

# CIGAR BOX BULLETIN

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



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

Chair/Editor: **Tim Brooks**

Scribes: **Joe Angland, Paul Barbian, Jim Dean, Bob Giaquinto, Arnold Gordon, John Kavanagh, Michael LaGamma, David Michonski, John Reese, Av Rivel, Frank Scarpa, Bob Shullman, Fred Wu**  
Archivist: **Tad Larrabee** Website: **Mark Geimer** Format: **Len Carusi, Mark Geimer**

**VOLUME 70 NUMBER 22 February 1, 2023**

**SCRIBE: FRED WU**

**Next Week's Scribe: MICHAEL LaGAMMA, [mdlgamma@optonline.net](mailto:mdlgamma@optonline.net)**

President **JOE MANCINELLI** opened the meeting at 9:45. **JEFF JUNKER** led us in the Pledge of Allegiance. **JERRY SCHWENDEMAN** followed with "The Star-Spangled Banner," and then led the group in "Volare" and "For Me and My Gal," accompanied by **JIM SANTORA** on the piano.

**JOE** thanked the support team, **ED PARKER, MARK GEIMER, PETER DODGE, HORST TEBBE,** and **BARRY RICHELSONPH. JOHN KNIGHT** provided refreshments, **JOHN KAVANAUGH** was the greeter, and the mentor was **JOHN TONER**. Projectionists were **LEN CARUSI** and **TONY COCCHI**.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**JOE** asked members to please respond to the RMA survey they recently received about possible future special events. He also reported that the RMA is still trying to improve the parking situation near the church. You can park on Lafayette and if you have the ParkMobile app, it is easy to pay by credit card; \$2.50 gives you four hours of parking so you don't have to go out and feed the meter. It can be used throughout Greenwich as well as surrounding towns. Once you install the ParkMobile app, simply load in the information pertaining to your vehicle (tag #, make, model) and your payment method; this is a onetime activity. Then upon parking you put in the parking zone as indicated on the street

sign. You can select the time duration you want to park and you are done. If time expires, you can add time as desired, directly from your smart phone.

**PETER UHRY** was honored by the Old Greenwich Association on January 30 for his many volunteer activities over the course of the 50 years he has lived in town. Carolyn Petersen presented **PETER** with the Old Greenwich Award that is given to an individual as a public display of thanks for significant contributions.

**MICHAEL AMBROSINO** noted that January 27 marked the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War, a conflict that engulfed five presidential administrations, divided the nation, and made Vietnam veterans the most disrespected group of people who served their country. His impassioned remarks can be read in their entirety here:

### [END OF VIETNAM WAR](#)

Corresponding Secretary **ARNOLD GORDON** reminded members that Fareed Zakaria and Gideon Rose will speak at the Greenwich Library on Thursday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>.

He then delivered a memorial for deceased former member **KURT SCHAFFIR**. The eulogy is attached.

### [EULOGY FOR KURT SCHAFFIR](#)

**ARNOLD** closed with the following joke.

A homeless person desperate for a drink went into a local sleazy tavern. He ordered a drink but told the bartender "I don't have any money! But can you please have pity on me as I just lost my job, lost my wife, and I'm living on the streets and just really need a drink." The bartender looked at the homeless man, took pity on him, and said "I will give you free drinks for the rest of your life if you can do three things." The homeless man asked what they were. The bartender said, "First you have to first drink a quart of tequila." The homeless man said, "Well, it's not my favorite, but I think I can do it for free drinks for life."

The bartender then said that behind the bar there is a wolf in a shed. "You need to cut the wolf's paw nails and trim them." The homeless man said "Hmmm. I guess I can do that, but it is a bit weird." And finally, "There is a woman upstairs who has never had an orgasm."

You need to be successful!" If you do all three you will have free drinks for life. "Wow!" said the homeless man, "I was always a stud when I was younger, no problem!"

So, the homeless man drank down a quart of tequila with the usual lime and salt. He felt kind of woozy and tipsy but told the bartender he was ready for the second challenge. Off he staggered to the shed out back. All of a sudden there was a ruckus, banging, and the wolf growling and howling. About 20 minutes later the man returned to the bar and said to the bartender, "So where is that woman who needs her nails cut???"

Speakers Program: **HOLLISTER STURGES** announced that today's speaker, David Fitzpatrick, will talk about cable news. He recently retired as staff writer for Anderson Cooper on CNN. **DAVID MICHONSKI** introduced the subject of next week's talk by asking "What do you do when a six-year-old brings a gun and shoots his teacher? What do you do when an Asian man turns a gun on a crowd celebrating the most important Asian holiday of the year? Next week's presentation 'What to do in the Event of an Active Shooter,' is a must for all of us, our families, and our friends." Two highly decorated officers, Keith Hirsch and Daniel Paladino, will tell us about proven actions that can be taken to protect ourselves.

## **MEMBERSHIP REPORT**

**PETER STERN** began the membership report with the induction of a new member, John Blankley, who was nominated for membership by **HOLLISTER STURGES** with these remarks.

"It's a pleasure to nominate John Blankley for membership in the RMA. He is no stranger to our organization. His daughter Katie DeLuca, who recently resigned as Greenwich's Town Planner, spoke to us twice about our town's future, and John gave a superb talk, "In Defense of Connecticut," on the high quality of life in our state.

Born in Great Britain, John and his wife Vera came to the USA almost 40 years ago and became American citizens in the late 1990s. After earning his degree in modern history from Oxford University where he also ran cross country, he embarked on his professional career as public auditor with Price Waterhouse, becoming a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, a distinction accorded to those who work at the highest levels of some of the world's largest organizations.

John describes his public life as divided into five parts.

- 1) His professional career as public auditor at Price Waterhouse.
- 2) His entrepreneurial career starting an IT consulting business which created 40 jobs in Connecticut.
- 3) His corporate career as CFO with British Petroleum North America and locally with Stolt-Nielsen. In this capacity he managed many stock and bond offerings including the largest high-yield bond offering that had ever been done at the time, \$800 million, in 1995.
- 4) In his political life, he served three terms in the RTM, two terms on the BET, and as treasurer of the Democratic Town Committee. He ran for first selectman, state representative, state senator (twice) and state treasurer.
- 5) Public Role number five is John's charity and volunteer work. He currently serves as the first vice president of the St. Andrew's Society of the State of New York, the oldest charity in the state, founded in 1756. He serves as a member at large on the Greenwich Library Trustee Board and was recently elected the chairman of Greenwich Green and Clean.

Lest you think John is all work and no play, his interests include playing classical piano, bridge, politics, and — and here's my favorite part – running a marathon at age 60 with a time of four hours, 11 minutes. He is a member of two local clubs: Harpoon Club and Horseneck Club. John and his wife, Vera, have lived in Greenwich since 1983 and have raised three children, now grown, who attended local public and private schools. Without reservation, I warmly recommend John for RMA membership.”



Weir, Blankley, Sturges

**JACK WEIR** seconded the nomination, which was approved unanimously by a show of hands vote. In his acceptance remarks, John said he is looking forward to membership in the RMA, and jokingly warned that at the St. Andrew's Society, a formerly all-male organization, he had successfully advocated for admitting women.

**CARL WHITE** counted 94 members present in person and 13 on Zoom at today's meeting, for a total of 107. In addition, there were three guests: Reinhard Augustin, guest of **KLAUS JANDER**, Larry DeVan, guest of **BOB MEANEY** and **MIKE AMOROSO**, and Steve Small, guest of **TONY FITZPATRICK. PETER** congratulated two members having birthdays, **JACK WEIR** (76) and **ED MILLER** (80). As for returnees, **TONY COCCHI** has returned from the Turks and Caicos Islands. **WILL MORRISON** is attending via Zoom due to his Covid quarantine.

**DON CONWAY** announced that the BET is meeting tomorrow at Town Hall to discuss the budget. Who is putting in what, and how much will our taxes be? Attend or tune in to find out.

**TAD LARRABEE** reminded all that the Greenwich Choral Society is performing *Carmina Burana* on February 28.

## **RESTAURANT REVIEW**

**MICHAEL AMBROSINO** recently dined at La Cremaillere in Banksville, just north of the Greenwich-Bedford border. He described an enjoyable meal with the characteristically excellent cuisine, small portions, and high prices of French restaurants. He said that the restaurant is housed in a 1750 farmhouse tastefully decorated for a classic country-style setting.

1. Cost: You have two choices: \$90 per person for two courses or \$125 per person for three courses, consisting of two appetizers and one entree. Desserts range from \$12 to \$17; side dishes are priced at \$15 (entrees are not served with vegetables); wine is \$18 a glass, and an extensive but pricey wine list is available.
2. Appetizers: a good choice - the escargot, foie gras, pate, and lobster tail with caviar will not disappoint you. I would stay away from the salads at these prices.
3. Entrees: highly recommend the rack of lamb, dover sole and duck breast. The side dishes (\$15) complementing your entree are spinach, fries and mushrooms.
4. Desserts: a wide assortment but I would highly recommend the souffles. Grand Marnier is my favorite but it is also offered in chocolate and pistachio.
5. Service: typical French, meaning very attentive and gracious. However, not one member of the staff is French, which reminds you that you are in NY, not Paris.

6. Bottom Line: if you are on a budget and/or very hungry I would not recommend this restaurant. However, if you are celebrating a special event such as an anniversary, birthday, etc. or you truly enjoy fine dining with little regard to the cost by all means enjoy it.

## VOLUNTEERING

**MICHAEL AMOROSO** spoke about the importance of volunteer activities to the RMA. He lauded the Fabulous Five top volunteers (by hours) of recent weeks: **ALAN GUNZBURG, JEFF JUNKER, HORST TEBBE, WILL MORRISON,** and **ARNOLD GORDON**, out of a total of 83 volunteers. The Fabulous Five top five non-profits served by RMA members (by hours) were the RMA, Melody Men, Call-a-Ride, Town of Greenwich, and religious organizations with a total of 63 organizations served. Members can log their hours and find more detail at:

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

**MICHAEL** also introduced a new volunteer opportunity offered by the Greenwich United Way: Math Champions, a program that helps foster stronger math skills and confidence with fun and interactive games for students in K-5th grade at Cos Cob School. In just one hour a week you can impact a child's life. No experience necessary and training is provided. Contact Cecile Meunier, [cmeunier@greenwichunitedway](mailto:cmeunier@greenwichunitedway), or 203-829-2256.

## SPORTS

**Platform Tennis:** **MICHAEL AMBROSINO** reported that yesterday there were five players of platform tennis: **JIM DEAN, MICHAEL AMBROSINO, FRED WU, JOHN REESE,** and **JOE MANCINELLI.**

**Tennis:** **ANDY HOLMES** said that last Friday we had eight players play four matches at the Old Greenwich Tennis Academy. In the opening round, the winners on court 1 were **RALPH NEWITTER** and **ANDY HOLMES** and on court 2 the winners were **JEROME COLEMAN** and **PETER ORBANOWSKI.** In the finals round, the winners on court 1 were **JEROME** and **ANDY** and on court 2 the winners were **ANDRE MAZUREK** and **PETER DODGE.** This week's captain will be **DON BREISMEISTER.**

**Tai Chi:** Although **WILL MORRISON** could not attend the meeting, he sent this report. “Discover the ‘Chi Hook’ and its benefits - improved balance on the court and clarity at the card table. Class is Monday at 9:30 in Old Greenwich. To find out more or get on the class confirmation email list, contact **WILL** at [wdmorrison@gmail.com](mailto:wdmorrison@gmail.com).”

**Walkers and Talkers:** **TAD LARRABEE** reported on the January 26 walk. “My computer had a nervous breakdown, so I was unable to send my usual invitation to everyone because our backup system also failed. I’m sorry if I failed to reach someone who wanted to join us. We still had ten walkers! We met at Byram Park and after exploring the park itself, we walked through some nearby neighborhoods and along the Byram River in Greenwich before dipping into Port Chester to view the progress on the construction of the large apartment building. After rain cancellations on the past two Thursdays, it was a good day for a walk.”



Walkers on the crest of a hill



Dead End: exploring an old cemetery

**Bridge:** **RON MURRAY** reported that there were seven players. Top scorers were **RON FRIEDMAN**, 2570, **RON MURRAY**, 1150, and **CHARLEY LAND**, 1090. We play Wednesday afternoons at the Greenwich Library Cafe, and welcome new members who would like to join the club.

**Hearts:** **TOM HEALY** reported that there were two tables and eight players. Winners were, Table 1: **TOM** and **ANDY HOLMES**, with moonshots by **TOM** (2) and **MICHAEL AMBROSINO** (1); Table 2: **DON CONWAY**, with moonshots by **JACK SWEGER** (2) and **DON** (1).

**Pickleball: PAT MACCARTHY.** Although pickleball was rained out last Thursday, we had seasonably mild weather on Monday and played eight spirited games. **JEROME COLEMAN, BOB GIAQUINTO, LOU RUPNIK, PAT MACCARTHY,** and **PETER CRUIKSHANK** were assembled. It was **PETER's** first game ever and he played extremely well. Pickleball is played, weather permitting, from 10 am until 12 pm on Mondays and Thursdays at Christiano Field. If you want to join the pickleball contact list, please email **PAT MACCARTHY** at [pmaccarthy415@gmail.com](mailto:pmaccarthy415@gmail.com).

### TODAY'S SPEAKER

**HOLLISTER STURGES** introduced the speaker, David Fitzpatrick, whose presentation was titled "Cable News and How it Changed the American Landscape." Mr. Fitzpatrick is a former staff writer for *CNN's Anderson Cooper 360*, and his presentation described the influence of cable news on the world today. He was a CNN anchor producer, senior executive producer and investigative producer from 2001-2021. Prior to joining CNN he spent 25 years at CBS News in a variety of editorial positions, including service as a producer in the network's Washington, Los Angeles and London bureaus. He has also served as the network's bureau chief in Chicago and later, national editor. He joined the *CBS Evening News* as a producer in the late 1980's and subsequently joined *60 Minutes* as a producer attached to the late Morley Safer. Upon leaving CBS News in 1998, he joined the staff of the ABC News primetime newsmagazine *20/20*. Mr. Fitzpatrick is a graduate of Brigham Young University and 35 year-plus resident of Darien.



Mr. Fitzpatrick said that he is proud of having worked for CNN for two decades. Even though some people think it is too liberal, and some think it is too conservative, CNN has become like a utility, adept at getting news from remote corners of the world and bringing it to you immediately. The breadth and reach of CNN are unmatched.

Ted Turner founded CNN in 1980, and lost hundreds of millions of dollars starting it up. Only beginning in 1990 did it become profitable because of its satellite link to the war zone in Iraq. This catapulted it into a leading news source. When he started at CNN in 1980, CBS staffers deprecated it, calling it "chicken noodle news." It took a long time for CNN to get established and respected. For example, the White House Press Pool is a group



of writers and photographers from the major networks assigned each day to cover the president on behalf of the larger corps of correspondents. CNN had to battle for a long time to get into the pool. Ted Turner led a remarkable life, but he now suffers from a progressive neurological disease called Lewy Body dementia.

CNN has become famous for “Breaking News” but it may have been overused in efforts to try to improve ratings. That changed when Chris Licht took over CNN from Jeff Zucker. Chris was famous in the industry for teaming with Stephen Colbert, one of his best friends. Colbert had advised him not to take the CNN job.

Chris was an early producer of the Joe Scarborough show, *Morning Joe*. For many years, Fitzpatrick had worked for Jeff Zucker, a great leader of CNN. Zucker had been able to get CNN’s ratings above those of Fox for a time. The transition to Licht has not been easy, with about 400 people fired, and some of these firings received a lot of notoriety in the press. Licht’s most prominent change was on the *CNN Morning Show*, to which he appointed Don Lemon, Poppy Harlow, and Kaitlan Collins as the new anchors. The ratings numbers so far have not been kind. Viewership of 440,000 is quite low, on par with many unknown cable channels.

One reason for CNN’s current difficulties may be the policies set by the new head of Time Warner, David Zaslav. He had been with Discovery Network, which bought Time Warner by taking on \$50 billion in debt. They are going to have to reduce costs by \$3 billion, mainly by cutting programming. Some top reporters considered “liberal” have been fired. They are trying to reduce the abrasiveness of their opinion writers. John Malone, who hired Chris Licht, is famously conservative. John Malone felt that CNN was broadcasting too much opinion, especially against President Trump. Malone has lobbied conservative members of Congress to come back to making appearances on CNN.

For a long time, Republican lawmakers would not appear on CNN. Chris has turned that around, but it has not helped its ratings surpass MSNBC. CNN has not yet replaced Chris Cuomo, who was fired for giving advice to his brother Andrew Cuomo, against CNN rules. Chris Cuomo now appears on NewsNation, an obscure new cable channel.

CNN just announced that it will air a weekly show hosted by Bill Maher called *Overtime* on Friday nights at 11pm. Licht also reached out to Gayle King, anchor of the *CBS Mornings* show, to host a weekly nighttime show on CNN.

Trevor Noah, who recently left *The Daily Show* on Comedy Central, is reportedly also being considered for a post at CNN, an attempt to provide more entertainment and improve ratings. But as a comedian Noah is accustomed to a huge, expensive team that CNN probably cannot afford. If all this makes it sound as though CNN is moving from news into entertainment, Mr. Fitzpatrick noted that Fox News calls its prime-time hosts “entertainers,” not “journalists.”

Carriage fees are fees paid by all cable operators to content providers, on a three or four year contract, based on the popularity of their content. ESPN is the most expensive because of its popularity, charging between \$2 and \$7 per month per subscriber. Ted Turner devised this system by which cable networks get paid twice for their programming, once by carriage fees and again through advertising. But this is all going to be undermined by streaming services, which are making an aggressive pitch for consumers’ money. This threatens the cable networks’ carriage fees. It inspired CNN’s failed attempt to start a new streaming news service called CNN+. After hiring more than 300 people, CNN+ was shut down after less than a month. Included in the firing was Chris Wallace, but his show survived on CNN. Another victim was Audie Cornish, who also was kept on to create a podcast on CNN. Mr. Fitzpatrick predicts that sometime soon, cable operators will start offering a bundled cable news package that includes CNN, but it will be fought tooth and nail by the cable news services.

Mr. Fitzpatrick believes that in spite of its precarious situation, CNN will not disappear because it is too valuable a national and international resource for imminent breaking news, especially international news. CNN is unique in that it sends teams all around the world to cover important breaking stories. It might be acquired by a company with deep pockets, like Apple.

In response to audience questions, Mr. Fitzpatrick stated that CNN has fallen behind Fox and MSNBC because Fox appeals to conservatives and MSNBC appeals to liberals. People want to hear what they agree with. CNN has tried to capture the middle, which has been a losing proposition.

Cable news has morphed into 24-hour broadcasting, and opinion has filled up the time between real news stories. Opinion has become endemic to cable news, which is far different from Ted Turner’s original model. In Fitzpatrick’s view, social media is the main

reason why people want to hear news reports that support their opinions. BBC and PBS are old-fashioned news sources because they have long-format stories and interviews that young people have not the patience to watch. Most young people don't watch news broadcasts, but instead get their news from the internet.

To see the full presentation, go to the following link and click on "Speakers" and then on "Speaker Videos":

<https://greenwichrma.org/>

Note: The views expressed in this presentation are those of the speaker. 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 February 8, 2023, will be →**MICHAEL LaGAMMA**←. Please send a copy of any remarks you want included in the CBB to him at [mdlgamma@optonline.net](mailto:mdlgamma@optonline.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](mailto: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](http://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.

Photos by **ANDY HOLMES, TIM BROOKS** and **DICK FRANCK**.

Retired Men's Association of Greenwich, Inc. · 37 Lafayette Place · Greenwich, CT 06830 · USA. Visit our website at <https://greenwichrma.org>

**RMA 2022 CALENDAR**

<b>Weekly Repetitive Activities*</b>			
<b>Day</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Contact</b>
Mondays	9:30 am	QiGong and Tai Chi Workout	Register in advance with Will Morrison – <a href="mailto:wdmorrison@gmail.com">wdmorrison@gmail.com</a>
Mondays	10:00 am	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	Resumes in Spring	RMA Golf, the Griff Golf Course, Greenwich	Mike Ryan – <a href="mailto:ryantomac@netscape.net">ryantomac@netscape.net</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	Bob Shullman – <a href="mailto:bob.shullman@gmail.com">bob.shullman@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	9:00 am	RMA Walking	Tad Larrabee - <a href="mailto:tadlarra@optonline.net">tadlarra@optonline.net</a>
Thursdays	10:00 am	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	Resumes in Spring	Outdoor Tennis, Bruce Park	John Knight - <a href="mailto:johnknight7@gmail.com">johnknight7@gmail.com</a>
Friday	1:30-3:00 pm	Indoor Tennis	Andy Holmes - <a href="mailto:Andyholmes56@gmail.com">Andyholmes56@gmail.com</a>

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