



# 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, Fred Wu**  
Archivist: **Tad Larrabee** Website: **Mark Geimer** Format: **Len Carusi, Mark Geimer**

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**SCRIBE: FRED WU**

**Next Week's Scribe: DAVID MICHONSKI, [DAVID@QUIGLER.COM](mailto:DAVID@QUIGLER.COM)**

RMA President **JACK WEIR** opened the meeting at 9:46 am. **TOM HEALY** led us in the Pledge of Allegiance. **GRAN BURGESS** led the songs, starting with the "Star-Spangled Banner," followed by "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" and "In the Good Old Summer Time," accompanied on the piano by **JIM SANTORA**.

**JACK WEIR** thanked the members on duty today: CBB Editor **TIM BROOKS**, scribe **FRED WU**, projectionists **LEN CARUSI** and **TONY COCCHI**, volunteer advocate **TOG PEARSON**, mentor **RUSS HARDEN**, greeter **JOHN KAVANAGH**, audio/video **ED PARKER, MARK GEIMER, PETER DODGE, HORST TEBBE, BARRY RICHELSON** and **STEVE MARINO**, set up **BOB BISHOP, JIM BUTLER** and **JOHN CRAINE**.

**JACK** announced that there will be no meeting on July 19 because the hall is not available. The Yale golf outing will take place on August 2, at the Yale golf course in New Haven. There is a sign-up sheet in the back of the room. Payment is required by July 26. Secretary **ED FARRELL** is in Greenwich Hospital for a few days; he welcomes emails but is not accepting visitors. Annual RMA dues have been received from 177 members, but now that there are about 250 members, about 73 checks are missing! Checks for \$100 can be hand delivered at a member meeting or mailed to Treasurer **JEFF JUNKER**, 9 Tree Top Terrace, Greenwich 06831.

**JACK** thanked **PETER STERN** for helping the RMA reach a membership level of 250. **PETER** then initiated the induction of two new members.

Bill Grad was nominated by **GRAN BURGESS**, and seconded by **RUSS HARDEN**. **GRAN**'s remarks were as follows. "I first met Bill when we both attended the Phillips Exeter Academy. He was a year ahead of me. Bill was a track star and I think he still holds records in the 50-yard dash and the low hurdles. He was also president of his class for three years, a hint at the popularity that possibly bodes well for his election to the RMA. Bill continued his 'tracky' ways at Princeton, where I also went, though injuries slowed him down a bit. He was a broad jumper and jumped 22 feet, 11 inches, or about this far.... (walks away from and back to the podium). I think Bill would be a great addition at the picnic if we add a broad jump competition. Take a moment to picture RMAers broad jumping. (Pause) Pretty disturbing, eh?

"An interesting fact: Bill's relay team still holds the Princeton record to this day. Why? Because the timing is now measured in meters not seconds, so they will hold that record forever. If Bill is admitted to the RMA, we'll have a current record-holder in our midst. I will also note that Bill was voted Most Likely Bachelor by his Princeton class but has shunned that award by staying married to Laura for fifty-plus years. They have two children Ben and Kim, who went to Greenwich public schools.

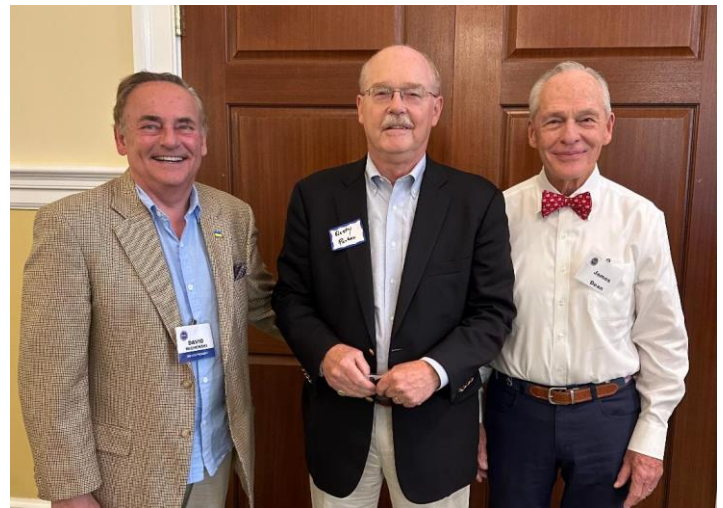
"Some notable aspects of Bill's working life include teaching fellow at the Athens College in Greece, after which he served in the Coast Guard Reserve for six years; a buyer at Bloomingdale's; founder of a long-distance phone company, Call-USA, which he sold to an English company; general manager of Crystal Mall in Waterford, CT. Bill created a 'Twilight Evening of Giving,' where over 100 non-profits sold tickets for a private night of shopping, an idea which spread to some 40 malls and raised some \$2 million. Something tells me he might be good at the volunteer part of our organization. Bill has been active in local philanthropic organizations and has served in leadership positions at the United Way, Rotary, Jewish Family Services, Greenwich Reform Synagogue, and At Home in Greenwich. He is a member of the Greenwich Board of Assessment Appeals. He is currently a commercial real estate broker specializing in retail properties, which, I guess, is why he's able to become a member of the Retired Men's Association." **BILL** was inducted by a unanimous show of hands vote.

Rusty Parker was then nominated by **DAVID MICHONSKI**, and seconded by **JAMES DEAN**. **DAVID**'s nominating remarks follow.

“Frank Parker was born, raised, and has lived in Greenwich his entire life. He graduated from Brunswick in 1965, from Stevens Institute of Technology in 1969, and from UConn with an MBA in finance in 1986. He made electricity for 16 years with CL&P, and then entered the family international dry bulk shipping business for 25 years. He is married to a lifelong Greenwich resident, Cathrine, nee Skaarup, with three boys who all live nearby, and three granddaughters. He has been active at Christ Church Greenwich, Greenwich Land Trust, Greenwich Riding and Trails Association, Greenwich Tree Conservancy, Historic Preservation of Greenwich, and the Northeast Greenwich Association. Also, he is currently on the board of Indian Harbor Yacht Club. His passion is preserving open space, preserving the quality of life in Greenwich, and alternative energy and energy conservation.” **RUSTY** was inducted by a show of hands vote.



Burgess, Grad, Harden



Michonski, Parker, Dean

**PETER** then welcomed guests Charlie Shapiro, sponsored by **ANDY HOLMES** and **BOB SHULLMAN**, Paul Phillips, sponsored by **BOB PHILLIPS**, and Bill Spinibaldi, sponsored by **SPIKE LIPSCHUTZ**. Returnees were **CARL WHITE** from Martha's Vineyard, **LEE LUNDY** from USNA, Annapolis MD, **ANDY HOLMES** from Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro, and Greece, **JOE MANCINELLI** from Ocean City, MD and Washington, DC, and **PETE UHRY** from Maine.

Birthdays celebrated were **ALEX GOSPODINOFF**, 96, **HOLLISTER STURGES**, 84, **TONY FITZPATRICK**, 74, **JOHN REESE**, 70, **DAN FREDLAND**, 89, **JOE HAVRANEK**, 80, **JEROME COLEMAN**, 75, **HOWARD RESSLER**, 75, and former member Henry Gunders, 99.

A total of 101 members were in attendance, including four on Zoom.

Corresponding Secretary **ARNOLD GORDON** suggested that members take their grandchildren to the annual St. Catherine's Carnival on the church parking lot grounds from July 12 – 15, starting at 6 pm nightly. Be young again! He also reminded everyone about the trip to Goodspeed Opera House on August 24<sup>th</sup> to see the musical comedy *Summer Stock*, based on the 1950 Judy Garland-Gene Kelly film (<https://www.goodspeed.org/shows/summer-stock>). Attendees will meet at St. Paul's Riverside Church for a 9:15 am departure by bus. Lunch at the Gelston House across the street from the theater is included. Tickets are \$125, payable by check made out to the RMA, and should be given to **MAURICE KROHN**. Deadline for sign-ups is July 26 and seating is limited, so don't delay.

For Shakespeare fans, see a free performance of *The Tempest*, nightly at 7:30 pm on July 13-16 and the following week, July 20-23, on the great lawn alongside The Royal Green Restaurant at Sterling Farms on Newfield Avenue, Stamford. Details here: <https://patch.com/connecticut/greenwich/calendar/event/20230713/7b4cf01f-ff0c-4d0a-9557-c828ed983f5b/free-outdoor-shakespeare-the-tempest>

He closed with a few irritating groaners and one sign-sighting:

"Doctor, my child swallowed a roll of film. What should I do?" "Let's wait and see if anything develops."

"Why did the Mexican take anti-anxiety medication? For Hispanic attacks."

"97% of people are stupid. Glad I'm in the other 5%."

**JERRY SCHWENDEMAN** was today's official jokester. As we get older we visit our urologist more often. A guy says "Doc, you gotta help me. My private parts are turning orange." The doctor examines him and says that things like this are usually caused by stress. The guy says he was just fired last week, but he hated his boss, and he just found a new job at twice the pay and almost no work. The doctor asks "so what have you been doing?" "I've been sitting home watching porn on TV and eating Cheetos."

**TIM BROOKS** previewed the talk by **CHICK DONOHUE** at 11 am today: "The Greatest Beer Run Ever: A Memoir of Friendship, Loyalty, and War"

**JOE MANCINELLI** announced next week's presentation about the pilgrimage along the Camino de Compostela. It is believed that since the Middle Ages, people from all over the world have been traveling the pilgrimage routes from Portugal, France, and Spain to Santiago de Compostela, or Santiago de Camino. However, in recent years the road to Santiago has become extremely popular and it is estimated that in 2022 there were over 400,000 pilgrims that made this journey. The trip, which can be as much as 200 km, may be done on foot, by bicycle, and some even travel as their medieval counterparts did, by horseback or by donkey. Some choose a more comfortable trip with luxury vehicles and four-star hotels, while other choose a more spartan approach and hike through villages, forests, and fields, sleeping in tents and hostels along the way. Next week, Ms. Celeste Mancinelli will present her award-winning one-woman show, *Crying on the Camino*, and we will share in her recent journey with her two steadfast companions. She has performed this show on Broadway, as well as in several states and countries. It is very entertaining. The First Presbyterian Church Fellowship Hall will be transformed into a mini theater where we can enjoy the sights, sounds, joys, horrors, and laughter along the way. **JACK WEIR** told us that next week we will be allowed to use the hall until 12:15 to accommodate the show.

Volunteer Chair **WILL MORRISON** introduced **LEE LUNDY**, who has been tutoring at Cos Cob School, teaching reading to third graders. **LEE** described his very rewarding experience and added, in his view, the main benefit is socialization, giving the children an opportunity to speak with someone who is not a third grader and not a family member. The United Way organizes this program in almost every school. This is the link to an article on the program.

<https://www.greenwichsentinel.com/2023/06/28/greenwich-united-ways-reading-champions-celebrates-15th-graduation>

**WILL** announced the volunteer hours for June. The percent of members reporting hours was down 21% to 19% month to month. The top three volunteers were **TIM BROOKS**, **JEFF JUNKER** and **HOLLISTER STURGES**. Top non-profits supported were Call-A-Ride, religious organizations, and Coffee for Good.

### [List of Volunteer Hours Served](#)

**SONNY CHAN** wanted to inform RMA members of a great movie deal. "I'm a big movie goer so I have a membership to AMC theaters called the AMC Stubs A-List. For a monthly

charge of \$24.95, you get to see 3 movies a week. No restrictions. I average about one to two movies a week, sometimes three, so even on my worst month I see six movies so that's only a bit over \$4.25 each. I have seen up to 12 which is barely over \$2 each. With theaters in Port Chester and in Stamford, there are a lot of options and it is a pretty good deal if you're a movie goer."

### GAMES MEMBERS PLAY



The **Walkers and Talkers** report was given by **JEFF JUNKER**. Among other things, they encountered a new plaque on Steamboat Road, near the shore.

**Tai Chi. WILL MORRISON** talked about Tai Chi. The focus this coming Monday will be rooted balance. This is a balance where the body is not only aligned from the crown of the head through the hip to the center of the foot, but

also where one's attention creates a vertical line that extends from the "heavens to the center of the earth." Join us in Old Greenwich, 9:30 Monday mornings. Write **WILL** to get the specifics and to be added to the class confirmation mailing list.

**Bridge** results from **RON MURRAY**.

1. **TONY COCCHI** 2,980 points
2. **ED MASTOLONI** 2,220 points
3. **STEVE SHAPIRO** 2,150 points

We play Wednesday afternoons at 1 pm in the cafe on the ground floor of the Greenwich Library, where lunch is available. We welcome all members and guests, whether beginners or experts, who are interested in bridge to join our group. If you are concerned about the status of your game, no need to worry. We are a friendly group and have a number of excellent players who would be happy to answer your questions.

**Pickleball. PAT MACCARTHY** said pickleball will be at Byram from 9-11 because the demand for courts at Christiano is so high. Contact **PAT** if you want to join.

**Hearts.** **BOB SHULLMAN** gave the report. We had eight hearts players at two tables last Wednesday. At table 1 four games were played. The winners were **DON CONWAY**, who won two games, **TOM HEALY** and **BOB SHULLMAN**, who each won one game. **DON, BOB,** and **JOHN STANKUNAS** each shot the moon once. At table 2 three games were played. The winners were **JACK SWEGER**, who won two games, and **BILL FAKUNDINY**, who won one game. **JOE DOWLING** had one moonshot.

**Golf.** **MIKE RYAN** gave the report. We did not play yesterday because of the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday. Over the next two Wednesdays we will be playing ahead of the women, so I'm hoping that itself will lead more golfers to come out. Sign-up sheets for the next two weeks are on the bulletin board.

**JACK** adjourned the meeting at 10:34.

### **SPEAKER PROGRAM**

**TIM BROOKS** opened the program with a video about a reunion of today's speaker, **JAMES "CHICKIE" DONOHUE**, with a group of his old friends who were Vietnam veterans. **TIM** then introduced **CHICKIE** and interviewed him about his book, *The Greatest Beer Run Ever: A Story of Friendship, Loyalty, and War*, and the movie that followed.

In 1967, as a young merchant seaman living in upper Manhattan, **CHICKIE** and his friends were disturbed by the virulence of the anti-war protests and the lack of support for the



young soldiers, some of whom they knew, who were fighting and dying in the faraway war. Someone suggested "take them a beer" to show that their old friends supported them, and **CHICKIE** decided to do just that. The next day he boarded a civilian merchant ship with a list of soldiers from his neighborhood and a duffel bag filled with cans of beer, and headed for Vietnam. Once in the war zone he tracked down several of them, while dodging bullets and

evading authorities. Then, just as he was about to leave, the bloody Tet Offensive began and he was caught in the middle of that.

When he finally got home even members of his own family didn't believe his story of what he had done. Others told him it should be made into a movie. Finally, 50 years later, he met a retired reporter who helped him write a book about his adventure, but it was turned down by publishers. So he self-published it. He brought books to the VFW and elsewhere and sold them himself. Hollywood producer Peter Farrelly learned about it and wanted to make it into a movie. In March 2020, after it became public that he had signed a movie deal with Farrelly, New York publishers started calling him. This started a bidding war, which was won by HarperCollins. In just a couple of years, a movie was released and the book became popular, in spite of the Covid pandemic.

The best thing about the story is that the four guys he found in Vietnam are all still alive today, and they get together a few times a year. Many friends who didn't go to Vietnam have since passed, but these guys are still around! The success of the book enabled him to bring his wife to Greenwich and be near his daughter and grandchildren.

A trailer for the movie, which was released in September 2022, was then screened, after which **TIM BROOKS**, himself a veteran, continued his interview of **CHICKIE**.

Q: What was it like to see yourself and your family on the big screen?

A: It just happened. I had been to Vietnam a couple of times before as a merchant seaman. I knew that the officers and Vietnam officials weren't used to dealing with businessmen. I was afraid that the US Army officers might stop me if I just told them the truth about what I was trying to do, but they thought I was a CIA agent, because there were no other civilians there. Because of my military experience I also knew how to communicate with the soldiers about how to locate my buddies. I had no trouble getting to where I wanted to go, even though I was a civilian.

Q: The scenes in Vietnam were very realistic. Did you advise the movie producers about what Vietnam should really look like? A: One of the best things to come out of the war is that there are a lot of Vietnamese and their descendants here in the US now. They knew what the scenes in Vietnam should look like, so they acted as advisors on that.

Q: Were you yourself in the movie?



A: No, I was supposed to be in a group scene but I ended up on the cutting room floor. As for the title, Peter Farrelly told me the name of the book was too long for a movie title. I told him the only Vietnam movie I had seen was *Forrest Gump*, so if you want to call it *Chickie Donohue* that's ok. So they kept the long name.

**CHICKIE** didn't have a visa when he arrived, but he needed a visa to leave Vietnam. He was able to get the papers while there, and he was all set to get a flight to the Philippines arranged by the US Embassy in Saigon. But that was the day that the Tet Offensive started, and the embassy had been overrun by the Viet Cong. He waited near the embassy for hours, and saw people getting killed. It turned out that the enemy had been able to take over the embassy because some of the employees were working for the Viet Cong. The US did not want to admit this was true, so they brought a tank to the embassy and blew a hole in the wall. General Westmoreland then said that was how the Viet Cong got into the embassy.

Q: Tell us about your experiences making the movie.

A: On the first day, Zac Efron had to do 20 takes for a scene. I thought that meant he was doing a bad job, but later I realized that was how movies are shot and edited. I realized that Zac, playing me, was able to make me feel emotional when I was watching it.

Audience Q&A:

Q: Did you consider going back and doing it again? **CHICKIE** promised his mother that he would never go back.

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

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

### **IMPORTANT REMINDERS**

**JEFF JUNKER** reminded the membership that annual dues are now past due. Please get your checks to **JEFF** in person or by mail to 9 Tree Top Terrace, Greenwich CT 06831. More than 170 members have paid their dues on time. Please don't burden our leaders with having to make individual calls to delinquents. Thanks.

**TO CBB CONTRIBUTORS:** Scribe for the next meeting will be →**DAVID MICHONSKI**←. Please make sure you give a copy of any remarks you want included in the CBB to him, *preferably via email.*

**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:** 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** 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.

Pictures by **ANDY HOLMES** and **JEFF JUNKER** 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 – <a href="mailto:wdmorrison@gmail.com">wdmorrison@gmail.com</a>
Mondays	9:00 am	Pickleball	Pat MacCarthy – <a href="mailto:pmaccarthy415@gmail.com">pmaccarthy415@gmail.com</a> Michael LaGamma – <a href="mailto:mdlgamma@optonline.net">mdlgamma@optonline.net</a>
Tuesdays	9:30 am	RMA Golf, the Griff Golf Course, Greenwich	Mike Ryan – <a href="mailto:ryantomac@netscape.net">ryantomac@netscape.net</a>
Tuesdays	Resumes in fall	Platform (paddle) tennis at Loughlin Field, Cos Cob	James 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	1:00 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	Pat MacCarthy – <a href="mailto:pmacCarthy415@gmail.com">pmacCarthy415@gmail.com</a> Michael LaGamma – <a href="mailto:mdlgamma@optonline.net">mdlgamma@optonline.net</a>
Friday	Resumes in Fall	Indoor Tennis	Andy Holmes - <a href="mailto:Andyholmes56@gmail.com">Andyholmes56@gmail.com</a>

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