

Democrat

Rich Dunn is a member of the Democratic Men's Committee of Carson City, which hosts weekly luncheons featuring a variety of speakers.

So it's the Democratic Men's Club of Carson City that puts these on?

Well, we now use the term "committee." ... And we changed our name to committee because the secretary of state's office said we'd have reporting requirements if we weren't a subset of the central committee.

How long have you been having these luncheons?

Well, I'm glad you asked that question. ... The first one was March the 5th of last year—2018. And the intention originally was to have them once a month with reservations and ask for a contribution of 10 dollars. So, there was a price of admission to get in of 10 dollars, and then you had to buy your own food, so it really added up. And then the restaurant we were meeting at, they had a better offer and they kind of escorted us out the door. So, I had to look for a better place, and that turned out to be—to my surprise—Round Table Pizza, which, to my amazement has a banquet room. ... It works just great. They have a nice, big TV we can put our PowerPoints onto, and we bring in our own little sound system, and there's sliding doors that isolate us from the rest of the building. It's worked out well, and they're very helpful.



PHOTO/JERI DAVIS

Tell me a bit about the purpose of the luncheons.

All we were talking about initially was, "How do we support the central committee, except to ask everybody to give a monthly donation?" And I raised my hand and said, "Well, why don't we just have luncheons where we ask for donations?" Even though you can't charge people to enter or something like that, at least it gives them the feeling that they've gotten something for their money. It's not just, "We need money. Give me your money." It's a chance to sit down and socialize. We have, like, a half an hour before the speaker gets up for people to get their pizza and their salad and interact. And, so, we get to know each other—and that's very positive. And we learn a heck of a lot doing this. But the original and primary purpose is that I sit by the door and look very sad until they make an offer. But I emphasize that

it's not a price of admission. It's not a mandatory donation. I don't care who you are, if you walk right by me and sit down, I'm still very happy. I don't keep track of the people who don't donate. I only keep track of the amount that people do donate, so you're not going to be shaming yourself if you don't donate. ... Everybody is invited, and sometimes we get trouble-makers but not very often. And they don't make much trouble—because we have answers. They're asking what they think are stumbers, and we tend to know what we're talking about. ...

How do you pick the speakers?

You know, the main way I do that is I read the newspapers. I read the Reno Gazette Journal. I read the Lahontan Valley News. ... I read the Appeal, and I read USA Today. ...

What topics have you guys discussed?

Well, last Monday we had CW Bayer, who's a local musician and local historian. And he's written an incredible book that I really recommend called *Reno's Jazz Hysteria*. ... The week before that was representatives of the Bernie Sanders campaign. Because we've got the caucuses coming up, I'm giving first priority to the campaigns. So coming up on the 20th, that Martin Luther King Day, I've got Cory Booker's campaign—not the candidate, you know, this is their people putting their best foot forward. And I make a point of saying, "These are not rallies. Don't come here to cheer. Come here with your tough questions." □

NOTES FROM THE NEON BABYLON

BY BRUCE VAN DYKE

Good sports

Yes, of course, we are culturally out of our minds for sports in this, the Age of Athletic Fetishism. Yes, of course, the incessant idolization, worshipification and pedestalization of sports figures and teams resides on the limits of sanity. Yes, of course, if we took one-tenth of the energy that we expend on the adoration of teams and athletes and used it for the Betterment of All Mankind and Our Wondrous Planet, we'd be living in a gleaming utopia free of all hatred, disease and bedbugs—with Jetson-like air cars for all. Yes, yes, yes and yes.

OK, so with that said ... how about that freakin' game last Sunday night between the 49ers and Seahawks? I mean—whoa. You show me a crazy, fevered contest that gets decided on the last bloody play of the game by one bloody *inch*, and I'll show you some rather gripping television.

And when you consider that for the Niners, this was their *fifth game in a row* that was decided on the *last freaking play of the game*, well, I have to wonder how many heart attacks the team has provoked since Thanksgiving. (And, yes, Niner fans, you got away with some serious pass interference on the next-to-last play of the game. You know you did!)

So if the Saints beat the Vikings this Sunday in New Orleans (which they will. Trust me. I'm a Viking fan, and I'm not feelin' real good about this one) and if the Seahawks beat the Eagles in the Battle of the Raptors (which they will, since the Eagles basically stink), well, then that means that the Niners will, for their first playoff game ... host the freaking Seahawks! If you're a Niner fan with a pacemaker, beware! Your poor ticker could be in for another rough ride!

Since I have a sports jag going, I might as well throw this into the mix—because somebody's gotta say it—but, honestly, who the bleep gives a bleep about the bleeping Dallas Bleepboys? Seriously. The Bleepboys have had a stone cold chokehold on 8–8 seasons for the last 25 bleepin' years. Bleep 'em!

Speaking of gripping television, have you watched *The Irishman* on Netflix yet? You talk about an instant classic. DeNiro, Pesci and Pacino are all in prime form, chewing up scenes like they were sticks of Juicy Fruit. And don't let the 220-minute length spook ya. I carved the movie into a 4-night mini-series, 55 minutes a night, and that concept worked quite nicely. □



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