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The Senior Forum

October 2009

IT'S ALL ABOUT FELLOWSHIP

Ridgefield Men's Club *News*



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The Ridgefield Men's Club Newsletter is published ten times a year by the Ridgefield Men's Club.

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Ridgefield Men's Club

54 Danbury Rd. , #216 Ridgefield, CT 06877
 (A Non-Profit Social Recreation Club)
 (IRS #06-131978)

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(July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010)

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 2011: Jack Alexander, Tom McKee, Ed Van Den Ameele
 2010: Jim Kelly, John Morris, Bob Payne

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 Dar Yoran, Bob MacDonald, Bill Lutzius, Bud Rigby, Al Ryff, Jack Malloy, Ted McCormick, Peter Myers, William Schmitt, Frank Kromer, George Hefferon and Mike Troy

The Prez Sez



A "Forum for Fellowship"?? What the heck does that mean? Do I just come twice a month, and say " please check my attitude, and fill me up with Fellowship, please"?

We are celebrating the 25th anniversary of a club dedicated to the objective "...to provide and promote Fellowship among the members..."and the Fall season sparkles with events that are widely anticipated and greatly enjoyed. But they don't just happen through spontaneous combustion. Neither do all the other on-going activities such as the Gourmet outings, the Interest Group programs, the Communications innovations, etc. All these things take energy and direction to bring them to life as vehicles for Fellowship.

My Dad used to say: "be-

longing to an organization is like having a family...you only get out of it what you are willing to put into it!"

Now is the time for each member, particularly the newer ones, to ask what they are willing to invest of themselves in order to enhance their own Fellowship experience, and make a meaningful effort to sustain the tradition of the Mens Club. We are currently seeking new leadership for the Gourmet activity, as well as key support roles in other ongoing programs. You don't have to be the whole engine; we are just looking for some new spark plugs!

See me to find out how you can help keep the Club filled up with Fellowship.

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Bulls & Bears

by Dick Paul



The Group of 20 is meeting in Pittsburgh to discuss among other things what needs to be done to

provide a more stable global financial system. Each of the twenty countries represented there will come with its preferred approach to the problem based on past experiences—both good and bad. As you can imagine it will be almost impossible for twenty sovereign nations with diverse interests to reach agreement on what should be done. This is especially true now that the urgency of finding a quick solution has passed. So I have asked myself what is likely to happen and why.

My best guess is that very little will happen now or in the immediate future. Looking at it from the standpoint of the U.S., they are concerned if they get too tough with the banks the banks will simply move their international business elsewhere—meaning outside of the U.S. where the regulatory environment is more friendly. There is not a single politician or a regulator who wants to be identified as the party that caused the

investment banks to locate elsewhere. Prior to 2008 the banking industry provided 40% of all the profits of the S&P 500 and represented 17% of the capital weighting of the US market. Executives of the banking industry with their very large compensation packages provide a substantial portion of IRS income tax revenues. They also are major contributors to philanthropic activities. Many are leaders in their communities. After the loss of most of our manufacturing activities over the past several decades, following this with a loss of the lucrative portion of U.S. financial activities would be viewed by the US as a major catastrophe.

The commercial bank portion of the bank system is not a problem. The FDIC wound the failing commercial banks down during the credit crunch without difficulty. The problem banks are the big investment banks. They have grown too big to fail and are major contributors to the shadow banking system. They provide more than one half of all credit and are therefore critical in meeting the credit needs of the economy. Those that have survived the credit crunch have emerged bigger and stronger than ever. There is nothing in place to keep

them from going back to the same high-risk practices that led to the credit crunch in the first place.

Jeffrey E. Gartner provides a case for a global central bank in the September 28, 2009 issue of Business Week. He argues that a global central bank is necessary in today's complex, interconnected world economy. The world has had a series of financial crisis over the past thirty years: Latin America debt crisis in 1980s, the Asian financial crisis, the collapse of Long Term Capital Management and the Internet stock implosion. After each crisis governments promised new rules and institutions but little was actually done. The reason for this is government oversight is national and the problem is global. Regional solutions do not solve global problems. Annual cross-border capital flows increased to \$11.2 trillion in 2007, more than 20% of global gross domestic product. It was \$1.1 trillion, or 5.2% of global GDP in 1990. Until treatment of banks is global and uniform we appear destined to continue to have global financial crisis on a regular basis. Only if you are ready to give up some of your sovereignty will this problem be solved. You and your fellow countrymen and women are probably not willing to do so and that is the basic problem!

What's Up!!!

Speakers:

October 7: Darla Shaw, "Value of Humanity Travel/ India."

October 21: Bill Toomey, "Highstead Arboretum."

November 4: Rev. Dr. Charles Hambrick Stowe, "Abraham Lincoln."

Gourmets:

The Gourmets will hold a luncheon at Hopkins Inn on THURSDAY, October 22nd. The social hour begins at 11:30 am with Hors D'oeuvres and a cash bar. The luncheon service will start at 12:30 pm. We currently have a full list of attendees signed up for the luncheon and a wait list as well.

We are awaiting input from a few members who are interested in taking on the role of organizing the future luncheons and dinners that have been a part of the Men's Club activities for many years past. We stand ready to help and support the new team during the transition. For more information call Bill Lutzius at 431-6276 or Al Ryff at 438-5737 or via e-mail at whlfudgie@sbcglobal.net for Bill, a.ryff@att.net for Al or at the October membership meetings.

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Nota Bene:

Perhaps new members might pay particular attention to the appeal from Al and Bill to step up and get involved with one of the more active activities of the club. It's a great opportunity to become immersed in a fun way in our Fellowship mission. Come on, give it a try!!!!

Bicycle Activity News

In case you missed this on the web site here is the first official photo of the Bikers activity. Lee Finkel is still looking for guys that enjoy bicycling. Give Lee a shout if you can look as good as these guys or even if you cannot.



Trivia Question:

What is the relationship between the Green Hornet and the Lone Ranger?

Last Month's Question:

Where is the "World's Longest Candy Counter"?

Answer: Chutter's in Littleton, NH. The candy counter runs the entire length of the store.

112 feet of glass jars filled with candy ranging from yesterday's favorites to hard-to-find flavors of the best of today's treats. Recorded by the Guinness Book of Records.

Web Site News:

Jack Alexander our erstwhile web master has put a Bulletin Board on our Internal page. This will be available for special messages that might be of interest to some of our club members. If members have messages that they feel might be of interest to club members please contact our President Ron Steiger. Ron will then let Jack know about attaching the message to the Bulletin Board if he feels that there will be sufficient interest.

Ladies Holiday Luncheon:



Don't forget to mark your calendars for Wednesday, December 2, The Ladies Holiday Luncheon.

Sign up dates will begin at our next meeting October 7 and continue on October 21 and November 4th

What's Up, Con.t on page 5

(What's Up!!!, Con't from Page 4)

**Congratulations to our EX
PREZ, Mike Troy on his
HOLE in ONE, at the
Ridgefield Golf Course.**

Atta Boy Mike.



Whattaa a Swing!!!!



see related story on page 12

Errata:

Jim Callahan's e-mail address was not listed correctly in last months Newsletter, in the column 'Who is that Guy.' The correct address is :

james_callahan@sbcglobal.net

Trick



Treat

October 31

Aging

submitted by George Hefferon

I'm Fine

*There's nothing whatever the
matter with me*

*I'm just as healthy as I can be,
I have arthritis in both my knees
And when I talk, I talk with a
wheeze.*

*My pulse is weak and my blood
is thin,*

*But I'm awfully well for the
shape I'm in.*

*I think my liver is out of whack
And a terrible pain is in my
back.*

*My hearing is poor, my sight is
dim,*

*Most everything seems to be
out of trim.*

*But I'm awfully well for the
shape I'm in.*

*I have arch supports for both my
feet,*

*Or I wouldn't be able to go on
the street.*

*Sleeplessness I have night after
night,*

*And in the morning I'm just a
sight.*

*My memory is failing, my head's
in a spin,*

*I'm peacefully living on aspirin.
But I'm awfully well for the
shape I'm in.*

*The moral is as this tale we
unfold,*

*That for you and me, who are
growing old,*

*It's better to say I'm fine with a
grin*

*Than to let them know the
shape I'm in.*

-Cardinal Cushing

The Biography Page



I was born in Waco, Texas in March of 1939. Graduated from Texas A & M University in 1959 with a BS in Industrial Engineering. Graduated from WestConn in 1978 with a MA in American History

I spent seven years in the Air Force, and my most memorable assignments were attached to the UN in 1963 flying peace keeping forces from the Congo to Indonesia and returning with Pakistani troops. The secret mission I volunteered for shortly after turned out to be Joint Task Force 8, Operation Dominic, the last atmospheric nuclear testing program the US conducted at Johnson Island. I've seen 3 bombs exploded and one missile destroyed in flight before the weapon was armed.

In 1965 I eloped to Reno, NV with Kay Swartley. We have one son and two daughters, and six grandchildren.

I joined Trans World Airlines in August, 1966 and spent 34 years working at the greatest job in the world; well let's qualify that, it's the greatest job in the world if you like to travel and see the world. In 2000 I retired and now I wonder how I ever found the time to go to work.

My hobbies are, traveling to exotic and unusual places, reading, genealogy, wine tasting, and gourmet food, (which explains the extra pounds I carry around) ballroom dancing, history, yoga, and tai chi.

Oh, I forgot, growing up I had horses and played cowboys and Indians in a four hundred acre pasture.

I got my first rifle at age 10 and first shotgun at 11. It wasn't unusual for kids to go hunting or fishing before or after school. Almost all pickup trucks had a gun rack in them and nobody locked their cars.



As told to Jim Callahan

Bob Jones is a Brooklyn native. He attended Pratt Institute, Columbia University and Cornell University. As a licensed professional engineer, his career was geographically clustered on the east coast, but the projects throughout his career truly had international impact.

After being discharged from the US Army, he worked for the Ford Instrument Company and was involved with electro-mechanical systems, and the Redstone & Jupiter Missiles. The majority of his career was with Perkin Elmer. He retired from Perkin Elmer in 1985 with his last assignment as Chief Engineer, Hubble Space Telescope. Bob then went into independent consulting. While at Perkin Elmer, Bob worked on telescopes, optical alignment systems and aerial reconnaissance systems.

Bob and his wife Steffi have lived in Ridgefield since 1957 and have one son.

Bob's other interests include: mountaineering, skiing, hiking and building model steam engines, gas engines & cannons. He is also a member of the Society of Industrial Archeology.

In Vino Veritas

by Col. Jack Daniels



The grape studied by the Wizards last month was Zinfandel and the results of

their judging may be found on the Wizards' page of the RMC website. Zinfandel is a powerful and sturdy red wine whose attributes have been tarnished due to the million upon millions of cases sold under labeling such as "blush", "pink" or "white". These weaker versions of the wine are quite adequate, light in color and with lesser body, however they tarnish the virtues of this adaptable grape. Adaptable - is the perfect word, since they may gravitate into many types of wine far beyond the ubiquitous watery, blush offering nomenclatures. Port wines made from Zin can go to a 20% alcohol rating; next are the so called "monster" Zins which go to 15% or 16% alcohol. Frequently hot on the palate these alcoholic offerings do not enhance the food with which they are served but do have a certain appeal due to high alcoholic content. A good match, well worth trying for hearty fare would be a Zin having 12% to 14% al-

cohol.

Mike Grgich, who won the 1976 Paris tasting with his Montelena Chardonnay and in 1981 won the Chardonnay World Sweepstakes with his first bottling from Grgich Hills Vineyards, started some interesting research on Zinfandel in 1948. He was working his first job in the USA and mentioned to Lee Stewart, who had hired him as winemaker and chemist for Souverain Cellars, that the Zinfandel grapes grown on Souverain's property were similar to Plavac Mali grapes in his native Croatia. Common wisdom at the time was of the opinion that Zinfandel was descended from the Italian grape Primitivo. The 1988 edition of the Schoonmaker encyclopedia states, "Primitivo ...is now thought to be identical to the Zinfandel grape of California." Fast forward to 2000, scientists from Croatia and California have concluded via DNA testing that the origin of Zinfandel was Crljenak Kastelanski, the father of Plavac Mali.

"Zinfandel is America's grape" states Matt Kramer and many wine drinkers second this assessment. The grape is not only a favorite of American wine drinkers, it is almost exclusively grown in the states. Requests for Zinfandel wine in

France, Italy, Chile or Australia might be met with a quizical look and some questions. In this country it has become a patriotic symbol and is featured as the ideal wine for celebrations. What could be more American than a BBQ and Zinfandel on the Fourth of July or Turkey and Zinfandel on Thanksgiving Day.

Once a batch of Zinfandel got stuck in the fermentation process and the sugar did not convert into alcohol, the winemakers at Sutter Home Winery decided to sell the slightly sweet, pinkish wine as White Zinfandel. They were soon selling millions of cases. White Zinfandel has been described as a starter wine; something to try when a novice is being weaned from soft drinks. No White Zinfandels equal the reds for taste and body but a group of journalists and wine writers recently tasted 12 white Zins from different producers and agreed that the Beringer's was the most flavorful and also the driest.

Check the Wizards' discussion of Zins on the RMC web site; try some of their choices. Experiment with a slightly more expensive wine such as the Chateau Souverain. Their Zins still impress critics and continue to win the gold medals.

RMC History

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SUBMITTED BY DICK GODBOUT

December meeting a huge success with more than 60 members attending.

President Jack Danielson presented a check to the "Y" Executive Director Jim Lepak in the amount of \$450.00, which they had already purchased a VCR and TV and it was demonstrated with the tapes of the "Y's" activities. Jim pointed out that the unit has many applications which include visual demonstrations of the ongoing Y programs, record of special events, also will show rented VCR movies at a considerable savings over renting filmed movies. (look where we are today 25 years later in visual entertainment)

Town Hall looking for part time workers for next four months checking compliance with orders to homeowners to separate the discharge from sump pumps and downspouts to sewer lines.

GROUPS

Bridge... to meet Jan 14 at Ernie Hewitt's house

Antiquers... at Stan Petersons House Jan 15

Bowlers... give Dick Siegert a call as he has assumed this activity from Ted Mayer who would rather work than bowl..

Ed Pierce V.P. gave details of the Luncheon at the Red Lion where and When..A tremendous success enjoyed by all. Potted poinsettias were presented to all the Ladies through the generosity of Ed Peirce and pinchbeck's Nursery.

News letters from the Ridgefield Community Center informing members and encouraging to become members \$25.00 Family \$15.00 Single

Phil Martin gave an excellent, and entertaining report on RV's (Recreational Vehicles) including campers, trailers, and motor homes. now you know who to see if interested in owning one.. HAPPY HOLIDAYS Dick McKirahan—EDITOR

(Oktoberfest, con't from page 1)

Now- The Fun, The Brats, The Keg!

Relaxing in The Sun



The Prizes

Um- Um Good



Serious Stuff



The Keg



The Brats



The Guys



More of



the Same



VNA Update

with

Santoro Wyman



reported by Jim Connelly

One of the most valued community organizations we have in Ridgefield is the VNA. It probably touches as many or more people's lives, at times, when they need it most, than many others.

Theresa Santoro, president of the VNA and Bill Wyman Chairman of the Board were our presenters. Theresa covered some important background information about the VNA, pointing out that its service embodies the phrase "neighbors caring for neighbors".

They, as an agency, have been doing this for 95 years and are proud to be the fourth oldest business in the community.

In 2009, she stated that, the VNA has 537 Home health patients, they will give over 4000 flu shots and have on their roles over 1500 generous citizens who help support the VNA through their generosity. The budget for the VNA is a whopping \$4,800,000. This

tells you something in raw dollars and cents about the depth and breath of their services to our community of 24,000 men women and children, old, young, infirm and healthy. Theresa mentioned in her talk that the Ridgefield VNA has the highest ranking patient satisfaction index of any Home Health Care Agency in the region.

So those were the numbers but the real story is in the VNA's mission to our community and that she emphasized is to

1. Home Health Care
2. Foster Community Based Wellness
3. Promote Public Health

She then provided details on these services; things such as Health Fairs, Health Screening Clinics, Vaccine Programs, Travel Clinics, Lifeline, Senior Care Management Programs, Home Rehabilitation Services just for starters. All of this and more provided by truly dedicated professionals and volunteers. The organization is proud to be ranked in the top 25% of national VNA's.

Bill Wyman, Chair of the Board of Directors spent his time bringing the audience up to date on a subject near and dear to their hearts, the aging

population of which we are an integral part of. Numbers again tell part of this story of the Aging of America.

In 2008, Americans 65 and older comprised about 12% of the population; it's predicted by 2030 that that number will nearly double to 20%.

A prime topic of conversation these days is health costs. The elderly consume a large percentage of these costs now, so you can imagine how these costs will escalate in the next plus twenty years as this population group increases.

This could result in serious problems for health care agencies in the future if they do not begin to plan for it now.

Bill assured us that our VNA has already begun to look at and evaluate what they are going to need for services in the coming years and how they will be able to coordinate the services necessary to service this population with the necessary personnel and funding. The first step was to find the Missing Link, as he described it, a coordinator that can look at what needs to be done, how to go about doing it and how to get the necessary funding to sustain it.

That person has been added to the staff and was introduced to our audience. The link has been found and is up and running and ready to face a very challenging and busy future.

A Session With John Frey

reported by Jim Connelly



A familiar face graced our podium on September 16, our neighbor, friend and State Representative, John Frey. John is serving his sixth term as our Town's chief advocate and was here to bring us up to date on the comings and goings at the State capitol. He characterized this session as grueling, made that way, chiefly because of the budget problems and the difficulty in getting the bipartisan support that seemed to be necessary to get us out of the financial mess the State finds itself in. Initially he gave us a brief overview of some of the 60 bills out of the 4000 bills proposed. It becomes obvious as he spoke that the legislative process can be long, tedious and often boring. He did discuss a few specific bills that dealt with Banking, Children and Families, Seniors, Bottle Bills, etc. etc. A list of all the bills passed in the session ending June 3, is

available on the Legislature's web site.

John obviously had the States budget on his mind and most of the audience I'm sure were aware of the print and face time that was given to this over the period of the session. He minced no words, "Connecticut is struggling".

We are losing businesses, we are losing jobs. Our unemployment rate is just under 9% lower than the nations but the highest it has been in decades. Personal bankruptcy is up 49% in the second quarter of 2009 from one year ago.

Of course all of this leads to a Tax revenue drop of over \$2,000,000,000 in two years. Fairfield County the home of many mega -buck executives accounts for 49% of the states revenue. So the major losses reside right in our back yard. Up until the last few years revenues have been keeping up with spending, high revenues but also high spending, however that has changed in the last few years, spending has continued to increase but revenues are dipping therefore the shortfall. Of course it seems logical to conclude the one way to solve this problem would be to at least reduce spending, but I guess nothing is that simple in the political arena. My words not Mr. Frey's.

John certainly emphasized to our audience that reducing spending is certainly part of his formula but that seems to be a problem with some of his fellow legislatures, again my words not John's. Hopefully we have some smart guys and gals in Hartford that can figure all of this out and I think John is one of them.

John did not vote for the budget and spoke against its tax issues. The mantra was reduce spending do not raise taxes. The governor let the budget stand without her signature.

We have not heard the last of this issue me thinks.

John closed his summary of legislative doings with some happenings on the local front. The Ballard Green Expansion is now going on and is nearly completed. A traffic light has been proposed on Route Seven at Ridgefield Crossings, it's badly needed. John says it has a 60-40 chance of happening. Route Seven expansions are progressing along nicely and he says it's on track to be completed in two years.

All in all not a very up- lifting assessment of what's happening in our state but hopefully with an up tick in the economy and some belt tightening and increased revenues we can ride out the storm and see some brighter days down the road. Hoppa Hoppa!!!

A Tale of Golf

by Jim 'Duffer' Connelly

This is a little tale inspired by Mike Troy's hole in one and a tale that I wrote for the News-letter in 1994.

I loved the game of golf and played regularly up until this year. I partnered with many guys in the Men's Club years ago and at one time had a Men's Club Golf group with Jack Kunze, Mike Boring, Jim Robertson, Dennis Duggan, Al Ryff, Jim Robertson and others. The men's group that played on Thursday was always fun and we had a foursome that traveled around the state playing on Tuesdays on some of the beautiful public courses that we have here in Connecticut. For various and sundry reason my golfing days have gradually slowed down to a gentle few days a year.

I hate to admit it but I never excelled at the game. I didn't take it up seriously until after I retired but I enjoyed playing, being out of doors, walking about a beautiful well manicured landscape and enjoying the company of good friends. I can still hear the cry of "FORE" from some of the duffers like myself. A duffer by the way has been defined in "The Duffers Dictionary", "As a golfer whose actual score on any given hole is ordinarily more than twice his reported

score." Now I don't think that's very nice but I'm just giving you their definition, for what it's worth.

However I have observed that many times this cry of 'FORE' could be a cry of agony because of an errant shot that is headed for the body of a fellow golfer.



A golfing friend of mine did describe this game of golf, "As the art of using a flawed swing, a poor stance and a weak grip to hit a small ball badly toward the wrong hole." We know this is something Mike Troy did not do.

I always thought that if you really enjoyed doing something you should be familiar with some of it's history.

Now golf historians claim that the game originated in Scotland and has been played since about 1100 A.D. It was actually developed from a Roman game that was played with a bent stick and leather covered ball stuffed with feathers. Some golfers still think that when they look at

the distance they hit, it feels as if the ball was still stuffed with feathers. I was probably one of these guys!

Many golfers also feel that golf gives them an opportunity to express a variety of artistic talents, for example verbally, by using four letter words such as fore, putt, flub, fade and many others not suitable for publication in the Ridgefield Men's Club Newsletter. I also thought it gave one an opportunity to express ones artistic talent physically by decorating the course with broken and bent clubs, articles of clothing, lost balls or an uncooperative partner.

Please excuse me Mike for going on and on about golf. You were the inspiration that caused it all.

Please do not get another hole in one!!!!

**Happy Columbus Day
October 12**

