

CIGAR BOX BULLETIN

Retired Men's Association of Greenwich, Inc.
1 West Putnam Avenue, Greenwich, CT 06830



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, Frank Scarpa, Charlie Shapiro, Fred Wu**
Archivist: **Tad Larrabee** Website: **Mark Geimer** Format: **Len Carusi, Mark Geimer**

VOLUME 70 NUMBER 52 September 20, 2023

SCRIBE: ARNOLD GORDON

Next Meeting Scribe: **CHARLIE SHAPIRO**, CHARLES.LOUIS.SHAPIRO@GMAIL.COM

"The only thing that holds a marriage together is the husband bein' big enough to step back and see where his wife is wrong." - Archie Bunker

President **JACK WEIR** began the business meeting at 9:45 am. **DON CONWAY** led us in the pledge and using his Melody Men's voice, with **BOB MORGAN** at the Steinway, led us in singing "My Country 'Tis of Thee," "Oh What a Beautiful Morning" and "Peg O' My Heart." **JACK** thanked all the many men who do yeomen's jobs in organizing and supporting our meetings: scribe, formatter, CBB editor, projectionists, volunteer advocate, greeter, mentor, audio/video, set-up and refreshments.

He then thanked **DAVID MICHONSKI** for his leadership in putting on a superb picnic last Thursday at Greenwich Point, having overcome the last-minute change of date. **DAVID** provided more details later in the meeting (see below). **JACK** and **BOB BISHOP** plan to meet with the Deputy Police Chief of Greenwich on Friday concerning RMA's parking situation. They will point out the many things RMA does for the community without asking for many things in return.

JACK reminded us that we need a special events chairman and urged someone to volunteer; without that leader, this program may have to be significantly curtailed. Please contact him for details (johnkweir47@aol.com; 203-249-3924). He then proudly

announced that even after accounting for those who have died and failed to renew their membership, there are now 237 dues-paying members. He encouraged us to help recruit new members to reach 250.

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY REPORT

Corresponding Secretary **ARNOLD GORDON** mentioned that there will be a mass for recently deceased member Erf Porter on Saturday, September 23rd at 11 am at St. Clement Church, 535 Fairfield Avenue, Stamford. An RMA eulogy for Erf will be presented by **GEORGE DIPPY** at next week's meeting (September 27th).

AARP Connecticut is offering six opportunities during September and October to register for up to two complimentary admissions, while supplies last, to Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo, Mystic Seaport Museum or Mystic Aquarium. For details, see:

<https://www.aarp.org/search/?q=mystic%20aquarium&c=everywhere>,

<https://www.aarp.org/search/?q=beardsley%20zoo&c=everywhere>, and

<https://www.aarp.org/search/?q=mystic%20seaport%20museum&c=everywhere>

This year, eight municipal offices are on the local ballot on November 7th, including first selectman, selectmen, Board of Estimate & Taxation, Board of Education, town clerk, tax collector, Board of Assessment Appeals and town constable. Historically, only about 40% of eligible voters cast ballots for local elections. **HARRY FISHER** reinforced **ARNOLD's** recommendation for members to volunteer at the polls and provided this link for details: <https://greenwichct.gov/628/I-Want-to-Work-at-the-Polls>. In addition, the League of Women Voters urges people to sign up for one or more of several other activities including postcard writing, Get Out The Vote (GOTV) lawn signs, and GOTV information distribution at community events. For details: https://lwvgreenwich.org/content.aspx?page_id=2664&club_id=784813&actr=3

ARNOLD reminded everyone about the RMA Annual Banquet at the Tamarack Country Club on November 8th. Thus far, over 150 members and guests have been registered at 15 tables. Several table hosts are still recruiting attendees. If you have not yet been approached and would like to participate in this important event, feel free to contact any of the hosts listed on the bulletin board and attached here, or contact **ARNOLD** (ajgordo@verizon.net; 203-340-9336).

[List of Table Captains Still Recruiting](#)

In his inimitable way, he then inflicted pun pain on the group with these words of wisdom: "Have you ever tried to eat a clock? It's very time consuming."

"A man tried to assault me with milk, cream and butter. How dairy!"

"Don't worry if you do not know the meaning of the word 'apocalypse'? It's not the end of the world."

"Need an ark to save two of every animal? I Noah guy."

"What was the favorite dessert of Roget, of thesaurus fame? Synonym buns."

To the relief of the members, he introduced **CARL WHITE** who related a short history of the famous Marx Brothers who appeared in 13 movies. He focused on Groucho, host of the show *You Bet Your Life* from 1947 to 1961 (remember "Say the magic word and win \$100?"). Groucho never went to school beyond age 12 but was a voracious reader who gained extensive book knowledge. He was a comedian, actor, writer and singer. **CARL** shared a few of Groucho's clever lines, such as these:

"I never forget a face, but in your case, I'll be glad to make an exception."

"I refuse to join a club that would have me as a member."

"Women should be obscene and not heard."

"These are my principles. If you do not like them, well, I have others."

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DAVID MICHONSKI thanked the 31 persons who helped with the RMA picnic; its success was not possible without their help. They include **WILL MORRISON** for planning and providing the road map based on his running the picnic last year; **DON CONWAY** for obtaining park permits and for changing the date to Thursday; **LEN CARUSI**, for email communications; **JOHN FEBLES** and **BARRY RICHELSON** for signage; **BOB BISHOP** for bringing the U.S. flag and the RMA banner and leading us in the Pledge of Allegiance; **PETER STERN** for being the captain of the welcome table and raffle, assisted by **JOHN FEBLES**, **TONY FITZPATRICK**, **STEVE JOHNSON**, **BARRY RICHELSON**, **JOHN STANKUNAS**, and **ALAN WEYL**; **WILL MORRISON** for bringing the tents, helping to erect them and taking them back for storage; **PETER UHRY** for bringing additional tables from the Old Greenwich Yacht Club and then returning them and for assisting in the table set up and decoration, along with **ALAN WEYL**, **JERRY SCHWENDEMAN**, and **JOE MANCINELLI**; **ANDY HOLMES** for being our photographer and heading the games with the assistance of **BOB BISHOP**, **PETER DODGE**, **ARN WELLES**, **BRUCE SOCKET**, **ANDRE MAZUREK**, **FRED**

WU, PETER TUNLEY, JOHN REESE, TAD LARRABEE; STEVE MARINO for assistance with the purchase of the sound system and **JOE MANCINELLI** for setting it up; **MIKE AMBROSINO** for purchasing all the beverages and returning extras for credit to RMA; **TOM HEALY** and the Melody Men for conducting the sing-along; **ARNOLD GORDON** and **TOM HEALY** for being our jokesters and keeping the crowd roaring; **MIKE AMBROSINO** for arranging the lip synch performances by **TONY COCCHI, DON CONWAY, JERRY SCHWENDEMAN** and **JOE MANCINELLI**. **DAVID** also thanked Stop and Shop for the fixings for the corn bread and ShopRite for the ice which was arranged by **PETER STERN** and delivered by **JOE MANCINELLI**. Last but not least, **DAVID** thanked Jane Weyl, wife of **ALAN WEYL**, and Carol Dietz, a guest and friend of **DAVID** and his wife. **DAVID** especially thanked his wife, Linda Michonski, who provided daily support for the weeks of planning and served as a shuttle service on the day of the picnic bringing supplies and food.



Welcome table



Games



Gloria Garcia & Fred Wu



Plenty of food!



Mike Ambrosino



David Michonski



Lunch



Tom Healy & the Melody Men

JOHN KAVANAGH drove home the message that the RMA needs more mentors. It is very important for the future of the RMA that we continue to bring in a steady stream of new members. An important part of that process is to engage personally with prospective new members when they come to their first meeting. The mentor position was created to facilitate that process. When a potential new member checks in at the greeter desk at his first meeting, it is important that we have someone for him to talk to. The mentor can answer his questions about the RMA, introduce him to people to talk with, and give him a sense of all the activities the RMA offers. The mentor job does not require a significant time commitment. We ask mentors to serve once a quarter. Typically, the mentor arrives around 9:20 to 9:30 to talk with candidates until the start of the business meetings and during the break. The job is fun and very important to the RMA. So please sign up by sending **JOHN** an email at jjkct176@gmail.com.

DON ROTZIEN is planning to hold the next ROMEO lunch at Greenwich Point on Friday, October 13th at 1:00 pm. Bring your own lunch and your beach card. If you don't have one, just let the guard know that you're with RMA. That date happens to be the 69th anniversary of RMA's founding. In case of bad weather, it will probably be held at Riko's Pizza on the Post Road in Old Greenwich. If you're interested in attending the lunch, please email **DON** at dsrotzien@gmail.com so you can be notified of any changes.

JOHN TONER provided this notice after the meeting: On Saturday, October 14th from 9 am to noon, there will be a courtesy paper shredding service at the Island Beach Parking Lot (Arch Street). Two or three volunteers are needed to help control traffic. Please contact **JOHN** if you can help – johnftoner@hotmail.com; 203-531-7535.

JIM DEAN described RMA's plans for this year's Salvation Army fund-raising goal of \$10,000. Kettles will be placed after Thanksgiving at three locations, to be decided by us. Under consideration are Acme Foods in Riverside, Starbuck's on Greenwich Avenue, and Whole Foods on the Post Road. Cash or credit cards can be used to make donations on site. Each year, The Salvation Army serves more than 25 million people across America. That means 55 million meals for the hungry, 10+ million nights of shelter for the homeless, and countless Christmas gifts for those who may otherwise go without. Donations in the red kettle stay local - directly impacting the lives of our neighbors by helping them in a time of need. Volunteers are needed; please contact **JIM** (203-550-0657; jhdeanco@gmail.com). In order to have enough volunteers, RMA will partner with some other groups, such as the Boy Scouts. There will be a series of sign-up sheets on the Bulletin Board for Committee members, kettle volunteers, and administrators. JOIN THE ARMY!

JOHN REESE related the following message about the next RMA ChatGPT/AI/Tech Discussion Group meeting to be held on Tuesday, September 26th from 3 to 4:30 pm. It was decided that for best audio quality, more time and for possible online demonstrations of the actual technology, that this discussion should be held online rather than in-person. To join the Zoom meeting:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83181076149?pwd=UERzQkF5S3pYZXRKRkpKeGdwQ25Hdz09> This link will be also be mailed to the 22 members who have already expressed interest in this group by signing up or sending him an email. Contact jreese@validea.com for more information. You do not need to preregister, but feel free to drop him a line with your general or specific interest.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Membership: **PETER STERN** reported that 114 members and three guests attended the meeting (count by **CARL WHITE**). Guests were Craig Walters, guest of **MIKE SMITH** and **BOB MENDELSON**, Peter Mouyios, guest of **SPIKE LIPSCHUTZ**, and Hal Doshan, guest of **PAT MacCARTHY** and **ARNOLD GORDON**. **PETER** welcomed **ED FARRELL**, **RUSS HARDEN** and four others via Zoom. Returnees for the week were **ANDY HOLMES** from Iceland and the Faroe Islands, and **JOE MANCINELLI** from Washington, DC. There were many birthday boys, serenaded with the Happy song with **BOB MORGAN** at the piano:
ED PARKER, 78 **STEVE LEIFER, 85**

JIM SANTORA, 82
GERHARD PETER, 76
JOHN TONER, 77
JERRY STINSON, 76
CARL WHITE, 75

BOB SAMUELS, 80
PETER ORBANOWSKI, 79
GEOFFREY HORNBECK, 80
ENRICO VISELLI, 70
STEPHEN MARINO, 94

Speaker Program: **TIM BROOKS** announced that Steve Kemper, author of *Our Man in Tokyo: An American Ambassador and the Countdown to Pearl Harbor*, will speak today about Ambassador Joseph C. Grew who served in Japan during the turbulent decade that culminated with the surprise attack on the US fleet. **TIM** also urged everyone to attend next week's speaker program, featuring our very own **BOB MORGAN**, who will regale us with his fascinating story, "My Career as a Major Label Recording Executive in the 1960s with Artists Ranging from Bobby Vinton to the Dave Clark Five."

Special Events: On behalf of **ARTHUR STAMPLEMAN, MAURICE KROHN** reminded us about the free RMA tour of the Kendall Sculpture Gardens at PepsiCo (700 Anderson Hill Road, Purchase, NY) on Thursday, September 28th at 10:15 am. It will be a 1.5-hour guided tour by **ARTHUR** of 45 sculptures by major 20th century artists. There are still seven or eight slots available. Contact **MAURICE** at krohnmaurice142@gmail.com.

TOM HEALY has asked that we remind members that the Melody Men are in need of a back-up piano accompanist. If you know how to tickle the ivories, please don't be shy, step up and help. It is easy, fun, and schedules can be arranged to suit your availability.

GAMES PEOPLE PLAY

Pickleball: **PAT MacCARTHY** reminded us that RMA pickleball is played, weather permitting, from 11 am until 1 pm on Mondays and from 10 am until 12 pm on Thursdays at Christiano Field. Unfortunately, rainouts were experienced during the past 2 weeks but the forecast is favorable this week. If you want to join the pickleball contact list, please email **PAT** at pmaccarthy415@gmail.com. Pickleball table(s) will be organized for the RMA banquet on November 8th. If you are interested in joining a table, please email **PAT**.

Tennis: **ANDY HOLMES** enthusiastically reported that indoor tennis is back as they kicked off the start of the new season two weeks ago on September 8th at the Old

Greenwich Tennis Academy. In the first matches of the new season, the opening round winners were **ANDRE MAZUREK** and **PETER UHRY** on Court 1 and **PETER DODGE** and **RON FRIEDMAN** on Court 2. In the finals round, the winners on Court 1 were **ANDRE** and **RON**, while on Court 2 the winners were **RANDY MOTLAND** and **STEVE JOHNSON**. This past Friday in our second session of the new season, opening round winners were **RALPH NEWITTER** and **JEROME COLEMAN** on Court 1; the winners on Court 2 were **ANDRE MAZUREK** and **STEVE STEIN**. In the Finals Round, the winners on Court 1 were **RALPH** and **STEVE** and on Court 2 the winners were **ANDY HOLMES** and **PETER DODGE**. This week's captain will be **JOE MANCINELLI**.

Hearts: **BOB SHULLMAN** reported that after the September 6th meeting, eight members played a total of six hearts games at two tables with four players each at Greenwich Library. At the first table, three games were played. **JOE DOWLING** won one game as did **DON CONWAY** and **BILL FAKUNDINY**. Additionally, there were three moonshots, two by **JOE** and one by **DON**. At the second table, three games were also played. **JOHN STANKUNAS** won two while **MICHAEL AMBROSINO** won one game, and he shot the moon once.

Bridge: **TONY COCCHI** delivered the winning scores from the most recent games: **BRUNO SCHRAGE**, 3420, **TONY**, 2960, and **RON MURRAY**, 2310. Play is every Wednesday at 1pm in the cafe on the ground floor of the Greenwich Library. Lunch is available to purchase. All members and guests who are interested in bridge, whether beginners or experts, are invited to join the group.

Golf: **MIKE RYAN** reported that a total of only 15 players participated on a soggy Griff course yesterday. Winners were:

Closest to pin on Hole 5 – not a soul

Closest to pin on Hole 7 – **BOB SHULLMAN**

Closest to pin on Hole 15 – **JIM SANTORA**

Longest drive on Hole 8 – **TONY COCCHI**

Notable scores: **BILL GRAD**, 97, **TOM HEALY**, 96, **PETER TUNLEY** and **TONY FITZPATRICK**, 93.

Sign-up sheets for the next two weeks are posted on the Bulletin Board. **MIKE** also reminded members about the annual golf luncheon on October 4th at the Field Club; the

cost is \$55. If you are not already signed up, please contact **MIKE** asap (ryantomac@netscape.net; 203-698-0441).

Paddle Tennis: **JIM DEAN** reported that courts have been reserved for Tuesday mornings, 10 to noon, at Loughlin Avenue Park, Cos Cob. Checks for \$25 should be made out to Town of Greenwich. Tennis shoes must be worn on the courts. Play will continue until March 22, 2024. For weather playing information, call 203-861-6100. Each week, a sign-up sheet will be posted on the Bulletin Board for the following week. Or, call or text **JIM** at 203-550-0657.

ARNOLD GORDON closed the business meeting with an impassioned plea (heartily endorsed by the editor) for members with reports to ***please send them to the scribe by email***; this will greatly facilitate the compiling of the CBB.

TODAY'S SPEAKER

TIM BROOKS introduced author Steve Kemper, who has penned many books, especially about interesting people, such as *A Splendid Savage: The Restless Life of Frederick Russell Burnham*, and *Code Name Ginger: The Story Behind Segway and Dean Kamen's Quest to Invent a New World*. His work has appeared in many national magazines and newspapers.



Kemper spoke about his most recent book, *Our Man in Tokyo: An American Ambassador and the Countdown to Pearl Harbor*, a little-known but important story about the experiences of Ambassador Joseph C. Grew in Japan during the turbulent decade that culminated with the surprise attack on the US fleet. In his book, Kemper reconstructed a dramatic backstage view of these explosive years by drawing on Grew's 6,000-page Tokyo diary, thousands of diplomatic

dispatches between the embassy and the State Department, and firsthand Japanese accounts to take readers into the Tokyo embassy, the Japanese cabinet, and the Imperial Palace.

Grew was the son of a Brahmin family from Beacon Hill in Boston, was Harvard educated and a school friend of Franklin Roosevelt. He devoted his professional life to the Foreign Service, having served for the State Department in 14 locations around the world; he was influential in creating the Foreign Service model of today. Appointed to serve in Japan by President Herbert Hoover in 1932, Grew was reappointed by FDR and served into 1942. Hoover was concerned about Japan's new aggression, exemplified by their invasion of Manchuria in the 1930s. Far right Japanese militarists spread havoc at that time with assassinations, bombing of civilians, and other atrocities, claiming it was at the behest of Emperor Hirohito. The Japanese people revered Hirohito and considered him a divine link to the first emperor, 2600 years earlier (referred to as the "foundational myth"). Although he served as spiritual advisor, as a "divinity" Hirohito could make no decisions directly ("To err is human") and was expected to rely on advisers whose decisions he accepted, including appointments of prime ministers. So chaotic was the 1930 decade that there were 17 different foreign ministers in the turbulent Japanese government. As a result, there was no real central power with whom Grew could talk. Ironically, at the end of the feudal shogunates in the mid-1800s, Japan took on a democratic structure while still barring foreigners. Leaders sent their children to US and UK universities and although traditional Japanese culture prevailed, American culture permeated the country throughout the decades in the form of foods, western dress, theater, movies, night club shows, baseball, and golf. It all changed in the 1930s.

Grew liked Japan and its people, as well as some high-ranking officials with whom he met in the 1930s. At the same time, he foresaw the danger posed by the influence of war-mongering militarists and imperialists on Japan's foreign policy, and he strived to help avoid a possible war at all costs. This story is less well-known than the rise of Nazism and fascism in Europe, but just as dramatic and important. Grew spent the decade attempting to warn American leaders about the risks of Japan's raging nationalism and ambitious militarism, while also trying to stabilize Tokyo's increasingly erratic and belligerent foreign policy. His dispatches and counsel were often disregarded in Washington. He was undermined by his boss, US Secretary of State Cordell Hull and Hull's top adviser for East Asian affairs, Stanley Hornbeck, who favored using economic leverage to compel Japan to end its imperial ways; President Roosevelt sided with them instead of with the more conciliatory approach recommended by Grew.

War fever was taking over Japan as the army rained terror in China, not only in Manchuria, but in the infamous Rape of Nanking when an estimated 200,000 Chinese were killed and

mass raping occurred. By 1940, there were one million Japanese soldiers in China. An American ship off the China coast was attacked with many sailors killed; in addition, American hospitals and schools were bombed. The Japanese were further emboldened by the example of the German blitzkrieg into Poland and beyond. The Japanese foreign minister at the time, Yosuke Matsuoka, had lived in Oregon and obtained a college degree while there; however, on his return to Japan he became a “right-wing nut,” even visiting Hitler, whom he called a “fellow genius,” and Stalin, with whom he made a peace pact. All along, he promoted the claim that Japan was a dove while the US intended to take over Japan. In August 1941, FDR sent a message intended for Emperor Hirohito, that as leaders of their respective countries, they must ensure there would not be a war. It was never delivered and the bombs fell on Pearl Harbor on December 7th. According to Kemper, Grew regarded not only Matsuoka as the villain, but also Prime Minister Fumimaro Konoye, War Minister Hideki Tojo, Navy Minister Admiral Osami Nagano, Army Chief of Staff Hajime Sugiyama, and Emperor Hirohito who refused to block the militarists’ policies. Grew became desperate at the end of October 1941 when he tried to make a last-minute effort with Prime Minister Konoye to negotiate peace directly with FDR. In his book, Kemper places most of the blame on Konoye, who:

“had pushed Japan into a disastrous war with China, entangled Japan with the Axis, ruined Japan’s economy, and overseen a military expansion that took Japan to the edge of war with the West.”

Based on his experiences as Ambassador, Grew penned a 275 page detailed report that included criticism of the US. It was rejected by Cordell Hull who ordered Grew to burn all copies. Instead, he deleted 175 pages of “offensive” material; no copy of the missing pages has ever been found. Grew and the other staffers were interned but then allowed to leave Japan on June 25, 1942. Once back in the US, he made speeches boosting the war effort, wrote a brief book about his ambassadorial experiences, and continued to work at the State Department. He eventually became under-secretary of state. As fate would have it, after the war ended and a new Cold War began, Kemper noted in his book that Grew resigned from the State Department because colleagues “disliked his views about Japan and his adamant warnings about Soviet Russia and communist China.”

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

TO CBB CONTRIBUTORS: Scribe for the next meeting (Sept. 27) will be →**CHARLIE SHAPIRO**←. 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.

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 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**..

Retired Men's Association of Greenwich, Inc. • 1 West Putnam Avenue • Greenwich, CT 06830 • USA. Visit our website at <https://greenwichrma.org>

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	9:00 am	Pickleball	Pat MacCarthy – pmacCarthy415@gmail.com Michael LaGamma– mdlgamma@optonline.net
Tuesdays	9:30 am	RMA Golf, the Griff Golf Course, Greenwich	Mike Ryan – ryantomac@netscape.net

Tuesdays	10 am-12 pm	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	Pat MacCarthy – pmacCarthy415@gmail.com Michael LaGamma – mdlagamma@optonline.net
Friday	Contact Holmes	Indoor Tennis	Andy Holmes - Andyholmes56@gmail.com

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