

Grapevine

Rotary Club of Naples, NY
Celebration at Ferris Hill, February 26, 2018

Today was a very special meeting for the Naples Rotary Club, as we gathered at Ferris Hills to honor Al Mann on the (early) occasion of his 103rd Birthday!! Al, his dear wife, Fran, and their two daughters, Babette and Laura were there also to help take part in the festivities! Our club had been planning this event for a while, and it came as a complete surprise to Al, which was our hope! The location was elegant, the luncheon was delicious, and the lovely gift and cake, which were compliments of Sherry, topped the day off nicely! A plethora of cards wishing Al all the best rounded out the "Birthday table"!

We began our meeting in the usual way by joining President John in reciting The Pledge. It was decided since we didn't have a Flag with us, to face Jack, as he was very colorful today! In light of all our Gold Medals received recently at the Winter Olympics, Jack decided to lead us in singing The Star-Spangled Banner. Our Invocation was given by our own Jamie, who, along with wife, Bessie, has recently returned from Cambodia. Jamie's Blessing spoke of Al, whose love, joy, and music has brought much to the Naples Rotary Club. He asked The Lord to help each of us continue in this vein, as we try to help and serve others. There were seven tables of members and guests among us today. President John asked a member from each table to introduce the guests that sat with them. Our special guests, of course, were Fran, Babette, and Laura, as mentioned earlier.



Other fine guests included Doug and Sue Schwingel, friends of Al and Fran, and Pat and Bo, Katie, wife of John B., Kit, wife of Bill C., Jim, husband of Joan, Sharon, wife of Jack, Bill S., friend of John and Katie, and Kim Torpey, editor of The Neapolitan. Added to that list of welcomed guests were 31 members, as well!!

It was time for The Mailbag, and President John had one item to share with the club. He had received word from Don Milton that we are behind in our Annual Giving Fund. Don Alhart and Ellen Hughes have challenged us to donate "a dollar a day" during the month of February to help meet our goal. Those who

wish to do so, may give a check in the amount of \$28 for The Rotary Foundation to Susan.

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There were various Calendar Items to note. The Rotary District 7120 Oratorical Contest Finals will be held at FLCC on 3/3, at 11:30. Two of our Naples students will be participating. If possible, please try to come and support our Naples finalists! The District Training Assembly will be 4/14 at the Avon High School. Next week's meeting on 3/5, will feature a program on Medicare. The next Rotary Lite Meeting will be at Brew and Brats on 3/7. The program on 3/12 will be a presentation on Camp Onseyawa. Jack will be attending the PETS Training in Syracuse on 3/16. There will be a Board meeting on 3/19. Registration is open for the District Conference in Saratoga, which is set for May 4th-6th. Also, there was a reminder to sign up to help at the upcoming Trout Derby on April 1st.

Our host, Lynne Standish, was invited to the podium to speak briefly about Ferris Hills and Clark Meadows. Each facility is designed to meet the individual needs of its residents. Ferris Hills is geared to independent living, while Clark Meadows provides assisted living for its residents. These two facilities, which are a part of Thompson, were referred to by Lynne as "One Community with two front doors". The residents, who are watched closely for any specific changes, are referred to as "family", according to Lynne, and the best quality of care and intervention are provided. I think we would all completely agree that this beautiful setting makes Senior Living a pleasant experience!

Those of us who know John French know that he has "a thing for numbers", and, of course, he didn't disappoint us today! He had four separate numbers displayed on the screen, and he asked us about their importance. The number 13 is how old Charlie Grove will be on March 28th, (also Al's Birthday)! The number 79 is how old Naples Rotary is. The number 178 had to do with the saxophone, and, of course, the number 103 was Al's Big Birthday Age! Wow!!! A life well-lived for sure!

Flanked by a picture of Naples Rotary Club from 1988 on the screen, as well as other photos from the past, such as Al's and Fran's 70th Anniversary, John proceeded to take a walk down Memory Lane. He talked about the various initiatives of the Naples Rotary Club, many of which Al has been a viable part. Our "patriarchs", Al and Bill Vierhile, always sat in the same corner of The Redwood at each meeting. Their wisdom and good-natured ways were always an inspiration to the rest of the club. Al was among some of our club Veterans who took part in the Honor Flight as well. Yes, Al, you have been an inspiration to each and every one of us, and we thank you for your wisdom, gentle spirit, and lease on life!

Following our Meeting Format, it was time for Fines. Jamie, Bessie, Frank, Lee, Tom, Vicky, and Bill C. had missed meetings. Bo had had a very "big" birthday last week. Alex didn't have her badge. Vicky had been on a trip. John B. had had six wines and grape juices win awards! The Happy Bills poured forth, as we all were so glad to be with Al to honor him today! Bo was glad that Al is a Norwegian! Jamie was glad that his kids welcomed him and Bessie home with a nice meal. Frank and Kathleen recently visited their daughter, Heidi. Jack was proud of grandson, Jacob, and his indoor track accomplishments. Also, daughter, Olivia is due very soon with her first child! Laurie was glad that Al played his wonderful music at her parents' 50th Anniversary Celebration. Judy was glad that grandson, Charlie shares a birthday with Al!

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John F. was happy for the Naples students who will be participating in the Oratorical Finals, and for wife, Sherry, who provided the lovely cake and gift for Al's party.



For our Fifty-Fifty today, Al drew Brenda's ticket, # 510. The Kitty had reached \$101. Brenda drew the King of Spades! President John had our Win-Win ready for us. How many Presidents have there been in the last 103 years? John had a series of past Presidents' pictures up on the screen to prove that the answer is 18! We can always count on Jane to come up with a Rotary Moment for us! There was an article in The Daily Messenger about a Model T Ford that was going to be in an upcoming play. Guess who that Model T belongs to? You guessed it...our own John Brahm!

Our hearts were touched as Al read a poem to us that he had written for a little Valentine Contest that had taken place at his residence. It spoke of the love that he had for his family, and how that love mattered in his life. His poem had received Second Prize, but his Rotary Family would agree that its message was First Prize! We'd like to thank Ferris Hills for allowing us to celebrate Al's special day at your lovely facility. Most of all, we thank you, Al, for the opportunity to honor a life so well-lived! We hope to come back soon!

