

CIGAR BOX BULLETIN

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



www.greenwichrma.org

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SCRIBE: PAUL BARBIAN

"Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all the others" - Winston Churchill, 1947

President **JOE MANCINELLI** called the meeting to order followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. With **BOB MORGAN** at the piano, **MIKE HAYDEN** led the membership in singing the "Star Spangled Banner," "Ain't She Sweet" and "Side by Side."

President **MANCINELLI** had no announcements to make so he promptly turned the meeting over to Corresponding Secretary **ARNOLD GORDON**, who had the sad duty to convey the news that former member **KURT SCHAFFIR** died from congestive heart failure on Saturday, December 31st; he was 97 years old. He and Sandy had been married for 64 years. **KURT** was an RMA member for 19 years; he was a scribe and was very active with the bridge group. A memorial will be given at a later date. His obituary can be found here:

[Obituary for Kurt Schaffir](#)

ARNOLD again reminded the membership of the importance of getting Covid vaccinations. The latest variant is highly transmissible and can by-pass previous vaccines. A new Omicron variant, XBB.1.5, is causing 40% of all infections in the US, but 75% in the Northeast. In CT, the positivity rate is now about 18% and in Greenwich about 13%, way above the comfortable level of 5%. The new variant is more easily transmissible and thus it is more likely that people will catch the disease. Although it does not seem to cause

much serious disease or hospitalization, that really applies only to those vaccinated and boosted. Paxlovid treatment is still an effective treatment option, however. Unfortunately, the new variant has gained additional mutations, which help it to bypass Covid-fighting antibodies that were generated in response to vaccination or previous infection. Given the additional risks of the flu and RSV, those over 65 should be particularly careful due to their greater susceptibility. For the most up-to-date information about Covid-19 in CT:

www.ct.gov/coronavirus

For all you pickleball players, winter drop-in play is available indoors at the Western Civic Center for residents on Monday (for beginners), Wednesday (intermediates) and Friday (advanced). For details:

[Pickleball at the Western Civic Center](#)

ARNOLD then shared some lessons he has learned about women after 58 years of marriage:

“Never make a woman mad. She can remember stuff that hasn’t even happened yet.”

“Behind every woman is a man who has absolutely no idea what he did wrong.”

“If a woman says ‘First of all,’ run away; she has prepared research, data, and charts and will destroy you.”

“Arguing with a woman is like reading a software license agreement; you ignore everything and click I agree.”

He then introduced the day’s Jokester, **PAUL CAMPION**, who said he asked kids for jokes. The following were among the results:

“What is the choir’s least favorite note? B flat.”

“Why do clergy like Swiss cheese? Because its holy.”

“For the Christmas blessing the Pope wished the faithful a ‘Happy Leon.’ One of his staff came over and turned the Pope’s talking points right-side-up, and then the Pope wished the crowd a ‘Happy Noel.’”

PETER STERN followed with the membership report. He reported attendance of 71 members in person, and 11 via Zoom, for a total of 82. Birthday greetings were conveyed to **MIKE HAYDEN**, 91, and **BILL FAKUNDINY**, also 91. The average age of RMA members,

PETER reported, is 82. **BILL O'DONNELL**, a returnee, was welcomed back. He attended via Zoom from Lauderdale by the Sea, Florida. The one guest present was Mark Pruner, guest of **JOHN TONER**.

PETER BERG previewed the speakers for today's meeting, Margarita Albin, chair of the Planning and Zoning Commission, and Peter LaRow, Greenwich town planner.

HOLLISTER STURGES informed the membership that the speaker on January 11, 2023, will be Pete Gogolak speaking on "How an Immigrant Changed the Game of American Football."

DON CONWAY announced that the planned trip to the Intrepid has been cancelled due to lack of interest. **DON** inquired of the members their interest in travelling by bus for RMA outings. A show of hands indicated that many did not object to travelling by bus.

Visiting chair **MICHAEL AMBROSINO** reported that **MARK FOX** had a knee replacement at Stamford Hospital just before Christmas. He is at home receiving outpatient physical therapy. Phone calls and/or emails are welcome (203-524-5766, mlf1113@gmail.com).

SAL DeANGELO is at Nathaniel Witherell and is expected to be discharged within a couple of weeks. He will be residing with his son upon release. Phone calls and/or emails are welcome (bobdeangelo5@gmail.com).

The annual RMA Holiday Party, on December 21, was a big success. In addition to jokes, videos and a singalong with the Melody Men, there were prizes for the most stylish or imaginative attire and the most outrageous or flamboyant. The winners were Santa Claus (**JAMES DEAN**) and Mrs. Claus (Florie Munroe) in full Santa attire, and **JOE DOWLING**. Ho-ho-ho!



Mr. & Mrs. Claus (Jim Dean, Florie)



Healy, Dowling, Schwendeman

VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

Salvation Army Kettle Campaign-JAMES DEAN.

JAMES reported that RMA volunteers participated in the Kettle Campaign over eight weekend days in December at the Acme Food Market in Riverside. The RMA volunteers were **JIM BUTLER, GRANVILLE BURGESS, TIM BROOKS, DON CONWAY, JAMES DEAN, JOHN FEBLES, TONY FITZPATRICK, ANDY HOLMES, DAVID MICHONSKI, WILL MORRISON, PAT MACCARTHY, JOE MANCINELLI, PETER UHRY** and Florie Munroe. We rang the kettle bell from 10 am to 4 pm on Friday and Saturday with each volunteer completing at least one, two-hour time slot. No RMA members were available for the time slots on Dec 23 or 24. We reached out to the Salvation Army and the kettle was manned for those times by Kevin and Major Kimberly Smith from the Stamford Salvation Army office.

During the course of four weeks, we donated forty hours, raised \$1,868.79 in cash plus an additional amount through Apple Pay and Google Pay. The electronic donations have not yet been tabulated by the Salvation Army. These donations will be directed to those in need in the Greenwich community. This was a meaningful activity for the RMA and provided us with very good community recognition

*Ukrainian Refugee Support: **MIKE RYAN.***

Twenty Ukrainian families have come to Stamford under a U.S. Government program called Uniting for Ukraine. To get these families settled in terms of housing, furnishings, jobs, transportation, and schooling is a monumental task. Fiona Porter has taken it upon herself to spearhead the efforts to assist these families. Accompanied by a young Ukrainian wife, she spoke to the RMA about how we can support the resettlement program for these refugees who are truly in need. Contact **MIKE** for further information (ryantomac@netscape.net).

*Food Drive for the Covenant House: **MICHAEL AMBROSINO.***

The food drive for the Covenant House will take place on Jan 18, 2023. Donations are welcome. A list is attached from **MICHAEL** of the most needed items, and where you can send a check if you wish to donate cash.

[Items Needed for Food Drive](#)



*Neighbor-to-Neighbor: **PETER STERN***

PETER reported that he and his wife reinstated an annual tradition of hosting a New Year's Day brunch for longtime friends after a Covid hiatus. Their invitation read, "No gifts, please. If you wish, in lieu of a gift, bring non-perishable food items that we will in turn donate to our local food bank or Neighbor-to-Neighbor" **PETER** and his wife took a fun gathering and added charity and volunteerism to their usual



Dean, Brooks

hospitality. If you are looking for a theme for a future dinner party, why not make it, “stocking a food bank”?

*Summary of RMA Support for Non-Profit Organizations: **WILL MORRISON.***

Recipients of RMA support (total hours from October 1 to December 31, 2022)

RMA internal	756
Melody men	573
Call-a-Ride	374
Religious Orgs	165
Town of Greenwich	120
Nathaniel Witherell	98

Top Five RMA Volunteers by Hours

JEFF JUNKER	189
WILL MORRISON	142
HORST TEBBE	114
ROBERT RIMMER	106
ARNOLD GORDON	97

Members can record their hours at home, and see their totals and last logged date here:

greenwichrma.org/log.

GAMES WE PLAY

Pickleball: **PATRICK MACCARTHY** reported that pickleball was canceled Christmas week due to frigid weather, but with the return of seasonably warm weather, we had spirited games at Christiano last Monday. Pickleball is played, weather permitting, from 10 am until 12 noon on Mondays and Thursday at Christiano Field. If you would like to join the pickleball contact list please email **PAT** at pmaccarthy415@gmail.com.

Tennis: **PATRICK** reported that tennis was also canceled Christmas week. Following are the results for Monday, January 2.

Opening Round: Court 1 winners, **MOTLAND/MAZUREK**, 6/1. Court 2 winners, **BREISMEISTER/MACCARTHY**, 5/3.

Finals Round: Court 1, even winners, **MACCARTHY/MAZUREK**, odd winners, **MOTLAND/BREISMEISTER**. Court 1 winners, **MACCARTHY/MAZUREK**. Court 2, even losers, **MANCINELLI/FRIEDMAN**, odd losers, **FAKUNDINY/HOWLAND**. Court 2 winners, **MANCINELLI/FRIEDMAN**, 6/1.



Tennis mavens, in December

Hearts: MICHAEL AMBROSINO reported that on December 28, **JOHN STANKUNAS** won two games, and **MICHAEL** won one game. Moonshots were scored by **MICHAEL, JOHN, DON CONWAY**, and **TOM HEALY** (one each).

On December 21, **TOM HEALY** won two games and **MICHAEL** won one. **TOM** scored two moonshots.

On December 14, there were two tables playing hearts. Table 1 played three games with **JOHN KNIGHT, TOM HEALY** and **JOE DOWLING** winning one game each. **JOE** had three moonshots, and **TOM** and **JOHN** had one each. At Table 2, three games were played with **DON CONWAY** winning two and **MICHAEL AMBROSINO** winning one. **MICHAEL** had two moonshots.

Additionally, **MICHAEL** mentioned that the hearts group wants know if there are any members who want to learn how to play hearts and then join the group, and if there are members who once played hearts in school or when they were in the military and would

like to participate in a “refresher” course on how to play. He asked those in attendance to meet with him during the coffee break, which some members did, or to contact **BOB SHULLMAN**, the hearts group chair, to discuss when they are interested in participating in a hearts “education” course later this month. **BOB** can be reached at Bob.Shullman@gmail.com, or 203-968-5278.

Bridge: **RON MURRAY** reported as follows. On December 28, with seven players, top scores were **RON MURRAY** (1970), **BRUNO SCHRAGE** (1950) and **CHARLEY LAND** (1700).

On December 21, with eight players, top scores were **CHARLEY LAND** (4380), Vivian (a guest, 3090), and **ANDRE MAZUREK** (2470).

On December 14, also with eight players, the top scores were **RON MURRAY** (3410), **ALEX KOSSEIM** (2870) and **ANDRE MAZUREK** (2870).

Walkers and Talkers: **TAD LARRABEE** reported that on December 15 we met at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Riverside and had a very nice 3.5 mile walk around Riverside including the docks at the Riverside Yacht Club. No hills. There were no walks on either December 22 or December 29. The next walk is planned for January 5, 2023.

SPEAKER PROGRAM

PETER BERG introduced the speakers, Margarita Albin, chair of the Planning and Zoning Commission, and Patrick LaRow, Greenwich town planner, who spoke on “Issues in Greenwich Land Use.”

The speakers began by reminding everyone that the Planning and Zoning Commission (“P&Z”, or the “Commission”) regulates the size and location of buildings, and the subdivision of land in Greenwich. The Commission’s work is guided by the principles in the Town’s Plan of Conservation and Development (“POCD”), which is based on a ten-year planning horizon.

Important changes have occurred since the last POCD in 2021. These include increased work at home, on-demand services, outdoor dining, new commuting patterns, and an influx of new residents leaving New York City to avoid Covid. As a result P&Z is revising

zoning for accessory dwelling units (“ADU”s) in response to changing state requirements. New regulations may be published in the second half of 2023. Other items on the agenda include planning to “greenscape” Route 1 from Portchester to Stamford to make it more attractive with trees; addressing the “missing” segment of Greenwich real estate market—a segment that is priced so that couples with steady but modest income can purchase a “starter home” in Greenwich; and forecasting the need for public schools. The latter is very difficult due to the large number of factors that influence parents in educating their children.

A lively Q&A session followed the presentation in which many specific concerns were addressed. These may be seen by viewing the full presentation:

Go to <https://greenwichtown.org/> and click on “Speakers”

Patrick LaRow was named town planner of Greenwich effective January 1 of this year. He has been with the Planning and Zoning Department since 2007 and served as deputy director since 2017. Patrick has expertise in municipal and regional planning and land use policy. Patrick is a graduate of the University of Albany, SUNY, with a Masters in Regional Planning and the University of Buffalo with a Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Design/Architecture.

Margarita Alban is chair of the Planning and Zoning Commission of Greenwich. She has masters degrees in both management and accounting. She spent her career at ExxonMobile in their U.S. and International Divisions with experience in finance, construction, sales and public affairs. Margarita joined the Planning and Zoning Commission in 2006 and became chair in 2018.

Note: The views expressed in this presentation are those of the speakers. They are not intended to represent the views of the RMA or its members.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

TO CBB CONTRIBUTORS: Scribe for the next meeting, on January 11, 2023, will be →**JOHN KAVANAGH**←. Please send a copy of any remarks you want included in the CBB to **JOHN** at jjkct176@gmail.com.

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 at www.greenwichrma.org/log.

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

Weekly Repetitive Activities*			
Day	Time	Activity	Contact
Mondays	9:30 am	QiGong and Tai Chi Workout	Register in advance with 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	Resumes in Spring	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	Resumes in Spring	Outdoor Tennis, Bruce Park	John Knight - johnknight7@gmail.com
Friday	1:30-3:00 pm	Indoor Tennis	Andy Holmes - Andyholmes56@gmail.com

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