



February 22, 2010

News

DEPARTMENTS

- Home
- Arts & Living
- Business
- Calendar
- Editorial
- Horoscope
- Legal Notices
- News
- Obituaries
- Sports
- Community
- Resources
- Volunteering
- Self Help
- Tides
- Weather
- Island Blog
- Archives

CUSTOMER SERVICE

- Advertising
- Submit Classifieds
- Subscriptions
- Employment
- Contact Us

- Photo Galleries
- Video Clips
- Audio Clips

PUBLICATIONS

- Nantucket Today
- Nantucket Real Estate Guide
- Nantucket Restaurant Guide
- Nantucket Wedding Guide
- Nantucket Home & Garden Guide
- Nantucket Argument Settlers
- Discover Nantucket: Visitor's Guide
- Save the Date

CLICK HERE
for Text Alerts
on your
Phone
or PDA

DONATE NOW to Haiti Earthquake Relief

CLICK HERE
to help provide immediate relief and long-term support to earthquake survivors in Haiti by making a donation

DON ALLEN FORD

ROMEOS celebratet 30 years of lunches without women

By Gabriella Burnham
I&M Staff Writer

Romeo! Romeo! Wherefore art thou Romeo? Stop beckoning for your lover over the balcony and try the SeaGrille on a Wednesday at about noon.

It may not be the young, seductive romance of a Shakespearian play, but there will be a slew of Retired Old Men Eating Out (ROMEOS) who want nothing more than a few jokes over lunch and cocktails.

"You're married to your wife for better or for worse, but not for lunch! And our wives are delighted to have us out of the house," said Huntington "Bucky" Block of Sconset, one of the 56 ROMEO members. The group celebrated its 30th anniversary yesterday at the SeaGrille, which has been their eatery of choice every Wednesday since 1991.

The group started with Edgar Newhouse in the late 1960s, whose son Alan is currently a member. Edgar started eating out with his buddies because he wanted to engage in "intelligent conversation," joked Bill Hance, better known as "the Professor," the longest-standing member of the group. A mutual friend of Hance and Newhouse invited the Professor to join, and he has carried on the tradition since.

First they started at the Club Car, which became too expensive, Hance said, so the ROMEOS, formerly known as the Wednesday Woebegones, moved from location to location until landing at the SeaGrille.

"They told them they weren't allowed to come back to the Tap Room because they caused too much of a ruckus," said Hance, shouting over the chatter in the restaurant. What Hance described as "rowdy" is more accurately defined as a genuinely good time. The group ranges from age 60 to 92 – the oldest being Benn Jesser – and, in between sipping Bloody Marys and eating clam chowder, the group dedicates their conversation to jokes, memories, and the occasional political debate.

"There is one thing you never want to admit when you're taking out a young woman," joked ROMEO member Nob Hovde. "Don't admit you were in World War II, and don't bring up prostate cancer."

The group is not difficult to join, said Block: all you have to do is get invited in by a current member, and you must tell a good joke. Also, each member must fit the criteria of the acronym, Retired Old Men Eating Out. Yes, that means no women are allowed to eat with the group, although Block assured that does not mean they don't like women. "We love them!" he said.

They did make one exception for Phyllis Macomber after her husband Bill, a ROMEO member and former ambassador to Jordan and Turkey, passed away in 2003. But other than that, no exceptions.

The turnout was a record breaking 45 at the anniversary lunch, which started off with drinks at the bar, where they gather for casual banter.

"They're very consistent," said Sea Grille owner Robin Harvey. "They have not missed a Wednesday. The only time we didn't have them is when we had to close for a special party. But they are here literally every Wednesday of the year. They peak at about 25 to 30 in the summer, and they could go down to six in the dead of the winter."

Belinda Cox, who was their waitress/bartender for five years, was named the guest of honor. The group was sad to see her leave the Sea Grille to work for Harbor Fuel.

"We know you're intelligent and beautiful, Belinda, but we know nothing else about you. Tell us something, do you have a husband?" asked Block. Cox confessed she has a boyfriend, upon which Block assured that if he stepped out of line, she has 45 retired old men to back her up.

Reach Gabriella Burnham at gburnham@inkvm.com

MARKET PLACE

Search Classifieds
Display Ads

NANTUCKET VISITORS GUIDE

- Culture & History
- Dining
- Getting Here
- Island Information
- Lodging
- Real Estate
- Recreation
- Shopping
- Town Government

RAFAEL OSONA ANTIQUES

508-228-3942

GREAT POINT PROPERTIES
RENTALS & SALES

SEE PHOTO ORDER PRINT

It's easy to order great pictures from The Inquirer and Mirror.

Click Here!

Ceramic Tiles, Greeting Cards, Mousepads, Mugs, Puzzles, T-Shirts and More!

The Inquirer and Mirror
PHOTO STORE
WWW.ACK.NET

Nantucket Philanthropy Guide 2009

NANTUCKET IS FRAGILE ENJOY IT

DON'T DESTROY IT
NANTUCKET IS A NATIONAL MONUMENT FOR BIRDS AND BEES