

BECON

10/4 (good buddy) /19

As was mentioned in last week's BECON, Rene videoed this morning's pledge that will apparently be used by a FOX 4 initiative called Path to Patriotism where the Pledge of Allegiance will be aired Monday through Fridays in the mornings. Everyone was standing extra tall and straight and reciting with conviction. Nicely done.

Guests

- Dennis Pitman, Yellowstone Co. Commissioner, was our speaker this morning.
- Pastor Scott Darling (One Million Praying), introduced by Benette Darling. Benette also led the prayer this morning.
- Collette Critelli – Rene's sister was here and introduced by Tanner.

Announcements

- It was nice to see Mark Schiffner and Kelly Elletson at breakfast this morning – both recovering from injuries/medical procedures.
- Thank you notes from the Billings Clinic and from the USS Billings Commissioning team were circulated today. As was mentioned by Dennis Pitman today in his talk, the Club's donation to the commissioning has been earmarked for a crisis fund for crew members that may need financial help in the future.
- For anyone who signed up for the Club event at the Mustang game and failed to show-up, there will be a little something extra in your next invoice apparently ☺
- Phil Bauer is looking for help with a giant Halloween spook house that he will be helping with. It's a benefit for the HER Campaign, Big Brothers & Sisters and SCRAP. To be located at 2137 Lampman Dr. This runs from the 29th thru the 31st – 6 pm to 10 pm.
- Just an FYI that came up in the spook house announcement, Rene mentioned the Group page for our Club on Facebook can be used for inter-Club announcements if so inclined. If you are not already on the group page, here is a link: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/178613855915873/> When you go to the page, click where it says join. The page is open to members and spouses but is private so posts can only be seen by those in the group whereas our Facebook page is visible by the public.
- Leif announced that the new Bozeman Exchange Club was launched on June 26th and that another one has started in Kalispell (currently 10 signed up, need 20 to launch so please spread the word if you know anyone in the Kalispell area), another one planned for Cody, WY. Our own Tony P has been instrumental in building these clubs and as such, Leif presented him with a "New Club Builder" plaque in recognition of his work in these efforts. Thanks Tony!
- Those nifty little Exchange Club water bottles from the Hole n One tourney are still available - \$11. If I didn't already have 10,000 of these, I would get one myself . . . maybe I'll just make it 10,001?

- And apparently on the down low because there was no announcement today (we had inside knowledge at our table), Happy Birthday to Larry Iacopini. Fellow hacker, long-time club member and all around good guy!
- Tanner reminded us of the Halloween Pub Crawl (Nov. 2) and the Chile Cookoff (Nov. 9). We need more red hot chili cookers for this cookoff, get in touch with Tanner if you'd like to enter your chili.

Speaker

Dennis Pitman came in this morning and spoke more about the commissioning of the USS Billings, the Magic City's namesake new Littoral Combat Ship.

Per Wikipedia, The littoral combat ship (LCS) is a set of two classes of relatively small surface vessels designed for operations near shore by the United States Navy. It was "envisioned to be a networked, agile, stealthy surface combatant capable of defeating anti-access and asymmetric threats in the littorals. Littoral combat ships are comparable to the corvettes found in other navies.

(Note – Littorals means littoral zone or near shore, which is where this ship is designed to operate specifically in anti-mine duty and will apparently be used to intercept drug running boats and the like).

This ship doesn't have conventional propellers but instead is jet propelled, and as such, can really haul the groceries – 40 to 50 mph (or did he mean knots?), has a light draft to operate in shallow water and they can direct those jets to be used as a weapon of sorts to swamp smaller boats with unfriendly intent. It has a crew of 75, actually two crews that rotate in six-month deployments. It doesn't have a home port yet but was launched in Key West, FL.

With regard to the commissioning, this is what we usually see on tv with the woman hitting the bow of the ship and it sliding into the water and creating a mini tidal wave – "I hereby commission this sloop, the Flying Wasp," etc. This ceremony is both the culmination of a lot of lead-up work done by the Navy and the work and fundraising done by the namesake Billings group like that Vice-Chaired by Commissioner Pitman, as well as on-going efforts to look after its crew with funding for various things after the commissioning and throughout the service of this ship. Dennis mentioned that a "commissioning" represents the "bringing to life" of this ship and includes the pomp and circumstance associated with the ceremonies (although Dennis mentioned their group de-formalized a lot of this) and includes the gifts for the crew (thanks Red OXX and others). The ship is decorated with art and mementos from Billings (including a photograph by our own Kevin Davis' wife) and it is kind of cool that they put up street signs in the ship's hallways that match the familiar Billings streets ie Central Avenue.

Dennis showed us a draft of a Youtube video of the ship and commissioning and also mentioned that the naming of a ship literally takes an Act of Congress -so it's not easy and is quite interesting that not only is this ship now in service but another ship, a submarine, the USS Montana, is also in construction currently.

For our sponsorship, the club was given 4 commemorative coins and 4 hats so those were given away this morning to eight lucky Club members and these coins & hats are also for sale - \$20 with the proceeds going to those funds mentioned above. Interestingly, the commemorative coins have a design mostly the same as the Navy logo for the ship but was also required by the Navy to be different and unique. These coins are in limited numbers so they might be a nice little keep sake and would make a cool golf marker.

Have a great National Taco and Vodka day (stay upwind of that!)