

# CIGAR BOX BULLETIN

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



[www.greenwichrma.org](http://www.greenwichrma.org)

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**SCRIBE: JOE ANGLAND**

*"Lord, grant that I may always desire more than I can accomplish."*

– Michelangelo

President **MICHAEL AMBROSINO** opened the meeting, and **TOM HEALY** led the members in the Pledge of Allegiance. With **JIM SANTORA** accompanying on the piano, **TOM HEALY** led members in singing "God Bless America," "Margie," and "That's Amore."

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**MICHAEL AMBROSINO** advised that until further notice all RMA meetings – membership, Board, and program committee – will be in person at the First Presbyterian Church.

**MICHAEL** noted that **JIM SANTORA** and **TONY FitzPATRICK** will be leading a food (and possibly clothing) drive next month to benefit Neighbor-to-Neighbor.

**MICHAEL** advised members that annual dues for the fiscal year beginning May 1 are \$100. Checks should be made payable to RMA and brought to the next meeting. He also reminded members that attendees at meetings were expected, albeit not required, to contribute \$2 to the cigar box to defray the cost of refreshments and room rent.

**MICHAEL** reminded members to *email* summaries of the reports they give at our meetings to the Scribe, to avoid the need for his retyping them.

Corresponding Secretary **ARNOLD GORDON** called everyone's attention to the annual Greenwich Spring Beach Cleanup that takes place on Saturday, April 30<sup>th</sup> at Greenwich Point from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Volunteers are always needed. Good for the town and your soul! For details, go to:

<https://www.greenwichgreenandclean.org/beachcleanuplikeluke2022>

In his role as jokester, **ARNOLD** regaled us with quick takes on the joys of marriage and family, including "I told my wife she should embrace her mistakes... so she hugged me", "My wife says I only have two faults, 'I don't listen' and something else....", and, "I told my wife I wanted to be cremated. She made me an appointment for Tuesday."

**PETER STERN** reported the following birthdays: **GERRY BOYLE** (84), **RON WILSON** (80), **FLEMMING HEILMANN** (86), **PETER TUNLEY** (77), and **RICK HOLZ** (74). **JIM SANTORA** celebrated them with the traditional tune. There were 72 members in attendance today, 59 in person and 13 by Zoom. There was also one guest, Jerome Coleman, a guest of **PAT MacCARTHY**. **PETER** noted that the Zoom participants included snowbirds **TONY FitzPATRICK** and **PETER TUNLEY**. Returnees include **BART BARTHOLOMEW** from Jupiter, FL, **GRAN BURGESS** from Sarasota, FL, **JOHN KAVANAGH** from Naples, FL, and **STEPHEN MARINO** from Dover, NH.

**PETER** reiterated **MICHAEL AMBROSINO's** reminder that annual dues are \$100 and that checks payable to RMA should be given to **TAD LARRABEE** at the next meeting.

**JACK WEIR** reported on publicity. He advised that next Tuesday an RMA sign will be placed on one of the holes of the Griff. He also reported that WGCH had agreed to broadcast interviews with RMA leaders for a very low rate, and provide free announcements of our guest speakers.

**HORST TEBBE** advised that we are in serious need of volunteers to edit meeting videos, operate the audio, and run the Zoom feed of the meetings. Volunteers were urged to contact him after the meeting. **MICHAEL AMBROSINO** emphasized the importance of this request for volunteers and noted that many volunteers will make light work.

**PETER UHRY** advised that the town will hold a collection for Household Hazardous Waste Day on Saturday, May 7, from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Island Beach parking lot. For a list of items accepted see attached flyer, visit [www.greenwichct.gov](http://www.greenwichct.gov), or call Public Works at 203-869-6910 or Health Dept. at 203-622-7838. All paints, including latex, will be accepted.

### [HAZARDOUS WASTE DAY – May 7, 2022](#)

**PETER** ([uhry@sbcglobal.net](mailto:uhry@sbcglobal.net)) is seeking volunteers to periodically help with maintenance and trail improvements in our town parks. The group will most likely meet once a month based on need and weather. Volunteers will meet on weekday mornings for a couple of hours. Weed whacking, improving wetland crossings, and adding plants and puncheons could be on the agenda. It is like **TAD LARRABEE's** walks, but with a purpose. **PETER** promises nothing other than helping our parklands be better places to visit. Some exercise is to be expected. He suggested that you talk with your wife.... she will want to send you. Indeed, bring her along. All are welcome.

**RUSS HARDIN** reported that for the week ending April 27 we had 190 outside hours from 18 volunteers and 115 inside hours from 14 volunteers, with the leader being **STEVE MARINO**, who recorded 36 hours.

**BOB RIMMER** noted that today's speaker will be Sean McMeekin, an award-winning historian who will discuss his recent book, *Stalin's War: A New History of World War II*. Next week's speaker will be Greg Zuckerman, a reporter for the Wall Street Journal who will speak about the development of the Covid vaccines.

### **FUN AND GAMES**

**Pickleball:** **PAT MacCARTHY** reported that we used two courts this Monday, which was good for a Monday. The group plays on Monday and Thursday mornings from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Christiano Park.

**Tennis:** **PAT** also reported the week's tennis results. In the opening round, **ANDY HOLMES** and **BILL HOWLAND** won on court 1, while **PAT** and **MICHAEL AMBROSINO** won on court 2. In the final round, **PAT** and **ANDY** won on court 1, and Jerome Coleman and **BOB GRAYSON** won on court 2. Next week's captain will be **PETER UHRY**.

**Walkers and Talkers:** **TAD LARRABEE** reported that on Thursday the group had nice weather for a walk through the woods at the Rye Marshlands Conservancy where it saw about 30 deer and about the same number of turkeys. They then wandered out onto Maries Neck with views toward the American Yacht Club and Long Island Sound. It was a fun, gentle walk and a nice way to spend the morning!

**TAD** also noted that the Greenwich Choral Society is giving a concert at 4:00 p.m. on Saturday, April 30<sup>th</sup>, at Christ Church, Greenwich. The music is very different from most concerts **TAD** has been involved in over the past 20 years. The Missa Latina is a complete setting of the Latin Mass for solo soprano, large mixed choir, and a jazz band consisting of violin, bandoneon (accordion), piano, double bass, drums, and percussion. The word "latina" refers not only to the Latin text, but also to the musical style which makes use of Latin-American rhythms that are complex and difficult. Elements from Argentinian tangos stand side by side with Caribbean rhythms and Latin jazz, with enough space provided for instrumental improvisations. There will be several other selections of Latin American music which are challenging and fun to sing. The band will also present some music on their own, which should be spectacular. Please go online at <https://www.gcs-ct.org/> to buy tickets.

**Bridge:** **RON MURRAY** reported that this week's winners were **RON** (2880), **ALEX KOSSEIM** (2760), and **JOHN FEBLES** (2720). The group meets on Wednesdays at 12:30 p.m. and newcomers are welcome.

**Golf:** **MIKE RYAN** reported that on a rainy day we had 17 players braving the elements. The closest-to-the-pin awards went to **KIP SCHULZE** on 5, **JOE MANCINELLI** on 7, and Kevin Kreuse on 15. **GRAN BURGESS** won the longest drive award on 8. Best scores of the day belonged to **GRAN** (93), **JIM BOARDMAN** (95), **BOB SHULLMAN** (97), and **RICH BARTHOLOMEW** (97). **MIKE** encouraged members to come next Tuesday when the RMA sign will be unveiled on a yet-to-be-determined hole.

**Hearts:** A total of seven games were played. **JOHN STANKUNAS** and **GRANT PERKINS** each won two games. **MICHAEL AMBROSINO**, **RICK HOLZ**, and **BOB SHULLMAN** won one game each. **GRANT** shot the moon twice.

**Tai Chi: WILL MORRISON** reminded us that the group meets at the First Congregational Church in Old Greenwich on Mondays, with a beginner's session at 8:45 a.m. and a session for the more experienced at 9:30 a.m.

### A WORD OF THANKS

On the occasion of his final meeting as President, **MICHAEL AMBROSINO** thanked the membership and, in particular, the Board for their support during the past year. He encouraged members who did not regularly volunteer for RMA duties to do so, noting that both they and the RMA would be the better for it. **MICHAEL** reflected that his principal goal this past year was keeping us safe in the pandemic environment, and he was pleased to say that he was aware of no case of spreading Covid at an RMA event. He also noted he had wanted to improve relations with the First Presbyterian Church, and he believed that had been accomplished. Finally, **MICHAEL** said that he was very pleased that we had maintained a fairly constant membership at a time when, because of Covid, similar organizations had seen their membership plummet. Upon the conclusion of **MICHAEL'S** comments, the members rose as one to applaud his year as the RMA's President.



Ambrosino passes the bell to incoming president Joe Mancinelli. Pictures courtesy of Tom Healy and Joe Mancinelli.



An informal lunch on Arthur Avenue, in Da Bronx.



Where are the donuts?

## TODAY'S SPEAKER

**BOB RIMMER** introduced today's speaker, Sean McMeekin, a professor of European History and Culture at Bard College. Professor McMeekin holds a B.A. from Stanford University and an M.A. and Ph. D. from University of California, Berkeley. He recently published *Stalin's War: A New History of World War II*. Professor McMeekin explained that his recent book was the product of extensive research of archival material that became available only after the collapse of the Soviet Union. He noted that he had a bit of nostalgia when talking about those illuminating archives because, given the contents of his book, it did not appear he would be allowed to access them again.

Professor McMeekin reported that the archival materials made clear that Stalin wanted World War II to break out. Although he paid lip service to the concept of collective security against the Nazis, it was a mere chimera. His grand notion was that a war among the leading capitalist countries would leave them all deeply debilitated, paving the way for the Soviet Union and the communist ideology it embraced to prosper. Thus, he conspicuously failed to join Britain and France when in March 1939 they formally recognized Poland's independence.

In time, Stalin recognized the risk of being drawn into the war, and he oversaw a major military buildup in 1940 and 1941. Indeed, it appears that Stalin was considering initiating an attack on Germany. Unfortunately for him, the German assault came earlier

than expected, and well before Soviet preparations were complete. The result was widespread German success in the early months of the war on the Eastern Front. After Stalin was pulled into the war, the United States, through its lend-lease program, became the Soviet Union's lifeline, supplying it with over 9,000 planes in addition to thousands of trucks, motorcycles, and other vehicles. The United States also supplied huge amounts of food to the Soviet Union, including butter and dehydrated borscht. Stalin became so reliant on these U.S. supplies that he was outraged when President Truman cut them off following the end of the war in Europe.

Professor McMeekin provided some interesting sidenotes on the lend-lease provisions. For one thing, Soviet agents who had been spying on U.S. industry just the year before switched occupations and became purchasing agents. The same spies who had been trying to learn the secrets of the Norden bombsight were now given the same order forms as the U.S. Army and were permitted to order their bombsights from Norden. The lend-lease efforts may have helped the Soviet Union develop the atomic bomb. Among the provisions they requested and received were two key elements in the production of atomic weapons, enriched uranium and heavy water. At the time the Soviet Union requested these materials, the United States doubted that the Soviets knew enough about an atomic weapon to understand their significance, and it feared that denying the request for these materials would signal to the Soviet Union that they were particularly important – a signal that might point the Soviets toward development of an atomic weapon themselves.

Professor McMeekin pointed out that even before it lost the war on the Eastern Front, Germany's plan had backfired. At the start of the war Germany was heavily dependent on Russia (and Ukraine) for grain, iron ore, and other essentials. Hitler had believed that a quick victory over Russia would give Germany these materials at no cost. Instead, the protracted battle with Russia meant that these supplies became completely unavailable. Professor McMeekin noted the particularly harsh position that Stalin took with respect to Soviets who became prisoners of war. Officers who surrendered were deemed traitors and subject to execution upon their return. Among those who fell in this category was Stalin's son, Yakov, who committed suicide after being disowned by his father while a German prisoner.

While the Soviet Union wound up deeply embroiled in the European war, it remained until mid-1945 uninvolved in the Pacific war, which Stalin saw as consistent with his vision that capitalist countries would destroy each other. Stalin had signed a neutrality pact with

Japan in April, 1941, and Pearl Harbor did nothing to change that. Indeed, hundreds of U.S. pilots who landed (or crashed) in Russia after bombing raids on Japan were held prisoner for years, rather than being repatriated to the United States – the country that was supporting the Soviet Army and feeding the Soviet people.

The full presentation can be viewed at <https://vimeo.com/user9053619/videos>

### 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 presented this picture: it is a limerick contest held in 2016, with the irrepressible **ARNOLD GORDON** (r) as moderator.



Do you have any pictures of past RMA activities to share?

### IMPORTANT REMINDERS

**TO CBB CONTRIBUTORS:** Scribe for the next meeting, on May 4, will be none other than →**ARNOLD GORDON**←. Please send a copy of any remarks you want included in the CBB to [ajgordo@verizon.net](mailto:ajgordo@verizon.net).

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

**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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## RMA 2022 CALENDAR

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

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