

Reporting Meeting of November 20, 2017

Calendar of Events

Last Week: Nov 13: Denise Bambinelli, Recipient of Mike Welshhans Scholarship
This Week: Nov 20: Howie Eskin, Erie Canal
Next Week: Nov 27: Club Assembly, new initiatives; celebrate George Baily's life on the occasion of his 100th birthday
Coming Up: Dec 4: BOD Directors 5pm; Club Assembly
Attendance: Rotarians: 22 Guests: 3
Invocation: Dan Stec offered the invocation

Note: Regular meetings are held Monday Evenings at 6:00 PM in the William E. Sewell Memorial Room at the Ballston Town Hall.

Please give suggestions for future programs to Beth Brownell.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Bob Youmans announced that arrangements for the Holiday Tree Lighting and Concert are in place. Please arrive at the Library at 6pm to help manage the crowd.
- Beth Brownell reminded members that the menu for the Holiday Party Dec 11 at the Charlton Tavern is on the website and has been emailed. RSVP to her by 12/3.
- Beth Brownell reported that the upcoming club assemblies will involve discussions surrounding new service and work project areas that the club would like to pursue. New committees will be formed to work on new initiatives including reviewing the APF effectiveness, creating a framework to help high school students perform service in the community and develop plans for new areas of local club service.
- Mike B. reported that Linda is training him on all the procedures for the Holiday Party since she will not be attending.
- Mike reported the Nominating Committee's slate of officers and board members to be voted on at the Dec 18 meeting: President Beth Brownell, President-Elect Silas Schrader, President Nominee Gregg Schorr, Secretaries Mary Anderson and Linda LeTendre and Treasurer Val Mosier. Board directors Peter Parker, Ken Crotty and Dan Stec were put forth. There is one more seat that may be filled.

- Tom Brownell reported our club contributed the 3rd most money per capita to the Foundation last year.
- Mike Brewster collected Happy Dollars with his usual good humor.

Howie Eskin, Erie Canal

Howie presented a history of the Erie Canal on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of its beginning. Merchants needed a way to efficiently move goods to the west in a cost effective manner. NYC became a large seaport due to the ability to move goods. Boston and Philadelphia had no rivers west. New Orleans and the Mississippi River were the closest rival. The Canal initiative started in 1817, only 25 years after the Declaration of Independence was signed. At the time there were no engineers, and surveyors performed the bulk of the planning and engineering. RPI became established as a result of the problems faced in designing and building the canal.

Local farmers and immigrants did the bulk of the work, and invented equipment to get the work done. Techniques were borrowed from the English canal system to create rock-lined canals. The canals were east of Rome as the river was rocky, uneven and had many rapids. West of Rome, boats could proceed in the river. Waterproof cement was invented to keep the water from leaking out of the canals. Early explosives were used as well. The inventor gave the patent to NYS expecting to be paid and he never was. Work was done with manual labor, horses, mules, wagons and wheelbarrows. After eight years of construction the canal was completed. It is the most successful and influential public work project in the US. Before the canal it took two weeks to move goods from Schenectady to Buffalo. On the canal, it took five days. In 1959 the St Lawrence Seaway was opened, giving direct access to the Great Lakes and that resulted in the decline of the canal. It is now used for pleasure boats and to move things too large to be transported by road.



Serve with us. The world is waiting.

Reported by Beth Brownell