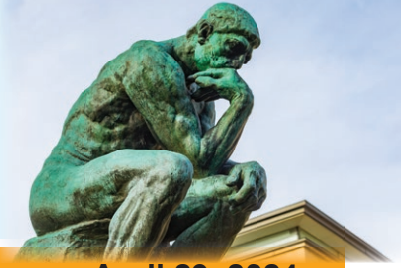


Rotary This Week!



Utica, NY, USA

April 29, 2024

Munson's property transformation is this week's topic

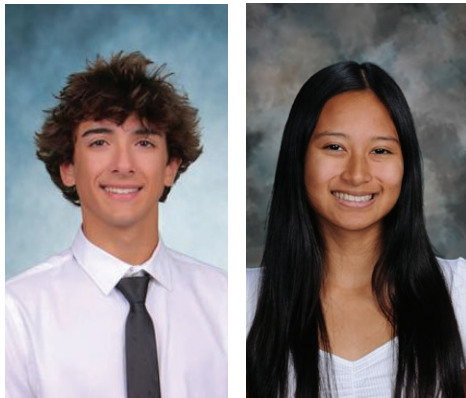


Our speaker this Thursday is John Murphy, director of Development and Donor Relations at Munson. He joined Munson three years ago after 23 years in development at Hamilton College.

John manages events, membership and individual giving along with support through corporate, foundation and government grants.

He will speak with us about Munson's part of Utica's Downtown Revitalization Initiative grant, which will transform the Genesee Street property over the course of the coming summer. His involvement in the arts goes beyond Munson as he holds a Master of Music in voice and opera from Northwestern University School of Music, Evanston, IL

ND, NY Mills students to address club this week



New York Mills students Lauren Kulpa and Frank Calhoun as well as Notre Dame students Sara Aung and Paul Kearney return to the club this week for their second visit, Outstanding Educators Program Chair Bart Gorman reports. Frank Calhoun and Sara Aung will address the club this time.

Frank is NY Mills class president and he captains several varsity teams. He plans to attend SUNY Brockport for kinesiology and to run cross country and track. ND's Sara Aung is involved in athletics and Naval Junior ROTC. She wants to attend Penn State as an ROTC cadet and become a naval officer.

Members make the difference

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Editor's travel musings

EXTRA SECTION

**Program | Thursday | May 2 | Noon |
Mid York Library | 1600 Lincoln Ave. | Utica
Virtually via Zoom**

Deadline for next newsletter (5/6) is Saturday, May 4 at 3 p.m.; submit to news@uticarotaryclub.org.

Editor Robert Stronach

MEMBERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Meet Dr. Thomas Webb

By Joe Abraham

Dr. Thomas (Tom) Webb is a 48-year member of the Rotary Club of Utica. He has been retired 10 years after practicing Optometry in Utica for 41 years. He was a member of three optometric societies, including serving as past president of the Mohawk Valley Optometric Society. He is currently in his 30th year on the Board of Directors of the Central Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired, including a term as chairperson.

Tom joined Rotary in 1976 to give back to the community that has been so good to him. He was a member and past chair of our Club's Classification Committee for over 20 years and is now serving his 11th year on the club's Board of Directors. He became a Paul Harris Fellow in 1991 and received the club's Quiet Giver Award in 2023.

Tom enjoys the comradery of our club as well as the informative speakers at our meetings.

The Rotary Club of Utica is lucky to have Tom as a member, as his friendly and positive demeanor is always welcoming at meetings and club events.



Calendar of Events

5/2	Meeting John Murphy of Munson noon Mid-York Library	5/23	Club Social TBD 5:30 pm
5/15	Board Greater Utica Chamber Noon	6/7	Service Above Self Gala 6:00 – 11:00 pm The Stanley
5/16	Meeting noon Mid-York Library		



Utica Rotary's crew cleaned up part of the North-South Arterial in downtown Utica this past Saturday.
MORE PHOTOS ON NEXT PAGE.

Celebrating the Earth with action

By Joe Abraham

While we are encouraged to make positive choices regarding the environment, as well as doing our parts to keep our communities clean on a daily basis, each April, those ideals are magnified as we celebrate Earth Day!

This year, Utica Rotarians participated in two events that benefited our community's environment. The most recent of these efforts was our annual highway cleanup, organized by Immediate Past President Tina Pavlot.

Thirteen Rotarians and friends met on Stark Street in Utica on Saturday morning, breaking up into

three groups to clean a stretch of the North-South Arterial (on either side of Noyes Street).

Participating club members were PP Tina (joined by her husband Ryan, sister Lynn and niece Shelby), David Bagley, Dave Jones, Drew DeBlasiis, Irene D'Onofrio, Joe Abraham, Tom Webb, Tracy Page, and two of our newest members, Joanne Moskal and Matt Schlosser.

After two hours of hard work, Rotarians dispersed, with some running off to attend to errands before the afternoon rain and the others meeting at Bagg's Square

Brewing Company for brunch. President-Elect Travis Rabbers joined the group, fresh off another successful 5K run.

Speaking of Rabbers, he and PP Dave Jones also took part in a special event in New Hartford the weekend prior, as our friends in New Hartford Rotary held a Microforest Planting Day at Veterans Memorial Park. Rabbers, Jones and several Rotarians from across the district assisted New Hartford Rotarians, with some 1300 trees and shrubs planted.

Kudos to all who participated in these amazing efforts!



Utica Rotary's April social was at the Beer Hub on Genesee Street.



Utica Rotarians Travis Rabbers & Dave Jones were out helping New Hartford Rotary's planting project.



Utica Rotarians clean up areas along the North-South Arterial.

EDITOR'S TRAVEL MUSINGS... by Bob Stronach

Roma: che bella città | Rome: what a beautiful city



A drive-by shot of the landmark built in honor of Victor Emmanuel II, the first king of a unified Italy. Photos by Bob Stronach unless otherwise noted.

Riding through Rome always leaves me in awe. No matter which way one turns, there's an impressive ancient ruin, a majestic structure, a monument or sculpture, a work of art (even on street corners and sides of buildings).

I simply want to stop and take a picture. But I can't if our group is to visit a planned series of sites in one afternoon.

That was the case on April 17 when we and our friends piled into Mercedes-Benz vans. Our friends hailed from across the globe – Peru, Argentina, Guatemala, Korea, Portugal, Italy, Hungary, Ukraine, Croatia, Togo and Zimbabwe. We all were attending a meeting at the Seraphicum (Pontifical University of St. Bonaventure) and were now about to take in the sights at: the Three Fountains, Circus Maximus, the “convento” of Capuchin Franciscans

(built in 1600s), Trevi Fountain, and Piazza di Spagna (Spanish Square). We ended the evening sharing dinner with the friars at the Capuchin Franciscan Order's headquarters, or curia.

Three Fountains

Some of the fountains and sites are romantic; other definitely not so.

Tre Fontane, or Three Fountains, is located on the grounds of a Trappist Monastery (Abbey or Abbazia delle Tre Fontane). Trappists are monks who spend most of their time in silence, whether in prayer or at work. They operate a farm, apiary, brewery, among other endeavors. They sustain themselves by selling beer, liquor, honey, olive oil and, my favorite, chocolate (from light milk chocolate to extra extra dark).

The complex houses three churches or chapels – the original abbey, erected in the 1100s,

a chapel built over the dungeon or jail cells where the Apostle St. Paul was held for preaching Christianity, and finally, the chapel erected around three fountains, each about 15 feet apart. The fountains no longer spout water; they've been dry since the 1800s, our guide Mas-similiano noted.

It is the site of Paul's execution. With his neck and head positioned on a stone pillar (it's there in a corner of the chapel), the Roman executioner beheaded Paul. The executioner's powerful blow forced his head to fly out and bounce three times, according to legend, and fountains of water miraculously sprung up at each spot the head hit.

Apart from the gruesome tale of the fountains' birth, the grounds are replete with beauty and tranquility, and attract swarms of tourists.

Continued.



LEFT: Statue of St. Bernard of Clairvaux, an early leader of the Cistercian (Trappist) Order and founder of numerous monasteries, stands at the side of the original abbey church at Tre Fontane. Beyond him is the chapel built over the Roman jail cells where St. Paul the Apostle was held. RIGHT: The path leads to the chapel of the Three Fountains, where St. Paul was beheaded. BELOW: Frescoes adorn the pillars inside the abbey, built circa 1140.



Convento Cappuccini

The tour included a visit to Il Convento dei Cappuccini (Capuchin Franciscan Friary) on Via Vittorio Veneto, which encompasses a church, friary, crypt and museum. The church and friary date back to about 1630 and were built by Cardinal Antonio Barberini, himself a Capuchin Franciscan friar, with the blessing of his brother, Pope Urban VIII. Our guide, Massimiliano, mentioned that once the new church was built, the friars moved from their old friary located near Trevi Fountain, and dug up the graves of friars and moved their bones to the new crypt under the church. More on that in a moment.

The church is a single nave church, with raised side chapels adorned with important works of art such as the Archangel Michael by Guido Reni, The Mocking of Christ by Gherardo delle Notti, and the Ecstasy of Saint Francis by Domenichino.

Similarly, the museum, which traces the history of the order, features artwork of Capuchin saints by Caravaggio and other artists.

The crypt, on the other hand, boasts artwork of another sort. Some might call it ghoulish, but it's definitely a tourist attraction. The bones of about 3,700 deceased friars, and even some royalty who had been close to the order, adorn several rooms of the crypt. Skulls are piled up. Bones are formed into designs across the walls and ceilings, even chandeliers. Massimiliano pointed to a skeleton of a prin-



Convento dei Cappuccini: single nave church (above) with famous artwork hanging in the side chapels (below).



Bones decorate a room in the crypt beneath the church.

cess fastened to the ceiling of one room, which struck me as ready to pounce, like something out of a horror film.

A sign simply proclaims, "What you are now we used to be; what we are now you will be."

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Circus Maximus

Street signs overlooking the former arena known for its chariot races proclaim, Circus Maximus. Today a park runs the length of the track. A tower and some ruins are at one end and the ruins of the imperial palace sit on Palatine Hill overlooking the park. Originally built in centuries BC, it was enlarged by later emperors, reaching its maximum size of 2,000 by 600 feet under Constantine in the 4th century AD.

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Overlooking the chariot racetrack at Circus Maximus, with ruins of the Imperial Palace in the background. Photo by Pedro Zitha, OFM



Trevi Fountain, mobbed with tourists.

Trevi Fountain

On to more romantic sites. Trevi Fountain, featured in a number of movies, attracts a sea of humanity. It seems everyone wants to toss a coin (right hand over left shoulder, of course) or get a picture in front of the Baroque style fountain, which measures 86 feet high by 161.3 feet wide. Its name is derived from the Latin word, trivium, referring to the fountain being at the convergence of three streets.

Did you know that the fountain came about because of a pope? In 1730, Pope Clement XII organized a contest to design a majestic fountain. Architect Nicola Salvi eventually won the contract, with work beginning in 1732. He died before completing

the job, so they hired architect Giuseppe Pannini who finished the project in 1762.

The fountain has appeared in *Roman Holiday* (1953); *Three Coins in the Fountain* (1954); *La Dolce Vita* (1960); *Sabrina Goes to Rome* (1998); and *The Lizzie McGuire Movie* (2003).

According to several news sites, tourists toss about \$1.5 million in loose change into the fountain each year. Coins pile up and are fished out every few days and taken to the Catholic charity, Caritas, which uses the money to fund a soup kitchen, food pantry and other projects to help the poor in the Eternal City. By the way, a cadre of police officers watches over the throng. It is illegal to take your coin back, or

someone else's, for that matter. But that's not the only reason. In May 2023 climate activists from the group, Last Generation, vandalized the fountain by dyeing the water with charcoal.

I didn't toss a coin because I knew I would return to Rome in the fall, nor did I throw three coins because I already had my true love.

Piazza di Spagna

There's another fountain, Fontana della Barcaccia, located at the bottom of the Spanish Steps in one of Rome's most famous squares, Piazza di Spagna. It gets its name from Spain's influence and the fact that the Spanish embassy to the Holy See is just up the street.

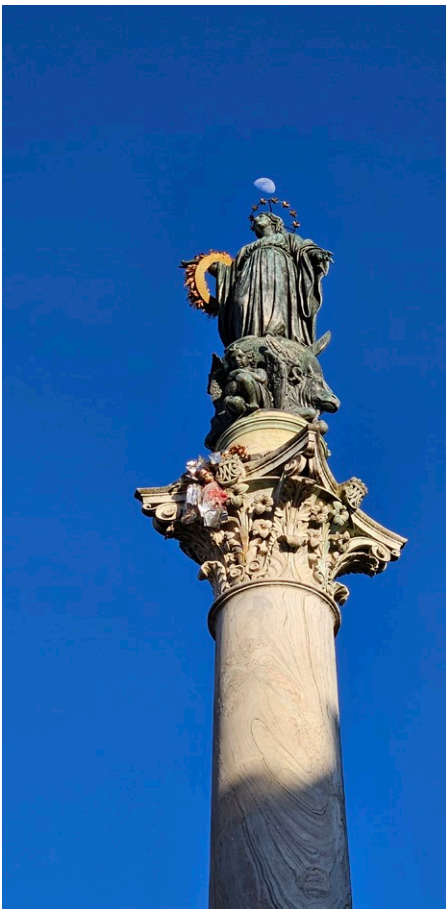
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Piazza di Spagna and the Spanish Steps.



At the Spanish Steps with friends from Zimbabwe and the Ukraine. The photobomber is from Guatemala.



The moon rises above the Tower of the Immaculate Conception in front of the Spanish Embassy to the Vatican. Photo by Tibor Kauser.

At one time Rome was under Spain’s protection; in recognition of that, in 1854, Pope Pius IX had the Column of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary erected in front of the embassy.

The steps were built between 1723 and 1726, and lead up to an Egyptian obelisk and the French monastery church, Trinità dei Monti. There are 135 steps and three different terraces, symbolizing the Holy Trinity (the Trinità). The square is surrounded by historic buildings and upscale eateries that are popular meeting places for friends and business associates.

The Italian name of the fountain means “Fountain of the ugly boat,” and refers to a story that the Tiber River flooded in 1598 and stranded an ugly little boat on the spot.

Visitors swarmed the fountain, taking selfies and pictures of

one another, angling to get the steps in the background.

I tried taking a selfie and got most of the steps. But my wind-blown hair stood out.

Supper with friars

We ended the day enjoying supper at the Capuchin curia. As was the friars’ custom, we served ourselves, filling plates with homemade pizza, assorted vegetables, salad, cheese and cut-your-own Italian bread, followed by cakes and ice cream.

The friars were very welcoming and joyful and had us join them for after-dinner liquors in their recreation room. The minister general of the order went about pouring shot glasses of his special brandy for everyone. The brandy was very good, very smooth. The subsequent fiery heat that rose and consumed the upper part of my body cured my cold. Even if I didn’t have one.