

CIGAR BOX BULLETIN

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



www.greenwichrma.org

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SCRIBE: JOE MANCINELLI

"There are only two days in the year that nothing can be done. One is called yesterday, and the other is called tomorrow, so today is the right day to love, believe, do and mostly live."

- Dalai Lama

President **MICHAEL AMBROSINO** brought the meeting to order at 9:45 am, with **BOB BISHOP** leading us in the Pledge of Allegiance. We then joined in singing the "Star-Spangled Banner," led by **TOM HEALY** with **JIM SANTORA** on the piano. From patriotic, the melodies changed pace with, "Everybody Loves Somebody" and "Carolina in the Morning."

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MICHAEL AMBROSINO informed us that **ED PARKER**, one of our key TV & audio specialists, has been released from Yale New Haven Hospital following a major surgery and will be recuperating at home. He hopes to be joining us in a few weeks. On a related topic, **MICHAEL** reminded us that we definitely need some new volunteers for the TV & audio team. It is a critical element in the success of our meetings as well as our ability to post on-line information to the public. Please contact **HORST TEBBE** for further information.

With the golf season approaching, it was noted that **PAUL CAMPION**, who has been the golf chairman for several years, will be stepping down this season. Thank you, **PAUL**, for

coordinating many enjoyable golf matches over the years! If you are interested in stepping into the role of golf chair, please contact **MICHAEL**.

VOLUNTEERING – A CORNERSTONE OF THE RMA!

Lastly, **MICHAEL** mentioned that the RMA will be participating in the Greenwich St. Patrick's Day Parade on March 20th, and we are pleased to announce that one of our members, **JOHN TONER**, will be grand marshal. Stay tuned for more information.

Corresponding Secretary **ARNOLD GORDON** reminded everyone about Ronald Reagan's famous line, "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down that wall," and playfully addressed our president with "Mr. **AMBROSINO**, take down those masks." **ARNOLD** then asked members if there were any venture capital veterans, but there were none in the room. If you have had experience in that area, please get in touch with **TOM McGUIRE** (tmjmcg@gmail.com).

When asked about their use of landscapers or lawn services, many members indicated that they did use them. **ARNOLD** informed everyone that the noise and pollution from gas-operated leaf blowers are not only annoying and disruptive to peaceful enjoyment, but dangerous. They can generate sound from 85 to 100 decibels, similar to that from a jet plane takeoff. Attempts have been made over the years by Greenwich citizens to convince the town to restrict their use and/or use alternatives (e.g., battery operated units), to no avail. Recently a new group, Greenwich Quiet Yards, has begun a major campaign for the cause. Details can be found here: <https://quietcommunities.org/another-attempt-at-controlling-leaf-blower-use-in-greenwich-ct/>.

Finally, he told the group about some amusing signs on trucks (e.g., radiator repair shop: "best place in town to take a leak") and some innocent but comical answers in middle school tests in Scotland (e.g., "Solomon had three-hundred wives and seven-hundred porcupines").

He then introduced **JERRY SCHWENDEMAN** who threw a couple of groaners to the attendees. The first regarding a talking parrot named Rosco who liked to eat popcorn, only to be followed with a tale of an unlikely viewing at a nursing home.

JOHN FEBLES updated us with RMA volunteer hours for Feb. 22nd. Total outside hours were 419 by 35 RMA members, and total inside hours 54 by 23 members. The top RMA

member was **KEATING HAGMANN** with 103 hours. Please remember to submit your hours at the volunteer table or to jfebles13@gmail.com.

TIM BROOKS reported that **DON CONWAY** has asked that members be notified that the Greenwich Public School System was in need of substitute teachers, both for grade and high school classes. The only requirement is that you have a college degree. You can specify subject areas you prefer and grades you would be comfortable teaching. Lesson plans are prepared by the regular teacher. You are put on a contact list that is used when the regular teacher is out, but there is no obligation if you are unavailable on a particular day. There is a per diem payment of \$110. If interested contact Marilyn Adelberg at the Board of Education H.R. Department, 203-625-7400, or marilyn_adelberg@greenwich.k12.ct.us. Mention that you are a member of the RMA.

DON ROTZIEN reported on an enjoyable ROMEO luncheon that was recently held at Tengda Asian Bistro where there were 19 attendees including President **MICHAEL AMBROSINO**. The food was delicious, the service excellent, the prices reasonable and the comradery outstanding. He encourages any suggestions for future ROMEO lunches. They plan to meet every five to six weeks. Contact **DON, TONY COCCHI** or **BILL FEATHERSTON** if you are interested.

Membership Chair **PETER STERN** provided the following meeting stats: In person attendance was 63 and zoom was 15, for a total of 78 attendees, including one guest. David deMilhau was in attendance as a guest of **BOB RIMMER** and **RUSS HARDEN**. For birthdays: **RALPH NEWITTER** is 79, **DON ROTZIEN** is 80, **ED MASTOLONI** is 85, **PETER BERG** is 18+ (figure it out), and **PETE JUNIUS** is 83. All the birthday boys were treated to the happy birthday melody on the piano.

BOB MENDELSON was nominated for induction to the RMA by **BOB SHULLMAN** and **TAD LARRABEE**. **BOB** received his law degree at Harvard and then became an associate attorney at Willkie Farr & Gallagher on Wall Street. He was intrigued by a startup insurance client based in the city that he then joined. That client eventually moved out to Greenwich and during his 19+ years there **BOB** rose to become W.R. Berkley's president and COO. He has been married to his wife, Pat, for almost 54 years and has two lovely children. **BOB** has also volunteered with Inspirica for the last 25 years. Inspirica is one of the largest providers of services to the homeless in Connecticut. Inspirica is more than just a homeless shelter. They seek to break the cycle of homelessness by providing the

programs and services that help their clients to achieve and maintain permanent housing and stability in their lives. **BOB** has served on Inspirica's Board of Trustees for its endowment fund, several terms on the Board of Directors with two terms as vice chair, and he currently serves on the Investment Committee.

BOB was unanimously accepted into the RMA and presented with the RMA name badge, lapel pin, decal, and parking permit. Welcome to the RMA, **BOB**!



Bob Mendelsohn

PROGRAM

PETER UHRY provided a brief overview of today's speaker. Leslee Asch will present "Puppetry as an Art Form – The Legacy of Jim Henson." **HOLLISTER STURGES** announced that next week the RMA will feature a conversation with Governor Ned Lamont discussing "The Challenges Facing Connecticut." Many thoughtful questions have been submitted and we expect a large turnout, so please arrive early.

FUN AND GAMES

Walkers and Talkers: **TAD LARRABEE** informed us that nine RMA walkers warmed up last Thursday morning with a refreshing walk. We met at the Bruce Museum and walked around Bruce Park and some of its western neighborhoods. Tomorrow (March 3) we will

walk in the residential area north and west of the Greenwich YWCA, but taking a new route this time.

Tennis: **JOE MANCINELLI** extended a warm welcome back to **RON FRIEDMAN** after a two-year sabbatical, noting that **RON**'s backhand drop shot was a nasty as ever. Opening round winners on court one were **JOE MANCINELLI** and **RANDY MOTLAND**, on court two were **RON FRIEDMAN** and **PAT MACCARTHY**. Final round winners were **MANCINELLI** and **MACCARTHY** on court one and **ART DELMHORST** and **MICHAEL AMBROSINO** on court two. Next week's captain is **JIM FISHBEIN**.

Bridge: **RON MURRAY**, 3,720, **JOHN FEBLES**, 3,250, **TONY COCCHI**, 2,550. **JOHN** and **RON** both won a slam for 1,220 points.

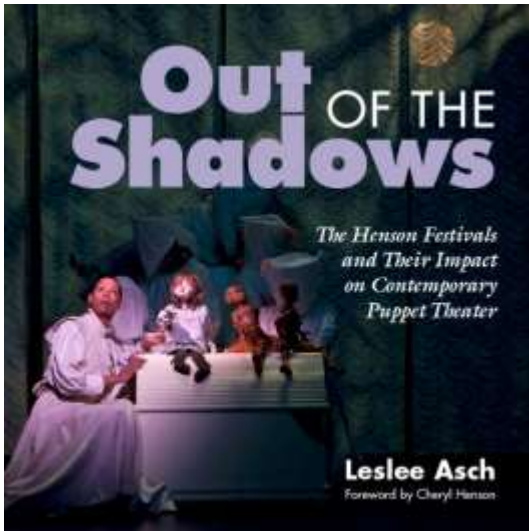
Pickleball: **PAT MACCARTHY** reported on the usual pickleball fun. It is a year-round RMA activity and the fastest growing sport in America. Christiano Field Mondays and Thursdays at 11:00 am.

Paddle Tennis: **JIM DEAN** informed us that they had a seven-man turnout this week for several enjoyable games. The season will be wrapping up at the end of March and **JIM** will be planning some type of closing event.

TODAY'S SPEAKER

The RMA speaker for today was Leslee Asch discussing "Puppetry as an Art Form – The Legacy of Jim Henson." Leslee worked for Jim Henson for over 20 years. She began her career as a puppet builder and went on to serve as director of exhibitions for Jim Henson Productions, curating and managing exhibitions world-wide. She also served as executive director of the Jim Henson Foundation and producing director of the Henson International Festivals of Puppet Theater. She was a long-time trustee of the Jim Henson Foundation, and now serves on the board of the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center. This experience led to the writing of her book *Out of the Shadows: The Henson Festivals and Their Impact on Contemporary Puppet Theater*, covering an important and previously unexplored aspect of the Henson legacy. The book includes hundreds of photos and sketches that display puppetry as a contemporary art form.

The Jim Henson Foundation's International Puppet Festivals, which Leslee produced with



Jim Henson's daughter Cheryl, brought puppet theater into mainstream American theater. Between 1992 and 2000, the festivals presented 136 different productions from 31 countries that were seen in 24 theaters throughout New York City. Over 120,000 people attended the New York performances.

While most people assume that one's involvement with puppetry stems from a childhood love of puppets, that is not actually the case. Many puppetry artists emanate from the theater. Leslee was a French major and studied French theater leading to involvement with the

Bread & Puppet Theatre in Glover, Vermont. There she participated in performing, building, and programming puppet shows. She spent time in Russia in 1976, where she visited the Obraztsov Puppet Theatre in Moscow. This is the world's largest puppet theatre, and it features a famous clock on the theatre's façade with puppet figures looking out of small houses every hour as well as surround sound providing the puppetry with an added sense of realism.

With the aid of her slide presentation, Leslee explained that one of her first challenges was to create a pair of latex shoes for the marionette versions used in the now classic *Emmet Otter's Jug-Band Christmas*, a six-month project that evolved into a 20-year pursuit. She also contributed to the first *Little Red* skit that, with the addition of the character's unique voice, ultimately became the world recognized Elmo that we know today. Likewise, she worked on the *Fraggle* characters, and *Fraggle Rock* continues today, shown on Apple TV. She reminded us that at the heart of *Fraggle Rock* was Henson's theme of world peace where different characters can co-exist.

Her presentation included examples of noteworthy international puppetry that included Japanese shadow puppets symbolizing the Tree of Life which is shown at the beginning and end of all Japanese puppet shows, the Warhorse puppet, which evolved into the Tony Award winning play and puppetry used in Wagner's *The Ring* performed at the Met. Of particular interest were Jim Henson's initial creations, with video clips from the 1950's featuring commercial ads for Wilkins Coffee. Jim cleverly and comically highlighted two puppets, Wilkins and Wontkins, one a strong proponent of Wilkins Coffee trying to

convince his counterpart to take a drink, with humorous and entertaining results. Thus, the popularity of TV puppets was born and as they say, “the rest is history.”

The underlying theme of Leslee’s entertaining presentation was Jim Henson’s deep love of puppetry, his creative genius and his overall generosity and support for artists throughout the world to do their own thing and express themselves through puppetry.

NEXT WEEK’S SPEAKER

“Conversation with Governor Ned Lamont on the Challenges Facing Connecticut “

SPECIAL FEATURE

Past President **PETE UHRY** has asked that we include a few “historical” RMA pictures, with a question of the week. Last week, we saw these RMA men lined up in front of a row of porta-potties. They were volunteers at the 2014 Greenwich Town Party, and all except the man on the far right (Bernie Schneider) are still active today.



Who are these four RMAers from 2017, and where are they?



Do you have any pictures of past RMA activities?

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

TO CBB CONTRIBUTORS: Scribe for the next meeting, on March 9, will be →**JOE ANGLAND**←. Please send a copy of any remarks you want included in the CBB to jangland@optonline.net.

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 Scribe Tribe. 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.

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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