



CIGAR BOX BULLETIN

Retired Men's Association of Greenwich, Inc.

www.greenwichrma.org

This Bulletin is brought to you each week by these volunteers
Chair/Editor: **Chet Risio**. *Scribes:* **Av Rivel, Kurt Schaffir, Arnold Gordon, Ed Farrell, Gerry Lessuk, George Stockbridge, Dan Fredland, Tony Cocchi, Joe Mancinelli.**
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Volume 65, Number 46, April 4, 2018
Scribe: TONY COCCHI

President DON CONWAY opened the meeting at 10 a.m., and PETER STERN led us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

TOM HEALY then directed us, GEORGE STOCKBRIDGE accompanying on the Steinway on our monthly singing of the Star-Spangled Banner, He's Got the Whole World in His Hands and Good Night, Irene".

Corresponding Secretary (aka joke teller) ARNOLD GORDON spun us a story about a dyslectic nurse and her potential problem with an instruction on how to handle a boil.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. **RALPH VIGGIANO** called for a vote on the new nominees for the Offices, Board Members, and Standing Committees for the next year. The nominees were approved unanimously.

OFFICERS
President

TAD LARRABEE

| | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1st Vice-President | JERRY SCHWENDEMAN |
| 2nd Vice-President | RUSS HARDEN |
| 3rd Vice-President | MICHAEL AMBROSINO |
| Treasurer | WAYNE DEVRIES |
| Recording Secretary | JIM FISHBEIN |

BOARD MEMBERS

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Membership | HORST TEBBE |
| Program | HOLLISTER STURGES |
| Publicity | JACK CUFF |
| Special Events 1 | ABBY SMOLER |
| Special Events 2 | MIKE FERRARESE |
| Director-at-Large | 1 Yr JACK WEIR |
| Director-at-Large | 1 yr ANDY HOLMES |
| Past President | DON CONWAY |
| Past President | PETER UHRY |

STANDING COMMITTEES

| | |
|------------------|-------------|
| Cigar Box Bullen | CHET RISIO |
| Volunteers | PETER STERN |
| Audit | JIM STEEN |

2. RMA Summer Tennis: JOHN KNIGHT, TONY COCCHI and PETER UHRY discussed the upcoming summer tennis program and the addition of Pickle-ball as a summer sport. The tennis courts at Loughlin Field in Cos Cob will be used for both tennis and Pickle-ball, on Mondays and Thursday from 9AM to 11 AM. The response of the RMA members will determine the how the court use is divided between the two sports. We are discussing with Betsy Underhill (the local Pickleball Ambassador) to supply us with lessons and some temporary equipment (racquets and balls).

3. Shakespeare Group: The RMA Shakespeare Group will be discussing "Romeo and Juliet" next Thursday, April 12, at the home of KEITH SMITH, 37Jones Park Drive in Riverside. If you would like to join the group you can email GEORGE STOCKBRIDGE at grspersonal@aol.com or call him at 203-698-0710.

Editor's Note: GEORGE, speaking of the feud between the Montagues and Capulets, mispronounced the latter name as "Copulates". The young lovers would surely have done so were it not for their early demise.

4. Neighbor to Neighbor: JIM SANTORA read a "Thank you" note from the Neighbor to Neighbor organization thanking the members for their generous donations which provided food, clothing and basic living essentials for people in our community.

5. On Saturday, April 7, 2018 there will be a re-dedication of the Grand Army of the Republic Civil War Veterans Memorial at 10 AM at 280 Greenwich Avenue Havemeyer building. The memorial is in memory of the 69 soldiers who gave their lives in that war as well as the over 450 volunteers (nearly 8% of the towns 1860 population) for the army.

COMMITTEES

VISITING: WAYNE WRIGHT reported that NICK MECCA has been hospitalized in Stamford Hospital. No calls or visits are requested.

Editor's note; NICK passed away later that day at age 89. Family and friends will gather on Monday, April 9, 4-8pm at Coxe & Graziano Funeral Home, 134 Hamilton Ave.

MEMBERSHIP: HORST TEBBE advised that there were 98 members in attendance. Those celebrating birthdays were JOHN AWDZIEWICZ, 86, LARRY REBAK, 81, ALLEN DEERING, 83, and MIKE FERRARESE 75.

VOLUNTEER HOURS: ANDRE MAZUREK advised that there were 451 hours by 41 men for outside activities, and 157 hours by 27 men for RMA activities. The maximum hours reported was by TAD LARRABEE with 23 hours.

FUN AND GAMES

BRIDGE: KURT SCHAFFIR reported there were 7 players. The 3 highest were KURT SCHAFFIR WITH 4550, ANDRE MAZUREK with 2770, and RON FRIEDMAN with 2720.

TENNIS; JOE MANCINELLI reported the winners on court #1 were TOM HEALY and RANDY MOTLAND; winners on court #2 were MICHAEL AMBROSINO and SAM MARASSO. Next week's captain is PETER ORBANOWSKI.

HEARTS: PETER BERG related to us that there were 8 players. Table #1 winners were PETER BERG and JOHN KNIGHT. At table 2 TOM HEALY and JOHN HOEY won. Those shooting the moon were PETER BERG, JOHN KNIGHT, and TOM HEALY. JOHN STANKUNAS shot the moon twice.

GOLF: MIKE RYAN reported that last week was a washout, sign-up sheets for the next 2 weeks are posted in the back. He will be collecting dues and is looking for golf hosts over the next seven months of the season.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Open to all members, guests, candidates and spouses. Checks to be made out to RMA, and must be received within two weeks or the reservation will be cancelled. Contact MIKE FERRARESE (myagentmike@yahoo.com / 203-554-0678) or ABBEY SMOLER (abbeysmoler@gmail.com / 203-531-0235).

West Point tour, April 19, 2018. Lunch at the Thayer Hotel, \$85. Bus departs 8:45am from St. Catherine's Church parking lot. Status: Wait listed.

Botanical Gardens, lunch at Mario's Restaurant on Arthur Ave., May 24, \$105pp. Bus departs St. Catherine's at 8:45am. Status: 18 places open.

Belmont Race Track. Thursday, June 14, 2018. Lunch: Buffet in Belmont Room. Cost: \$85.00. Bus leaves St. Catherine's at 10:30 AM. Status: Wait listed.

TODAY'S SPEAKER

After the break, HOLLISTER STURGES introduced the speaker, **Tom Niles**. Tom has 36 years of experience in the United States Foreign Service including Ambassador to Canada, Ambassador to Greece, Ambassador to the European Union as well as Assistant Secretary of State for Europe and Canada. Tom gave his perspective on changes that the current administration has made in foreign affairs. Those opinions include:

- There is a lack of a cohesive foreign policy and processes that gather and formulate policy from multiple sources and coordinate and make joint decisions.
- The State department is being destroyed due to underfunding, understaffing and neglect. He pointed out that we are negotiating in the Far East without an Ambassador to South Korea.
- The appointment of National Security Adviser John Bolton is frightening because of his lack of "adult supervision".
- The current administration is dismantling the institutions and working arrangements that have served the country well and been built up since 1945. GATT, the International Monetary Fund, the International Bank, NATO and the opinion of our European allies have all been impacted by the actions of the administration.
- The introduction of tariffs can cause trade wars that damage both sides. The dissolution of NAFTA would create real problems for the US, Mexico and Canada.
- If the US backs out of the Iran treaty, it will be a disaster because the treaty is working and Iran is not proceeding toward developing nuclear weapons. In addition, it would discourage North Korea from entering a deal with the US if it feels the US cannot be counted on to keep an agreement.
- The making of short term domestic political decisions is hurting the longer term and international opinions. He used the decision to move the US Embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem as an example.

NEXT WEEK'S SPEAKER
Bea Blahing on "The Indigenous Peoples of Mindanao"

Visit us at www.greenwichrma.org

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MEMBER PROFILE of JIM MACKAY

This the 23rd in a series of Member Profiles intended to allow members to get to know one another beyond a face and a name tag.

JAMES MILLAR MACKAY was born January 19, 1921 in the Byram section of Greenwich, CT in a house built by his grandfather. Three years later the Mackays moved to his Grandfather Hvolbeck's farm on Riversville Road in Glenville, where he remained for the next 86 years. Life for a boy growing up on a farm in the then forested area of Greenwich was somewhat idyllic. Despite the hard farm work, there was a forest to explore, a river to swim in and small game to hunt. When the Depression hit, the family was able to support itself because the farm was self-sustaining.

"My grandparents, the Hvolbecks, were Danish on my mother's side. In 1860 they bought this farm where I grew up and still live. My MacKay grandparents had come over about the same time around 1870, and settled in Greenwich on Havemeyer Place. My Grandfather MacKay was a carpenter, and my father was an electrician, so I come from working people. On the farm we raised chickens, rabbits, cows and horses plus corn, potatoes, and apples. We would sell the apples to the Palmer Cider Mill. The Depression was very hard. We didn't have material things but we had enough to eat. Thinking back on it now, it was a fabulous time.

When I was fourteen, my father bought me a .22 rifle. I did a lot of hunting, fishing and trapping. We used to trap muskrats in the Byram River and sell the furs to I.J. Fox in New York City for five dollars a pelt."



Jim, age 19, with his dog, Boy, at the homestead on Riversville Road.

In 1939 Jim graduated from *Greenwich High School* and went to work at the Greenwich Trust Company on Greenwich Avenue, as a runner for \$12.00 a week, working six days a week. He was hired by F. Reginald Gisborne, President of the Greenwich Trust Company. At the bank, he worked his way up to a teller position. In 1941 Jim married Catherine Miles, from Greenwich. They had met two years earlier in high school, and renewed their acquaintance at a party in Pemberwick. Because they were both under 21, Jim at 20 and Catherine 19, state law required they get permission from a judge to tie the knot.

Jim was drafted in 1942 at age 21, and took basic training at Fort McClellan Alabama. As an infantryman, he was shipped to Yuma, Arizona for desert training in preparation for the North African campaign.

“But then the North African campaign was over in 1943, so we were shipped to Belfast, Ireland to get ready for the invasion of France. I was transferred from the Eighth Infantry Division to the Signal Corps, which was an intelligence unit that intercepted and listened in on German transmissions. We had German-speaking American boys who were able to interpret what they were saying. While in this division, I was a corporal and served as the jeep driver to the Company Commander. As a result I was able to drive all over Europe and see much of the countries I had never visited before.



before D-Day, 1944

Jim with a GI buddy in England shortly

We landed on Omaha Beach, approximately 10 days after the initial allied landing, and went all through Normandy France, and up through to Paris where we liberated Paris from the Germans. We were attached to Patton's Third Army and the Battle of the Bulge began, and all units were headed towards that area. After that battle, we crossed the Rhine at Worms into Germany, and then our next task was to free the Dachau concentration camp. Most of the people were all dead, and they were piled into big freight cars, thousands and thousands of naked bodies. They had been stripped of everything so the Nazis could put them in the ovens. It was a horrible experience. Surrounding Dachau were all individual homes, and the locals said they had no idea what was going on in that place. I questioned that: "How could they not know...They knew...they knew."

Eventually we ended up in Salzburg, Austria, where we met the Russians". This brought the end of the war in Germany. It was a long stretch of time for me, probably over a two-year period."

The war in Europe was over in 1945, and Jim was shipped back to the US eager to get out of the Army, but the war in the Pacific was still raging and it appeared that he would be sent there. The atom bombs on Nagasaki and Hiroshima ended that conflict and Jim was discharged. He went back to the bank.

"I got my old job back and went from twelve to twenty-four dollars a week. All firms had to rehire us back again but, because all the positions had been filled with women, they didn't know what to do with us. When I was drafted I left as a teller and was supposed to come back as a teller. So I spent six months weeding out old bank statements and records. [Eventually, the women married and left the bank and I got my job back as a teller.](#)"

The bank educated him by having him attend the University of Wisconsin, the Amos Tuck School in Dartmouth, and the American Institute of Banking. It was more than three years of graduate courses. Jim eventually became a commercial loan officer. He made loans and friendships with many of the merchants in Greenwich.

"I worked with them all, Irv Grannick had a drugstore on Greenwich Avenue, and The Weiss family had the Favorite Shoe Store. The Toggery Shop and Webb's Food Market were also important customers. Jim McArdle had a seed company before becoming McArdle's Garden Shop. We used to loan money to carry their inventory and receivables."

Over the next 20 years from 1945 to 1965, the Greenwich Trust Company acquired four or five local banks. The banking industry was evolving, and bank acquisitions were being made and eventually the Greenwich Trust Company was sold to the Bank of New England.

"But bad loans were being made by the Bank of New England, which led to its bankruptcy. We were a 33 billion dollar bank that went broke. I and other bank officers lost a lot of money. Common stockholders were all washed out." The Bank was taken over by the FDIC out of bankruptcy, and eventually sold to the Bank of America. Except for a short time, I worked at the bank all my life. When I retired at 63, I was a Vice President, Loan Officer."

The MacKays have two daughters, Bonnie and Kimberly, six grandchildren and six great grandchildren. Some still live in Greenwich.



Jim and Catherine at their winter home in Venice, Florida

In his leisure time, Jim volunteered as treasurer for 10 years with Christ Church, and five years with the Girl Scouts of Greenwich. He was President of the Exchange Club in Greenwich, and handled the money for the Community Chest and the American Red Cross in Greenwich. He served as a member of the Representative Town Meeting for 15 years. Jim was a founding member of the Bailiwick Swim and Tennis Club in Greenwich, where he served as treasurer. In Venice Florida, where he had a second home for 30 years, he was a member of the Plantation Golf and Country Club, where he actively played golf and tennis into his 90's. He was a superb athlete.

"I used to ski at Stratton Mountain, hunted all over New England, and I played golf and tennis. I've won so many trophies I don't know what to do with them all."

Jim Mackay is a long time member of the RMA. He served as an active member, and enjoyed the great camaraderie and weekly speakers who came.

Jim loves Catherine, his wife of 76 years, his family, grandchildren, and great grandchildren, and they all love him back. He was always so involved in their interests, which made him a favorite member of the extended family. They all called him "Pop" or "Poppy", which brought a lot of joy to both himself and all the family.

Jim, always reluctant to talk about his war experiences, was asked if he could talk more about World War II, and he only said, *"It was brutal...too brutal."*