

CIGAR BOX BULLETIN

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



www.greenwichrma.org

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January 10 Scribe: MIKE ABRAHAMS, MICHAEL.ABRAHAMS@WSP.COM

"Even a busted clock is right twice a day"

President **JACK WEIR** commenced the business meeting at 9:46 a.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by **LARRY DeVAN**. "The Star-Spangled Banner," followed by songs "Side by Side" and "When You're Smiling" were sung by the RMA with the help of our song leader **JIM BUTLER**, accompanied by **BOB MORGAN** on the piano.

The following were acknowledged by **JACK WEIR** for their work making the meeting possible: **MARK GEIMER** who was both formatter and projectionist, CBB editor **TIM BROOKS**, refreshments **MICHAEL AMBROSINO**, volunteer advocate, **DON ROTZIEN**, greeter, **JOHN KAVANAGH**, and the superb audio video and set up team members. **JACK** also asked for a round of applause for **SPIKE LIPSCHUTZ** and **ARNOLD GORDON**, the organizers of the wonderful RMA Holiday Party on December 20.

Our President said the RMA has a need for two interim positions thru at least April 30, a new assistant board secretary to assist **MICHAEL LAGAMMA**, who has moved up to replace an ill **ED FARRELL**, and a new head of visiting to replace **MICHAEL AMBROSINO** who wants to step down. Kindly advise **JACK** if interested in either position at johnkweir47@aol.com

RMA 2023 HOLIDAY PARTY



L-R: Joel Seligmann entertains; plenty of food; Jim Dean for the Salvation Army

TIM BROOKS announced that the Board this morning has approved a policy that allows anyone to make a voluntary donation to the RMA, to help offset our sharply rising costs. Because we are registered as a social club rather than a charity, the donations are not tax deductible. Our website will have instructions on how to contribute.

Treasurer **JEFF JUNKER** announced that the RMA has received income of over one thousand dollars each from our investment CD, our banquet and a donation. FYI our beautiful hall presently does cost us \$500 per meeting.

Membership Chairman **PETER STERN** opened with the first new-member induction of the new year. **GERRY BOYLE** nominated Jamie O'Connor to membership, summarizing his background as follows.



Boyle, O'Connor, Stern

venues.

“Jamie was born in Ithaca N.Y. and studied at Cornell. After graduating he worked for the U.S. Department of Agriculture. His career at the federal government lasted four hours, after which he resigned, returned to Ithaca, and was offered a job selling advertising during a late-night poker game. Later, he traveled the USA in his Ford Econoline van, working as a house framer. Eventually he ended up in Austin, Texas, where he worked as a door man and later lead bartender at one of Austin’s famous live music

“In 1982 he returned to Cornell and received his MBA in finance. He was hired as a telecom and utilities analyst by Jardine Fleming and moved to Hong Kong to follow Hong Kong and Chinese companies. He later returned to New York and joined Baring Securities as a main board director and head of their New York sales and trading operations. In 1993 he moved to Greenwich and started Pacific Equity Research, an institutional broker dealer specializing in Asian securities.

“Jamie has been retired for 10 years during which time he has traveled extensively to such interesting places as Cuba, Portugal, Russia, and the Ukraine. He has four children and stays active walking at Tod’s Point and maintaining his 200-year-old house.”

The nomination was seconded by **PETER STERN** after which Jamie was voted into the RMA and thanked all for his election. PETER then continued with other announcements.

Members can get a new, yellow, numbered parking permit for the nearby Lafayette Lot at the greeter desk from 9:00 – 9:45 on January 10 and beyond. Attendance at today’s meeting was 77, including six on Zoom (count by **CARL WHITE**). Today’s greeter is **JOHN KAVANAGH**.

The following recent birthdays boys were serenaded, with **BOB MORGAN** at the piano.

Tog	Pearson	75
John	Stankunas	83
Rusty	Parker	76
Lyn	Kaufman	97
Eric	Zitzmann	88
Steve	Boies	82
John	Craine	87
Keating	Hagmann	78

Two guests were welcomed to the meeting, Kory Breitel, guest of **FRANK SALEM** and **JOERG BLASER**, and Tak Eng, guest of **FRED WU**. Returnees this week were **GERRY BOYLE** from Southern California, **STEPHEN MARINO** from San Diego and Houston, **JACK WEIR** from snowless Vermont, and **JOHN KAVANAGH** from North Carolina.

Corresponding Secretary **ARNOLD GORDON** wished everyone a Happy New Year while lamenting that he had to begin on a sad note by reporting that former member Alex Gospodinoff died peacefully at Greenwich Hospital, on December 14, in his 97th year. Alex was an RMA member from June 2017 until May of this year. His obituary can be found here:

[Obituary for Alex Gospodinoff](#)

If any member knew him well and would like to deliver an RMA remembrance, please contact **ARNOLD** (203-273-5779; ajgordo@verizon.net). He then continued with a remembrance of **DR. PETER ARTURI**, who, as he had previously reported, died on December 7 at the age of 97. He had been an RMA member since August 2000. **ARNOLD** read a piece on behalf of **DR. GEORGE UBOGY**, who knew **PETER** very well (**GEORGE** was in Florida).

“Pete died this past December 7th, a significant date because he was deeply patriotic and because he had enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1944. A full obituary was published in the *Greenwich Time* on December 11, 2023.

“Pete was born in 1926, was a first-generation Italian-American, and grew up and attended public school in Port Chester, where he was a talented baseball and basketball player. He attended Columbia University as an undergraduate and NYU medical school, was an intern in Greenwich Hospital and became a very successful general practitioner in Greenwich. In 1971, he was one of the half dozen attending physicians who formed the original emergency room staff at Greenwich Hospital. I took over his medical practice, which was huge. Pete was a tough act to follow. His patients were extremely devoted to him, as he had given them excellent medical care, had an engaging personality, and spoke some Italian. It seemed as though all of Chickahominy and much of Byram and Cos Cob were in his practice. And they were kind enough to continue to bring in the tastiest tomatoes and peppers with them in August and September; I'm sure they found Pete in the E.R. and kept him well supplied. Golf became his favorite sport and again he excelled. He backed off from it in recent years because the equipment changed and he didn't care for the "improvements.” He attended football and hockey games as team physician for Greenwich High School and St. Mary's High School. Pete had an extremely devoted family, with six children, fourteen grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren. He became the medical director of Nathaniel Witherell, a valued member of the Greenwich Board of Health and a liaison between the Board and Nathaniel Witherell. He also kept RMA members well informed of public health considerations. In recent years, he had to taper his RMA attendance to render care to his wife Timmi, whom he had married when she was a beautiful nurse at Greenwich Hospital and who worked in his office for a number of years. A full life, well lived.”

[Obituary for Dr. Peter Arturi](#)

ARNOLD mentioned that there are some interesting, supposedly “secret” tips on savings available if you shop at Home Depot. See the following.

[“Secret” Tips for Savings at Home Depot](#)

The Connecticut legislature was very busy last year. Many new Acts became effective on January 1, 2024, such as new requirements for online privacy, data and security, and an increase in beverage container deposits to 10 cents. For more details see:

[New Laws in Connecticut for 2024](#)

For his closing item, **ARNOLD** showed a brief video that describes some of America's exceptionalism.

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW YAKOV SMIRNOFF VIDEO](#)

Before introducing **TOM HEALY**, the jokester for the day, **ARNOLD** mentioned that members will be relieved to know that he will not be seen at meetings possibly for a few weeks as a result of knee replacement surgery on January 8. However, he will be watching via Zoom to find out if he is the butt of any jokes or insults and will take appropriate revenge on his return.

Speaker Program: **ARNOLD** described the presentation by the speaker of the day, Dr. Susan Masino, the Vernon D. Roosa Professor of Applied Science at Trinity College. Her laboratory-based research focuses on mechanisms of brain health and disease, with emphasis on the influence of nature on brain health, and the critical role of climate-regulating ecosystems. She will be describing some surprising relationships between our brains and the outdoors. **SPIKE LIPSCHUTZ** previewed next week's speaker, Rick Lawrence, PhD, a chemical and nuclear engineer who worked for IBM among other companies, specializing in machine learning and decision analytics. He will speak on the hot topic of artificial intelligence (AI): "From Search Engine to Regenerative AI: How ChatGPT Changed the World in a Few Months."

Volunteer Programs: **WILL MORRISON** reported that over the last year he has seen that one of the most successful models for getting members excited about volunteering is the "campaign" model. A member finds a compelling nonprofit, discusses the possibility of an "event," and promotes participation to the membership from the RMA podium. The Christmas Salvation Army drive and the upcoming Covenant House food drive are prime examples. He sees potential with Greenwich Green and Clean and Friends of Binney Park as being compelling partners in this regard. Just stop by or drop him an email (wdmorrison@gmail.com) if you are interested in putting something together. And remember to log your hours after the meeting or at:

greenwichrma.org/log

In the meantime, following are the volunteer and non-profit leaderboards for the three months starting October 1.

Volunteer Hours - 1Q, since October 1, 2023

Number of volunteers: 53

Total hours: 2,183

- **Internal: 576 (35%)**
- **External: 1607 (65%)**

Top Supporting Members

Top 10	Volunteer	Total Hours
1	Junker, Jeff	141
2	Gunzburg, Alan	125
3	Brooks, Tim	123
4	Gordon, Arnold	117
5	Hayden, Mike	115
7	Wu, Fred	113
8	Dean, Jim	86
9	Rimmer, Bob	71
10	Lundy, Lee	67

Non-Profits or Projects receiving the most support

Top 10	NPO	Hrs Received	# of Vols
1	Internal	576	25
2	Call-A-Ride	344	10
3	Condo / Co-op	136	7
4	Salvation Army	135.5	11
5	Lions vision + others	125	1
6	Greenwich, Town of	109.5	3
7	Greenwich Symphony	101	2
8	USS Intrepid	100	1
9	Religious Org's	87.5	8
10	External	75	4

MICHAEL AMBROSINO reminded us of our seventh annual food drive for the Covenant House in Stamford, Connecticut, will begin in mid-January. Details regarding food and cash donations will follow in the coming weeks.

JOHN REESE announced that the RMA AI/ChatGPT tech discussion group will meet via Zoom on Monday, January 8, at 4:30 pm. This will be a general RMA discussion group for those interested in staying up-to-date on technology and especially AI and ChatGPT. Come with a question or come listen to how our fellow members are using ChatGPT and what can go wrong. Other technology subjects, cell phones, computers, remote controls, computer aids for the visually impaired and advances in hearing aids are all welcome. If you want to join our email list or want the Zoom link emailed to you, email **JOHN** at jreese@validea.com. In the subject line say "join RMA tech" and include your full name.

JIM DEAN presented the final Salvation Army Kettle program report. On December 1 we started our volunteer program with the Town of Greenwich and the Salvation Army. One goal was to involve as many RMA and community members as possible. We elected to use Sign up Genius software to help us coordinate volunteers and schedules, and it proved to be most valuable. Our fund-raising goal was to raise \$10,000, and in fact, we raised more than \$13,000. This was thanks to RMA member online contributions, Kettle volunteer bell ringers and the new addition of TIP TAP allowing people to easily tap their phones or cards to contribute. **JEFF JUNKER** with his trombone playing also helped the cause. **JIM** hopes to have even more volunteers next year. It was mostly a fun project, and we thank everyone for their participation.

SPORTS REPORTS

Tai Chi: WILL MORRISON. Tai Chi continues to help us get and stay healthy during these winter months. Currently we are focusing on balance and focus development through highly intentional movement patterns. Contact **WILL** for more information or to get on the mailing list.

Pickleball: PAT MacCARTHY. RMA pickleball is played from 11 am until 1 pm on Mondays and from 10 am until 12 pm on Thursdays, at Christiano Field. On New Year's Day, we had very spirited games highlighted by remarkable points by 4.0 pickler **FRED**

WU and by auspicious shots by first-time player **KRIS BRATBERG**. If you want to join the pickleball contact list, please email **PAT** at pmacCarthy415@gmail.com.

Walkers and Talkers: **TAD LARRABEE** reported that there had been two RMA walks since our last membership meeting. On Thursday, December 14, we started at Scalzi Park in Stamford. It was another beautiful cool day. We walked down through the center of downtown Stamford and over to the Mill River which cuts north/south through the west side of Stamford. There's a good walking path that goes north through Mill River Park and back to Scalzi Park along the Mill River. On Thursday, December 21, we met at the Byram Library and walked south on Mead Avenue and then north on South Water Street along the Byram River. We crossed the Mill Street bridge and then south past the giant apartment construction project before meandering over to North Main Street and back on Mill Street. Downtown Port Chester is going through significant change and rebuilding which will likely accelerate during the next decade, so it is interesting to observe this process during our walks. Again, a nice but chilly day! Our walk scheduled for Thursday, December 28, was cancelled due to predicted rain.

I hope to start off our New Year on Thursday, January 2, with a walk starting at Rye Playland, where parking is free in the off season. There is a nice walk through the Edith G. Read Natural Park and Wildlife Sanctuary and back through local neighborhood roads.

Hearts: **BOB SHULLMAN** reported that on December 13 there were two tables and eight players, who completed six games. The scores were as follows. On table 1, **MICHAEL AMBROSINO**, **ANDY HOLMES**, and **BOB SHULLMAN** each won one game, with no moonshots. At table 2, **BILL FAKUNDINY** won two games and **JOHN STANKUNAS** one game, while **JOHN KNIGHT** had one moonshot and **JOHN STANKUNAS** had two.

BOB SHULLMAN then gave a short introduction to the game of hearts saying the lowest score wins. Shooting the moon is not easy. The game is played with four participants per table. **BOB** encouraged all, even total beginners, to attend the weekly Wednesday sessions which last from 1 pm to 4 pm and even sometimes til 4:30 pm, at the Greenwich Library.

TODAY'S SPEAKER



ARNOLD GORDON introduced today's speaker, Dr. Susan Masino, who is the Vernon D. Roosa Professor of Applied Science at Trinity College in Hartford, CT, a member of the Science and Technology Working Group of the Governor's Council on Climate Change (GC3), the Hartford County Coordinator for the Old Growth Forest Network, and recently a Charles Bullard Fellow in Forest Research at Harvard University. Although she had planned to appear in person, Covid interfered; as a result, she appeared via Zoom. Her talk is entitled "Why Our Brains Need Wildlands."

If you were wondering how there could be a connection between the brain health and the outdoors, wonder no more, because Dr. Masino explained how protecting our brains and protecting nature are both vitally important for our long-term wellbeing. She described how these two goals are mutually reinforcing by sharing the growing evidence for the brain health benefits of nature and how common-sense actions can benefit individual and collective health.

Dr Masino's work indicates that nature benefits mental health for all ages. Unfortunately, mental health is declining as is the amount of land preserved forever as wildlands. She is a huge advocate for more land dedicated to nature which recharges your "batteries," decreases anxiety and depression while promoting creativity.

She stated that we are in a poly crisis with climate change, health, ecology, and protecting clean water. All can be improved with more land reserved with specific language denoting that it has forever protection. In New England, only 3.3% of the land is so documented while Connecticut has less than 1%. She pointed out that in the forest many things cannot be seen such as microbes and giant viruses. In a teaspoonful of forest soil, sixteen unknown species were found. Bacteria and fungi provide two third of all antibiotics. Huperzine A found in moss has shown some benefit with Alzheimers, epilepsy, Parkinson's Disease and pain. Gould Farm in Massachusetts, for example, remains a beacon of hope and healing for individuals living with mental health challenges and a

shining example of the healing power of nature and community. Highstead in West Redding, Connecticut, is a local example of what can be done locally and throughout New England to preserve more land for nature and its benefits for all including refuge and peace.

Frederick Law Olmsted was an American landscape architect and considered to be the father of landscape architect in the United States. Olmsted was famous for co-designing many well-known urban parks, including New York's Central Park, Prospect Park in Brooklyn, Cadwalader Park in New Jersey and many others. He was born in Hartford Connecticut in 1822. His firm continued on with his two sons. He believed that wildlands promote healthy living.

The State of Connecticut needs a plan to preserve wildlands for our health. What is needed is permanent forever protection. There is lots of land in our state and we are not taking it from people. Remember, she maintained, forests welcome people. A recent survey concluded the public wants more preserved, forever forests. There is more work to be done. It takes centuries to build a dense forest so what we have must remain. Near Hartford there are trees that date back to before the Revolutionary War.

The talk can be viewed by going to the RMA website 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 →**MIKE ABRAHAMS**←. 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** and **TIM BROOKS**.

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