

# CIGAR BOX BULLETIN



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



[www.greenwichrma.org](http://www.greenwichrma.org)  
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*Fellowship, Volunteerism, Service*

**VOLUME 71 NUMBER 30 May 8, 2024**

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Log your volunteer hours at [www.greenwichrma.org/log](http://www.greenwichrma.org/log)

RMA President **WILL MORRISON** opened the meeting at 9:46 am. **JERRY COLEMAN** led the membership in the Pledge of Allegiance. **DON CONWAY** led the singing, accompanied by **BOB MORGAN** on the piano, of "God Bless America," "It's a Good Day," and "Sentimental Journey."

**WILL** recognized RMA Greeter **TOM NACINOVICH**, mentor **MICHAEL AMBROSINO**, CBB scribe **FRED WU**, volunteer advocate **CRAIG WALTERS**, greeter **JOHN KAVANAGH**, and **JOHN KNIGHT** for the refreshments. He also thanked the audio/video team **ED PARKER, MARK GEIMER, PETER DODGE, HORST TEBBE, BARRY RICHELSON, STEVE MARINO, ARN WELLES, JOHN FEBLES**, and **JERRY STINSON**, and the setup team **BOB BISHOP, JIM BUTLER** and **JOHN CRAINE**.

**ED PARKER** reminded all that when using a microphone, be sure to “use your outside voice” and hold it very close to your mouth. Also, avoid using the microphone while positioned just in front of a speaker.

**JEFF JUNKER** is in Denmark, and **TAD LARRABEE** is taking his place for collection of RMA dues checks.

**WILL** reminded us that the Memorial Day Parade is coming up. We will be marching down Sound Beach Avenue with the RMA banner, and we always get lots of applause. Also, **WILL** would like to form “curiosity groups” of members interested in special topics, such as genealogy, photography, reading on various subjects. If you have an idea for such a group, please contact **WILL**.

Corresponding Secretary **ARNOLD GORDON**, announced the sad news that **TOM McGUIRE**, member since 2018, passed away on May 2 at the age of 96. His obituary is attached. **HORST TEBBE**, the sponsor for **TOM**’s membership, will deliver a memorial at next week’s meeting.

### [Obituary for Tom McGuire](#)

**ARNOLD** expressed thanks to member **STEVE MESKERS**, our Connecticut State Representative for the 150<sup>th</sup> District, for his work on behalf of the State and our community by helping sponsor and pass in the House several important bills, including HB 5390 that he says preserves local zoning control, HB 5002 that supports early childhood care and education, HB 5004, the 2024 Connecticut Climate Protection Act, and HB 5491 that establishes a property tax exemption for veterans who have a service-connected permanent and total disability rating as determined by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. **ARNOLD** offered kudos to **STEVE** and his colleagues.

Mark your calendars to celebrate Greenwich Pride Day on Sunday, June 2 at 1 pm at Town Hall with flag raising and an ice cream truck.

Our superb Greenwich Library is seeking feedback through a new community survey about the library. Current users and non-users are encouraged to help them examine usage and satisfaction with collections, services, and programs.

If you enter (by Tuesday, May 21), you might win one of three \$50 gift cards to The Café at the Library. Go here for the survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/greenwich2024>

Before introducing jokester **TOM HEALY, ARNOLD** related a story about a novel choir. It was visitor's day at the mentally deficient sanatorium and all the patients were standing in the courtyard and singing "Ave Maria." **ARNOLD** hastily confirmed that it had nothing to do with the Melody Men. They were singing it beautifully. But oddly, each of them was holding a red apple in one hand and tapping it rhythmically with a pencil. A visitor listened in wonder to the performance and then approached the conductor. "I am a retired choir director," he said. "This is one of the best choirs I have ever heard." "Yes, I'm very proud of them," said the conductor. "You should take them on tour," said the visitor, "what are they called?" "Surely that's obvious," replied the conductor... "They're the Moron Tapanapple Choir."

A memorial service for **SAL DEANGELO** will be at St. Michael the Archangel Parish on Tuesday May 14 at 11 am, 469 North Street Greenwich, CT 06830.

Jokester **TOM HEALY** told some great jokes:

"Why did I get divorced? Well, last week was my birthday. My wife didn't wish me a happy birthday. My parents forgot and so did my kids. I went to work and even my colleagues didn't wish me a happy birthday. As I entered my office my secretary said, 'Happy birthday, boss!' I felt so special. She asked me out for lunch. After lunch, she invited me to her apartment. We went there and she said, 'Do you mind if I go into the bedroom for a minute?' 'Okay,' I said. She came out five minutes later with a birthday cake, my wife, my parents, my kids, my friends, and my colleagues all yelling, 'SURPRISE!!!' while I was waiting on the sofa... naked."

"Three Irish men in a pub were called Mick, Pat, and Tat. The barman says 'Are you all related?' Mick said 'Yeah, we're triplets!' Barman said 'Triplets! How come you and Pat are six feet tall and Tat is only four feet tall?' 'Well!' said Mick, 'Me and Pat were breastfed so there was no tit for Tat!'"

**Visiting Report:** **PAT MACCARTHY** informed us that **DAVID MICHONSKI** is having treatment for a meniscus problem in his knee, and will miss the next few meetings.

**Membership Report:** **PETER STERN** listed the recent birthdays and **BOB MORGAN** played the birthday song.

<b>JOHN DENNE</b>	85
<b>BAO NGUYEN</b>	74
<b>GERRY SEITZ</b>	86
<b>CRAIG WALTERS</b>	78
<b>PAUL CAMPION</b>	87

Attendance was 84 in person, 11 on Zoom, for a total of 95. Thanks to **RICK HOLZ** for the count. There were three guests, Doug MacLaury, guest of **PAT MacCARTHY** and **SKIP AUCH**, Ken McAdams, guest of **BOB MORGAN** and **MIKE HAYDEN**, and John Ryan, guest of **SKIP AUCH**. Returnees were **GRAN BURGESS** and **GEORGE UBOGY**, both from Sarasota, Florida. **PETER** reminded us that we are happy to announce major events in members' lives, such as 50<sup>th</sup> anniversaries, birth of first grandchild, etc.

**Speaker Program Report:** **SPIKE LIPSCHUTZ** informed us that Dr. Benjamin Lebewohl will speak today about the illness and death of Ludwig van Beethoven. **PETER UHRY** announced that the Grace Notes will perform for us next week on Wednesday, May 15. Come enjoy some American Songbook, jazz standards, pop tunes, Motown, spirituals, country, Broadway hits, and holiday favorites. The Grace Notes are an all-volunteer women's a cappella singing group with the purpose of providing therapeutic music to people in need of a little cheer. The group performs for audiences at senior living residences, elementary schools, hospitals, rehabilitation centers, civic organizations, special community events, and the occasional private event.

**Special Events.** **ALAN WEYL** described the successful tour of Yale University yesterday. The tour leader was **DAVID RICHARDS**. This Saturday morning May 11 there is the video of a live performance of *Madame Butterfly* by the Metropolitan Opera shown at New Roc Theater. On Wednesday, May 15 at



RMA at Yale

5:00 pm at the Bruce Museum, there will be a symposium on non-opioid pain medications, organized by the research foundation established by **LARRY ALLEN**. On Friday, May 17 at 7:00 pm the Greenwich Library will show a documentary film *It Ain't Over*, about Yogi Berra. There may still be a few seats left.

**ROMEO Lunch.** **DON ROTZIEN** reports that the next ROMEO lunch is scheduled for Thursday, May 16 at Greenwich Point. It will start at 1:00 pm behind the main concession stand. Bring your beach card but if you forget it just tell the guard that you're with the RMA. See you there!

**Volunteer Report:** **MARK GEIMER** reports "A couple of weeks ago I asked for volunteers to help in running the RMA. The response was minimal. So I'm not going to 'ask' again but I'm going to 'remind' you that we are a volunteer organization and it's right there on our flag that you see at every meeting. Many of you when you were inducted said something like 'Thank you for voting me into the RMA. I look forward to meeting all of you and contributing to the organization.' I know I did. It's time to honor that sentiment. I'll post the jobs in the CBB with my email. Let's hear from you!"

Internal Job Openings (Contact [mark.geimer@gmail.com](mailto:mark.geimer@gmail.com))

#### Wednesday Morning Tasks

Projectionist

Zoom Session Monitor

Cameraman

Sound Controller

Done at home

Video Editor

Format and Send CBB  
Send Meeting Reminders  
Other Key Positions  
Assistant Treasurer  
Assistant Membership Chair  
Volunteers Program Chair

### GAMES PEOPLE PLAY

**Tennis:** **JERRY COLEMAN** asked everyone not to mumble when speaking at the podium. Last Friday was the end of the RMA tennis season and here are the results. Runner-up round: **REESE/MERL** over **JOHNSON/MacCARTHY**  
Championship round: **ORBANOWSKI/COLEMAN** over **PRUNER/NEWITTER**  
**JERRY** closed by thanking **ANDY HOLMES** for serving as tennis organizer for the past five years “efficiently, with equanimity, and with a smile.” “Indeed, if you want to get something done around here, get a hold of Andy, and he'll get it done for you.” **ANDRE MAZUREK** will be the new chair.

**Hearts:** **ANDY HOLMES** reported “At last week’s Hearts get-together at the library after the meeting, a total of seven games were played by eight members at two tables. At Table 1 three games were played and **BILL FAKUNDINY** won all three games with no moon shots occurring. At Table 2 four games were played. **MIKE AMBROSINO** won two games while shooting the moon twice, **JOE DOWLING** also won a game and shot the moon once while **BOB SHULLMAN** also won one game and shot the moon once.”

**Bridge:** **RON MURRAY** gave the bridge report for Wednesday, May 1. “There were eight players.

1. **ED MASTOLONI** 5680
2. **BRUNO SCHRAGE** 4190
3. **RON FRIEDMAN** 3780

**ED** and **RON** made a slam - they bid six spades and made seven. Well done!  
We play every Wednesday afternoon in the cafe on the ground floor of the Greenwich Library. Lunch is available. We invite all members and guests who



are interested in bridge, whether new or experienced players, to join our group. If you think your game is a bit rusty, not to worry - we have several excellent players who can answer your questions.”

**Golf:** **JOHN CRAINE** reports “we had 20 golfers yesterday under beautiful skies and light winds. Winners of our four competition holes were: closest on Hole 5 – **JOE MANCINELLI**, closest on Holes 7 and 15 – **PAT YUEN** and longest drive on Hole 8 – **CHARLIE ADAMS**. Notable scores under 100 for 18 holes were: 97 – **TOM HEALY**, 92 – **GRAN BURGESS**, and top scoring honors went to **CHARLIE ADAMS** with an 86. Also Notable was **JOE MANCINELLI** with a birdie on Hole 9. **GRAN BURGESS** is our Captain next Tuesday. We will be starting at about 10:30 am and continue playing behind the women for the rest of May.

**Tai Chi:** If you’re interested, contact **WILL**.

**Walkers.** On May 2 **JEFF JUNKER** led a group of intrepid walkers on an unusually vigorous hike through Cranberry Lake Preserve in West Harrison, on a sparkingly clear day.



Walkers & Talkers at Cranberry Lake



Jerry Pollack shows how it's done

### **TODAY'S SPEAKER**

At the May 8 meeting of the RMA, **SPIKE LIPSCHUTZ** introduced Dr. Benjamin Lebwohl, a professor at Columbia University, about the illnesses and death of the famous composer Ludwig van Beethoven.

Dr. Lebowhl began by emphasizing Beethoven's monumental importance and influence in the history of Western classical music. He transformed multiple genres like the string quartet, piano sonata, and symphony, and redefined what it meant to be an artist, moving away from being a servant to nobility to being seen as a revolutionary and heroic sufferer.



The lecture then moved into exploring the various sources that provide insight into Beethoven's medical history, including biographies, his letters, conversation books (in which people wrote messages to the deaf Beethoven and he responded verbally), and actual medical case histories.

An early letter at age 16 revealed Beethoven was already concerned about having tuberculosis and asthma like his dying mother. Throughout his 20s, he experienced recurrent respiratory infections, gastrointestinal issues, and progressive hearing loss, first sharing this in an 1801 letter to a friend. The famous Heiligenstadt Testament from 1802 showed Beethoven contemplating suicide over his hearing loss before deciding his art was his reason for living.

Dr. Lebowhl discussed theories around the causes of Beethoven's deafness, including ear infections, Paget's disease, autoimmune issues, and otosclerosis. But the primary focus was on his final illness in the 1820s, marked by jaundice, ascites (fluid accumulation), vomiting, and edema. His doctor performed serial paracenteses (abdominal fluid drainage), but eventually Beethoven developed peritonitis, which may have been spontaneous or iatrogenic (unintentionally caused by the doctors).

The autopsy in 1827, led by the "father of modern pathology," Rokitansky, revealed cirrhosis of the liver with fatty changes consistent with alcohol abuse, an enlarged spleen and firm pancreas suggestive of pancreatitis, and



damage to the auditory nerve likely from past meningitis. No conclusive cause for the deafness was found.

In 2000, a controversial book theorized Beethoven had lead poisoning based on high lead levels found in a lock of his hair. This was initially disproven when that lock was found to be from an unrelated woman. However, in 2023 the same research team confirmed extremely elevated lead levels in genetically-verified Beethoven hair samples, reopening that theory. They also found evidence Beethoven had a mutation making his liver more susceptible to injury, such as from alcohol. While lead exposure could explain some symptoms, Dr. Lebowhl argued the primary driver of Beethoven's liver disease was likely his well-documented heavy drinking, which he continued despite medical advice.

The lecture explored whether Beethoven's deafness and suffering influenced his groundbreaking musical compositions, with some theories that he portrayed these experiences directly in certain works. Ultimately, Beethoven saw his art as a response to his challenges, his reason for living despite despair.

Dr. Lebowhl discussed fascinating interdisciplinary connections between music and medicine, including Beethoven using improvisation for therapeutic purposes with a friend. He suggested a modern approach could have utilized cochlear implants for hearing loss and potentially a liver transplant, though Beethoven's ability to follow treatment regimens is uncertain.

In summary, this lecture provides a comprehensive medical overview of Beethoven's documented illnesses and final fatal case, incorporating sources from his own words, doctor reports, pathology findings, and emerging genetic evidence. It explored the interplay between his conditions, suffering, therapeutic view of his art, and creative process as one of the most influential composers in history.

The full presentation 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 →**MICHAEL LAGAMMA**←. Please send a copy of any remarks you want included in the CBB to him, *via email please!*

**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, TIM BROOKS, LARRY ALLEN.**

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 Workout	Register in advance with Will Morrison – <a href="mailto:wdmorrison@gmail.com">wdmorrison@gmail.com</a>
Mondays	11:00 am	Pickleball	Pat MacCarthy – <a href="mailto:pmacCarthy415@gmail.com">pmacCarthy415@gmail.com</a> Michael LaGamma– <a href="mailto:mdlamma@optonline.net">mdlamma@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	10 am-12 pm	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:mdlagamma@optonline.net">mdlagamma@optonline.net</a>
Friday	Contact Holmes	Indoor Tennis	Andy Holmes - <a href="mailto:Andyholmes56@gmail.com">Andyholmes56@gmail.com</a>

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