

Rotary



THE DRUMMER



**ROTARY CLUB OF WILTON, CONNECTICUT
DISTRICT 7980**

www.wiltonrotaryclub.org

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Fifteen Rotarians, one guest speaker, and one guest joined president Pam Brown at Rolling Hills Country Club to share in fellowship on a partly sunny, mild Friday afternoon that felt like the first day of spring.

[GUESTS/VISITORS](#)

Bob McDowell, CEO, Riverbrook Regional YMCA; Jenny Wong (guest of Elaine Tai Lauria).

[ANNOUNCEMENTS](#)

1. **Rotary Foundation Minute.** Christene reminded us to donate to the Rotary Foundation between now and 30 June. Any amount is welcome. She is hoping to get 100% club participation.
2. **Wilton Winter Carnival, Sunday, 26 January, 12 to 4 p.m.** The Club will be operating the Bonfire/S'mores station near the Schenk's Island park entrance. Set up begins around 1145. Please come by for an hour or two.
3. **Smoke Detector Update.** Patrick reported that he passed the police background check mandated by the Red Cross for access to homes for smoke detector installation. Letters have gone out to Wilton seniors inviting them to sign up for the program. Patrick is grooming Matt Castaldi to be his successor.

4. **The 50/50 Pot Keeps Growing.** \$817 was up for grabs. The pressure was on Chris Lavin to pull the Joker from the remaining eight cards, but he could not close the deal. We now have to wait two more weeks for another chance at the pot.
5. **Australian Bushfires.** The Rotary Australian Districts is coordinating worldwide Rotary financial assistance for the country's bushfires. Go to www.rawcs.org.au if you'd like to contribute.
6. **Special Award.** Judy was the recipient of the prestigious "Above and Beyond" award by the Ensemble Travel® Group. The award was bestowed on Judy by a vote of her peers at the Group's conference in Seattle last fall.
7. **Upcoming Meetings/Events.**
 - a. *17 January: NO meeting!*
 - b. *24 January: Meeting at Rolling Hills CC. Speaker: Jane Ferreira, Mercy Learning Center.*
 - c. *7 February: Meeting/lunch at Wilton Y, followed by a private tour of the "new" facility (see below).*
 - d. *14 February: NO meeting. Happy Valentine's Day!*

TODAY'S PROGRAM

Bob McDowell, CEO of Riverbrook Regional Y, gave us a spirited recap of the Y's history and its ambitious (and successful) plans to renovate its existing facility in Wilton and open a new branch in South Norwalk. By way of background, Bob has been in the Y "business" for 40 years, and held management and executive positions for the organization in New York and Pennsylvania before coming to lead the Wilton "Y" 14 years ago. Under his watch, and with the dedicated assistance of 250 volunteers and 200 employees (including Chief Development Officer Christene Freedman), the Wilton Y has transformed itself from a local facility to a regional Y powerhouse.



The Y broke ground last February for a \$15-million expansion project, following a fundraising campaign that began in 2015 after its merger with the Norwalk Y. The campaign has netted \$6.6 million to date, closing in on its \$7.5-million goal, with the balance financed through a loan from Fairfield County Bank. A grand reopening was held on Saturday, 4 January.

Bob also presented us with plans to turn a building on South Main Street in So. Norwalk into a local Y facility that will serve an area of the city that has seen major redevelopment in recent years.

Congratulations to Bob, Christene and the entire Riverbrook Y staff, volunteers, and donors for a job well done! We look forward to our meeting on 7 February at the Y where we will see this all

firsthand!

Next meeting Friday, 24 January, 1215, at Rolling Hills Country Club.