

I want to thank John Bennett for that heartfelt toast to the Presidents of our two great Republics, the United States and France.

My name is Joseph Smallhoover and as President of the American Club of Paris, it is a great honor for me to welcome you all to this momentous occasion. For on this day we mark both the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the resumption of activities of the American Club of Paris following the hiatus caused by the Nazi tyranny, as well as the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the Paris American Club of New York.

That tyranny brought to a temporary end in Paris 160 odd years of a tradition of dinners started by Benjamin Franklin during his time as Commissioner and later Ambassador of the United States to France, but was the start of a tradition simply relocated to New York.

The Franklin traditions had been interrupted once before by the French Revolution, but they were resumed after the Revolution and continued without further interruption until 1940.

These luncheons and dinners were celebrated regularly through out the years, usually under the auspices of our Ministers or Ambassadors. As related in the Club's Yearbook of 1925 by an eminent painter of the time, the late Daniel Ridgway Knight (one of our former Vice Presidents and grandfather of Ambassador Ridgway Brewster Knight, who was President of the American Club of Paris when I joined in 1985), the long chain of clubs – “Latin Quarter Club,” “Gradle Club,” “Pen and Pencil Club,” “The Ramblers,” and “Stanley Club” – led up to the Universities Club, which was in turn converted into the “American Club” at the Thanksgiving

Dinner of 1904. General Horace Porter, then American Ambassador to France and Honorary President of the Universities Club, presided at that dinner, and the late William Swift Dalliba (a leading Paris businessman from Chicago, who had been responsible for the expansion of American Express to Europe) was elected by acclamation President of the “American Club of Paris.”

As you know, by the late 1930’s there was a large and vibrant American business, professional and artistic community in Paris, about which much has been written – some of which might even be true. In any event, while there was much coming and going across the Atlantic during those years, that all came to an abrupt end.

As the Nazis annexed Austria, took over the Sudetenland and signed a nonaggression pact with

the Soviet Union, the prospects for Americans living in Europe grew increasingly dim. Then the invasion of Poland in September 1939, put out the last lamp of peace and Americans in Paris, reluctantly and sadly, began leaving for home.

Many of the members of the American Club of Paris settled in New York. They were all heart broken about developments in Europe and curious about the fate of their beloved City of Lights -- Following the lead of Raymond Harper, an international lawyer who had practiced in Paris, they began meeting at the Brevoort Hotel in New York for lunch shortly afterward the fall of Paris in June 1940. Neither Raymond Harper nor any of the others attending those lunches sent out announcements or made phone calls. But by word of mouth the news got around. At first there were five or six for lunch, then 10 or 12, soon 25 or 30.

In late 1940, the Brevoort lunches became, without much fanfare, the Paris American Club of New York. But I will leave it to my eminent colleague President John Bennett to enlighten you on the subsequent history of the New York Club.

As might be expected, following the Liberation and the end of World War II, some of the former members of the American Club of Paris returned to the City of Lights. And with their return, the American Club of Paris resumed its activities.

In May 1946, some seventy years ago, the first luncheon meeting following the Liberation of Paris was given in honor of Jefferson Caffery, the American Ambassador to France and Honorary President of the American Club of Paris.

For a number of years, the two Clubs were in close contact, but as the generations who had participated in the cataclysm of the mid-Twentieth Century faded away, so also did the ties between us.

Today, not only do we celebrate these important anniversaries, but we also rekindle that friendship between our two Clubs, and honor the tradition that Benjamin Franklin began when he cemented ties between the United States and France.

And so in that light, and the long tradition of support and patronage by the American Ambassador in Paris, it gives me great pleasure to introduce to you the Honorable Jane D. Hartley, United States Ambassador to France and Monaco.

Madame Ambassador ...