

CIGAR BOX BULLETIN

Retired Men's Association of Greenwich, Inc.
37 Lafayette Place, Greenwich, CT 06830

www.greenwichrma.org

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"We make ourselves sick by worrying about our health."
Dr. Lewis Thomas

President **JERRY SCHWENDEMAN** frantically rang the bell at 9:58 but the unruly crowd did not settle down until 10:01 when **DON HERMANN** led us in the pledge. Then **JACK SWEGER** conducted us in *God Bless America, Baby Face, and I've Been Working on the Railroad*. **GEORGE STOCKBRIDGE** lent his able hands in piano accompaniment. Corresponding Secretary **ARNOLD GORDON** challenged the crowd to answer two of George Carlin's "ponderisms" and then related a story about the devoted football fan who opted for the Super Bowl game instead of his wife's funeral. In honor of Memorial Day, **STEVE MARINO** showed a five-minute video of the annual commemoration ceremony at Indian Harbor Yacht Club from 2015, a moving event; we caught a glimpse of our former, long-time member, **CHUCK STANDARD**.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

El Presidente welcomed returnees **MARSHALL TOPPO** from Ft. Lauderdale, Fl and **PAUL KEELER** from Vero Beach, Fl and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

PETER UHRY asked for volunteers to *Help Improve Binney Park*, by cleaning up flower beds around the pond area. It will take place on Saturday, June 1 from 9:30 until noon. Preregister at bpacinformation@gmail.com or contact **PETER**: 203-637-0482.

HORST TEBBE expressed disappointment in the nearly 100 members who have not paid their RMA dues that were due on May 1st. **WARNING**: Grace period will end as of next meeting and those still in arrears will be put on the inactive list. **PLEASE PAY YOUR DUES. THE RMA DEPENDS ON THE FUNDS TO CARRY OUT ITS MISSION AND PROGRAMS.**

COMMITTEE REPORTS

VISITING: There was no report.

PROGRAM: **TAD LARRABEE** urged us to stay for the talk by recent Pulitzer Prize winner, David Blight, about his book *Frederick Douglass, Prophet of Freedom*. **HOLLISTER STURGES** announced that former member **Bob Wylie, on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the D-Day invasion, will address us next week about his WWII experience: D-Day, Operation Overlord, Six of June, 1944.** Bob was a nose-gunner in the Air Force, stationed in England; he flew on 25 bombing missions over Europe. A Member Profile of Bob is being distributed to the RMA members under a separate mailing. Profile Editor **CHET RISIO** thanked **HOLLISTER STURGES** and **TAD LARRABEE** for their invaluable help in completing Bob's Profile.

MEMBERSHIP: **HORST TEBBE** reported 111 members present. There was one guest, Bob Simms, g/o **RUSS HARDEN** and **GEORGE STOCKBRIDGE**. Inductee **DOUG FIELDS** was introduced for membership by **PETER ORBANOWSKI** and **ED FARRELL**. **DOUG** and his wife Marilyn are Greenwich residents. A graduate of Fordham University with a B.S. and Harvard University with an MBA, he founded and still runs TDA Industries, a real estate development and private equity-oriented company. **DOUG** enjoys traveling and has visited 54 countries. He likes tennis and other outdoor activities (note to walkers; recruit him). Birthdays were celebrated for **LARRY POSNER, 71, DAVID KANE, 86, RALPH VIGGIANO, 71, DICK BERGSTRESSER, 85, AL KNIGHT, 77, and JOE COLEMAN, 91.** Special congratulations to **SERGE GABRIEL** who turned the RMA-magical 90 last week (so where was the cake?). Another enviable milestone mentioned was the 70th wedding anniversary of member **GEORGE CHELWICK** and his wife Nancy.

As part of the periodic Human-Interest series initiated by **CHET RISIO**, he introduced **JIM BUTLER**, who regaled us about his adventures as a young bank employee stationed in El Salvador, especially during the month of July in 1969. Good news (excellent work experience, birth of their first child) and bad news (death of his father; war with Honduras broke out); as **JIM** put it, "The sun, the moon and the stars all in one month."

JERRY reported that one of our former members, Phil Hahn, died a few days ago at 87; he sang with the Melody Men and will be remembered with a eulogy at next week's meeting. **TOM HEALY** delivered a remembrance of former member John Romans, who died early this month at 76. John sang with the Melody Men and is remembered for his beautiful tenor voice. A celebration of his life will occur on June 1, 2019 at 11 am at the Larchmont Yacht Club, 1 Woodbine Avenue, Larchmont, NY. If planning to attend, please RSVP to cwpromans@gmail.com.

SPECIAL EVENTS: **ABBEY SMOLER** brought us up to date on two pending events. Details below.

VOLUNTEER HOURS: **JOHN CRAINE** provided the statistics for the week ending May 29th: 467 outside hours by 45 men and 134 RMA hours by 30 men; champ for the week was **FRANK SCARPA** with a cumulative 76 hours.

FUN AND GAMES

BRIDGE: **TONY COCCHI** dealt the details. There were 7 players; top scores were as follows: **ANDRZEJ MAZUREK** 2910, **JOHN FEBLES** 2460, and **RON MURRAY** 2440.

OUTDOOR TENNIS: **JOHN KNIGHT** lamented that there were no-shows on Monday (Memorial Day). Come to Loughlin Avenue courts on Mondays from 9 am to 11 am.

PICKLEBALL: **JOHN KNIGHT** and **TONY COCCHI** reported that 7 players showed up in the iffy weather and slightly wet courts (dutifully dried with towels and sponge roller) and played for the full two hours. All are welcome Thursday mornings from 9 am to 11 am at the Loughlin Avenue Courts in Cos Cob. Learn about this fastest growing sport here: <https://tinyurl.com/y478zxrh>

HEARTS: **JOHN KAVANAUGH** summarized the 8 games at three tables by 12 men. **TOM HEALY** and **GRANT PERKINS** won two games each; **CHARLIE GRAVES**, **RALPH VIGGIANO**, **JACK SWEGER**, and **JOHN KAVANAUGH** each won one game. Moon Shots: **JOHN STANKUNIS** twice; **RALPH VIGGIANO**, **JOHN KNIGHT**, **GRANT PERKINS**, **JACK SWEGER**, and **JOHN KAVANAUGH** once.

GOLF: **PETER TUNLEY** reported that 10 men showed up on May 27. Closest to the pin on 7 was **GEOFFREY BURGE** and on 15 it was **RUSS HARDEN**, who also hit the longest drive. He nearly stole the whole show by scoring an 82, best of the bunch, with two birdies back to back. Let's all Tweet to that!

TODAY'S SPEAKER

TAD LARRABEE introduced **Dr. David Blight from Yale University**, where he is **Professor of American History and Director of the Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition**. Accorded many honors for distinguished scholarship, he has held numerous prestigious academic positions, including professorships at Harvard and Cambridge University, UK. Dr. Blight dedicated his talk to friend and fellow writer Tony Horwitz, who died suddenly several days ago. He highly recommended his last book, *Spying on the South*. Dr. **Blight's interest in Frederick Douglass** began while teaching in high school and first wrote about this unusual man during the 1980s when he was in graduate school. Douglass escaped from slavery in Baltimore, Maryland at age 20 and soon became a leading voice in the abolitionist movement. Douglass was no doubt a genius who mastered written and oral language at an early age. After starting his own newspaper, he became a political abolitionist, a Republican, and eventually a Lincoln supporter but a fierce critic of the policies of the United States that did not fully address the problems of racism. Blight described one of Douglass's most important speeches, *The Composite Nation*, from 1867 which was given many times around the country. It was during the Reconstruction period following the Civil War; the 14th Amendment had passed that year (abolition of slavery) and the 15th would be passed in 1869 (right of citizens to vote "shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude."). The speech represented a hopeful and optimistic vision that a new Republic and a new Constitution were on the horizon – without slavery, the US could be a nation under law, equal for all people, whereby the Bill of Rights would be Federalized rather than enforced unequally by individual states. Blight

pointed out that this concept resonates in today's polarized environment; the abortion debate is a prime example.

Dr. Blight described the six themes he devised of Douglass's life in constructing the narrative of his role as a "prophet" in his book:

Words – mastery of language, his form of power; Autobiographies – he wrote 3, encompassing 1200 pages; Grounding in the Bible – source of storytelling and metaphors in all his speeches and writings; Radical Outsider – who became an insider, working for the Government; Balance between public and private life – his relationship with his first and second wives and his children; Douglass the Thinker – as an artist, intellectual, creator.

Professor Blight closed his superb talk with a quote from Douglass's second autobiography: "As long as heaven allows me to do this work, I will do it with my voice, my pen, and my vote." The Q&A that followed added more insight to Douglass's life. For more on the talk, see this article from the Greenwich Time:

<https://www.greenwichtime.com/local/article/Yale-professor-defines-Frederick-Douglass-for-13904536.php>

SPECIAL EVENTS

Open to all members, spouses, candidates and guests. Checks should be made out to RMA and must be received within two weeks of the reservation or the reservation will be canceled. Buses depart from the St. Catherine Church parking lot on Riverside Avenue opposite the church. Contact persons are listed with each event.

Belmont Racetrack: June 13, 2019, lunch at the Belmont Room where there is a DRESS CODE requiring coats and ties and suitable attire for women. Cost \$85. Bus departs at 1pm. Status: Five places open. Contact **TOM HEALY** 203-661-2954.

Botanical Gardens: Robert Marx exhibit, July 11, 2019, lunch at Mario's on Arthur Ave., \$115. Bus departs at 8:45am. Status: 22 places open. Contact **MIKE FERRARESE** at 203-554-0678.

NEXT WEEK'S SPEAKER

**Bob Wylie, former RMA member,
D-Day, Operation Overlord, Six of June, 1944**

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