

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 ANGLAND

"Being honest may not get you a lot of friends, but it'll always get you the right ones."

– John Lennon

President **JOE MANCINELLI** opened the meeting at 9:45 a.m., and **DON ROTZIEN** led the members in the Pledge of Allegiance. With **BOB MORGAN** accompanying on the piano, **JIM BUTLER** led members in singing "This Land Is Your Land," "Don't Fence Me In," and "You Made Me Love You."

JOE MANCINELLI reminded members that next week's meeting would be solely by Zoom. He then presided over the finals of the RMA Legs Beauty Contest, with the six finalists being the only six entrants. The members' applause selected the winner, which after excluding the finalists who were not present, turned out to be **CARL WHITE**. **CARL** was rewarded with an ointment that should give him a good start to reclaiming his crown next time around.



"Legs" Winner

IN MEMORIAM

MIKE SMITH delivered a memorial for **GERALD “JERRY” ISAACSON**. **JERRY** was born in St. Augustine, Florida in 1927, and he passed away on July 20, 2022, at the age of 95. A loving husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, he served his country in two wars. **JERRY** enlisted in the army during World War II at the age of 17, and he served in Yokohama during the occupation of Japan. On his return he enrolled in Knox College where he met Ann, his beloved wife of 69 years. They lived in Chicago, where he began his long career in educational publishing. That career was interrupted by the Korean War, during which he was promoted to first lieutenant and won a Bronze Star for coordinating artillery in close support of ground troops. Typical of his generation, **JERRY** seldom spoke of his wartime experiences. He was doing what was expected and necessary. On his return from Korea, **JERRY** resumed his career, in time becoming a vice president of the school division of Macmillan, president of Xerox Educational Publications, and senior vice president of *Esquire*. When he retired from the corporate world, he opened the Stamford branch of the Huntington Learning Center. He maintained his passion for education, teaching English as a Second Language into his 80's.

JERRY was an avid sailor, and he served as commodore of the Riverside Yacht Club in 1996-97. He was active in state and local politics, serving on the Greenwich Republican Town Committee and heading its budget committee. **JERRY** was a dedicated member of the First Congregational Church, where he served as a deacon for four years. He and his wife, Ann, were named Greenwich Volunteers of the Year in 2010. **JERRY** and Ann moved to Edgehill in 2011, where he published the newsletter. **JERRY** is survived by his five children, 11 grandchildren, and 14 great-grandchildren. With a wonderful smile, **JERRY** was a great friend to all, and he loved contributing to our Greenwich community. The members then observed a moment of silence in **JERRY's** memory.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Corresponding Secretary **ARNOLD GORDON** noted that Connecticut's 2022 Sales Tax Free Week is August 21 through August 27. Many retailers offer additional discounts on clothing and footwear during Sales Tax Free Week. The tax exemption applies to each eligible item costing under \$100, regardless of how many of those items are sold to a customer in the same transaction. The tax holiday applies to purchases made in-store, online, mail-order, and over the phone.

Substituting for the ill-disposed **JERRY SCHWENDEMAN**, scheduled jokester for the day, **ARNOLD** told a true story about a legal tiff in Nevada in which a church was sued by a brothel. The take-home message comes from the judge on the case: "I don't know how the hell I'm going to decide this case, but it appears from the paperwork that we now have a whorehouse owner who staunchly believes in the power of prayer, and an entire church congregation that thinks it's all b.s."

ARNOLD observed that we sometimes need to go to a cemetery, and he inquired whether it unnerved you when the GPS says: "You have arrived at your final destination." He also told of the husband who told his wife that he wanted her to have a bracelet that his grandmother wore. The wife inquired "Why does it say Do Not Resuscitate?" Finally, **ARNOLD** shared some signs from Indian Hills Community Center, Indian Hills, Colorado, including "Bulldozer: someone who sleeps through political speeches" and "Kleptomaniacs always take things literally."

PETER STERN reported that 98 members were in attendance, including 11 by Zoom. In addition, four guests were present: Tim Alexander, a guest of **GERRY MAYFIELD** and **DON ROTZIEN**, Tog Pierson, guest of **SKIP AUCH** and **ED BLOOM**, Henry Tischler, guest of **JAY SCHONDORF**, and Michael LaGamma, guest of **PAT MacCARTHY**. **PETER** acknowledged the birthdays of **JIM BUTLER** (80) and **HARRY FISHER** (69), which were celebrated with the traditional tune. **PETER** then welcomed **ED MILLER** after a long absence. He also acknowledged several returnees, **JOE MANCINELLI** from Wells, Maine, **MIKE RYAN** from Greece, Turkey, and Cape Cod, **PAT MacCARTHY** from Montana, and **ANDRE MAZUREK** from Ecuador and Colombia.

BOB RIMMER reported that today's speaker would be Greg Zuckerman, who would talk about his most recent book, *A Shot to Save the World: The Inside Story of the Life-or-Death Race for a Covid-19 Vaccine*. **TIM BROOKS** advised that next week's speaker would be Will Friedwald, who would talk about "The Life and Music of Nat King Cole."

WILL MORRISON reported that there were 129 outside volunteer hours from 21 members and 194 inside volunteer hours from (a presumably different) 21 members. **HORST TEBBE** led with 25 hours.

WILL then reminded us that volunteerism is part of the RMA mission. We log lots of hours. Do you know what organizations are popular with us? Where do you

volunteer? Does the organization or project need more help? Do you think fellow members would be interested? To increase the number of members that support your organization(s) and to help generate increased interest in community service in general, we need an updated list of our supported organizations and projects and their supporters.

[CLICK HERE TO SHARE THE LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS YOU SUPPORT](#)

WILL also reported that 84 members have indicated that they plan to attend the picnic, with 59 of them bringing a guest.

For a detailed report on the picnic, [CLICK HERE](#)

It's not too late to tell us about your plans for the picnic! Do you plan to attend?

[CLICK HERE TO RSVP FOR THE PICNIC](#)

JOHN CRAINE advised that the annual RMA Raftup had been postponed until noon, Thursday, September 8, due to weather. The event will include both rag haulers (sail) and stink potters (power). The rendezvous location is the picturesque anchorage off Great Captain's Island. Bring food and beverages, and enjoy scuttlebutt with old and new friends. When the celebration is over, some plan a cruise of Captain Harbor and its beautiful surroundings. Fully vaccinated boaters, non-boating members, and guests are invited, subject to capacity limitations. For more information or to sign up, contact **JOHN** (203-698-0118) or **BARRY RICHELSON** (203-637-5454).

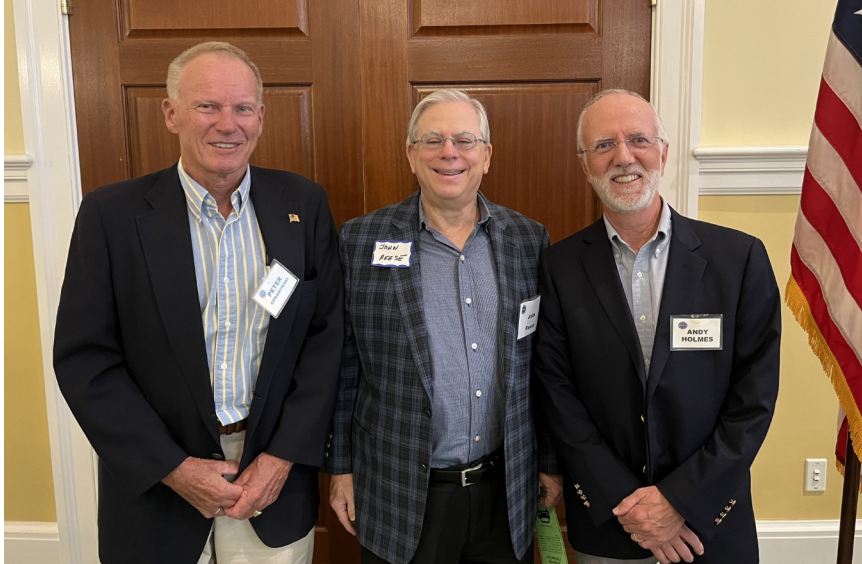
The latest ROMEO lunch was held at Greenwich Point Park last week, and a grand time was had by all. Here are some pictures.



INDUCTION

John Reese was nominated for membership by **ANDY HOLMES**, who had met John fairly recently on the tennis court. John told **ANDY** that he was looking for people with whom to play tennis and pickleball, and **ANDY** explained that he knew just the place for him. John graduated from MIT with an engineering degree, and he then attended Harvard Business School. John founded and sold two companies before developing an algorithm-based systematic approach to investing based on the methods of such financial gurus as Peter Lynch and Warren Buffet. Today that company has two components, a subscription based digital newsletter, Validea.com, and a private wealth management arm, Validea Capital. John has written two books, *The Guru Investor* and *The Market Gurus*, and is a columnist for several international financial publications including *Forbes*, *The Globe and Mail* in Canada, and Realmoney.com. John resides in Harbor Point Stamford where he relocated in 2020 after more than a decade in New York and a quarter century in West Hartford. He has three adult children and he and his partner, Madelyne Kirch, recently welcomed a first grandchild who happily lives nearby.

PETER ORBANOWSKI seconded the nomination with enthusiasm. John's nomination was unanimously approved, and **JOHN** was presented with his lapel pin, decal, badge, and parking pass. **JOHN** thanked the members, commented that he had been impressed by what he has seen at the RMA to date, and said he looked forward to becoming involved in RMA activities.



Orbanowski, Reese, and Holmes

FUN AND GAMES

Tai Chi: **WILL MORRISON** urged members to consider joining the group, which meets on Mondays at 9:30 am. The focus is on balance, flexibility, and resilience.

Pickleball: **PAT MacCARTHY** reminded members that pickleball is played, weather permitting, twice a week at Christiano Field.

Golf: **GRAN BURGESS** reported that this week we had five foursomes. Closest to the pin were **PAT YUEN** on #5, **BART BARTHOLOMEW** on #7, and **MIKE SMITH** on #15. **CHARLIE ADAMS** had the longest drive. Best scores were **JIM BOARDMAN** (88), **TONY FITZPATRICK** (89), **BART** (90), **GRAN** (90), **CHARLIE** (92), **TOM HEALY** (94), **TONY COCCHI** (94), **MIKE AMBROSINO** (99), **DON HAMILTON** (99), **JOE MANCINELLI** (99), and **PAT** (99). Next week's captain will be **MIKE RYAN**. **MIKE** noted that the annual RMA Golf Luncheon would be on October 13 at the Field Club. The cost is \$50. **MIKE** added that the captain on September 6 would be **JOHN CRAINE**.

Walkers and Talkers: **JEFF JUNKER** explained that in **TAD LARRABEE's** absence he would be leading the Thursday morning walk on August 25, which will explore Cos Cob. He added that last week's walk took the



group down Indian Head Road onto Elias Point in Riverside. They explored several private roads that provided terrific views of the Sound as well as nature: Osprey fishing, a northern cicada killer bee, and many sea birds.

Bridge: **RON MURRAY** reported that the top scorers among this week's players were **RON** (4780), **ED MASTOLONI** (4630), and **RON FRIEDMAN** (3970). Small slams were bid and made by both **TONY COCCHI** and **ED**, and by the two **RONs**.

Hearts: This week **DON CONWAY**, **JACK SWEGER**, **MIKE AMBROSINO**, **TOM HEALY**, **JOHN STANKUNAS**, and **GRANT PERKINS** won a game apiece. **MIKE** had the only moon shot. Next week's captain will be **JOHN KNIGHT**.

HUMAN INTEREST

TIM BROOKS began by noting that The Greenwich Symphony will open its season on Saturday, September 10th. The Symphony has obtained discounts from six restaurants for dinner on Saturday night or lunch or dinner on Sunday, for patrons who show Symphony tickets, receipts, or programs. They hope you will take advantage of this opportunity for an enjoyable outing. RMA members are eligible for a \$25 discount off a five-concert subscription (normally \$175) or a \$5 discount off a single ticket (normally \$40). To get the discount online (greenwichsymphony.org), use the coupon code "GroupSubscription" or "GroupTicket" on the checkout page. Alternatively send a check to GSO, PO Box 35, Greenwich, CT 06836. The Symphony's premiere performance will feature "Rhapsody in Blue," and **TIM** regaled us with the story of how that composition came to be.

In January 1924, 25-year-old George Gershwin and a songwriter friend named Buddy DeSylva were shooting pool. George's brother Ira was reading the paper and came across an interview with bandleader Paul Whiteman, in which Whiteman promoted a concert to be staged the following month that would feature a concerto that George Gershwin was writing. This was news to George. Whiteman later explained that he was relying on Gershwin's expression of interest in working together on something bigger and grander than just another popular song. Whiteman noted that one of his chief rivals, a bandleader named Vincent Lopez, had announced that *he* was staging a major concert later in 1924 in which he would bring "jazz to the concert hall" for the first time. They couldn't let Lopez steal their thunder.

Whiteman's secret weapon was his arranger, a young man named Ferdie Grofé, who would go on to an illustrious career as a classical composer. Whiteman immediately assigned Grofé to work with Gershwin to get this music done. The day after his conversation with Whiteman, Gershwin took a train to Boston, and he later said that as he listened to the rhythm of the wheels clattering along the tracks he worked out the whole arc of the Rhapsody. Back in New York he started working furiously to get it down on paper. Every few days Grofé would come over to his apartment to get the next section and begin orchestrating it for the instruments in a large orchestra.

About a week before the premiere on February 12th, at Aeolian Hall, it was ready for the first rehearsal. It was supposed to open with a series of ascending notes on the clarinet, but during a break Gershwin heard clarinetist Ross Gorman playing around and smearing the notes, and he said "Yes! Do it like that!" That's how we have the famous opening clarinet swoop upward, or glissando, which is now one of the most recognizable openings in any piece of concert music.

TODAY'S SPEAKER

SKIP AUCH introduced Jim Campbell, himself an RMA speaker, who had suggested today's speaker, Gregory Zuckerman, to us. Jim then introduced Greg, a 26-year special writer at the *Wall Street Journal* and a three-time winner of the Gerald Loeb Award – the highest honor in business journalism. Greg has authored several best sellers, including *The Man Who Solved the Market: How Jim Simons Launched the Quant Revolution* and *The Frackers: The Outrageous Inside Story of New Billionaire Wildcatters*. Greg regularly appears on CNBC, Fox Business, Yahoo Finance, National Public Radio, ABC, and Bloomberg Television. He is a magna cum laude graduate of Brandeis University.

Greg spoke to us today about the subject of his most recent book, *A Shot to Save the World: The Inside Story of the Life-or-Death Race for a Covid-19 Vaccine*, which recounts the high-stakes and heroic effort to develop a vaccine in a remarkably short period of time. Whereas developing a vaccine typically takes eight to ten years, with four years being the fastest any prior vaccine was developed, the highly effective Covid-19 vaccine was developed in only 330 days.

Greg characterized the extraordinarily fast development of the extremely (albeit not perfectly) effective vaccine as modern science's greatest achievement. He explained that

this accelerated development was attributable to the convergence of several facts and forces, including previously unheralded basic research, an almost fanatic preoccupation with developing the vaccine by some biotech firms with no previous record of success, Wall Street financing, and help from the United States government.

The heroes of the story were not the most likely candidates, which one would think would be the large vaccine producers like Merck, Sanofi, and GSK. Those companies did not pursue a Covid vaccine with great vigor, in part because it did not appear to be that profitable a venture given that it appeared possible, at least at first, that the pandemic might just die off, meaning that working on a vaccine for it was financially risky. Moreover, vaccines in general were not big money makers for large pharma companies, which made much more from drugs that people took daily than from a once-a-year vaccine.

Into this vacuum stepped companies like Moderna and BioNTech. Moderna is a Cambridge, Massachusetts company that had attracted some attention because of its high-tech approach which focused on mRNA, but as of early 2020 it was viewed with some skepticism because after more than a decade of work it had no product. When its CEO, Stéphane Bancel, learned of the coronavirus, he concluded that it might be the problem for which Moderna's technology might be the solution. He redirected the company's efforts to focus on a Covid vaccine, and he drove his people with intensity that many of them could not handle – as reflected by workers' collapsing from exhaustion and stress. The early indications were that Moderna was on the right track with the vaccine it was developing, but it lacked the money to complete the job. Bancel fancied himself a great fundraiser, but his early efforts – directed at the government, Merck, and the Gates Foundation – all failed. Ultimately, it was Wall Street – and more generally, the incentives supplied by capitalism – that bailed Moderna out. Morgan Stanley purchased \$1.3 billion of newly issued Moderna stock, which it then resold to its clients. That \$1.3 billion infusion of capital gave Moderna what it needed to complete the development of the vaccine.

BioNTech is a German company that had been working on developing a cancer vaccine and other products for over a decade, but no products had reached the market. The CEO, Uğur Sahin, was convinced that its mRNA-focused technology was the way to deal with the coronavirus. At first his wife and partner, Özlem Türeci, was skeptical that the company should shift its focus to this new health crisis, but before long she was persuaded. BioNTech was partnering with Pfizer on other projects, and it asked Pfizer to fund its development of the Covid vaccine. Pfizer initially declined, but Sahin persisted and

eventually persuaded Pfizer to collaborate on the project, providing the funds that it needed.

But the science underlying the Moderna and BioNTech vaccines did not start with these companies. For decades, largely unheralded scientists had been doing the fundamental work on messenger RNA (mRNA) that was employed in both of these vaccines. Basically, mRNA sends a message to the body (hence “messenger” RNA) that causes it to create a protein (called a spike protein) that is not toxic but that resembles the coronavirus. The immune system recognizes the spike protein as an invading body and attacks it. This leaves the body prepared to fight the actual coronavirus if it enters the body. But making this actually work requires overcoming huge technical hurdles, and much of the basic work that enabled Moderna and BioNTech to do so was performed by Jon Wolff at the University of Wisconsin in the 1990s and later by teams at Duke, the University of Pennsylvania, and MIT.

The U.S. government played a role as well. Operation Warp Speed, the government’s program to expedite the development of the vaccine, eventually provided funding that helped some of the vaccine developers, and it helped speed up the process of vaccine approval. Greg’s only lament about the government’s role was that it did not embrace the vaccines with unbridled enthusiasm, perhaps causing many people not to get vaccinated, thereby increasing the number of people infected, the development of mutations, and the persistence of the disease.

Greg has several takeaways from this episode in medical technology. First, he found it reassuring that the vaccines, although developed with amazing speed, were based on technology that had been developed and refined over the decades, thus reducing the risk that something would go wrong. Second, he thought that we should be grateful to those who took the risk of investing so much time, money, and energy into something that might not have worked out. Third, he commended American exceptionalism: here, the willingness to take risks and the capitalistic system that produced incentives and means to do so. Fourth, he lamented the “I know better” approach that too many people took, letting non-authoritative YouTube videos persuade them to ignore the conclusions about vaccine efficacy and safety reached by true experts. Finally, he believes the Covid problem will not be disappearing, because especially given the number of unvaccinated people we can expect the virus to persist and mutate. The good news is that new vaccines and boosters are on the way.

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

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

TO CBB CONTRIBUTORS: Scribe for the next meeting, on August 31, will be →**ARNOLD GORDON**←. Please send a copy of any remarks you want included in the CBB to ajgordo@verizon.net.

ALL MEMBERS: The CBB team works every week to write and publish an informative and concise bulletin for our members' enjoyment. We can always use new members to join the Scribe Tribe. Please contact **TIM BROOKS** at tbroo@aol.com if you can support this effort.

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

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	8:45 am	QiGong and Tai Chi Workout	Will Morrison – wdmorrison@gmail.com
Mondays	10:00 am	Pickleball at Christiano Park	Pat MacCarthy – pmaccarthy415@gmail.com Mark Geimer – mark.geimer@gmail.com
Tuesdays	Various tee times	RMA Golf, the Griff Golf Course, Greenwich	Mike Ryan – ryantomac@netscape.net
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	Bob Shullman – bob.shullman@gmail.com
Wednesdays	12:30 pm	Bridge	Andre Mazurek - Mazurek.a.j@gmail.com
Thursdays	9:00 am	RMA Walking	Tad Larrabee - tadlarra@optonline.net
Thursdays	10:00 am	Pickleball at Christiano Park	Pat MacCarthy – pmacCarthy415@gmail.com Mark Geimer – mark.geimer@gmail.com
Friday	11:00	Outdoor Tennis, Bruce Park	John Knight - johnknight7@gmail.com
Friday	1:30-3:00 pm	Indoor Tennis (resumes in fall)	Andy Holmes - Andyholmes56@gmail.com

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