

CIGAR BOX BULLETIN

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



www.greenwichrma.org

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VOLUME 69 NUMBER 27 February 16, 2022

SCRIBE: FRED WU

"The Earth does not belong to us: we belong to the Earth." - Chief Seattle

President **MICHAEL AMBROSINO** started the meeting at 9:45 am by welcoming us back to in-person meetings at the church, and **BOB MORGAN** led us in the Pledge of Allegiance. We watched and listened as **TOM HEALY** led the Melody Men in singing our National Anthem accompanied by **JIM SANTORA** on the piano.



The World-Famous Melody Men Sing the National Anthem. Photo: Andy Holmes

TOM then led the entire room in singing “We Are the RMA” (composed by **BOB MORGAN**) followed by “Blue Skies.”

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MICHAEL informed us that our weekly membership meetings will continue to be in-person until we hear differently from him. **MICHAEL** is still seeking a volunteer to lead a food/clothing drive and hopes that someone will step up. In spite of the apparent early end of winter, **MICHAEL** reminded us that we will not be meeting at the church whenever Greenwich Public Schools or the First Presbyterian Church are closed due to weather. **FRED WU** is the scribe today, and **TONY COCCHI** is today’s mentor.

Visiting: **ED PARKER** is at Yale New Haven Hospital recovering from major heart surgery.

Corresponding Secretary **ARNOLD GORDON** reported that **GEOFFREY BURGE**, although still a paid-up member, has moved back to his homeland, Australia. He sends his good wishes: “I am missing you guys a lot... such an amazing community.” He welcomes communication with members, and can be reached at gburgesydney@gmail.com.

ARNOLD then read examples of the questions on an Alabama State Residency Application, which were not exactly praiseworthy of any rednecks in the group. He then introduced **PAUL CAMPION**, a new jokester, who told a few groaners, blaming **ARNOLD** for setting the precedent.

PETER STERN gave the membership report:

1. Attendance: 53 in person and 14 on Zoom, for a total of 67. No guests.
2. Birthdays:

CHARLIE	GRAVES	85
RICK	WOLFF	77

- a. Snow birds on Zoom: **GRAN BURGESS** and **FRANK SCARPA**.

3. Remember, be vaccinated and boosted and wear a mask. You should always carry proof of vax + booster with you.
4. For the record, **GEOFFREY BURGE** is still a member, so hello to “Down Under.”

DON ROTZIEN reminded all that the first ROMEO luncheon of 2022 will be on Thursday, February 24th at Tengda Restaurant. The restaurant will accommodate 20 people, and there are a few slots open. **DON** says that they could squeeze in a few more than 20 if necessary.

Program: HOLLISTER STURGES announced that **JACK WEIR** of the Publicity Committee has made an arrangement with the *Greenwich Sentinel* to publish weekly articles about RMA speaker presentations. At the end of each article is a paragraph about the RMA and a call for potential new members to contact **PETER STERN** or **MICHAEL AMBROSINO**.

HOLLISTER said that today’s speaker is **STEVE MESKERS**, State Assemblyman from the 150th district, and an expert on economics, speaking on “Economic Development in Post-Covid Connecticut.” Next week’s speaker will be the third candidate for Music Director of the Greenwich Symphony, Joshua Gersen, a native of Monroe, CT. He will be interviewed by **JERRY POLLACK**.

FUN AND GAMES

Hearts: MICHAEL reported that hearts will continue to be played at the Eastern Greenwich Civic Center through the end of March, but that future dates are uncertain due to the start of construction at the site. This week on table one, winners were **TOM HEALY** and **JOHN STANKUNAS**. On table two, **JIM DEAN** won 3 games. Moonshots: one each for **JIM DEAN** and **JOE DOWLING**.

Tai Chi: The normal Monday morning 9:30 session is cancelled because **WILL MORRISON** will be in L.A. visiting family. You will have to wait for a clue to the Secret Sauce. He will be back in a week. Otherwise, sessions are free and contributions are welcome. Mondays, 9:30 am in Old Greenwich and on Zoom. Sign-up with **WILL** is required, at wdmorrison@gmail.com. More info at experiencetaichi.org.

Walkers and Talkers: **TAD LARRABEE** reported that eight RMA walkers visited Stamford last Thursday, starting at Scalzi Park and walking alongside the Rippowam River and returning through downtown Stamford. The weather was perfect, nice and sunny, reaching into the high 40s.

TAD's second topic involves a potential paid gig. The Greenwich Choral Society is looking for someone who is qualified as a box office manager. This would involve working at concerts three times a year on weekends. It will require some technical background and learning how to utilize Audience View which handles on-line ticketing. If you are interested, please see **TAD**, call him at 203-637-4023, or email him at tadlarrra@optonline.net.

And speaking of the Greenwich Choral Society, at 4 pm on Saturday, February 26th you can celebrate Beethoven's 200th birthday, although it's a bit late due to COVID. The music is varied and enjoyable and the chorus is accompanied by a professional orchestra. It will be held at the First Presbyterian Church in New Canaan. See the flyer on our bulletin board for more detail. Tickets can be purchased on-line at gcs-ct.org.

Bridge: **ED MASTOLONI** reported that bridge was being played at **ANDRE MAZUREK's** house while they have less than two full tables. If more would like to play, they will move to the Eastern Civic Center. The February 9th bridge results were:

1. **JOHN FEBLES:** 3,070
2. **ANDRE MAZUREK:** 1,970
3. **RON MURRAY:** 1,700

Tennis: **ANDY HOLMES** reported that as usual every Friday, four matches were played at the Old Greenwich Tennis Academy. In the opening round, winners on court one were **PETER UHRY** and **ANDY HOLMES**, and on court two the winners were **ANDRE MAZUREK** and **BOB GRAYSON**. In the final round, the winners on court one were **ANDRE MAZUREK** and **ANDY HOLMES**, and on court two the winners were **BRUCE SOCKET** and **RON FRIEDMAN**. This Friday's captain will be **ANDRE MAZUREK**.

Platform Tennis: **MICHAEL AMBROSINO** reported that there were five players at the Loughlin courts on Tuesday morning.

Pickleball. JOE MANCINELLI, MARK GEIMER, PAT MACCARTHY and ANDRE MAZUREK playing pickleball on a beautiful winter morning:



In honor of the upcoming Presidents Day holiday, President **MICHAEL AMBROSINO** presented a trivia quiz on U.S. presidents. In spite of the difficulty of the questions, the members were able to answer almost all of them correctly, aided by a dazzling display of knowledge by **MAURICE KROHN**.

SPEAKER PROGRAM

HOLLISTER STURGES introduced State Representative **STEVE MESKERS** of the 150th District in Connecticut. **STEVE** identifies himself as a fiscally conservative, socially progressive Democrat. He was elected in November 2018, the first Democrat elected from the district in over 100 years, and has just completed the first year of his second term. **STEVE**'s presentation was entitled "Connecticut 2022: Where We Are, Update and Review."

Connecticut has made significant progress since the budget impasse in 2017. Three consecutive fiscal years have closed in surplus and the state has the most robust Budget Reserve Fund in its history. The state has reduced unfunded liabilities by funding more than \$1.6 billion in supplemental pension payments on top of the annual payments. The state's credit rating was upgraded for the first time in 20 years.

Continuing Connecticut's recent run of financial successes is dependent on remaining disciplined. It cannot be presumed that the pandemic is over. Further, it is not until the FY 2024–2025 biennium that the gap between the growth in fixed costs versus revenue begins to narrow. While large surpluses are projected for fiscal years 2022 and 2023, this business cycle will inevitably slow. The state needs to be prepared by continuing to be prudent stewards of the state's resources.

The state's fiscal position at the end of FY 2021 was much better than envisioned at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. FY 2021 ended with a General Fund surplus of \$475.9 million, the third consecutive year-end surplus. In addition, the state was able to maintain budgetary reserves at 15% while paying down unfunded liabilities. This success can be attributed to the effective response to the COVID-19 public health crisis which minimized disruption to most economic sectors and encouraged in-migration of residents and businesses, the unprecedented level of federal economic stimulus, and finally, the state's budgetary discipline. Considering the above, the governor is proposing modest, but impactful, revisions to the state's tax policies.

First, to provide meaningful middle-class tax relief and increase equity in the taxation of automobiles across the state, the governor is proposing to lower the existing property tax cap of 45 mills on automobiles to 29 mills. Towns would be reimbursed for the lower cap, at an expected cost of \$160.4 million annually.

Second, to stem the outflow of retirees, the governor is proposing to accelerate the phase-in of the pensions and annuities income tax exemption by three years. This provision allows single filers with an adjusted gross income (AGI) of less than \$75,000 or joint filers with an AGI of less than \$100,000 to exempt 100% of their pension and annuity income from the state income tax, up from the original 56%.

Third, the governor is also proposing to accelerate the restoration of the property tax credit on income tax to full eligibility while increasing the maximum credit amount from \$200 to \$300. Currently, only filers age 65 and over or those with dependents are eligible for the property tax credit. This is expected to double the current 400,000 eligible filers.

Fourth, to help attract educated younger workers to the state while helping to ameliorate the student loan debt burden, the governor is proposing to expand the employer student loan tax credit. Businesses that contribute toward an employee's student loan balance can avail themselves of a 50% tax credit up to \$2,625 per employee per income year. In sum, the tax relief proposals contained in this budget would total \$335.7 million.

In the Q&A session that followed, **STEVE** addressed many other important economic issues, including the shortage of affordable housing, the continuing high level of state government indebtedness, the great need for transportation infrastructure improvements, and the financial stress facing non-profit organizations unable to keep pace with private sector wage increases.

SPECIAL FEATURE

Past President **PETE UHRY** has asked that we include a few "historical" RMA pictures, with a question of the week. In 2014, this RMA virtuoso did something in spectacular fashion at the Griff Golf Course. What was it?



Do you have any pictures of past RMA activities?

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

TO CBB CONTRIBUTORS: Scribe for the next meeting, on February 23, will be →**BOB SHULLMAN**←. Please send a copy of any remarks you want included in the CBB to bob.shullman@gmail.com.

ALL MEMBERS: Do not forget to report all your inside and outside volunteer hours to **JOHN FEBLES** at jfebles13@gmail.com.

ALL MEMBERS: The CBB Team works every week to write and publish an informative and concise bulletin for our members' enjoyment. We welcome new members to join the CBB Team. Please contact **TIM BROOKS** at tbroo@aol.com if you are interested.

ALL MEMBERS are reminded that in addition to streaming on the Internet, RMA speakers are normally shown on the local public access TV channels, Verizon FIOS channel 24 and Optimum (Cablevision) channel 79.

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

Visit our website at <https://greenwichrma.org>.

RMA 2022 CALENDAR

Weekly Repetitive Activities*			
Day	Time	Activity	Contact
Mondays	9:30 am	Tai Chi Workout	Will Morrison - wdmorrison@gmail.com
Mondays	11:00 am to 1:00 pm	Pickleball at Christiano Park	Pat MacCarthy – pmacCarthy415@gmail.com Mark Geimer – mark.geimer@gmail.com
Tuesdays	10:00 to 11:00 am	Platform (paddle) tennis at Loughlin Field, Cos Cob	John Dean - jhdeanco@gmail.com
Wednesdays	9:45 to 10:30 am	RMA Weekly Meeting	Horst Tebbe - onehorst@optimum.net or Len Carusi at lencarusi@gmail.com
Wednesdays	1:00 pm	Hearts at the Eastern Greenwich Civic Center	John Kavanagh - jjkct176@gmail.com
Wednesdays	12:30 pm	Bridge	Andre Mazurek - mazurek.a.j@gmail.com
Thursdays	8:00 am	“Tai Chi Fundamentals” – First Congregational Church, Old Greenwich	Will Morrison - wdmorrison@gmail.com
Thursdays	9:00 am	RMA Walking	Tad Larrabee - tadlarra@optonline.net
Thursdays	11:00 am to 1:00 pm	Pickleball at Christiano Park	Pat MacCarthy – pmacCarthy415@gmail.com Mark Geimer – mark.geimer@gmail.com
Friday	1:30-3:00 pm	Tennis	Andy Holmes - andyholmes56@gmail.com)

*Day & time of some events may vary; check with contact