

T ROTARY CLUB OF THE BRONX, NY, INC. TUESDAYS

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Rotary Theme 2010-2011:
"BUILDING
COMMUNITIES, BRIDGING
CONTINENTS"

Volume 94 • Number 32
February 15, 2011

President
Barry Fitzgerald
530 Riverdale Avenue #6H
Yonkers, NY 10705
718-548-7732

LOOKING AHEAD

- 3/1 - No Meeting
- 3/4 - VISIONS Luncheon honoring PP Cheryl Simmons-Oliver at FJ Pine Restaurant, 11:45 a.m. This replaces the regular meeting this week. \$80, RSVP ASAP to Barry Fitzgerald at: 917-370-2040 or Amy Gordon at: 201-819-8656.
- 3/8 - Club Assembly and Board Meeting
- 3/15 - Celebration of Greece Sunset Meeting.
- 3/22 - Celebration of Israel with members of the Israeli Consulate. Luncheon meeting.
- 3/29 - John Flaherty from the NYPD.
- 4/12 - GSE Team from Bari, Italy visits. Club Assembly and Board Meeting.
- 4/19 - Celebration of Persia Sunset Meeting.
- 5/17 - Celebration of Mexico Sunset Meeting.
- 6/28 - President's/Paul Harris Dinner

OPENINGS...

President Barry Fitzgerald opened the meeting and Jim Romeo led the Pledge of Allegiance. Miguel Santiago gave the Invocation.

CHUCK-A-BUCK

Bea Castiglia-Catullo won \$70 in the 50/50.

MAKE UPS

None today

REPORT ON THE FEBRUARY 15, 2011 MEETING CELEBRATION OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC SUNSET MEETING



Photos courtesy of Walter Pofeldt and Jim Romeo
Guest Speaker Zenaída Mendez

National Organization for Women (NOW). Ms. Mendez was also one of the Women of Color Resource Center's Delegates to the World Conference Against Racism in Durban, South Africa and is President and Founder of the National Dominican Women's Caucus.

Ms. Mendez was born in Boca Chica on the east side of the Dominican Republic. She immigrated with her family to the U.S. when she was a teenager. She has written a book called "Voices of the Diaspora" and she read the following excerpt called "The Personal is Political".

"the universe has blessed me. In this spirit, I take a moment to reflect on the decisions I have made throughout this life which the Creator has blessed and given to me. ...I was born in a lovely country into a hard working family with wonderful parents who filled our hearts with love, laughter, folklore, pride, compassion, dignity and integrity. We enjoy dancing, drinking rum and eating sugar cane. My family, like hundreds of thousands before us, came to the U.S. to escape the horror of Joaquin Balaguer's government. At that time I had no idea what it would be like to leave the homeland. No question about it. The immigration process transformed you. It is a transformation that must take place in order for one to survive.

To arrive in NYC in the late 60s was very special. During that time the U.S. was evolving as a nation. The civil rights movement led by African-Americans left an indelible mark on this nation's history. Many gave their lives in the fight for their rights. ..The civil rights movement had an impact on young people who, like myself, had just arrived to the U.S. during those times."

Ms. Mendez continued by asking the question "Why do Dominicans migrate"? She said that the assumption has been that most immigration is caused by poverty and poor conditions in the native country. However, Professor Patricia Besor argues that since the

Continued on page 2



Miguel Santana

PP Cheryl Simmons-Oliver introduced the guest speaker, Ms. Zenaída Mendez. Among her many accomplishments, Ms. Mendez served for almost three years as Director, Racial Diversity Programs at the



Yummy Dominican treats were piled high.

VISIONS LUNCHEON

Support this important VISIONS Luncheon honoring PP Cheryl Simmons-Oliver at FJ Pine Restaurant, 11:45 a.m. This replaces the regular meeting on March 1. Tickets are \$80, RSVP ASAP to Barry Fitzgerald at: 917-370-2040 or Amy Gordon at: 201-819-8656.

www.bronxrotaryclub.org

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

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1980s, most Dominican migration has been from *both* the upper and lower classes. In the 1980s most immigrants were better educated and more skilled when compared to the rest of the D.R. A study by the U.S. Library of Congress stated that in a sizeable minority about 1/3 immigrated because they were unemployed, but most did so to gain higher incomes, to continue their education or to join other family members.

Ms. Mendez said that in the case of her family it was both political and economic. Her father had been let go from his job and had been blacklisted, making it impossible for him to find work. Her mother's teaching salary alone could not sustain the family. They were fortunate enough to have the resources to leave the D.R. as a family.

She believes that one of the reasons that the Dominican community in the U.S. has gained such presence in a relatively short time is that they love politics. She says civic engagement runs in their blood as do sports.

Ms. Mendez acknowledged the U.S. as a nation of sub-cultures, each group united by common ancestry and cultural traditions. She said that what happens over time is that sub-cultures become assimilated and members of the different groups come to think of themselves as Americans first and mention heritage second, eventually losing their strong sense of culture and uniqueness. She



expressed the hope that it would be a long time before this happens to the Dominican culture in the U.S.

Thank you Ms. Zenaida Mendez for the illuminating peek into your heritage.

Thanks also go out to Miguel Santana who helped arrange the evening's festivities, to the hard-working sunset meeting committee and to Cheryl Simmons-Oliver who brought Valentine's kisses for everyone.



Everyone enjoyed the evening. If you missed it, you missed a lot!




718-993-4747
Andy Pane '72

VISITORS & GUESTS

Eddie and Angie Robinson were guests of Ed Hicks, and Walter Pofeldt, Miguel Santana and guest speaker Zenaida Mendez were guests of the Club. Arthurine Carter was a guest of Lt. Col. Floyd Carter, Eugenia Robinson and Liza Mejia were guests of Carmen Robinson, Marcia and Meyer Urbanovsky were guests of Jim Romeo and Liz Padilla, José Martinez, Gregoria Feliciano and Marie Khury were also guests.

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Rotary Theme 2010-2011:
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Volume 94 • Number 33
February 22, 2011

REPORT ON THE FEBRUARY 22, 2011 MEETING
GUEST SPEAKER ~ PAOLO PIANTAVIGNA

President Barry Fitzgerald Introduced the guest speaker Mr. Paolo Piantavigna from Italy. He is an Ambassadorial Scholar studying Fiscal Federalism at Columbia University.

His views on the fundamental political economy question and its implications for tax policy follow.

Many of the world's nation states are Federal systems in which there is a sharing of powers, including the power to tax, between a central government and lower-tier, provincial or state governments. However, other nations are unitary with most or all power at the center.

Does the allocation of taxing powers matter for economic growth, for the ability to achieve the desired level of redistribution, or for the efficient allocation of public services? If so, is a Federal system to be preferred?

The principle of tax autonomy allows local administrations to introduce own taxes as well as modify tax rates, deductions, and allowances. In doing so, they must respect the principle of territoriality (taxing power restricted to the territory of competence), the principle of correlation (taxes and benefits must be related) and the principle of moderation (taxing power limited to area of spending competences).

The law explicitly states that the devolution of taxing powers to sub-national governments must not produce any increases of the national tax burden. Given the total tax burden defined at a national level by the central government, the question remains of its apportionment among government levels, which will have to be periodically agreed among central and lower levels of government.

As nation states evolve and new nations are born, it is natural to ask three fundamental design questions. First, how many local and state governments should there be? Second, how will they be represented in the central government? Third, how should taxing and spending responsibilities be allocated among the central and lower tiers?

With respect to taxation in particular, our answer depends crucially on whether the nation is a mature or a developing economy. Within the confines of a mature nation state, the constitutional planner has greater flexibility in the choice of feasible policy instruments and in many cases fewer fundamental objectives.

However, in a developing economy, redistribution is likely to be at least as important as efficiency in taxing and spending. Moreover, local units of government may not have the training or sophistication



Photo courtesy of Jim Romeo

Paolo Piantavigna to manage substantial tax revenues and to organize the provision of locally-provided public goods.

My studies of federalism in the United States and throughout the world have convinced me of the advantages that lie in an economy that has a federalist structure.

Federalism allows one to achieve a range of social goals, relating to redistribution, political participation, and various efficiencies, including the achievement of scale economies, the matching of benefits to costs, and the innovation flowing from competition among subnational governmental units.

Furthermore, within a federal system subnational governments can check central government abuses and promote individual rights and liberties. We are comfortable, therefore, with the principle of subsidiarity.

Subsidiarity requires that one allocate spending and taxing responsibilities to the smallest geographical and/or population jurisdictions that can raise taxes most efficiently and in the process provide the desired level of service quality at the lowest cost per citizen. Within mature economies, the now standard economists' prescriptions for efficiency are eminently sensible. One should level broad-based taxes at the center, which should take primary responsibility for the redistributive function.

Subnational provincial governments, especially local governments, should focus on efficiency. They should levy benefits taxes (including user fees) whenever possible. Some redistributive functions – those that benefit from direct ties between service providers and recipients – are best provided locally. However, those local functions should be limited in scope.

Is Italy a federal country?

If one considers the classic federal coun-

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OPENINGS...

President Barry Fitzgerald opened the meeting and Frank Arcuri led the Pledge of Allegiance. Rev. Susan Chadwick gave the Invocation.

CHUCK-A-BUCK

Jim Romeo won \$27 in the 50/50.

MAKE UPS

Geoffrey Ukekweh had 2 make ups at the Abagana Rotary Club in Nigeria. Debby Appel had a make up at the Midwest City Rotary Club.

VISITORS & GUESTS

Ann Ward was a guest of Rev. Susan Chadwick. Ted Nygreen visited from the White Plains Rotary Club and Bill Ruffanello visited from the South Shore Rotary Club.

DR. HAPPINESS

Ed Hicks collected 47 happy dollars from happy Rotarians and guests.

Birthday Babies

FEBRUARY

Ralph Scottino ~ 15th
Maurice Nwokolo ~ 19th

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PAOLO PIANTAVIGNA

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tries maybe Italy cannot be considered a federal system. There are no elements of strong autonomy of member Countries which are, for instance, present in the United States. However, if we consider the constitutional reform of 2001, Regional and local Authorities have become bodies which make up the Italian Republic, together with the central Government and which enjoy legislative and administrative autonomy guaranteed directly by the Constitution. The Central State cannot limit their autonomy if not within the boundaries allowed by the Constitution itself.

Compared to the past, the Central State has more limited powers to intervene in the protection of the unity of the system and limit the authority of the territorial bodies.

Which are the relations among Central Government, Regional and local Authorities?

After 2001, both Regional and local bodies (provinces, metropolitan cities and municipalities) have enjoyed autonomy directly guaranteed by the Constitution.

As to the legislative power both the Central Government and the Regional Authorities can pass laws in the subject matters they are charged with, assigning administrative functions to local bodies, according to the principles set by the Constitution. The Central State, however, has the exclusive legislative competence on a series of subject-matters which involve regional competence, among which the identification of the "fundamental functions" of local bodies.

Because of a series of historical and financial reasons, local bodies are not generally in favor of regional power. They rather prefer to have a direct dialogue with the State. They rather have a far-reaching and thorough intervention of the State when it comes to fundamental functions. This has also an impact on the financial relations.

It is, therefore, not completely correct to state that the Italian system follows a hierarchical structure: State-Regional Authorities-local bodies. This makes also the financial system of the functions of the regional and local authorities more complicated.

Which will the main problems be in the enforcement of the law on fiscal federalism?

The end of the transfer finance from the central to the local levels implies a massive work: to eliminate all state funds aimed at financing Regions and local bodies and to transform them in tax autonomy of Regions and local authorities.

The fiscal law is structured around three main principles:

- The phasing out of a previous financing

arrangements, which were largely based on vertical transfers and the assignment of tax autonomy and spending responsibilities to local administrations.

- The introduction of equalization transfers to redistribute resources across jurisdictions, allowing partial compensation of unequal fiscal capacity or full compensation of standard borrowing requirement, depending on the given spending category.

- The design and establishment of institutions charged with coordinating the implementation of fiscal federalism, the harmonization of local public accounting (specifically regions) and the coordination of fiscal actions across government levels. In short, the new structure of economic-financial relations between central and local government seeks to overcome the grant system of funding and endow regions, provinces, municipalities and metropolitan cities with greater independence in levying taxes and spending resources subject to observing the principles of solidarity and social cohesion.

Key principles of fiscal federalism are, firstly, coordination of taxation centres with spending centres thereby automatically ensuring that bodies will be more accountable for their spending and, secondly, replacement of historical spending based on continuity with spending levels reached the previous year with standard spending.

To become operative fiscal federalism requires a series of measures that will take seven years: two years for implementation and five years of transition. The law makes provision above all for a commission to draft the contents of the implementing decrees, to be ready within two years after the entry into force of the law. Provision also exists for a permanent commission to be set up to coordinate public finances. The funding of the functions transferred to the regions through the implementation of

fiscal federalism will obviously lead to the cancellation of the relevant appropriations from the State's budget.

To conclude, the implementation of fiscal federalism is a gamble that needs to pay off for the sake of progress in the Italian economy and Institutions and I hope that this reform makes my country more similar to yours for the fiscal point of view.

Thank You Mr. Paolo Piantavigna for your presentation. The Rotary Club of the Bronx wishes you well in your scholarly pursuits.



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MEETING TIMES & PLACES of ROTARY CLUBS in DISTRICT 7230

MONDAY

Bedford-Armonk	6:15p	Bedford Presbyterian Church
Bronxville	12:15p	Fogarty's Town Tavern
Central Bronx	7:00p	Jol Kabar Restaurant
Chappaqua	12:15p	Crabtree's Kittle House
New York	12:00p	Harvard Club
Northeast Westchester	6:15p	John-Michael's Restaurant
St. George's	6:30p	Grotto Bay Beach Resort

TUESDAY

Bronx	12:15p	The Harbor Restaurant
Chinatown	1:00p	Hop Lee Restaurant
Croton-on-Hudson	12:15p	Bella Paula
East Yonkers	12:15p	Luciano's Restaurant
Hamilton	12:15p	Royal Hamilton Amateur Dinghy Club
Hastings, Dobbs Ferry, Ardsley & Irvington	6:15p	Doubleday's
Mount Pleasant	12:00p	Casa Rina Restaurant
Port Chester-Rye Brook	12:10p	T&J Trattoria
Scarsdale	12:00p	Moscato's
Somers	6:15p	Pinnacle Restaurant
Staten Island	12:30p	Ligreci's Staaten Restaurant
Upper Manhattan	6:00p	Gran Piatto d'Oro Restaurant
White Plains	12:15p	Crowne Plaza

WEDNESDAY

Eastchester	12:15p	CIAO Restaurant
Gateway	7:15p	Lake Club
Harrison	12:15p	Emilio's Restaurant
Hartsdale	12:15p	Alaroma Restaurant

Inwood Manhattan	7:00p	Garden Cafe
Metro NYC	7:30p	Trattoria Dopo Teatro
Mount Kisco	12:15p	Mt. Kisco Holiday Inn
Mount Vernon	12:15p	Bona Sera Restaurant
New Rochelle	6:15p	Davenport Club
Ossining	12:30p	The Tuscan Grille
Pelhams	12:15p	Rockwells
Sandys	6:30p	Henry VIII Restaurant
Tarrytowns	12:15p	Westchester Marriott Hotel
Wall Street	5:30p	Downtown Association
Yorktown	12:15p	Murphy's Restaurant

THURSDAY

Cortlandt Manor	7:00p	Cortlandt Colonial
Elmsford	12:15p	Rinis Restaurant
Mamaroneck	12:15p	Emilio's Restaurant
Mid-Island	7:30a	Dakota Diner
North Shore	7:00p	LiGreci's Staaten Restaurant
Peekskill	12:15p	Cortlandt Colonial Restaurant
Pembroke	7:15a	Royal Bermuda Yacht Club
Pleasantville	12:15p	Riviera Restaurant
Riverdale	6:45p	The Riverdale Greentree
South Shore	12:15p	Marina Grand
Yonkers	12:15p	Luciano's Italian Restaurant

FRIDAY

Briarcliff Manor	12:15p	Briarcliff Recreation Center
Larchmont	12:15p	Larchmont Yacht Club
Rye	12:15p	Coveleigh Club