



Waunakee Rotary Club

May 27, 2010
Vol. 43 No. 40

Daren Steuart and Ben Pechan shared a little about their lives and careers as they gave their classification talks at the May 20 Rotary meeting.

Daren explained the winding journey that led him to start his own social networking site.

Growing up in the Salt Lake City area as one of eight children, he participated in a wide variety of activities from football and wrestling to debate and choir.

“Basically anything that would get me out of school I did,” he said.

After one year of college, Daren set out for a two-year mission in Italy. He learned Italian and learned how to make pasta, including his favorite, gnocchi.

With his mission complete, Daren headed back to Utah to finish his degree in economics and political science at the University of Utah.

During a stint working on Capitol Hill he learned he wasn’t as interested in politics as he once thought.

So he set out selling gaskets.

“I think I was the only gasket seller that ever had an economics degree,” Daren said.

After a couple years Daren opted to go to business school at the University of Chicago.

His experiences in Italy prompted him to add an international flair to his studies, and he took advantage of three internships that provided him with great experience.

Daren then jumped into the insurance industry, which led to almost a decade of work as a project manager for various insurance companies across the country. That work also brought him to Madison.

In 2009 Daren decided to leave CUNA Mutual Group and start his

own company – an online social network for fitness professionals. And early this year, *fitstash.com* went live.

With 38 million Americans seeking information about exercise online and 1.5 million fitness trainers and teachers, Daren felt that market was ready for a social network targeted just for it.

And so far, so good, he said, as the site has had 5,000 unique visitors and 50,000 page views in the first two months without any advertising.

Ben Pechan realized his desire to go into accounting as a student in an introduction to accounting class right here at Waunakee High School.

Growing up, Ben played football and baseball and is still passionate about both. As college neared, he looked at strong accounting programs at UW-Madison and UW-Whitewater before ultimately selecting to head to Whitewater.

During college, Ben had the opportunity to work in an internal audit position with Premier Bank, which allowed him to get a great deal of hands-on experience. Ben also interned with Kohler Corporation and actually got a job offer, but he declined as he was determined to get his CPA.

Luckily, after college he accepted a job with Virchow Krause, soon to be known as Baker Tilly, in Madison.

He started there in early 2008 and as of June 1 he will be a senior accountant. He works in the construction real estate group handling mostly regional accounts, but he did have the opportunity to go to Washington, D.C. and help out in that office for a short time.

During his spare time, Ben enjoys playing on the Home Talent baseball

OFFICERS

TOM REIS, PRESIDENT • BRENT ZIEGLER, PRESIDENT ELECT
PHIL WILLEMS, CLUB SECRETARY
BOB PULVERMACHER, RECORDING SECRETARY • AL DASSOW, TREASURER

DIRECTORS

ELLEN SCHAAF • JOHN CULLEN • LINDA OLSON

Calendar of Events:

- June 24, *changing of officers.*
- July 13, *pontoon cruise on Lake Wisconsin.*
- July 14, *senior citizens picnic*

team and enjoying the outdoors, especially being on the water.

Guests: Brent Neevel, guest of Roberta Baumann.

Visiting Rotarians: None.

Birthdays: May 28, Jon Jordan

Anniversaries: June 28, Gordon and Marilyn Meffert; June 29, Jim and Joanne Leonard; June 30, Fritz and Sheri Durst; June 30, Gene and Catherine Smith; July 2, Katie Kennedy-Shepherd and Jeremey Shepherd

Prayers: May 27, Susan Vergeront; June 3, Leonard Allen; June 10, Pat Durden.

Programs: May 27, Brian Ziegler, Badger Honor Flight; June 3, Club Assembly.

Greeters: May 27, Robert Tucker and Jim Tubbs; June 3, Bill Tygum and Susan Vergeront; June 10, Sean Wayne and Phil Willems.

Make up meetings online

It’s easy to make up a meeting on the Internet. The site is www.rotaryclubone.org. Print out the form and give it to Phil Willems, the club secretary.