

## New York Holiday Lunch December 2, 2023

Dear Amicalistes,

On Saturday, December 2nd, sixty Amicale members gathered at Le Monde restaurant on Manhattan's Upper West Side to celebrate the season and rejoice in seeing old friends and colleagues, as we do each year.

Le Monde is described as *"a cherished bridge between two worlds, where the spirit of French Brasseries meets with the vibrancy of the Upper West Side for a truly enchanting dining experience."* We were not disappointed. Our private dining room was enhanced with Simone Galton's lovely seasonal table decorations creating a festive and warm ambiance. The mood was animated as old and new members alike greeted each other on arrival.

The afternoon started with mingling, Champagne and passed hors d'œuvres. Michael Carroll welcomed everyone on behalf of the Amicale committee as guests sat down to enjoy a three-course lunch, including our traditional, bakery-fresh bûche de Noël for dessert. The culinary offerings were all superb.

Michael then introduced Amicale USA president, Ann Wadman, who began by thanking members of the Amicale USA team for their hard work, especially Annik Klein, who not only organizes and oversees our U.S. events, but is also Amicale's treasurer. Ann thanked Simone Galton who excels with her beautiful table decorations, Michael and Jim for their year-round support, and Robert Moran, our headquarters liaison officer, for his help with the AF table gifts and raffle prizes. Ann emphasized that everything Amicale USA does is a team effort.

We welcomed six new members - Nancy Petrovic, Christophe Vergnol, Silvia Lizarzaburu, Caroline Ramos, Olivia Homsy and Charles Paul - and thanked those who had come from outside the New York area: Joe Deeney and his grandson, Lance, from Pennsylvania; Robert Bracken and George Applegate from California; and Ray Cazamayou from Florida.

Next, Ann delivered the "State of the Amicale," reporting that our organization is thriving, with an increase in total active U.S. membership this year from 328 to 346. Recent changes to representation in the regions have also taken place and Ann introduced two new regional leaders in attendance: Robert Bracken for the Western region and Ray Cazamayou who, along with Eva Fabo, heads up our new Amicale delegation in Florida. The opportunities for getting together in person in 2023 were numerous and we plan more in the year ahead.

Robert Bracken then addressed the group and emphasized the importance of membership growth by suggesting that we all encourage former colleagues who are not yet members of Amicale to join. We're always eager to grow our membership so let's take Robert's lead.

Howie Podrasky then took the floor to announce that Amicale New York's annual summer cruise from Freeport, Long Island is on for Tuesday, June 18, 2024. He encouraged everyone to plan ahead, save the date and join us for this very popular event. Howie pointed out that we sail rain or shine and, for those who might be worried about choppy seas, he reminded everyone that it's always smooth sailing in the calm bays off Long Island.

Ann then turned the proceedings back over to our emcee, Michael, to conduct the raffle for three great prizes. He began by thanking Diane Corman-Rihs who donated a beautiful, top-of-the-line Nespresso machine -- Marie Sauvaget was the lucky winner. Nancy Inaba won two roundtrip tickets to Europe, and Mya Harwood took home a beautiful model of the new Airbus 350.

The event ended on a high note with members in agreement that it had been a great success, and all looking forward to the next one.

The Amicale committee wishes all its members un Joyeux Noël, des Bonnes Fêtes et une excellent Année 2024.

Avec nos amitiés,

The USA Amicale Committee: Annik, Ann, Michael, Howie, Jim and Robert