

CIGAR BOX BULLETIN

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



www.greenwichrma.org
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Next Week's Scribe: BARBIAN3015@GMAIL.COM

"He who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead; his eyes are closed." - Albert Einstein

President **JOE MANCINELLI** opened the meeting, and **TIM BROOKS** led the members in the Pledge of Allegiance. With **JIM SANTORA** accompanying on the piano, **TOM HEALY** led members in singing "You're a Grand Old Flag," "Bye Bye Love," and "Tie A Yellow Ribbon."

ANNOUNCEMENTS

JOE MANCINELLI noted that the Bruce Museum was having its grand reopening on April 2, free to all. He also noted that it was Vietnam Veterans' Day and acknowledged the veterans in the group. Finally, **JOE** advised that in New York City the Macy's flower show had commenced, again free to all.

TIM BROOKS shared a story of a friend of his who had passed out from low blood pressure in his home, hitting his head when he fell. Shortly thereafter an ambulance arrived, having been called by the friend's Apple watch which had detected the fall and (after giving the victim a chance to tell it not to) called 911 for help. The watch also offers other features, including a built-in cell phone. It's an interesting option for people of our age, and costs about \$300 to \$500. It was noted that other companies offer similar watches.

JOE followed the story with an appeal to members to submit recommendations of their own, for products, books, movies, TV shows, restaurants, or other items or services they think might be of interest to other members. Send a short paragraph to CBB Editor **TIM** so it can be published in the CBB (see following example).

RMA Member Recommendation

I'd like to suggest *Lucky Hank* (TV show). Bob Odenkirk, who is best known for his roles in the shows *Breaking Bad* and *Better Call Saul*, stars in this witty new comedy about a sardonic English professor who is surrounded by colleagues and students representing some of the cliches of today's world. Clueless, entitled students, nervous administrators, and strident advocates for various social causes are all lampooned. New episodes premiere on Sunday night on the AMC cable channel, which can be seen on Verizon FIOS, Optimum, and various streaming services including Sling and YouTube TV. – *Tim Brooks*

Corresponding Secretary **ARNOLD GORDON** reported that earlier this month, the national hospital quality awards for 2023 were announced by Healthgrades, a comprehensive database of ratings and comparisons for physicians, hospitals, and health care providers. The Patient Safety Excellence Award was presented to 445 hospitals in 44 states, the top 10% of hospitals nationwide. Among them was Greenwich Hospital, one of only three hospitals in Connecticut to receive the award, out of about 50 hospitals in the state. We should take pride when institutions in Greenwich achieve high rankings by independent investigators.

ARNOLD presented a video relating to his recent trip to Florida, where one of the most invasive species ever to hit the US has been seriously altering the Everglades ecosystem and lately has been migrating north and reaching some towns. He was referring, of course, to the Burmese Python, a large, dangerous carnivore, which is the subject of state-sanctioned bounty hunting. The video showed the largest specimen yet discovered and captured. You can view the video here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yxn9LGWXip0>

Unable to resist, **ARNOLD** offered up some of his usual zany groaners:

- I once dated a girl who broke up with me because I only have nine toes. Yes, I was lack toes intolerant.
- I accidentally rubbed ketchup in my eyes. Now I have Heinzsight.
- Did you know muffins spelled backwards is what you do when you take them out of the oven?
- Once upon a time there was a King who was only 12 inches tall. He was a terrible King, but he made a great ruler.

- Six cows were smoking joints and playing poker. You guessed it. The steaks were pretty high.

ARNOLD then introduced **TOM HEALY**, veteran RMA jokester, who shared some truisms:

- The biggest joke on mankind is that computers have begun asking humans to prove they are not robots.
- Just once I want a username and password prompt to say “close enough.”
- We celebrated last night with a couple of adult beverages – Metamucil and Ensure.
- For those of you who don’t want Alexa listening in on your conversations, they are making a male version – it doesn’t listen to anything.
- You know you are getting old when “friends with benefits” means having someone who can drive at night.

TOM also shared an amusing story about an octogenarian and his still-living father and grandfather, the moral of which is that it is still possible to get into trouble at age 118.

PETER STERN reported that 102 members were present, 13 by Zoom. Four guests were present:

- Pete Hamilton, guest of **TOG PEARSON** and **PETE UHRY**
- Steven Shapiro, guest of **HENRY TISCHLER**
- Mike Mack, guest of **MICHAEL AMBROSINO** and **ED MASTOLONI**
- Alan Weyl, guest of **BOB MEANEY**

PETER recognized the following birthdays: **TAD LARRABEE** (82), **MICKEY ROBINSON** (78), **BOB RIMMER** (85), and **JOHN HARKINS** (81). The birthday boys were regaled with the traditional melody. **PETER** also recognized four returnees:

- **CHICK DONOHUE** from Pompano Beach, FL
- **ARNOLD GORDON** from Punta Gorda, FL
- **BARRY RICHELSON** from Vero Beach, FL
- **PETER STERN** from Las Vegas, NV

Finally, **PETER** acknowledged **STEVEN GLASSER** and **ARN WELLES**, both of whom were attending for the first time in a long time.

MAURICE KROHN reported that the Red Cross training class scheduled for April 30 has been cancelled.

DON CONWAY advised the group that Parsonage Cottage will hold a miniature golf outing on its grounds in early June. The fee is \$100 for a foursome. More details to follow.

HENRY TISCHLER raised the possibility of holding poker nights, either at members' houses or at some poker venues in Stamford. Those interested should so indicate on the sign-up sheet in the back.

HORST TEBBE previewed the presentation by today's speaker, C. Griffith Mann, Ph.D., who will speak on "Unicorns and Heroes: John D. Rockefeller, Jr. and Tapestries at The Met Cloisters."

PETER BERG previewed next week's speaker, U.S. Congressman Jim Himes, who will provide a "Report from Washington."

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

WILL MORRISON urged members to submit their volunteer hours. He reminded us that we are six months away from the annual banquet, at which awards will be given for those who donated the greatest number of hours during the year. So, keep your totals up to date, at:

greenwichrma.org/log

He also mentioned that people should submit their stories – why they volunteer.

INDUCTION



Coleman, Ressler, Stern

JOHN KAVANAGH then oversaw the induction of Howard Ressler as a member of the RMA. Howard was nominated by **JEROME COLEMAN**, who has known Howard for over 25 years. They met when Howard was a partner of friends of **JEROME'S** at the firm of Kensington, James & Ressler. **JEROME** found Howard to be a bright, well-read, and witty fellow. The Kensington firm merged with a large firm, Anderson Kill, and **JEROME** renewed his acquaintance with Howard about six years ago in connection with a litigation **JEROME** was handling. A few months ago,

PETER UHRY brought Howard over at a Wednesday meeting and asked **JEROME** if he knew this guy? They have been in touch since.

Howard was born and raised in New York City, attended the Friends Seminary, and graduated from Lafayette College (Phi Beta Kappa) and Cornell Law. He specialized in bankruptcy matters and concluded his career with Diamond, McCarthy in their New York City office. Howard resided in Westport for 20 years, commuting to the city, and raised his family there. He recently moved to Greenwich where his wife was raised. He is interested in travel, theatre, intellectual discourse, history, and sports. His goal is to become more involved in the Greenwich community, to meet new people, and to make new friends.

The nomination was seconded by **PETER STERN**, who was serving as proxy for **PETE UHRY**. The group then unanimously elected Howard a member. Howard expressed his appreciation and remarked how impressed he had been by the vitality of the group reflected at the meetings he had attended.

FUN AND GAMES

Pickleball: **PAT MacCARTHY** advised that 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** at pmaccarthy415@gmail.com.

Tennis: **ANDY HOLMES** reported that this past Friday we had eight players play four matches at the Old Greenwich Tennis Academy. In the opening round, the winners on Court 1 were **JEROME COLEMAN** and **ANDY** and on Court 2 the winners were **MARK PRUNER** and **ANDRE MAZUREK**. In the final round, the winners on Court 1 were **ANDRE** and **ANDY**, and on Court 2 the winners were **JIM FISHBEIN** and **PAT MacCARTHY**. This week's Captain is **LOU RUPNIK**.

Bridge: **RON MURRAY** reported that the top scorers among this week's six players were **CHARLEY LAND** (2140), **RON** (1250), and **ANDRE MAZUREK** (1100). The group plays every Wednesday afternoon at 1:00 pm in the Cafe on the ground floor of the Greenwich Library. Lunch is available. All members who are interested in bridge are encouraged to join the group, whether beginners or experts. We have some very good players who would be happy to work with the beginners if they so desire. We're a very friendly group!

Hearts: **BOB SHULLMAN** reported that there were eight players at two tables on March 22. At Table 1, **JIM DEAN** won two games while **JACK SWEGER** won one game. There were

five moon shots at this table, with **JIM** shooting the moon three times, **JACK** shooting it once, and **BILL FAKUNDINY** shooting it once – his first time since he joined the group recently. At Table 2, **JAY SCHONDORF** won two games while **TOM HEALY** and **BOB** each won one game. There were seven moon shots at this table with **JAY** shooting the moon three times, **TOM** two times, and **JOHN KNIGHT** and **BOB** each shooting it once. Notably there were 12 moon shots in total this week.

Walkers and Talkers: **TAD LARRABEE** reported that the weather was threatening, but it held off until just after the walk! The group met mid-way up Pemberwick Road in west Greenwich and proceeded to walk through several neighborhoods including Pilgrim Drive, the only street in Greenwich that can be accessed only from New York! Of course, the guide was **JEFF JUNKER**, who seems to have an encyclopedic knowledge of the roads in western Greenwich. The group returned alongside the Byram River. They had a very enjoyable stroll of a bit over four miles and again saw many areas that they didn't even know existed. For those who might be concerned about our walks being long, we tend to "stroll," not pushing ourselves at a rapid pace.



Walkers on Pilgrim Drive



Part of the fun is spotting unique bumper stickers

Tai Chi: **WILL MORRISON** said that the group meets Mondays at 9:30 am in Old Greenwich. To find out more and to get on the weekly mailing list, contact **WILL**, wdmorrison@gmail.com.

Golf: **JOE MANCINELLI** shared some humorous observations about the sport (e.g., it being a five-mile walk interrupted by frequent disappointments), culminating with a classic video of Robin Williams describing the game as only he could. In a more serious vein, **MIKE RYAN** reported that our golf season starts next Tuesday, with a 9:30 am tee-off

time. The weather forecast is promising, with a projected high of 63 degrees. Dues are again \$20 for the year. Volunteer captains are needed.

TODAY'S SPEAKER

HORST TEBBE introduced today's speaker, Dr. C. Griffith Mann, the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Michel David-Weill Curator in Charge of the Department of Medieval Art and The Cloisters. He is responsible for the medieval collections and curatorial staff in the Met's main building and for directing the staff and operations at The Cloisters, the branch of the Met dedicated to the art and architecture of medieval Europe. He was formerly the Deputy Director and Chief Curator at the Cleveland Museum of Art. Dr. Mann is a 1987 graduate of Greenwich High School. He received his B.A. in art history and history from Williams College and his Ph.D. in medieval art from The Johns Hopkins University. A specialist in the arts of late medieval Italy, he has published on civic patronage, painting, and devotion in Tuscany.



Dr. Mann began with the history of The Cloisters, which is located in upper Manhattan, majestically situated on a hilltop with a spectacular view of the Hudson River and the Palisades in New Jersey. The Cloisters resulted from the collaboration of three men in the early twentieth century: John D. Rockefeller, George Gray Barnard, and William Wells Bosworth. Rockefeller was well-acquainted with, and enamored of, the area that now is Fort Tryon Park, having ridden horses there in his youth. He acquired a major estate there in 1917, thinking at the time that the property might be better used as a public place than a private residence. When the estate was destroyed by a fire, that transition became all the more likely.

Barnard was a sculptor who studied under Rodin, and he was taken by medieval art. He was particularly inspired by what he labeled the "patient Gothic chisel." He began buying medieval works and accumulated a substantial collection. He housed them at an unimposing site he called George Gray Barnard's Cloisters, which was located about a mile-and-a-half south of its current namesake. Barnard was hired to create sculptures on one of Rockefeller's properties, and the two men got to know each other. While working

for Rockefeller, Barnard told him that he had encountered an extraordinary set of medieval tapestries (now known as the Unicorn Tapestries) that were for sale. Rockefeller then asked Bosworth, an accomplished architect best known for the main building at MIT, for his opinion on the tapestries. When Bosworth enthusiastically endorsed Barnard's view of the tapestries' magnificence, Rockefeller examined them, bought them for about a million dollars, and donated them to the Met (after they adorned his apartment for a time).

Rockefeller facilitated The Met's purchase of Barnard's Cloisters, and The Met housed the Unicorn Tapestries there. Rockefeller, however, had reserved the right to control where they were housed, and he decided that they should be kept at a grander venue. In 1933 he initiated construction of The Cloisters at its current location, and that building was opened to the public in 1938. The Unicorn Tapestries – and thousands of other pieces of medieval art – have been displayed there since that time. The Cloisters itself is a work of art, designed to look like a medieval building and resplendent with beautiful gardens.

Dr. Mann then talked about the Unicorn Tapestries themselves. They appear to date from about the year 1500 in Brussels, but it is unknown who created them. They are probably the product of a workshop at which numerous artists and artisans worked on them, and even with this group effort they would have taken several years – perhaps a decade or more – to complete. Some background figures appear nearly identical to those in other works dating to that time, suggesting that they were produced by the same hand or studio. Unfortunately, the creators of these other works are also unknown. Given that only about half of the Unicorn Tapestries reflect the more modern compositional technique of having a background, middle-ground, and foreground, they may have been created in two different studios. The earliest documentation regarding the tapestries was a 1728 inventory of a French castle. That castle was sacked in 1793 during the French revolution, and the tapestries were lost for several decades. They were returned to the family in the 1850's.

The creation of the tapestries was an arduous process. It probably began with the creation of a "cartoon" – a drawing, perhaps full-sized, that guided the weavers as they proceeded. The principal materials were wool, silk, and metallic threads. Colors were generated using dyes created from three plants mixed in various proportions, along with human urine, to create the palette for the artists. Dr. Mann marveled at the intricate designs that were generated by meticulously weaving the colored threads.

The tapestries depict a hunt for a unicorn, a creature said to be imbued with great strength that could be captured only when a maiden entered the forest and caused it to

relax its guard, at which time a hunter in hiding could overcome it. There are conflicting views regarding why the unicorn was being hunted and killed. Some view the story through a religious lens, believing that the unicorn represented Christ and the tapestries symbolized his crucifixion. Others see the unicorn as a metaphor for love, a view supported by the roughly 80 species of flowers included in the tapestries, many of which (especially pomegranates) were associated with love.

Dr. Mann then shifted to explaining the efforts to restore the second great set of tapestries at The Cloisters, the Hero Tapestries. These tapestries depict nine great heroes: three pagan (Hector of Troy, Alexander the Great, and Julius Caesar), three Jewish (Joshua, David, and Judas Maccabeus), and three Christian (King Arthur, Charlemagne, and Godfrey of Bouillion). They appear to date to about 1400 and to have been created in the South Netherlands. Three principal sources account for most deterioration of tapestries: chemical changes (particularly oxidization caused by exposure to light), mechanical changes (mostly attributable to gravity), and soil. In 2018, the Met began remedying the deterioration of the Hero Tapestries, starting with King Arthur. The first step is eliminating any pests embedded in them. Initially this was accomplished through a several-week-long anoxic treatment that starved any pests of oxygen, but now it is accomplished by keeping the tapestries for a period at a low temperature at which pests cannot survive. The tapestries are then submersed in water and cleaning agents to remove dirt. Next, they are placed on a work table where restorers shore up their structure. Finally, worn portions are mended using threads that have been dyed to match the originals. It is at this stage that key aesthetic decisions are made about how much should be restored as opposed to keeping the original.

Dr. Mann took several questions from members, and he left all attendees with a much deeper appreciation of these works of medieval art and what goes into preserving them.

To see the full presentation, go to <https://greenwichrma.org>, cursor to “Speakers” and click on “Speaker Videos.”

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 will be →**PAUL BARBIAN**←. Please make sure you give a copy of any remarks you want included in the CBB to him, preferably via email at barbian3015@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.greenwchrma.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.

Thanks to **ANDY HOLMES, DICK FRANCK** and **TIM BROOKS** for pictures this time.

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RMA 2023 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	9:30 am	RMA Golf, the Griff Golf Course, Greenwich	Mike Ryan – ryantomac@netscape.net
Tuesdays	Resumes in fall	Platform (paddle) tennis at Loughlin Field, Cos Cob	James 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	1:00 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 Michael LaGamma – mdlgamma@optonline.net
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