



Wilton Rotary Drummer

Wilton, Connecticut

www.wiltonrotaryclub.org

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Seventeen members of Wilton's finest service organization (Boucher, Brown, Burnham, Careccia, Dephtereos, Edwards, Freedman, Goldman, Johnson, Kent, Khouri, Lavin, Mais, Mills, Russo, Tai-Lauria, White) found their way to Marly's for lunch the day after we were promised by Punxsutawney Phil only six more weeks of weather befitting our season. We were joined by our friends John Hendricksen from the Westport Club (Sunrise) and Debbie Hansen from The Wilton Chamber of Commerce.

Announcements – Fundraisers at Sedona in Norwalk (515 West Avenue). On the 6th for support of those who suffered loss as a result of the recent fire in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. On the 13th for Trackside. Have a steak and a glass of wine (or scotch) and part of the small amount you pay goes for these causes.

Carol reported that the police awards ceremony will be held on Monday, March 13 at Trackside at 6:00 PM.

Christene advises that you can see her put her toes in the lake at the Y on the 13th to support the Y's initiative to bring swimming lessons to the un-aquatics amongst us. If you pledge \$500 she'll go in head first. I missed what she said she'd do if you pledge \$1,000.00.

Pat is seeking volunteers for the Smoke Detector/CO₂ project. The Red Cross has donated the smoke detectors, the CO₂ Detectors we have purchased ourselves. Pat is not able to do them all himself this year – he needs to put together teams – an installer and a talker for each installation. Time to step up.

Beth reported that our outbound Youth Exchange Student – Grant Hussey – who went to Brazil - had such a good experience that his parents have given \$2,500 to Rotary. Evidently there was a match as well. The Husseys will be invited to one of our March meetings. We also have an inbounder who is being housed in New Canaan, although we are paying the stipend, and maybe an arrangement could be made to have him or her join us at some point.

John Hendricksen advises that we are now looking for folks to choose the District Governor for 2019-2020. All those in the running have already submitted their paperwork (too late for you to

apply, Andy; next year though) and now a selection committee is to be formed. See John if you want to be a part of the process. (I think that is what he said.)

Bud reported that he had just met with Vince Santilli, the CEO for Homes for the Braves in Bridgeport, (which operates the Nicholas Madaras, PFC house for homeless female veterans as well as a separate one for men) and that a March 9 fundraiser is being planned.

Bud then introduced our First Selectperson, Lynne Vanderslice, who gave us insights on where we stand as a town finance-wise. The big unknown is not only the level of support we can expect from Hartford but also what new mandates are coming down the pike. Particularly scary is a move to consolidate Town Health Departments which may sound like a cost-savings idea, and maybe it is, but if it goes through in current form would mean that Wilton would be charged with paying for services currently provided to residents of Norwalk through a combination of Norwalk taxes and state grants. Lynne is doing her best to reduce headcount on the town side, but there is only so much that can be done. And she does not seek to cut back on the level of services the town now provides. The increase in the year-to-year proposed budget is due almost entirely to compensation increases, largely outside the control of the BOS, evidently.

There are some positive economic developments – the empty building across from Town Hall will be turned into medical offices, and the Young's Nurseries property will become an address for the next assisted living facility. So the Grand List will grow. But at the same time, Lynne does not wish to lose a significant amount from the Grand List by expanding the Town Hall footprint, so the Police Department's building will have to go up, rather than be rebuilt on the West side of Route 7. Query whether a new building, even with the resulting loss of tax dollars, might be cheaper, as well as more functional, but then there are the optics.

On that happy note.

See you Friday.