Zoom Meeting of 18 April 2022

Calendar of Events

Last Week: 4/11 Virologist Eric Yager – Covid Pandemic

This Week: 4/18 Dr. Peter Sawyer HVCC – Politics, People and Polarization

Next Week: 4/25 Social/Guest Night/Pints for Polio at Frog Alley Brewing Sch'y - In person

Coming Up: 5/2 Dr. Patrick McGrath- BH/BL School Budget
OR Interclub Dinner at Turf Tavern Scotia

Note: Regular Zoom Meetings are held Mondays at 6:30 pm.

Check your e-mail inbox the day of the meeting for the computer Zoom link and password, as well as the phone number you can use to phone in if using your cell phone to participate.

Please give suggestions for future programs to Darlene Bower & Dan Stec.

Find us at bhblrotary.org and on Facebook

Together, we see a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change – across the globe, in our communities and in ourselves

Dr. Peter Sawyer – Politics, People and Polarization

Our own club member Dr. Peter Sawyer, presented to the club a presentation on Politics, People and Polarization. Dr. Sawyer earned his Ph.D. in Social Sciences from Syracuse University and has taught at Hudson Valley Community College for over 20 years. He is currently the Director of the Center for Service Learning and Civic Engagement.

His presentation focused on the present status of American society and the ideological polarization and individualistic mentality. In today's world there is a constant message of polarization from news media, social media and political leaders but one of the main references in the presentation, a Harwood Institute report, believes that this polarization is a misdiagnosis. This report, believes that Americans don't feel polarized or antagonistic toward one another but that they feel isolated and disorientated. The report says that there is no quick fix but that there are proven steps to help us move forward. Dr. Harwood suggests that in order to create authentic hope for society is that we *Start in Local Communities, Bring People Together*

Across Dividing Lines, Get People Building Together, Develop a new breed of leaders who are turned outward, Invest in and support local journalism and media, Create more boundary spanning organizations and groups, Generate a can-do counternarrative.

For more information on this report see

<https://theharwoodinstitute.org/civic-virus-report>

What was also interesting from Dr. Sawyer's presentation was that in one referenced study, from the book *The Upswing* by Robert Putnam, America's economic, political and social trends of 2020 mirror those of 1890. It was during this earlier time period that America's sense of community vs individualism started an upward trend but then reversed in the 1960's on a downward trend to present time and today's individualistic society. There also was not a significant causality found for this down swing in the 1960's but one could hypothesize the Vietnam War, Civil Rights, modernization and growing globalization/commercialization may have all played a role.

Dr. Sawyer ended the presentation with starting the discussion of How Rotary fits into the solution and what can we do more to help create the authentic hope discussed earlier in the presentation. As we discussed, Rotary does check off a lot of the proven steps that Dr. Harwood suggested in his report.

Here's to all of you in our Rotary club and your support in continuing to be a shining positive light and part of the solution in our community, nation, and world.

CLUB ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 4/25 Pints for Polio/Social/Guest Night @ Frog Alley Brewing in Schenectady. Darlene is arranging rides for those who need it.
- Frog Alley will be returning \$1 to the club for each pint of beer ordered.
- Our Community Drive-Through dinner at the BHBL HS by Spartan Catering, is set for 5/18. Italian food will be featured. Club members were urged to help.
- A fund raiser is scheduled 4/22 at Camp Stomping Grounds (time to be determined). The club has volunteered to do the cleanup.
- **May 2nd MEETING OPTIONS** we will have a hybrid meeting Zoom/PizzaWorks with Dr. Patrick McGrath discussing the BH/BL School Budget **OR** BHBL Hosting Interclub Dinner at Turf Tavern.

Reported by Jon Costolo