

CIGAR BOX BULLETIN

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July 15, 2015

*Here are the volunteers who publish this Bulletin each week for your enjoyment: **Editor:** George Stockbridge, Chair; **Scribes:** Gran Burgess, Av Rivel, Kurt Schaffir, Peter Uhry, Jim Butler, Arnold Gordon, Ed Farrell; Martin Grayson, Emeritus; **Format and Layout:** Gene Schwartz, Fred Waldron; **Archivist:** Harold Frost; **Printing:** Chet Risio, Larry Schmitz*

President RALPH VIGGIANO called the meeting to order with his usual gusto at 10:00 AM. KURT SCHAFFIR led us in the Pledge. With GEORGE UBOGY at the keyboard, TOM HEALY led us in singing *Yankee Doodle Dandy*, *Danny Boy* and *Standing on the Corner*. JOHN HARRIS was Corresponding Secretary with a story about ice cream cones and a wedding ring. Don't Ask!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

RALPH gave a tribute to JOE MALARA on his 95th birthday for which an overdue special cake was baked for the occasion (not by RALPH). In his usual generous way, he then offered special recognition to GERRY LESSUK, GEORGE SHADDOCK, PETER McSPADDEN, BOB WYLIE, JOHN CARON and VIN MASI for their continued devoted service to RMA. RALPH mentioned that RMA hats and shirts were available from PETER UHRY for those who did not yet pick them up.

BOB PHILLIPS reminded everyone about the new parking requirements: you must show a pass near the windshield to park free in the church lot; it is NOT valid outside the lot and meters must be fed on the street. If you received a parking ticket today, bring the ticket to the Parking Director at Town Hall and it will probably be excused; however, that might not work from now on. Passes were distributed via e-mail last week but paper copies are available from BOB if needed.

GEORGE STOCKBRIDGE appealed for more members to volunteer as scribes for the CBB. You may reach him at 201-698-0710 or GRSpersonal@aol.com. GRAN BURGESS invited everyone to an ensemble reading of his new musical, "Common Ground," about the abolitionist Frederick Douglass, to be held at the Theater Artists Workshop, 5 Gregory Boulevard, East Norwalk, CT (directions at www.taworkshop.org) at 7:30pm tomorrow, July 16th. BOB ROBINS announced that the next ROMEO luncheon will be at the Fairview Country Club on Wednesday, September 16th; save the date. JOHN CRAINE gave an "ahoy mates" for the next RMA Raft-Up at Greenwich Cove on Thursday, July 30th; sign-up is on the Bulletin Board. Bring your own vittles and beverages. Post-celebration cruises by some will go to the islands in Greenwich Harbor. You can contact JOHN at 203-698-0118. TAD LARRABEE (203-637-4023) is recruiting volunteers for the Annual Picnic to be held Thursday, September 10th at Greenwich Point; please sign up at the Bulletin Board for one or more chores before and during the event (e.g., asking merchants for raffle items, running the raffle, helping set up, picking up picnic items, helping cook, clean-up). TAD also invited walkers to join him tomorrow at Eastern Civic Center parking lot at 10am for a surprise perambulation. CHUCK STANDARD encouraged the members to subscribe to the 2015-2016 Greenwich

Symphony series of 5 programs(www.greenwichsym.org) at an RMA special price of \$130, a \$20 saving.

BILL DYNAN presented memorial tributes to two of our long-time members. GRAHAM WHITEHEAD, 86, died at Greenwich Hospital on Tuesday, June 30, 2015. See <http://patch.com/connecticut/greenwich/graham-w-whitehead-86-retired-president-jaguar-north-america-old-greenwich-resident>. Donations in his memory can be made to Friends of Greenwich Point. STEPHEN PIERSON, 83, passed away on July 7, 2015. See <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/atlanta/obituary.aspx?pid=175270081>. Gifts in his memory can be made to Friends of Greenwich Point and to Friends of Darien Library.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

VISITING: CHUCK STANDARD reported that WIN ADKINS, who recently had one lung removed, is back in Stamford Hospital with complications; no calls or visitor for the time being. RICH LIMBACHER with his new knee is recuperating at Nathaniel Witherell and is doing well; he welcomes visitors. DON O'KEEFE is also progressing at Nathaniel Witherell, where he expects to stay for another month.

PROGRAM: JOHN CARON gave us a preview of today's speaker, **Gordon Beinstein**, Principal of Western Junior Middle School, who spoke about the challenges in closing the achievement gap between low and affluent income students in Greenwich public schools; see details below. GEORGE UBOGY announced that next week's speaker will be Ms. Amanda Poole, daughter of RMA member JOHN POOLE, who will speak on alcohol and drug abuse, their diagnosis and treatment.

MEMBERSHIP: HORST TEBBE reported that 108 members, 1 candidate and 1 guest were in attendance. Guest: Robert Whitby (BOB ROBINS). **Birthdays** were: MIKE BALINT (87), JACK RILEY (94), DAN GRIMSICH (83), BOB LUCE (78), BOB BISHOP (81) and TOM McELVOY (91).

SPECIAL EVENTS: GERRY LESSUK announced that the next trip will be to Tanglewood on August 9th; 31 members will attend. On Thursday, September 17th there will be a trip to the Westchester Broadway Theater for lunch and the musical "Backwards in High Heels," about Ginger Rogers and her collaboration with Fred Astaire. On Thursday, October 22nd, the musical "A Wonderful Life" will be the treat at Goodspeed Opera House. See below for more details.

VOLUNTEERS: HARRY TWITCHELL reported that for the week ending June 15, 2015, 35 men reported a disappointingly low 321 volunteer hours on behalf of outside agencies and 28 men reported 119 volunteer hours on behalf of RMA. ERF PORTER reported the most hours, 93 accumulated over several weeks.

FUN AND GAMES

BRIDGE: KURT SCHAFFIR reported that the July 14, 2015 game drew 9 players. RALPH VIGGIANO led with 3680, followed by JOHN FEBLES, 3370, and JOHN HOFFMAN, 2900 points. **GOLF:** JOHN AWDZIEWICZ gave the results for July 14th. No scores since all ten players were rained out on the back nine but MIKE SMITH was closest to the pin at 7. **TENNIS:** No tennis report this week, but all are invited to play, weather permitting, every Monday and Thursday, 9-11am, Loughlin Avenue courts in Cos Cob.

TODAY'S SPEAKER

Over the past some 25 years, Gordon Beinstein has been a teacher and administrator in public schools in several CT towns, most recently as Principal of Western Middle School in Greenwich. He described the sobering statistics regarding discrepancies in achievement between students from different socioeconomic classes throughout Greenwich, especially at Julian Curtiss, Hamilton Avenue, New Lebanon, and Western Middle schools, which have much higher proportions of minorities and economically disadvantaged than schools on the east side of Greenwich. Even more than the traditional comparisons between black and white, male and female, Hispanic and non-Hispanic, over the past decade or so, economic disparity across all groups has become the most important factor in relative school success. Free breakfast and lunch are provided to all students whose families qualify under Federal poverty level criteria. Surprisingly, nationally 48% of school children qualify; CT 34%, Greenwich 15%; Western Middle School 40%; and by comparison, Riverside School 0.8%. Mr. Beinstein outlined several ambitious ongoing projects to help narrow the achievement gap: pre-school/pre-kindergarten access; longer school day time and summer work; maintenance of intellectual rigor in the curriculum; better data systems across schools; engaging parents extensively. Mr. Beinstein's excellent talk will soon be available on Vimeo via the RMA website: www.greenwichrma.org.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Open to all Members, Guests, Candidates and spouses. Checks should be made out to RMA.

Tanglewood: Boston Symphony Orchestra, Sunday August 9, lunch at Apple Tree Inn. \$125 per person. Status: Closed Departure 9:00am from Eastern Civic Center.

Westchester Broadway Theater: Thursday, September 17, includes lunch. \$85 per person. Status: 10 spots available.

Goodspeed Opera House: Thursday, October 22nd, lunch at Gelston House. \$115 per person. Status: 30 spots available.

For more details and to sign-up, contact GERRY LESSUK (gerrless@att.net, 203-698-9451)

NEXT WEEK'S SPEAKER

The RMA will welcome **Ms. Amanda Poole**, private practice psychotherapist in Greenwich

Visit our website at www.greenwichrma.org

Respectfully Submitted: Arnold J. Gordon