



CIGAR BOX BULLETIN

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



www.greenwichrma.org

Chair/Editor: **Joe Mancinelli**

Scribes: **Av Rivel, Arnold Gordon, Ed Farrell, Gerry Lessuk, George Stockbridge, Joe Mancinelli, Chet Risio, Frank Scarpa, Tim Brooks**
Archivist: **Tad Larrabee** Format: **Jack Cuff, Andrzej Mazurek, Len Carusi**
Print/Distribution: **Joe Mancinelli**

VOLUME 68 NUMBER 8 SEPTEMBER 2, 2020
SCRIBE: ARNOLD J. GORDON

“It took me seventeen years to get three thousand hits in baseball. I did it in one afternoon on the golf course.” Henry Aaron

President **RUSS HARDEN** opened the Zoom business meeting promptly at 10:00am. **HORST TEBBE** dutifully broadcast the RMA song, which was followed by recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance by **JIM BUTLER**. We were then treated to a video of the Melody Men when they sang the Star-Spangled Banner on the field at Shea Stadium a few years ago.

Corresponding Secretary-in-Chief **ARNOLD GORDON** reported that one of our former members, Dana Low, died on August 27th at 87 years old; he had joined the RMA in March 2001 and became inactive in 2012 when he moved to NH. **HORST TEBBE**, a former neighbor, volunteered to deliver a memorial at a future meeting; anyone who knew **DANA** should feel free to share their memories of him with **HORST** (tebbe@berkeley.edu). **ARNOLD** reminded everyone to think about presenting a brief human-interest moment at our meetings (share a hobby, play a musical instrument, tell an interesting story, recommend a book – you get the idea). Write to him at ajgordo@verizon.net. Still hogging the mic, **ARNOLD** asked if any members could recommend a philatelist-dealer (that's stamp collector shop in real language) in the vicinity; let him know if you can. Finally, he introduced **GEOFFREY BURGE** who told a shaggy golf story about a woman who outplayed the men but occasionally arrived late for morning tee-off. Why? She was practicing strokes with her husband at home.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. **PETER STERN** reported attendance of 73 members. Birthdays: **RUSS HARDEN 78, MIKE SMITH 81, RON CANTWELL 77, SAM MARASSO 81, BARRY RICHELSON 74, and BRIAN MAHONEY 73**. Guests: Bart Steinfeld (g/o **HOWARD RICHMAN**) and Dr. Alan Barry (g/o of **BOB**

RIMMER). **PETER** reminded everyone that when logging onto the Zoom Membership Meeting to please use your first and last names, so you can be easily identified. **GEOFFREY BURGE** as sponsor nominated **BRUCE SOCKET** for induction, seconded by **PETER**. A robust show of hands made it unanimous. **BRUCE** has been a Greenwich resident for the past 33 years and he and his wife have lived in Old Greenwich for the past 20 years. Before retirement, Bruce was a Program Manager at Northrop Grumman Corporation. He had over 27 years of experience directing the production of complex aerospace advanced surveillance radar systems. He directed cross functional program teams including manufacturing, supply chain management and business management. He has an MBA from Boston University School of Management and a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering degree from the University of Pittsburgh. Bruce does volunteer work at the Stamford Boys and Girls Club where he helps 4th and 5th graders with their homework.

2. **MICHAEL AMBROSINO** for Visiting reported that **FRANK LEE** is recovering from a fractured arm due to a recent fall. **MICHAEL** would appreciate it if members would inform him by e-mail (brooklynoil@yahoo.com) of anyone sick, injured or hospitalized so he can announce it at the next meeting. **DON CONWAY** mentioned that **MAURICE KROHN'S** wife, who has been ill for some time, is improving and will soon be moved to the Burke Rehabilitation Center.

3. LOOK SMART: **MICHAEL AMBROSINO** has three navy blue, fleece, long-sleeve shirts with embroidered RMA logo for sale; they are pullovers with a zipper that reaches the neck. Members have already scooped up 18 of these well-made, very warm shirts (fall and winter are really coming). There are 2 mediums and 1 large, only \$20 each. Contact **MICHAEL** at brooklynoil@yahoo.com if interested.

4. **STEVE BOIES** invited everyone to attend today's Zoom Webinar speaker program at 11am to see him interview Evan Osnos, currently a Staff Writer for The New Yorker Magazine. The focus of the interview will be on "The Future of U.S. and China Relations." **JERRY SCHWENDEMAN** winged it in announcing next week's speaker, Jet Vertz, who will tell us about *The Boeing 727Max Crisis*.

5. **JEFF JUNKER** reported that 212 members are current with their dues, including 3 inductees since June and 209 on the active list from May. There are still 17 people on the membership list who have not responded; the Board is reaching out to them via phone.

6. **ALAN GUNZBURG** mentioned that the Board of the Greenwich Department of Human Services, on which he serves as Chair, currently has one opening. They are expecting an opening for two more once the town charter is changed and the membership increases from 7 to 9 people. If you are interested and would like to know more about what they do and how you can help, please contact **ALAN** at 203-661-9619.

FUN AND GAMES

1. INDOOR TENNIS: **ANDY HOLMES** announced that the group is on a short break before the 2020/2021 season begins on Friday, September 11th. Contact **ANDY** if interested (andyholmes56@gmail.com).
2. OUTDOOR TENNIS: **JOHN KNIGHT** once again bemoaned the fact that due to lack of interest, outdoor tennis has defaulted.
3. PADDLE TENNIS: **MICHAEL AMBROSINO** mentioned that paddle tennis will resume in the fall at the Loughlin Avenue courts in Cos Cob. **JIM DEAN** will provide details once he makes arrangements with the Town. Meanwhile, if interested, let **MICHAEL** know (brooklynoil@yahoo.com).
4. GOLF: **PAUL CAMPION** reported that Tuesday was an odd weather day for RMA golfers (14 soggy souls). **GEOFF BURGE** and **PETER TUNLEY** led the Dawn Patrol at 7:40am; it rained steadily for 15 holes and when the “main group” showed up at 10:20am, about half of them decided to go home! It did not seem to bother **PETER TUNLEY** who carded an impressive 93 and a superb short game. Next week we start at 10:10 am and expect a lower turn-out due to Labor Day; however, please let **PAUL** know if you plan to play and if you will go for 9 or 18 holes (paulcampion1@optonline.net). **MICHAEL AMBROSINO** is working on organizing an early October “4 Ball Best Ball Scramble” (whatever that is), followed by an outdoor light lunch under cover. He is also trying to get more tee-time slots from the Griff management.
5. TAI CHI: **WILL MORRISON** reminded everyone that Zoom sessions are held on Mondays and Wednesdays at 3pm. Anyone can join Tai Chi for Balance and Focus. To join the fun, the link is <https://zoom.us/j/99622029436>; Meeting ID: 996 2202 9436, Passcode: raisehands. Participants are encouraged to donate to Neighbor to Neighbor or River House at \$10/class. For more information, contact **WILL** (wdmorrison@gmail.com).
6. WALKERS: **TAD LARRABE** jauntily reported that last Thursday, the group had an interesting walk in the Cranberry Lake Preserve north of White Plains. They enjoyed scrambling around the remains of the stone quarry that provided much of the stone for the nearby Kensico Dam. They also found a stone “hut” reportedly used by the famed Leatherman who regularly walked a 365-mile, 34-day loop from the Connecticut River to the Hudson River from 1857 through 1889. Locals on his route often left food for him and invited him in to avoid bad weather, but he insisted on staying in local caves and hollows. **TAD** normally announces the Thursday morning walks in Wednesday afternoon emails to all those interested. Please email **TAD** at tadlarra@optonline.net to add your name to the list.

7. BRIDGE: **TONY COCCHI** reported that they had 4 players last Wednesday at 1PM, including former RMA member KURT SCHAFFIR from his new home in PA. There is a growing interest in playing on-line with audio and visual contact with the other players. Contact **ANDRE MAZUREK** (mazurek.a.j@gmail.com) or **TONY COCCHI** (anthony.cocchi@lehman.cuny.edu) to join the group.

SPECIAL EVENTS

No events are currently scheduled and any for the future will depend on the pandemic situation.

SPEAKER PROGRAM

STEVE BOIES, acting as program moderator and presenter, introduced Evan Osnos, a Greenwich High School graduate in 1994, now a staff writer for The New Yorker magazine. Evan's book, "Age of Ambition – Chasing Fortune, Truth and Faith in the New China" won the National Book Award for non-fiction in 2014. He mentioned that he has viewed some of our RMA talks. Using an interview format, **STEVE** posed questions to Evan under the theme, *The Future of U.S. and China Relations*. The following is an encapsulation of the wide-ranging discussion that transpired. Evan began his career with a West Virginia newspaper but honed his craft as a foreign correspondent for the Chicago Tribune during the Iraq war and throughout the Middle East. He moved to Beijing, China in 2005, studied Mandarin, and subsequently joined the staff of The New Yorker. Living for many years in a State-approved compound for journalists and foreigners, he learned a lot about China from his native Chinese neighbors, and met his future wife, an American. He and his family now live in the US, but he travels to China frequently.

The Chinese economy today is 24 times as large as it was 25 years ago, largely due to introduction of a modified market-based economy, while maintaining a rigid political system under the Chinese Communist Party. With more Christians living in China than Communist Party members it creates some tension. Pronouncements from our Administration seem to be at times contradictory: Trump admiring and claiming friendship with Deng Xiaoping, leader of the People's Republic of China, while Secretary of State Pompeo tries to appeal to the people of China ("We are friends.") with an eye toward influencing a move away from the Communist Party and toward democracy. But most Chinese are not ready for such a major change, according to Evan. Ping, on the other hand, is of the opinion that the US is not as stable or prosperous as most would believe, and refers to Trump as a "paper tiger," creating opportunities for China to gain more influence in world affairs by filling voids created by the US (leaving the WHO and other international bodies and treaties). Evan believes that Trump's America-first isolation posture is in sharp contrast with what he suggests Biden's approach

would be, namely improved relations with China and drawing on alliances with other friendly countries and regions to deal jointly with threats from the regime.

China has 55 different ethnic minorities. Among the ethnic-religious conflicts that exist in China, one of the most visible and prominent involves the Uighur (or Uyghur), a Turkic-speaking Muslim sect numbering about 30 million who live for the most part in northwestern China, in the Uyghur Autonomous Region of Xinjiang. Evan opines that the reason for the government's suppression and mistreatment of those people stems from the policy that there must be only "One uniform China" and that if the Uighurs succeed in their attempt at independence it will create a domino effect with other minorities. China effectively still lives in a pre-civil rights world where multi-cultural co-existence is unacceptable.

What about Hong Kong, given the recent upheaval imposed by the Chinese Government's new law to stamp out opposition to the Communist Party? Some companies will leave, some will stay, but it is no longer a political and legal "safe house" independent from China. Beneficiaries will be places like London, Tokyo, and Singapore. Then there is the perennial conflict between Taiwan and mainland China, which, according to Evan, has become more perilous, with the US and Japan caught in the middle. Would the latter countries intervene if military aggression by China materializes? "I do not know," but foreign policy strategists are recommending that the US should make it clear that we would defend Taiwan.

Who can forget the covid story? A large population still shops at the "wet markets," part of the culture and tradition of the Chinese people. However, changes are expected to be made on how they operate and what they carry.

There were several questions from the audience which elicited the following information from Evan. China dominates the world market for rare earths, essential for electronics and other industries. However, they will not restrict our access since they rely more on the US than vice versa for many important materials and technology. When asked about Tibet, he strongly recommended a recent book that deals in depth with the situation: "Eat the Buddha: Life and Death in a Tibetan Town" by Barbara Demick (Random House, New York, 2020). Although China restricts our social media (Facebook, etc.), he does not think we should reciprocate as it could be counterproductive. In 2019 there were about 370,000 students from China attending our schools, which helps those institutions financially. However, the number is declining as many parents are uneasy about sending their children to the US and are opting for London and Australia, e.g.

NEXT WEEK'S SPEAKER

Jet Vertz, former VP with Pratt & Whitney Aircraft and now a consultant to commercial airlines, will speak about "The Boeing 727Max Crisis."

NOTE TO CBB CONTRIBUTORS: next week's CBB scribe will be **FRANK SCARPA**. Please send a copy of any remarks you want included in the CBB to **FRANK** at frankjscarpa@gmail.com.

Retired Men's Association of Greenwich, Inc. · 37 Lafayette Place · Greenwich, CT 06830 · USA
Visit our website at www.greenwichrma.org.