

CIGAR BOX BULLETIN

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



www.greenwichrma.org

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Fellowship, Volunteerism, Service

VOLUME 71 NUMBER 39 July 10, 2024

SCRIBE: DAVE MICHONSKI

Next Meeting Scribe: July 17 – **JOHN REESE** (JREESE@VALIDEA.COM)

Log your volunteer hours at www.greenwichrma.org/log

"Much of the value of our lives is determined by what we leave behind"
– William James (paraphrase)

After President **WILL MORRISON** opened the meeting, **DON CONWAY** led us in the Pledge of Allegiance and, for good measure, also read the Boy Scout Pledge. Song leader **JIM BUTLER**, accompanied on piano by **JIM SANTORA**, then led rousing renditions of "You're a Grand Old Flag," "Hey Look Me Over" and "(Ya Gotta Have) Heart."

PRESIDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

WILL then recognized greeter **CRAIG WALTERS**, mentor **JAMES DEAN**, CBB scribe **DAVID MICHONSKI**, volunteer advocate **JOHN DENNE** and refreshments provider **JOHN KNIGHT**. In the regular recognition rotation

WILL recognized the 33 members of the Program Committee who every week do an amazing job of creating first rate content for our meetings, and also special events volunteers **ALAN WEYL, TROY JOHNSON** and **LARRY ALLEN**.

WILL remarked that he had heard a member speak about retirement as “re-wiring” and thought it was a nice way of thinking of the RMA, i.e. as the “Re-wired Men’s Association.” He also noted that **DAVID MICHONSKI** will be leading the next two meetings.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Corresponding Secretary **ARNOLD GORDON** provided an update on **JACK WEIR**, who is still at the Van Munching Rehab facility at Stamford Hospital. He welcomes visitors, but **ARNOLD** reminded us to call his wife, Lucy (203-249-6582), a day before to schedule a visit. A few RMA members have visited **JACK** over the past few days. **JACK** will take calls to his room phone (203-249-5734). Be aware that it may be difficult to understand him, so be patient.

ARNOLD asked for a show of hands of those who served in the Korean War. He pointed out that First Selectman Fred Camillo is working with Lt. Gov. Susan Bysiewicz on putting together a ceremony to honor the veterans of the Korean War (<https://kwva.us/>), similar to what was done last year to honor our local Vietnam veterans. The date and location of the ceremony is still to be determined but what is needed now is to hear from the veterans and their families so a list of Korean War-era veterans can be compiled in order to honor and thank them for their service. Write or call Ken Borsuk (ken.borsuk@greenwichct.gov; 203-622-7702).

Indian Harbor Yacht Club, founded in 1889, will be celebrating its 135th anniversary with a very unusual light show that will use 175 illuminated drones instead of the customary fireworks. This first of its kind for Greenwich display will take place on the night of July 20th at the end of Steamboat Road, which will be closed for the occasion. Drone shows are replacing fireworks in some American cities to reduce the risk of wildfires.

ARNOLD informed us that mosquitoes trapped near the Eastern Greenwich Civic Center in Old Greenwich have tested positive for the West Nile Virus (WNV). These are the first positive mosquitoes identified by the Connecticut Agriculture Experiment Station in Greenwich this year. Other WNV-positive mosquito pools have been identified in Darien, Norwalk, New Canaan, New Haven and Stamford. So, beware of all mosquitos.

Before introducing the jokester for the day, **ARNOLD** gave us a short quiz followed by a series of clever cartoons by Poleurs, a self-taught cartoonist from Luxembourg. You can see the cartoons in the attached. He also posed the question, “Did you ever wonder how Noah was able to see well on his ark at night?” Answer: “He used a floodlight.”

[Link to cartoons by Poleurs.](#)

Jokester **JERRY SCHWENDEMAN** told of an eccentric millionaire who wanted an artist to give his interpretation of Custer’s last stand.

Next, Visiting Chair **PAT MacCARTHY** reported that unfortunately **RUSS HARDEN’s** lymphoma cancer has resurfaced. He is at home most of the time except Wednesdays when he gets therapy at Yale New Haven Hospital. **RUSS** welcomes calls and visits with advance notice. Please consult the new RMA directory for **RUSS’s** phone number and home address.

Membership Chair **PETER STERN** thanked today’s greeter **CRAIG WALTERS,**



Junker, Gamanos, Butler

and reported that attendance was 75 in person and four on Zoom, for a total of 79 (count by **LEE LUNDY**). This was followed by an induction ceremony for Dean Gamanos, who was nominated for induction into the RMA by **JIM BUTLER** and seconded by **JEFF JUNKER**. Dean was unanimously voted in as a new member. **DEAN** worked on Madison Avenue in advertising for many large firms

and major clients. He has also been an adjunct professor at the Fashion Institute in NYC where he teaches entrepreneurship. **DEAN** often came to our lectures and thought they were first rate, as were the Q & A sessions. See the attached nomination remarks by **JIM BUTLER**.

[Dean Gamanos Nomination Remarks](#)

Birthdays this week: **HOWARD RESSLER** is 76; **CHICK DONOHUE** is 83; **BOB LUCE** is 87; and **MIKE CATALANO** is 71. Guests are Bill Drake, a guest of **BOB MEANEY** and **DAVID MICHONSKI**, and Stan Godoff, the guest of **JIM DEAN**. Returnees are **PETER DODGE** from Newport, Rhode Island, and **CRAIG WALTERS** from Lake Luzerne, New York. Welcomed on Zoom is **RICK HOLZ**, escaping the heat of Connecticut in Lauderdale by the Sea, Florida.

PETER noted that **BOB CAREY** has paid his dues, but has mobility issues and cannot attend. Nonetheless, he wrote this note with his dues payment: "Please offer a special 'Hello' to all from Bob and Libby."

Speakers: Today's speaker will be Foster Hirsch on "Hollywood and Movies of the Fifties: The Collapse of the Studio System, the Thrill of Cinerama, and the Invasion of the Ultimate Body Snatcher—Television." Next week's presentation, announced by **SPIKE LIPSCHUTZ**, will be a panel of health professionals speaking on the topic, "Successful Aging at Home and In Our Community," and what we can do individually.

Annual Picnic: **JOHN KAVANAGH** reported that the picnic is September 12 and there will be no meeting on Wednesday September 11. He explained that the picnic will start at 10:30 am with an hour of games with prizes. Anyone going must register for the picnic and all attendees must give **MARK GEIMER** a check for \$15 per person. See attached for more details.

[Click Here for picnic invitation](#)

ROMEO Luncheon: **DON ROTZIEN** reported that the next ROMEO lunch will again be held at Greenwich Point on July 25th at 1:00 pm. Per usual, attendees will meet in the area behind the main concession stand. No beach card is required, just mention to the guard that you're with the RMA gathering. See you there!

Special Events: **ALAN WEYL** announced that on July 27 there will be a special event at Caramoor that starts at noon with music all afternoon. Price is \$70 for that ticket. The second option is a full day ticket for \$100 or less and includes a concert in the evening. Everyone can bring their own food or purchase food at the event. See the two-page flyer created for the event.

[*Caramoor Jazz Festival flyer*](#)

MIKE AMBROSINO announced another special event on Saturday, November 2 at noon at West Point. It is THE game of the season, Air Force vs Army. This may be a bus event with tickets in advance. **MIKE** is working on this and information will be forthcoming. Save the date. Ticket prices will be forthcoming next week and will be approximately \$65-80.

Projects of Interest: **BART BARTHOLOMEW** reminded us that the first meeting of the genealogy group is next Wednesday. The group will meet at 9:00 am in the church hall before the membership meeting. If you would like to be added to the group's mailing list contact **TIM BROOKS**.

ACTIVITY REPORTS

Hearts, for July 2:

	Games	Moonshots
Table #1:		
JOHN STANKUNAS	0	1
JOHN KNIGHT	2	2
JACK SWEGER	1	3
DON CONWAY	1	1

Table # 2		
ANDY HOLMES	2	0
TOM HEALY	1	1
BOB SHULLMAN	0	0
MIKE AMBROSINO	1	1

Bridge: **RON MURRAY** relayed the results for last week. There were eight players. The top three were **RON MURRAY**, 4290, **CHARLEY LAND**, 4110, and **ED MASTOLONI**, 3970. There were no slams. We play every Wednesday afternoon at 1 pm 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 newcomers or experienced players, to join our group. Do not worry if your game is a bit rusty - we have excellent players who would be happy to review your questions with you.

Golf: **JOE MANCINELLI** said that 18 members showed up last week. Best scores were **PHIL SCIBONA**, 98, **ANDRE MAZUREK**, 98, **BART BARTHOLOMEW**, 96, **PAT YUEN**, 94, **TOM HEALY**, 95, **JOE MANCINELLI**, 92, **PETER TUNLEY**, 89, and **CHARLIE ADAMS** who topped the leader board with 87. Other notable achievements were
Hole # 7: Closest to the pin, **TONY COCCHI**
Hole # 8: Long Drive, **BOB MORGAN**
Hole # 15: Closest to the pin, **TOM HEALY**

Walkers and Talkers: **JEFF JUNKER** reported that the group did not walk on July 4 but they plan on meeting this Thursday at 9 am. Everyone on the list will get an invite with the location.

Pickleball: **PAT MacCARTHY** reported that there was no pickleball.

Tai Chi: **WILL MORRISON** reported that **CHARLIE SHAPIRO**, **BOB MENDELSON**, **JIM BOARDMAN**, **PAT YUEN**, **FRANK HEGEMAN** and **PETER BERG** are regulars.

TODAY'S SPEAKER

TIM BROOKS introduced Professor Foster Hirsch who spoke on "Hollywood and Movies of the Fifties: The Collapse of the Studio System, the Thrill of Cinerama, and the Invasion of the Ultimate Body Snatcher—Television"



Hirsch provided a fascinating look at Hollywood's most turbulent decade, set against the boom of the post-World War II years, the Cold War, and the atomic age—with movies that reflected seismic shifts. Hollywood in the 1950s was a period when the film industry both set conventions and broke norms and traditions, from Cinerama, CinemaScope, and

VistaVision to the epic film and lavish musical. It was a decade that saw the rise of the anti-hero; the smoldering, the hidden, and the unspoken; teenagers gone wild in the streets; the sacred and the profane; the revolution of Method Acting; the socially conscious; the implosion of the studios; the end of the production code; and the invasion of the ultimate body snatcher, “small screen” television. It was Eisenhower's America—seemingly complacent and conformity-ridden as in Vincente Minnelli's *Father of the Bride*, Walt Disney's *Cinderella*, and *Brigadoon*, among others. It was also a darkening, resonant landscape, beset by conflict, discontent, and anxiety (*The Man Who Knew Too Much*, *The Asphalt Jungle*, *A Place in the Sun*, *Touch of Evil*, *It Came From Outer Space*), an America on the verge of cultural, political and sexual revolt (*East of Eden*, *From Here to Eternity*, *On the Waterfront*, *Sweet Smell of Success*, *The Wild One*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Jailhouse Rock*).

Foster Hirsch is the author of 16 books on theatre and film. A native of California, Hirsch received his B.A. from Stanford University and holds M.F.A., M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from Columbia University. Hirsch joined the English department of Brooklyn College in 1967, and in 1973 became one of the first professors to join the school's newly established film department. He has also been associated with the Pine Bluff Film Festival since its inception in 1994.

During his talk Hirsch explained that he was an intense movie goer and subconsciously he was gathering the data for his book for 70 years. He viewed himself as the last of the historians who lived through the period of the 50's and who had a front row seat for the movies of that time. He started one

chapter of his book with the phrase “The past is a foreign country” and said as we grow older we idealize it. Hirsch admitted being guilty of nostalgia and idealizing the past and in his book he wanted to challenge perceptions of the 50’s. He defended the culture and movies of the 1950s. He called it a “vital period,” more anxiety driven than we remember and even dark at times.

He noted that during WWII people went to movies. When TV came into people’s homes, attendance dropped. With TV the studios had to figure out ways to get people back into movie houses. One way was to add wide-screen film-making to accent the importance of theaters. Vista Vision and Technovision are two examples of this trend. In addition, theaters tried 3-D movies. Those did not last long because people did not like to wear the glasses. They started in 1952 but ended in 1954, with over 50 3-D movies.

Finally, the studios had to find other ways to appeal to people. They looked to great novels and books such as *Moby Dick* or novels by Hemingway and Dostoevsky such as *War and Peace*. They also went for a new style called “exploitation,” such as the *The Attack of the 50 Foot Woman*, targeting young people. In addition, there were a number of films focused on race. Some reflected progressive views on race. There were also revisionist westerns showing how Native Americans were treated.

Hirsch mentioned the three great divas of the 1950s, Bette Davis, Katherine Hepburn and Joan Crawford, of which he felt Joan Crawford was the best. Hirsch extolled *Sudden Fear* (released in 1952) with Crawford as one of the best films ever made. Other divas came later such as Marilyn Monroe and Jayne Mansfield. Hirsch thought Monroe was a fabulous actress but Mansfield was not, and for that reason she had only a two-year run at the top. Hirsch explained that James Dean, Montgomery Clift and Marlon Brando were the great male actors of the period. He believed that Brando was the greatest of all actors and recommended we all watch *On the Waterfront* and his portrayal of Napoleon in *Desiree*. He called James Dean “the world’s first teenager.” Today, Dean is one of the few 50’s actors that young people can still relate to.

The most controversial part of the 1950s was an attack on Hollywood for presumed communist leanings. It gave rise to informing on others and became

a form of degradation and humiliation. *On the Waterfront* is a film in which the character must testify against a corrupt union. It wasn't communism, but it made the point.

Noir films continued from the 1940s. One of the greatest noir melodramas ever made was called *Imitation of Life*, a film about a white mother and daughter and a black mother and daughter. In 1967 "neo noir" was introduced in the film *Point Blank*.

There were films that saved Hollywood. One was *The Robe*, a beautifully made 1953 movie about early Christianity, filmed in Cinemascope. In addition, *The Ten Commandments*, *Ben Hur* and *Land of the Pharaohs* are among the greatest of films. Hirsch indicated that in the 1950s there were also comedies and Westerns. The most famous comedy is *Some Like it Hot*. He also pointed out that science fiction surged in the 1950s. The atom bomb helped create science fiction movies like the *The Invasion of the Body Snatchers*. All of these films had a subtext. Today we have monsters without meanings, but in the 1950s they embodied subtexts about the culture and society. Also, in the 1950's full scale animations such as *Peter Pan* blossomed, as did documentaries.

He concluded that while the studio moguls had their last hurrah in the 50's, and were total czars who ruled everyone under their contracts, nonetheless they were insightful as to what the public wanted. While many moguls were indiscrete, still they were mostly brilliant men. Hirsch decried "presentism," i.e. looking back at the moguls with today's values. The only mogul he could not give a balanced view about in his book was Howard Hughes who he viewed as a mad man. But Hughes knew when to step aside for brilliant young talent. Nonetheless, RKO pictures went bust because of Hughes.

Hirsch concluded that there were more great movies in the 1950s than in any other decade. Following are seven movies of the 1950s that he highly recommends, along with brief explanations of why he considered each to be exceptional.

1. *On the Waterfront* (1954) - Hirsch called this "the single finest performance in American movies," referring to Marlon Brando's acting. He also considered it "the greatest American film of the fifties."
2. *Sudden Fear* (1952) - Hirsch described this as "one of the best films ever made" and urged the audience to "Go home and see it today."
3. *Imitation of Life* (1959) - Hirsch referred to this as "one of the greatest films ever made in America" and praised its subversive portrayal of race relations.
4. *The Searchers* (1956) - While Hirsch called this a "difficult film," he also deemed it a "masterpiece" for its treatment of racial themes in the Western genre.
5. *Ben-Hur* (1959) - Hirsch called this "the greatest epic I've ever seen in the movies," praising it as an exemplar of the epic genre.
6. *The Ten Commandments* (1956) - Despite criticizing its director Cecil B. DeMille, Hirsch insisted this is "a terrific piece of filmmaking" and "worth your time."
7. *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955) - He praised this film for James Dean's enduring portrayal of teenage angst, noting that even modern students can still relate to it.

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.

The scribe thanks **JOHN REESE** for assistance in the analysis of Prof. Hirsch's presentation.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

TO CBB CONTRIBUTORS: Scribe for the next meeting will be →**JOHN REESE**←. 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.

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 tim@timbrooks.net 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 **TIM BROOKS, PETE UHRY.**

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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 – wdmorrison@gmail.com
Mondays	11:00 am-1:00 pm	Pickleball	Pat MacCarthy – pmaccarthy415@gmail.com Michael LaGamma – mdlagamma@optonline.net
Tuesdays	9:30 am	RMA Golf, the Griff Golf Course, Greenwich	Joe Mancinelli - jlmanc@optonline.net
Tuesdays	Resumes in Fall	Platform (paddle) tennis	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	Ron Murray - mitmurray@aol.com
Thursdays	9:00 am	RMA Walking	Tad Larrabee - tadlarra@optonline.net Jeff Junker - jjunker@optonline.net
Thursdays	9:00-11:00 am	Pickleball	Pat MacCarthy – pmaccarthy415@gmail.com Michael LaGamma – mdlagamma@optonline.net

Friday	1:30-3:00 pm	Indoor Tennis	Andre Mazurek - Mazurek.a.j@gmail.com
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*Day & time of some events may vary; check with contact