

The Spoke

Rotary Club of Danbury

www.danburyrotary.org

May 26, 2010

P.O. Box 788, Danbury, CT 06813

President Jim's Corner: Wednesday's meeting featured a fellow Rotarian, Frans Boetes, who gave a presentation of his work in securing old Navy and Coast Guard vessels and preserving them as museums. Frans provide a history of each vessel and the reclamation work he did to restore them. It was a fascinating, and a remarkable story of effort and dedication. Thank you, Frans.



This Wednesday, June 2, is our annual scholarship luncheon. We have some wonderful students who will receive these scholarships. Please e-mail Elaine Malgieri emalgieri@ccfc-ct.org, if you are planning on attending. The luncheon is at Ethan Allen Inn. This is usually one of our best luncheons. Come see the great work Allison and her committee did in selecting this year's winners.

In the last two weeks, additional members have made their annual contributions to the Sustaining Members drive. We have about two more weeks to reach our goal. Please bring you donations to the next meeting.

The passing of the Gavel dinner will be held at the Ridgewood Country Club at 6:30 PM Friday, June 25, 2010. You should have received your invitations from Caryl Lucchesi. Try to attend in order to show your support for President-elect Paul Palanzo and his team.

This past January, we accepted an invitation from the Brewster NY Rotary Club to be their guest for lunch. It was a great success and in turn we have invited them to join us for lunch. They have accepted our invitation to join us for lunch on Wednesday, June 30

Please mark your calendar, and plan on attending these events.

Finally, and most importantly, let us all remember our fallen heroes this Memorial weekend. Yours in Rotary, Jim

Dates to Remember:

June 20-23, 2010, RI 101st Annual Convention, Montreal
6/2 Scholarship Luncheon
6/16 Laura Goldstein, Human Resources Law
6/25 Gavel Dinner, 6:30 pm, Ridgewood Country Club
6/30 Luncheon Meeting with the Brewster, NY, club.
10/23 Card Raffle Dinner

Amber Alert-

6/6 Brookfield Fire Dept 11 am to 3 pm
6/12 4H building, Stony Hill 10 am to 3 pm
6/13 Hatters Park (T-Ball) 11 am to 4 pm
7/10 Ridgefield Kids Day 11 am to 4 pm
7/30 Village Fair Days, N. Milford, 10 am to 4 pm
7/31 Village Fair Days, N. Milford 10 am to 4 pm
9/11 Taste of Danbury, 12 noon to 7 pm
9/12 Taste of Danbury, 12 noon to 7 pm
9/25 TBA N. Milford Green
10/23 Children's School, 118 Scofieldtown Road, Stamford

Today's Speaker: *Frans Boetes, and his Remarkable Journey Restoring WWII Ships— Two Treasured Gifts to Our Nation, and One he Gave to his Own Country:*



Our speaker for this week's luncheon was a frequent visiting Rotarian from Florida, who told a story of obsession and dedication that left us in awe.

Frans did not begin his journey of restoration working only with ships. His first project, was in his native Holland, where he saved 12 historical farmhouses from demolition. A multitaled businessman, he continued to save a number of historical buildings, and was elected to the Board of the National

Preservation Society for Dutch Monuments.

But his love for the sea won out. While working on a number of both land and maritime restorations, one day he discovered a 172 foot US Navy minesweeper, the Hr. Ms. Mercur. He was so impressed with the vessel, he bought it, restored it and found a resting place for it as a Maritime Museum in the Hague.

His next large maritime project was even more daunting. While passing a Naval ship yard, he found a WWII rust bucket, the USS Mohawk, negotiated for its



sale, and with a group of dedicated friends, restored it to a level he never imagined possible. It was truly a labor of love—putting in 14,000 man hours of elbow grease and determination, and a small fortune of his own money. He even hired two tugboats to take it to Florida, and went with them on the harrowing trip there.

His final find, was the USCGC Ingham, which was going to be scrapped. Fortunately, it was in great shape, and minimal restoration was required. With obvious affection, he proudly noted that the Ingham was the oldest active duty naval vessel in the U.S., had received countless honors, and is the most decorated ship in the U.S. Coast Guard. It now floats with the Mercur, in Key West, Florida, the two being part of another museum.

Frans brought two meticulously fabricated models of the Mercur and the Mohawk he build from scratch, to his presentation. A while ago, he inadvertently tossed a dog leash into the back of his car, and damaged one of the boats (it took 3 weeks of repair work), which taught him a painful lesson in always being careful when transporting these fine works of art.

Few of us can truthfully say we have been museum builders.



Luncheon Guest:



Heather Sadler, a frequent guest, was at our luncheon again this week. Apparently she finds our food, fellowship, and speakers enjoyable, and is considering a more permanent status with the club as a member. In any event, we hope to see her again soon, and we encourage her to follow the example of Carole Brown who became a member today.

Carole Brown is Inducted into the Club!



We are pleased to welcome attorney Carole Brown into Club membership. Carole has been attending our luncheon on a fairly regular basis, lately, and has joined the fold. Make an effort to get to know Carole. She will be a real asset to the Club and we trust she will be one of our most

treasured members.



President Jim reads Carole the Objects of Rotary while Paula Greenberg, her sponsor, looks happily on—and Carole looks happy too, doesn't she? Of course she does. She's now in the primo service Club!

Make-Ups

Mon. 12:15 pm, Norwalk, Norwalk Inn
 Mon. 6:15 pm, Newtown, Inn at Newtown, 19 Main St.
 Mon. 6:00 pm, Brkfld, Mario's Pasta Garden, 174 Federal Rd., Brkfld
 Tues. 12:15 pm, Westport, Inn at Longshore, 260 Compo Rd, So
 Wed. 12:15 pm, Danbury, Ethan Allen Inn
 Wed. 6:30 pm, Ridgefield, Sagi Rest 23 and a half Catoonah St.
 Thurs. 12:15 pm, New Canaan, Roger Sherman Inn
 Fri. 12:15 pm, Wilton, Greens Conval. Home, rear, Wilton
 Fri. 7:30 Danbury Sunrise, The Club at WestConn, Westside Campus

Rotary Club of Danbury Officers 2009-10	
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Those dam beavers; they would make good Rotarians!

When the state of Michigan sent a threatening letter to a landowner, insisting that he remove a couple of unauthorized dams he had built on his property or face legal action, the irate landowner replied with the following letter (abbreviated due to space limitations):



...I am the legal landowner but not the Contractor...a couple of beavers in the state are in the process of constructing and maintaining the two wood "debris" dams...While I did not pay for, authorize, nor supervise their dam project, I think they would be highly offended that you call their skillful use of nature's building materials "debris...I challenge you to

attempt to emulate their dam project...there is no way you could ever match their dam skills, their dam resourcefulness, their dam ingenuity, their dam persistence, their dam determination and/or their dam work ethic...In my humble opinion, the Spring Pond Beavers have a right to build their unauthorized dams as long as the sky is blue, the grass is green and water flows downstream...Bears are defecating in our woods. I definitely believe you should be persecuting the defecating bears...If you are going to investigate the beaver dam, watch your dam step...Being unable to comply with your dam request, I am sending this dam response to your office.

Contributed by Frank Hauser. True story verified by www.snopes.com. It has a Pennsylvania variant, too.

The Three Ships Frans Boetes Saved for Posterity:

The Meruur, the Mohawk, and the Ingham. The first two are models. The third is the real thing (as is his wife in the foreground).



Frans' Maritime Gifts to the Public Truly Represent "Service Above Self!"