

CIGAR BOX BULLETIN



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

www.greenwichrma.org

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"With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in to bind up the nation's wounds..." - Abraham Lincoln, Second Inaugural Address, March 4, 1865

After President **JACK WEIR** opened the meeting at 9:45 am, **FRED WU** led the men in the Pledge of Allegiance. **DON CONWAY** was song leader, as **JIM SANTORA** accompanied on the piano, with the tunes "American the Beautiful," "Peg O' My Heart" and "Enjoy Yourself It's Later Than You Think."

JACK then thanked those who made the meeting possible, including CBB Editor **TIM BROOKS**, scribe **DAVID MICHONSKI**, formatter **MARK GEIMER**, projectionists **LEN CARUSI** and **TONY COCCHI**, volunteer advocate **CRAIG WALTERS**, greeter **JOHN KAVANAGH**, mentor **PETER UHRY**, refreshments **SPIKE LIPSCHUTZ**, audio/video **ED PARKER**, **MARK GEIMER**, **PETER DODGE**, **HORST TEBBE**, **BARRY RICHELSON**, **STEVE MARINO** and **JOHN FEBLES**, and set-up **BOB BISHOP**, **JIM BUTLER** and **JOHN CRAINE**.

JACK had several comments.

1. Reminded us that the board will be discussing the RMA budget, dues, alternative funding mechanisms, etc., at the board meeting on February 7. Any written comments are

welcome and should be submitted to **JACK** or to **JEFF JUNKER** by February 1. All are invited to have input into that discussion of our dues.

2. He has received some positive responses re serving on the committee for an RMA 70th Anniversary “bash” in October, but would like more., If interested, see **JACK** or send him an email.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

RMA Food Drive for Covenant House. **MICHAEL AMBROSINO** introduced Merritt Freeman, one of the managers at Covenant House, who explained that 80 people a day come for breakfast and over 150 for lunch and 150 dinners daily. He thanked everyone for thinking “of those at the fringes.” The drive was a spectacular success.



Mike with Merritt from Covenant House



Mike with volunteers

ROMEO luncheon. **DON ROTZIEN** announced that the luncheon will be held at Tengda tomorrow. ROMEO stands for, among other things, Retired Old Men Enjoying Others.

Greenwich Symphony Orchestra. **FRED WU** announced that the Greenwich Symphony will play at the performing arts center at the high school on Saturday night at 7:30 pm and Sunday afternoon at 3 pm. They will perform Symphony #1 of Shostakovich, Beethoven’s Violin Concerto (the only one he wrote), and a Charles Ives’ piece called “The Unanswered Question.”

RMA quarterly medical advisory. **Dr. SPIKE LIPSCHUTZ** urged everyone over 60 to get a COVID booster and a flu shot, and in addition, a shingles shot and a pneumococcal

pneumonia shot. He also spoke about winter dryness and urged using a topical cream, ointment, even Vaseline, especially after a bath or shower. There is no need to spend a lot of money on “moisturizers.” He provided “Winter Cautions” like walking on ice, driving on black ice and urged us to slow down, but also find things to keep active. He suggested that as little as 3000-5000 steps per day is very beneficial. Active is good, he said and sedentary is not good. All the RMA activities like walking, paddle ball, Tai Chi, tennis, pickle ball, golf keep us moving.

He then gave us advice for our visits to the doctor. He urged us to prepare for the visit by (1) making a list of concerns and questions and bring them with you; (2) give the doctor a brief description of any problems or symptoms; (3) bring a list of your medications, including over-the-counter vitamins, or bring the medications with you so the doctor can accurately understand what you are taking and make any refills or adjustments.

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY

JIM DEAN, substituting for the recuperating **ARNOLD GORDON**, noted that drinking two cups of coffee a day can ward off various COVID variants. In addition, ginger helps to prevent brain aging and augments brain health, as well as making you feel younger. He also suggested a penicillin cocktail.

Moving into the world of groaners, he asked,

Q: “What two things can you never eat for breakfast? A: lunch and dinner.

Q: “What kind of room has no doors or windows?” A: a mushroom.

Q: “What do Alexander the Great and Winnie the Pooh have in common?” A: Their middle names.

He then made way for the day’s official jokester, **CARL WHITE**, whose remarks went unrecorded.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

PETER STERN reported attendance as 89, with nine on Zoom, for a total of 98 (count by **CARL WHITE**). Today’s greeter was **JOHN KAVANAGH**. With **JIM SANTORA** at the piano, the following birthdays were celebrated.

BOB CURRY, 78

BOB GRAYSON, 79

VIC CARUSO, 76

One guest was acknowledged, Gerry Seitz, guest of **JEROME COLEMAN** and **JACK WEIR**. Returnees were **BART BARTHOLOMEW** from Palm Beach and Fort Lauderdale, **ANDY HOLMES** from Australia and New Zealand, and **JEFF JUNKER** from Antigua. Special in-person welcomes went to **BRUCE PANTANO** (“First time in a longtime”) and **SAL DeANGELO** (“Our centenarian”). Welcomed on Zoom were **DOUG TAYLOR** (last week’s birthday boy at 97), **FRANK SCARPA** and **GEORGE UBOGY** (representing our Florida snowbirds), and **ARNOLD GORDON** (still recuperating but soon returning).

Correction: We regret the publication of some erroneous information about new member **MICHAEL TEBAY** in last week’s CBB, due to a mix-up. **MICHAEL** was born and raised in England where he graduated from Cambridge University with a degree in mechanical engineering. He moved to the US in 1971 and has had a long and successful career as an executive in the transportation industry. He retired in 2010, and is an avid rower, president of his local homeowner’s association, and a voracious reader, especially about current affairs. He and his wife Barbara will celebrate their 50th anniversary this December. They have two daughters. A detailed bio is attached. Welcome to the RMA, **MIKE!**

[Click here for Mike Tebay bio](#)

PARKING PERMIT ANNOUNCEMENT

Reminder, you can get a new, yellow, numbered permit at the Greeter Desk from 9:00 – 9:45 on January 31.

OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Speakers Program. **BOB RIMMER** introduced today’s speaker, Jennifer Homans, who will speak about her book *Mr. B: George Balanchine’s 20th Century*. Travis Milliman, who is the performing arts librarian at Greenwich Library, will conduct an interview format.

JIM CRAINE alerted us that next week Vice Admiral Joanna Nunan, superintendent of the United States Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point, New York, will speak. The title of her talk is “After 80 years the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy looks to the Future.” Nunan is a Fairfield County native who grew up in Bridgeport. She graduated from the Coast

Guard Academy in 1987 and received her MBA from Rensselaer Polytechnic. She spent more than three decades in the US Coast Guard, commanding units at every level. Considering that over 90% of the world's goods are transported by water and faces numerous challenges including strife in the Red Sea and artificial intelligence, Vice Admiral Nunan is a key leader in US national security.

Human Interest Story. JIM FISHBEIN followed with a presentation titled "Journey Through Our Solar System," his fifth in a series on astronomy. The first was about the planet, the second about the "Asteroids and Planetary Defense," the third about the Sun, the fourth was about space telescopes including the Hubble and the James Webb telescopes. Today's was about the Moon.

In 1610 Galileo found four additional moons orbiting Jupiter informing us that our Moon was not alone. Our Moon is 239,999 miles from earth and is one-third of Earth's width, and it moves away from the Earth by one inch a year. It rotates at the same rate that Earth does so the same hemisphere always faces Earth. It takes 27 Earth days to orbit around the Earth.

The first man on the Moon, Neil Armstrong, landed on July 29, 1969, with Apollo 11. There have been five successful USA landings followed by 12 men who walked on the Moon. Only the US, Russia, China and recently India have successfully landed on the moon. The Moon is somewhat like Earth with mountains and valleys, but also gets bombarded by meteorites at high speed, a challenge for colonizing. The atmosphere is also very thin with gravity only one-sixth of Earth's. Water ice was found in 2008 at the top and bottom poles, perhaps from a comet collision. The Moon's temperature hits 260 degrees Fahrenheit in full sun, but during darkness it plummets to -280 degrees Fahrenheit. Thus, its habitability is difficult and unlikely.

Earth was formed 4.5 billion years ago when our solar system coalesced. Forty to 100 million years later a Mars-sized object hit Earth, flinging off a large chunk of rocky material and much debris which formed the Moon, and added two huge iron masses to the Earth's mantle. Scientists believe the Moon was a product of this collision with Earth.

The Moon has light spots and dark spots The light spots are from mountains covered with a fine-grained soil. The dark areas are from lava filled 4.2 to 1.3 billion years ago. You cannot see the dark side of the Moon because the light side always faces us. In 1959 the Soviet Luna 3 spacecraft sent us the first images of the dark side. On the dark side is also

an ice-filled crater that is the size of Puerto Rico and is as deep as Mt. Everest. The ice may be a remnant of a comet which crashed into the Moon 3.6 billion years ago.

What benefits do we get from the Moon? It moderates earth's wobble, which stabilizes our climate; the Moon's seasons have guided agriculture and man's calendar of events; and the Moon's gravitational pull on Earth causes the tides, which guide fishing and shipping.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

WILL MORRISON offered the following. "Looking for a non-profit to support? Have a look at the external non-profits and projects that RMA members are supporting. Print outs are available at the volunteer advocate table. You can also see the list at greenwichrma.org/log as well as log your hours there.

"Are you a musician? There is an open call to play in an RMA band. Do we have a band or an audience? Not yet. Let **WILL** know if you are interested in playing or organizing."

GAMES MEMBERS PLAY

Tennis: **ANDRE MAZUREK** reported that in Court #1 the winners were **RALPH NEWITTER** and **BRIAN MAHONEY**. In Court # 2 the winners were **PETER ORBANOWSKI** and **RON FRIEDMAN**. In the finals round, on Court #1 the winners were **ORBANOWSKI** and **NEWITTER**, and in Court #2, the winners were **MAZUREK** and **JOHN REESE**.

Bridge: **RON MURRAY** relayed that on Wednesday, January 17, there were eight players. **BRUNO SCHRAGE** scored 3160 points, **ED MASTOLONI** scored 3000 points and **STEVE SHAPIRO** scored 2810 points. All members and guests are invited to play on Wednesday afternoons in the café on the ground floor of the Greenwich Library where lunch is available.

Hearts: Winners, as submitted, were **BILL FAKUNDINY** (three games, one moonshot), **JACK SWEGER** (two games, one moonshot), **JOHN STANKUNAS** (one game, one moonshot), **BOB SHULLMAN** (two moonshots), and **JACK WEIR** (one moonshot). Other results were illegible.

Tai Chi. **WILL MORRISON** reports that the focus in the Monday morning class in Old Greenwich lately has been “using the mind to enable movement and balance.” Reach out to **WILL** for more info.

Paddle and Platform Tennis. **WILL MORRISON** also reported that “We had a great day yesterday. We had 12 members on two courts and beat the afternoon rain. Our newest joiner is new member **KRIS BRATBURG**. Welcome **KRIS**. Contact **JIM DEAN** for more information.”

TODAY’S SPEAKER

BOB RIMMER introduced Jennifer Homans, PhD, who spoke on her book *Mr. B: George Balanchine’s 20th Century*. Travis Milliman, the Performing Arts Librarian at Greenwich Library, conducted the interview while Ms. Homans was on Zoom from Los Angeles.



Dr. Homans wrote her book about Balanchine because she viewed him as one of the greatest artists of the 20th century. She wrote about him both from a personal and professional point view, and also within the context of 20th century politics and culture in Russia, Europe and America. It took her 10 full years to research and write the book and she traveled all over the world and the US, including visits to Harvard where the Balanchine papers are housed. She traveled to St Petersburg and other places where Balanchine worked to get the full presence of him and she immersed herself in his world. Balanchine was a great reader who read Shakespeare, Pushkin, Dostoevsky, and other great names.

Balanchine was tough to write about because he did not write a lot down. What we have are little scraps and it is not easy to uncover his inner thoughts and desires. His taste in music was grounded in music like Tchaikovsky and Stravinsky, but he was eclectic and did everything like Bach and Mozart. He was eclectic in his tastes. He had a close relationship with Stravinsky and then suddenly Stravinsky was gone in 1971, removed from his life by the composer’s death. Balanchine was worried that he might not be able to carry on. Stravinsky was a kind of “father figure” for Balanchine and was a guide to his artistic

development. But when Stravinsky died, Balanchine bounced back with a two-week Stravinsky Festival that was extraordinary.

Hardships, revolutions, and health scares all influenced his work. He was just a child when the Russian Revolution happened and was part of all the violence that came after it. He was cut off from his family and was a wanderer in the streets, and these were all formative influences. He saw the whole format and hierarchical nature of society fractured. He started with a destroyed societal body and he could not go back and had to start anew. And he had to create balance and go forward. He kept moving forward. He was on the edge of dance and pushed it forward into the new world he now lived in. There was no longer a body center for him. He had to move forward into the new world of the 20th century without the guard rails that had existed in society worldwide. He said that he was living in the “radical now” and he wanted to make something that was totally alive and energetic. He would tell his dancers who might not feel the energy, “What are you saving your energy for? You could be dead tomorrow!”

Regarding the women in his life, Jennifer devoted a whole chapter to each woman. He went through a lot of women, but he cared passionately for each even though he could write scathing letters to them, because he loved them so much. The idea of love and woman was essential to his art work and himself as a man.

He was married five times and could not settle down the way stable people might. He fell in love with women who were great dancers and he had a romantic heart. The form that his love took was that he would fall in love with a dancer, marry her, and their love had to do with what he could bring out in her. He was interested in bringing out their personalities and over and over again in these marriages, you see his wives want something like having children or going out to dinner and not just focus on work. He could ONLY focus on work and that was true not just of his wives, but all the women who worked for him. All the women played a part in his creative process. Balanchine’s art came first and he could be cold and cruel to his wives, but art came first. He was fascinated by the occult and mysticism and spiritualism and he weaved through all of them.

Jennifer had first-hand experience with him because she danced for him. She was a student in the school and she could peek in to see his rehearsals and was an extra in some of his dances. Balanchine died in 1983.

HOLLISTER STURGES asked why is ballet so important in Russia versus in the US? And

how does she account for its passion? Balanchine made ballet important in Russia and he capitalized on the passion, mysticism, freneticism, and romance of Russian society and augmented all those traits.

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 →**FRANK SCARPA**←. 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**.

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

RMA 2024 CALENDAR

Weekly Repetitive Activities*			
Day	Time	Activity	Contact
Mondays	9:30 am	QiGong and Tai Chi	Register in advance with Will Morrison –

		Workout	wdmorrison@gmail.com
Mondays	11:00 am	Pickleball	Pat MacCarthy – pmacCarthy415@gmail.com Michael LaGamma – mdlagamma@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