

CIGAR BOX BULLETIN

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



www.greenwichrma.org

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"Ideology is what gives the evildoing its long-sought justification and gives the evildoer the necessary steadfastness and determination." --Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn

President **JACK WEIR** called the meeting to order. New member **LARRY ALLEN** led the membership in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, and then **CAPTAIN MIKE HAYDEN** led the group in singing three songs—"America the Beautiful," "Five Foot Two, Eyes of Blue," and "Let It Snow! Let It Snow! Let It Snow!" **JIM SANTORA** accompanied on the piano.

JACK WEIR then acknowledged the substantial contributions of the people who set up and run the Wednesday membership meetings, including CBB Editor **TIM BROOKS**; the scribe, **JOHN KAVANAGH**; formatter, **LEN CARUSI**; projectionists, **LEN CARUSI** and **TONY COCCHI**; volunteer advocate, **JOHN DENNE**; greeter, **BILL FEATHERSTON**; mentor, **JIM SANTORA**; refreshments, **SPIKE LIPSCHUTZ**; audio/video, **ED PARKER**, **MARK GEIMER**, **PETER DODGE**, **HORST TEBBE**, **BARRY RICHELSON**, **STEVE MARINO**, and **JOHN FEBLES**; set up, **BOB BISHOP**, **JIM BUTLER**, and **JOHN CRAINE**.

PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

The 2024 RMA Membership Meeting Calendar has been approved by the board and will be submitted to the First Presbyterian Church for their approval. **JACK** hopes to be able to post the new calendar shortly. He reminded the membership that the RMA will follow the Greenwich Public Schools' decisions re: snow days, so if the schools are closed on snowy days, there will be no RMA meeting.

JACK announced that **RUSS HARDEN** will be having a surgery next week, but that his tumor is shrinking and there are good prospects for his recovery.

JACK stressed the need for new members to be involved in RMA activities if they are to get fully integrated into the club's activities. He offered that if any new member wanted to be involved, he should contact him and he will see that the member gets connected to the right person.

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY

Corresponding Secretary **ARNOLD GORDON** mentioned that everyone should have received an e-mail notice and rsvp poll about the RMA Holiday Party on December 20th. Please return your responses as soon as you can so we can plan for sufficient seating and food. As of Tuesday evening, 194 members had opened the e-mail, but only 63 replied; 41 of the 63 members responded they were coming with 20 guests, for a total of 61. Here is a link to the poll for those who have not yet responded.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdWoBIWF43WTGHY56qC6HAiBfGXuxng1LPYE5r9X4_yxe3PYw/viewform

There will be lots of surprise entertainment and a generous buffet. A photo and laudatory review from a prior engagement by one of the musical groups that will be performing appears below. If you have any questions, contact **ARNOLD** (203-340-9336: ajgordo@verizon.net).

Joel Seligmann's Sax Dazzles Residents

by Libby Callaway



On June 27, musician Joel Seligmann brought the house down with his special program, "Music & Memories." His wife Sally Ann Greenberg provided a fascinating commentary as Joel featured favorites such as "What is This Thing Called Love," "Stand by Me," "Don't Be Cruel" and "Amazing Grace."

Additional entertainment was provided when Geraldine Christophersen, who recently turned 100, got up and danced along with her walker.

We're all hoping that Joel and Sally will return to Hill House soon!



ARNOLD then asked if any members remembered **CHARLIE SHIBETTI**, a former member, now deceased. While **ARNOLD** was manning the Salvation Army kettle at the Acme Supermarket, **CHARLIE'S** widow, Joan, saw his RMA cap and asked if he were a member. That led to some fond reminiscences. The moral of the story? Wear your RMA cap!

ARNOLD asked if members were familiar with a new CT State prescription drug discount program called ArrayRx. Registration started about two months ago. Those who sign up, including those on Medicare, will receive a free Rx card with savings up to 80% on generics for all FDA approved prescription drugs. This program is meant to deal with the dramatic rise in the cost of prescription drugs. For details: <https://arrayrxcard.com/>

The Greenwich Historical Society is sponsoring tours of the famous Bush-Holley House on December 16, 23 and 30. You will learn some very interesting history about our area. For details, scroll down at this site, <https://greenwichhistory.org/ghs-events/>

On behalf of **JOHN REESE**, he announced an online meeting of the RMA's Tech, AI, ChatGPT Discussion group at 2:00 pm on Tuesday, December 12. For more information contact **JOHN** at jreese@validea.com. The Zoom link for the Tuesday meeting is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84617326459?pwd=NUZpbzd1bkp0TEEzTmlqZE9TbzdzOQT09>

An article from the *Wall Street Journal*, suggested by **PAT MacCARTHY**, should be of interest to all. It describes important tax deductions that seniors overlook.

[ATTACH PDF OF WSJ Tax ARTICLE]

ARNOLD ended with some interesting tidbits.

- “**TAD LARRABEE** is taking steps to overcome his hiking addiction, but he’s not out of the woods yet.”
- A poster handed out in a church read “When you enter, it may be possible that you hear the call of God. However, it is unlikely He will call on your mobile phone. If you want to talk to God, find a quiet place and carry on the conversation. If you want to see Him, send Him a text while driving.”
- And the great Will Rogers once said, “There ought to be one day, just one, when there is open season on senators.”

ARNOLD then introduced **JERRY SCHWENDEMAN**, jokester for the day, who recounted a story about a new scam targeting men who are susceptible to the wiles of beautiful and loose female scammers.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Salvation Army Drive: **JAMES DEAN** announced the RMA Salvation Army Christmas Kettle Program was off to a great start by collecting just under \$4000 so far from the following locations: Acme Market, Betteridge Jewelers, Old Greenwich First Lights. The program has been helped by using the TipTapPay capability that makes it easy to give by credit card at the kettle location. Further, **JAMES** invites RMA members and friends to use the online pay capability at: <https://give.salvationarmy.org/Retired-Mens-Association> to make donations. He also asked for additional volunteer help, saying that he has openings for people to man the kettles over the next three weeks. He suggests we bring a family member, friend, child, grandchild and share the gift the joy of doing good things.

PAUL CAMPION has to settle an estate and needs contacts with people who work at Charles Schwab to help him. He asked members who know potential people at Schwab to contact him during the fellowship period after the membership meeting.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

PETER STERN began the membership report by reminding members that the new, yellow, numbered parking tickets are available at the greeter desk from 9:00-9:45 am on December 13 and 20. If you don't have your new yellow permit, please stop by the greeter desk and pick it up.

PETER then told members that attendance at the meeting was 84 in the church and six on Zoom for a total of 90 people. Additionally, there were two guests at the meeting, including Kris Bratberg, the guest of **PETER UHRY** and **PAT MACCARTHY**, and Jamie O'Connor, the guest of **GERRY BOYLE**.

The assembled group sang Happy Birthday to the five birthday gentlemen for this week, with **JIM SANTORA** accompanying on the piano.

CHARLIE	SHAPIRO	66
HAROLD	KUPLESKY	85
DWIGHT	CHAPIN	83
PAT	YUEN	71
TOM	MORRISON	91

PETER then began the induction of prospective new member Peter O'Neil by bringing to the podium his sponsor, **JOE WAIDE**, and his seconder, **BRIAN O'CONNOR**. **JOE's** nominating remarks were as follows.

"I am pleased to nominate Peter O'Neil for membership in the RMA. I first met Peter 20 years ago at the home of a mutual friend, and due to Peter's keen sense of humor, we have remained friends despite Peter's subsequent move to Lugano, Switzerland, on business. Upon his return to the US, the O'Neils lived in Hilton Head, South Carolina, and Essex, Connecticut. They returned to Greenwich this fall to enjoy their life membership in the Innis Arden Golf Club. Peter is from the United Kingdom where he attended Birmingham University and obtained a degree in commerce and Russian studies. He was fluent in Russian and three other foreign languages, which were important in his business career. After leaving the university, he joined British Metals Corporation as a trader. While there,

he gained experience on the trading floor of the London Metal Exchange before being transferred to the New York office of BMC as a trader in non-ferrous metal and their concentrates. In 1975, he was invited to establish the Marc Rich New York office where he headed the aluminum and alumina division. He then held positions in Europe and Russia where he specialized in the recycling of aluminum metal.”

PETER called for a vote on O’Neil’s admission to the RMA which was approved by a unanimous vote.



O'Connor, O'Neil, Waide

PETER STERN then gave an in-person welcome to first-time-in-a-long-time members, **WAYNE DEVRIES** and **BRUCE PANTANO**. **JOHN REESE** was the only returnee. He spent four weeks in Japan, including 15 different cities.

HUMAN INTEREST STORY

JOE MANCINELLI told the membership about an interesting culinary experience he had in Little Italy in New York City. He went to the Miette Culinary Studio where he and his family and friends could gather, prepare their own meal under the guidance of Chef Paul and his son, and then eat the meal they had prepared. The Studio was very organized and clean with everything prepared and ready for them. The Chef set **JOE** and his guests up into four teams: the steak team, the vegetable team, the pastry team, and the dessert team. **JOE'S** group were given aprons and the guidance to prepare their part of the meal. Chef Paul impressed on the group that their meals were all prepared without oil and that they were

special recipes. Then, they led the teams through a step-by-step process to get the meals prepared. **JOE** indicated that the entire group enjoyed both the experience and the meal tremendously. The contact information for the Miette Studio is: Chef Paul Vandewoude, Miette Culinary Studio, 132 Mulberry Street, Suite 2D, New York, NY 10013, 212-460-9322, info@mietteculinarystudio.com



ACTIVITIES REPORTS

Volunteer Activities. **WILL MORRISON** told the membership of his plan to create a brochure for new members to help them find volunteer opportunities that they can pursue.

Tennis: Before reporting last Friday's tennis results, **ANDY HOLMES** made an announcement. "The first half of the tennis season is just about over, but the second half will be commencing in early January. We currently have one spot available for our Spring season which runs from January through early May. So, if there are any new RMA members who would like to join our indoor tennis group or if there are any existing members who have thought about joining in the past, we would love to have you join our group. If you are interested, come see me at the break or send me an email. My email address is andyholmes56@gmail.com."

“As for last Friday’s results. We had eight players play four matches. In the opening round, the winners on Court 1 were **BRIAN MAHONEY** and **MARK PRUNER** and over on Court 2, the winners were **ANDRE MAZUREK** and **PETER ORBANOWSKI**. In the finals round, the winners on Court 1 were **MARK PRUNER** and **PETER ORBANOWSKI** and over on Court 2 the winners were **JEROME COLEMAN** and Susi Orbanowski. This week’s captain will be **JOHN KNIGHT**.”

In **platform tennis**, **JIM DEAN** said six members are competing for the season-ending RMA Cup.

Walkers and Talkers: **TAD LARRABEE** reported that the RMA Walkers visited Rye Marshlands Conservancy last Thursday and enjoyed a nice, dry walk along the edge of the large meadow and across a salt marsh to the island that provides varied trails along the Long Island seashore. We returned by a forest trail that ends near the front of the Jay Mansion. Now that the leaves have fallen, the woods provided more open views of the landscape, including an unoccupied egret’s nest. It was a beautiful, cool day, but the exercise kept us warm.



Jeff Junker examines a “bat house”



The intrepid Walkers

Pickleball: 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. We will continue

playing pickleball throughout the winter whenever we have at least four committed players. If you want to join the pickleball contact list, please email **PAT MACCARTHY** at pmacCarthy415@gmail.com.

Hearts: **JOHN KNIGHT** reported the hearts result for last week: Table 1 winners, **MIKE AMBROSINO** (2 games), **JOHN STANKUNAS** (1), **TOM HEALY** (1); moon shots, **MIKE AMBROSINO** (2). Table 2 winners, **RICK HOLZ** (2), **JOHN KNIGHT** (1), **JOE DOWLING** (1); moon shots, **JOHN KNIGHT** (1), **JOE DOWLING** (4).

Bridge is played every Wednesday afternoon in the Cafe on the ground floor of the Greenwich Library. Lunch is available. The Bridge Group welcomes all members and guests, whether experts or beginners, who are interested in bridge to join our group. Do not worry if you are new to the game or a long-term player who is a bit rusty. We have several excellent players who will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Tai Chi continues to meet every Monday at 9:30 am at the First Congregational Church. **WILL MORRISON** teaches members to move very slowly and figure out how their balance happens and how to nourish development of their balance. Contact **WILL**.

NEXT WEEK'S SPEAKER

Next week State Senator Ryan Fazio will speak on "Will the Lights Go Out in New England? The Future of the Electric Grid - And Your Electric Bill." While Connecticut residents pay among the highest electricity bills in the country, our problems could get far worse in just a decade. Due to policy and economic trends, electricity demand could double in 20 years, while supply is highly unlikely to keep pace. On top of that, the new generation capacity that is expected to be built is likely to be done at much higher cost than the past with immense needs for new infrastructure investment too. All that means that your electricity bills are going to get much higher, plus our region could suffer from rolling blackouts, unless there is a change in direction. Ryan Fazio, the ranking senator on the legislature's Energy Committee, explains the risks and possible solutions to keep the lights on and make energy costs more affordable. **PETER BERG** and **BOB MEANY** will be happy to take questions from the members for Senator Fazio to answer next week during his presentation.

FEATURED SPEAKER PRESENTATION

Today **ARTHUR STAMPLEMAN** introduced Dr. Cynthia MacKay who spoke about cataracts - the number one cause of blindness in the world - and cataract extraction, which is the most common surgical procedure in medicine. She told the assembled group that if you live long enough, you will develop a cataract. By age seventy, everybody will have some degree of cataract, and more than half will have a cataract that is so dense they will no longer be able to read and drive.



Dr. MacKay explained what a cataract is, what causes cataracts, how you will know if you have a cataract, how you can prevent cataracts, how surgeons remove cataracts, and when it is time for you to schedule surgery. She showed a remarkable video of her performing a cataract surgery, using her preferred techniques and explained, in detail, the structure of the eye, with all its component parts. She gave advice on how to choose the power

of our new plastic replacement lens and whether we should opt for an expensive “specialty” lens.

She described the symptoms that indicate the presence of a cataract: you can’t read road signs, you can’t follow a golf or tennis ball, you can’t read small print, you can’t recognize faces, you confuse blue, green and grey, you see halos around lights, you see double out of one eye, you are bothered by glare; your vision gets worse in bright light, you experience increasing near-sightedness, and you need frequent changes in eyeglass prescription.

Dr. MacKay told us that to prevent cataracts, you need to avoid smoking and exposure to second hand smoke. Further, you should wear UV blocking sunglasses and a hat in bright sun, wear eye protection during sports, and if you are diabetic, you must control your blood pressure.

Dr. MacKay is a board-certified ophthalmologist, with comprehensive training in all aspects of eye care, and with special expertise in diseases of the retina and eye laser surgery. She is Clinical Professor of Ophthalmology, Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons (Emeritus). Doctor MacKay retired in August 2018 after 40 years of ophthalmology practice in Manhattan. Her formal training and education include Harvard University, BA, 1964; State University of New York, Downstate Health Sciences Center Medical School, 1973-1977; Lenox Hill Hospital Internship in Medicine, 1977-1978; New York Presbyterian Hospital/Columbia University Medical Center, residency in ophthalmology, 1978-1981; New York Presbyterian Hospital/Columbia University Medical Center and Bellevue Hospital, fellowship in retina, 1981-1982.

Dr. MacKay will soon publish a memoir regarding her life as an eye surgeon. The working title is *Wife, Mother, Eye Surgeon: Surviving at Home, and in a Man's Profession*. It is expected to be published within the next four months

The talk can be viewed by going to the RMA website at <https://greenwichrma.org>, and clicking on "Speakers." Note: The views expressed in RMA presentations are those of the speakers. They are not intended to represent the views of the RMA or its members.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

TO CBB CONTRIBUTORS: Scribe for the next meeting will be →**ARNOLD GORDON**←. Please send a copy of any remarks you want included in the CBB to him, *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, TIM BROOKS** and **JOE MANCINELLI**.

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	11:00 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 – mdlgamma@optonline.net
Friday	Contact Holmes	Indoor Tennis	Andy Holmes - Andyholmes56@gmail.com

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