

Reporting Meeting of 17 July 2023

Calendar of Events

Last Week: 8/7 Club Assembly, Dinner at Town Hall

This Week: 8/14 Speaker and Dinner, at Town Hall
Dr. Leonard DiLiso

Next Week: 8/21 Service Night

Coming Up: 8/28 Social/Picnic at The Whetten's

9/4 No Meeting/ Labor Day

9/11 Charlton School Tour and Dinner

Note: Regular Meetings are held Mondays at 6:00 pm. Dinner at 6:00. 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.

Note: Fewer meetings will be hybrid or on Zoom going forward.

Please give suggestions for future programs to Linda LeTendre

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

The meeting was opened by President Peter Sawyer with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, followed by the invocation by Dan Stec, and recitation of the Rotary Four-Way test.

After the presentation, Peter Sawyer awarded our great Rotarian, member Garry Morrow, with the Paul Harris+3 Award. Congratulations Garry, and we thank for your longtime support of Rotary and our club!

Dr. Leonard DiLiso Presentation/Stories of Alexandr Solzhenitsyn

Linda LeTendre took pleasure in introducing her Saratoga Springs neighbor, Dr. Leonard DiLiso, (*pictured right*) who served as secretary to the Nobel Prize in Literature recipient, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn.

Solzhenitsyn was a Russian writer, who was a prominent dissident of the Soviet Union and outspoken critic of communism and helped to raise global awareness of the political repression of the Soviet Union, in particular the Gulag system.



Solzhenitsyn was born into a family that defied the Soviet anti-religious campaign in the 1920s and remained devout members of the Russian Orthodox Church. However, Solzhenitsyn lost his faith in Christianity, became an atheist, and embraced Marxism–Leninism. While serving as a captain in the Red Army during World War II, Solzhenitsyn was arrested and sentenced to eight years in the Gulag and then internal exile for criticizing Soviet leader Joseph Stalin in a private

letter. As a result of his experience in prison and the camps, he gradually became a philosophically-minded Eastern Orthodox Christian.

As a result of the Khrushchev Thaw, Solzhenitsyn was released and exonerated. He pursued writing novels about repression in the Soviet Union and his experiences. He published his first novel, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* in 1962, with approval from Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev, which was an account of Stalinist repressions.

Following the removal of Khrushchev from power, the Soviet authorities attempted to discourage Solzhenitsyn from continuing to write. He continued to work on further novels, including *The Gulag Archipelago* in 1973, the publication of which outraged the Soviet authorities. In 1974 Solzhenitsyn was deprived of his Soviet citizenship and was flown to West Germany. In 1976, he moved with his family to the United States, where he continued to write. In 1990, shortly before the dissolution of the Soviet Union, his citizenship was restored, and four years later he returned to Russia, where he remained until his death in 2008.

It was during this time in the United States that Dr. DeLiso was the personal secretary to Solzhenitsyn in Cavendish, Vermont. Dr. DeLiso told stories of his time with the author and the daily work and taskings. First thing would be the gathering and sorting of mail which he said was quite voluminous, to which Solzhenitsyn had around 200 categories for incoming mail. One category that remained engrained in Dr. DeLiso's memory was category 141 which was for requests for autographs, visits, honorary degrees, and such. After the mail was sorted, important items would be brought to their meeting at 10:30 and from there Solzhenitsyn would give his taskings for the day which primarily involved translation and transcribing the manuscripts.

Dr. DeLiso said that he originally was brought in as an English tutor for the children in the house, and then was asked to become the personal secretary. Dr. DeLiso had quite the background and curriculum vitae for the position. He, himself studied Russian and attended school in Vienna

and then the University of Moscow. He also studied at Harvard in linguistics. Earlier he worked in a bookstore in Hanover, NH and talked about seeing the American author J.D. Salinger quite often.

Needless to the say, the personal stories and insight into the life of the great Russian writer were fascinating and we will surely need to invite Dr. DeLiso back for more stories.

For more information on the author, please visit the website of the Alexsandr Solzhenitsyn Center <https://www.solzhenitsyncenter.org/>

Announcements

- Dues of \$85 for July through December are due
- Peter Sawyer announced that he will be sending out the budget for the club to review and give feedback/approve.
- The club will be reviewing our catered meals offerings, and looking at appropriate meal costs and schedule.
- Please continue to bring in Food Pantry donations for the Galway Food Pantry.
- A Goggle-Docment containing the activity schedule for the BHBL Rotary 2023-2024 Year may be found at: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1s5NEGkJLJNFEIYIoDKU8HdgGMjpnzGSvvGcbAV-flYM/edit> It should be opened each time used, to assure up-to-date information.

Reported by Jon Costolo

