

MEN'S CLUB

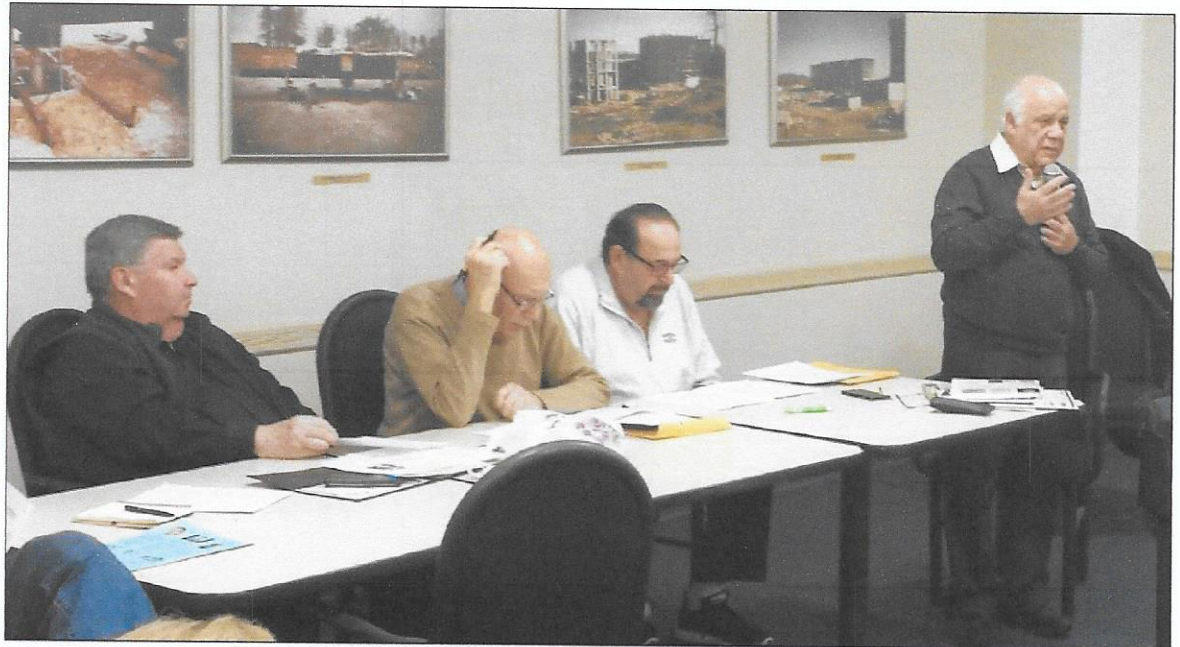
BY PAUL NETTLER

Our meeting on January 14th unfortunately started on a somber note with our President, Toby Horowitz, eulogizing our Founding President, Al Fuchs, who died on December 15th. He pointed out that without Al the Men's Club would never have come into existence. Al was a trusted friend to all who came into contact with him. He was passionate about the activities of the Men's Club and always thought of the members' interests. Toby feels that as a tribute to Al we all have a responsibility to make sure that the Men's Club continue to grow and remain strong and to remember his final words to Toby, "keep it going."

Our speaker on January 14th, Saul Silas Fathi, treated us to a fascinating current events cum history lesson about the world's trouble spots. His life story is most unusual. Having been born into a prominent Jewish family in Iraq, Saul's knowledge is first hand. At age 10, he and his younger brother were smuggled out of Baghdad and eventually reached Israel. He served in both the Israeli Air Force and the U.S. Army.

Saul started the lecture by giving us a brief review of the history of the Middle East and Islam from Roman times through the birth of Islam. He touched upon the difference between the Sunni and Shia and the role that corruption and stolen resources played through the centuries. He also discussed the manifestations of the Arab Spring.

Saul has some pretty strong opinions, which seem sometimes shocking. For instance, he believes that the military dictatorship is the only entity that can bring stability to the Egyptians, and yet, the Egyptian military is well known to be corrupt; that "Afghanistan is a hell hole not worthy of American sacrifices," and



Speaker Saul Silas Fathi addresses the crowd

the only reason Afghanistan pretends to be our ally is because of the financial aid they get from us, and if that stops, the Taliban will move back in from Pakistan.

Saul also believes that Iran's desire to build an atomic bomb should be feared most by Turkey and Saudi Arabia, because they are Shia and the Saudis are Sunni—tribal warfare versus the fact that Israel would retaliate. He believes—as do many others—that invading Iraq was a colossal mistake, exacerbated by the disbanding of the Iraqi officers corps, sending them back to their homes without any source of income or hope. It is these men, whom Saul believes have become the core of ISIS—their revenge. He does not rule out putting U.S. boots on the ground to destroy ISIS, and thinks we should stay out of the Ukraine. It's a corrupt country and it's not worth risking another cold war. Saul also believes that there will never be a two-state solution with the Palestinians. Both parties want Jerusalem to be its capital and you can never have two nations with the same capital.

What Saul fears the most is the possibility, that rather

than bomb Israel with an atomic weapon and risk certain devastating retaliation, some rogue nation such as Pakistan or North Korea would sell its capability to a group, such as ISIS, which has no territory or people to destroy. The presentation ended with a lively Q and A. There was some disagreement from the audience.

On February 11th, we will turn our attention away from the sublime to the ridiculous as we travel back in time to the world of Abbott & Costello. Who can forget the plaintiff cry, "Hey Abbo-o-o-ott?" Our speaker that evening will be Sal St. George, a playwright and living history consultant. His talk is entitled, *The Forgotten Funny Men: The Abbott and Costello Story*. In 1972, Sal visited Bud in his home. The conversation was recorded as Bud reminisced about his life as part of one of America's most beloved and hilarious comedy teams. It should be a fun and revealing evening.

Chaired by Gary Darche, the Current Events Group met on January 11th. Among the topics covered were the fact that there is nothing new about citizens not paying tax-

es, if they object to them. In 1791, there was a "Whiskey Rebellion" in this country, put down by none other than George Washington. Other topics touched upon included the high cost of some prescription drugs and medical care in general; the Syrian refugee crisis; the Clinton-Sanders contest; and of course, no discussion of current events would be complete without mentioning "The Donald."

The topics planned for the February meeting include the Iowa caucus results and Primary contests in general; financial attacks on Israel; New York City and State relationships; Muslims in America; and an update on the Iran treaty. As you can see, we have something for every taste, and you will be pleasantly surprised to see how well versed your neighbors are. Gary will be dodging tornados in Florida for the next few months, so Ralph Edwards will be leading the discussions. The meetings are at 10:30 until noon in the Coleridge Lounge, on February 8th, March 14th and April 18th. For further information contact Ralph at 347-235-0472.

Ralph will also be leading the Book Group, which has

its next meeting on April 11th at 10:30. The books to be discussed, "Ally" and "Devil in the White City", will be available at the Glen Oaks Library in March. Future events include a Bingo Night on February 28th in the large card room near the theater, where there will be door prizes; a members only Super Bowl Party on February 7th in the Coleridge Lounge, to which attendance is limited to 35 members. Heroes and soft drinks will be served at no charge. There will be a dinner on February 9th at The Heart of Portugal Restaurant and a Stud Poker Tourney on February 23rd at 6:30 in the downstairs card room. Our informal breakfasts continue to attract new members. We meet every Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday at 9:15 in The Towers restaurant, at which time we solve the world's problems. And don't forget to bring a dollar to our next meeting for our Chuck-A-Buck drawing. The odds are much better than the Lottery. For more information, go to our website, northshoretowersmensclub.org, or call our Events Committee Chairman, Arnie Rabinowitz, at 516-317-6705.