



Root Beer Float

**Root Beer and
Checker Club**
Established 1944
January 2024

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Checker Club**

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Issue 207

Root Beer and Checker Club President's Message January, 2024

Happy New Year to my friends in the Root Beer and Checker Club!

I hope you and your families enjoyed the holidays and have recovered from all that fun. Are you ready to greet the new year? 2024 has leapt off the starting block, and I'm already falling behind on my New Years' resolutions. To paraphrase Jimmy Buffet (RIP): I'm 'Searching for my lost Pause Button'. Before you know it, we will be enjoying Valentine's Day, and hopefully a trip to some warm and sunny destination to escape the bleak mid-winter blues.

We enjoyed a very festive Root Beer and Checker Holiday Party at the Beacon Hill Country Club. In this issue of the Float, there are lots of great photos from that happy event.

During the first two weeks of January, Bahr's Landing restaurant has been closed for annual renovations. In the interim, we have enjoyed lunch meetings at Luigi's Famous Pizza in Little Silver, and we will meet there again Tuesday, January 16 & 19. Also, we have resumed Friday lunch meetings at Luigi's on the 1st and 3rd Fridays of each month. We will return to Bahr's Tuesday, January 23, and we will have a speaker: Dan Rozett, who will speak about the Israel-Hamas War.

Calling all theater lovers: on Sunday, March 17, we will be seeing the Pulitzer Prize-winning masterpiece 'Sunday in the Park with George', which is one of the most acclaimed musicals. It will be presented at the Axelrod Theater. Details can be found in this issue of the Float.

The attached photo shows my wife Nancy and I dancing at the Ohio Star Ball in 2019. Thanks to my new hip, which was installed last March, we are happy to be back out on the ballroom floor taking lessons. That's one of my New Year's resolutions: to get back in the swing of things. Speaking about swing – I still enjoy Frank Sinatra's great swinging songs and I try to play along with "Ol' Blue Eyes" on my sax. For Valentine's Day, I am trying to learn Sinatra's great hit song "All Or Nothing At All", arranged by Nelson Riddle. Did you know that Nelson Riddle, who arranged many of Sinatra's top hits, graduated from Rumson High School in 1938?

Our Treasurer Charlie Parr reported that emailing of Club Invoices has resumed. They are being emailed from Donna Topinka. I just received mine for December. If you did not get an invoice, you might need to check your email Spam folder. Please pay the amount shown in the bottom right corner: "Current + Past Due Balance" by personal check.

(cont. next page)



Club News

RB&CC President's Message January, 2024 (cont.)

Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the Root Beer and Checker members who generously contribute their time, talents, and energy to keep the Root Beer and Checker Club alive and kicking. Many thanks to our House Committee, led by Sal DiFede, who organized the Holiday Party at Beacon Hill Country Club that we enjoyed, and our Treasurer who paid for it.

Our club website says it all: **The Club feels that it has, and will continue to have, a membership that represents the outstanding business and professional people of the community. Let's have lunch sometime!** <https://rootbeerandcheckerclub.org/about-us>

Here's to a Happy New Year in 2024!

Rich Vodhanel, President of the Root Beer and Checker Club



December's Birthday Cake

Photo

Rich Vodhanel

From The Membership Committee

This month I'd like to welcome **Rob Mead** as the latest member to join our club.

Rob and Irene reside at 165 North Lovett Avenue in Little Siver. Rob is a retired Middle School science teacher, a medical marketing publisher and international banker, he is also the past president of the Hartley Corporation. In his spare time, he enjoys travel, skiing, ice hockey, tennis, golf, carpentry, dog trailing and international currency collecting.

On behalf of the executive officers of the Root Beer & Checker Club, I welcome Rob as a valued member and we look forward to seeing them at our meetings and social events.

Sal DiFede

Chairman, Membership Committee

**If you have outstanding club payments and did/do not receive a December invoice from Donna Topinka please advise Charlie Parr
cdparro3@msn.com**

Club News (cont.)

Our Birthdays This Month

Don Warren	2	Bill Bender	3	Al Thompson	3
Jim Powers	18	Tom Rizzo	29	Les Mathis	31

Note: Friday (cash) lunches now offered at Luigi's Famous Pizzeria on the **first and third** Fridays of each month

Remaining **January** luncheon dates are:

Luigi's - 1/16 and 1/19 - - - Bahr's - 1/23 and 1/30

Dan Rozett will speak to the RB&CC at our regular lunch at **Bahr's on Tuesday, January 23.**

Dan is the Director of Community Relations and Israel Engagement for the Jewish Federation in the Heart of New Jersey. He is a native of New Jersey who has served as a member of the Israel Defense Forces.

He will speak about the current situation in the war between Israel and Hamas/Hezbollah.



January's **Birthdays Cake** - Bahr's Tuesday, January 30

Axelrod's ***Sunday in the Park with George*** - Sunday **3/17** - Details page 4

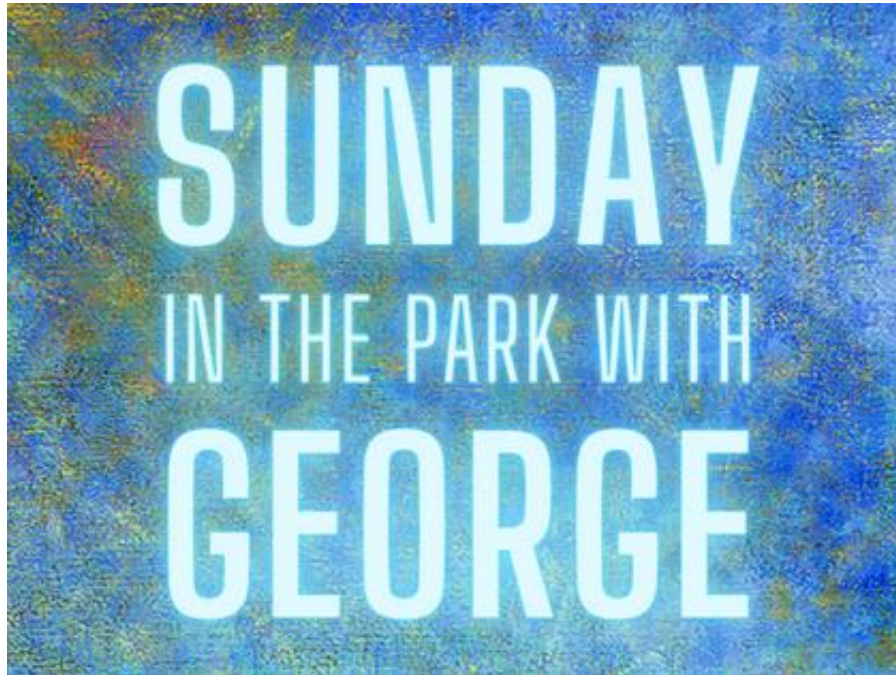
RB&CC visit to Saratoga Springs, NY - **July 31 thru August 1** - Details page 5

FYI - If anyone is having a problem with transportation to our lunches or special events, please let Jim Powers (seamuspowers@yahoo.com) know.

Note - Emails from Dona Topinka are your RB&CC invoices ! Please use **separate checks and note "Annual Dues, Party, etc."**

CARE COMMITTEE

Note, that if anyone should know of a fellow member being ill, incapacitated or unfortunately deceased, please let one of the Board members know so that as a club we can get in touch by phone call, get well/sympathy card, or hospital/nursing home visit.

Club News (cont.)**Theater News**

March 17, 2024 at 3 pm

20 tickets are still available

\$47 per ticket

The first musical in the Axelrod's **Sondheim Centennial Project** will be the Pulitzer Prize-winning masterpiece ***Sunday in the Park with George***, written with **James Lapine**, regarded as one of the most acclaimed musicals of all time. The 1984 musical, which originally starred Bernadette Peters and Mandy Patinkin, was inspired by the French pointillist painter Georges Seurat's painting A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte. The Broadway production was nominated for an astounding ten Tony Awards, including Best Musical.

If interested please contact Charlie Parr

cdparro3@msn.com

Club News (cont.)

RB&CC visits Saratoga Springs, NY in 2024 ***Bruce Rodman***

Hello everyone I've done some preliminary research about an RB&CC trip next summer to Saratoga Springs, NY & here are some thoughts.

Dates: Wednesday and Thursday nights, July 31 to August 1, 2024 (there is no racing on Mondays or Tuesdays, and weekends are challenging for dining and track reservations).

Accommodations: Several options, which would probably be left up to the individual members to make their own reservations. Several of the newer properties downtown are already sold out, but the Saratoga Hilton (downtown) is available for about \$400 per night. About 20 minutes south of Saratoga is the Hampton Inn of Clifton Park, NY for about \$215 per night. There are other options but probably not much else downtown.

Activities: Arrive **Wednesday** July 31 by noon, lunch downtown, which I could reserve. After lunch, a visit to the National Museum of Racing and Hall of Fame on Union Avenue, Saratoga Springs. Walking tour of downtown or catch the late races across the street. Dinner, which I would arrange.

Thursday: Arrive at Saratoga Racecourse around 7:30am for backstretch tour hosted by me as your tourguide, followed by breakfast on your own. 1PM -- attend the races at the oldest thoroughbred racetrack in the Americas, seating about \$50 per person to be arranged by me. Dinner, which I would arrange.

Friday: Depart

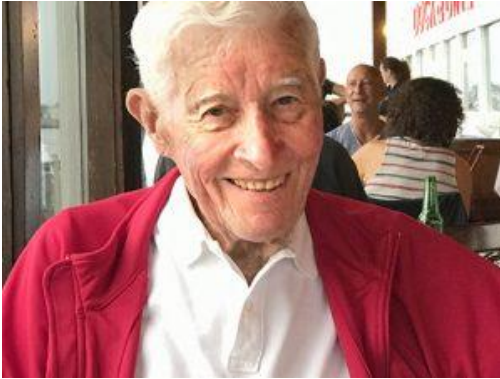
Arranging accommodations is the trickiest part -- my thinking is that each member would make his own reservations. I could try to get group rates and, if successful, communicate that info to interested members. The only thing that would be a "group" expense would be seating at the track, which I could front, and members reimburse me. Everyone could pay their own Museum fee, and the backstretch tour is free. Nonmembers are welcome, too.

Please let me know if you are interested. Thanks.

Bruce Rodman

732-759-5945

brodman8@gmail.com



Bruce Van Vliet

July 13, 1934 - Nov. 17, 2023

(Long time member of RB&CC)

Bruce Van Vliet of Vero Beach, Florida, passed away Nov. 17, 2023. The younger of two boys, Bruce was born July 13, 1934, in Orange. He grew up in West Orange, attending grammar and high school at Newark Academy. He continued his education at Lehigh University as a member of the ROTC. After graduating college, he joined the U.S. Army and spent several years reconstructing airfields in Japan and Korea, retiring as a lieutenant.

After the Army, Bruce branched out on his own, starting up companies with a focus on engineering. His work ranged from industrial clean rooms and soundproofing to cogeneration and industrial HVAC, and took him from the top of the World Trade Center to Puerto Rico. Bruce was also a frequent guest lecturer at the former Newark College of Engineering.

In his youth, his summers were spent at the Jersey Shore, sailing at Mantaloking Yacht Club or swimming in the ocean. He had a passion for sailing which continued throughout his entire life. Not one to sit still, he was an accomplished skier and eventually became a private pilot. Bruce was an active racquet sports player, loving squash, tennis and paddle tennis. In 1977, Bruce moved to Rumson from Short Hills to be near the ocean he loved, and there he continued his passion for sailing and playing racquet sports.

One fateful day – Sept. 9, 2012 – he suffered cardiac arrest while playing tennis. Thankfully, he was playing with three Marines and they knew exactly what to do until the police and EMS arrived. After three long and arduous days in the ICU, he awoke and began his road to recovery. Monmouth Medical Center called Bruce the Miracle Man, a title he gladly accepted. He was well known in the medical circles of Monmouth County for surviving this trauma to his heart. At the age of 78, not many people could have survived, but the skilled hands of his doctors gave him another 11 years of precious life.

Bruce was predeceased by his parents Virginia and Ira Merrill Van Vliet; his brother Neil Van Vliet; and his son-in-law Jack Gerber. He is survived by his adoring wife Diane, his biggest fan and advocate; his six children, Frank Semcer and Tina Gill Semcer of Chester, Paige Semcer McCann and David McCann of Rumson, Brian and Christine Semcer of Summit, Suzanne and Michael Taddeo of Syracuse, New York, Lyndsey Van Vliet of Chevy Chase, Maryland, and Heidi Barazza of Melrose, Massachusetts; his grandchildren, Trey, Carly and Kiera Semcer, Olivia Anagnostis, Connor and Ryan McCann, Jake, Mackenzie and Cooper Semcer, Sarah (Dan) Eager, Steven (Alicia) Taddeo, Amanda, Bradford (Lyndsey) and Clayton Gerber; his great-grandchild Micah Taddeo; and, of course, his best buddy, his dog Brody.

Bruce was a member of Navesink Country Club in Middletown; Monmouth Beach Bath and Tennis Club in Monmouth Beach; and Orchid Island Golf and Beach Club in Vero Beach. He was also a parishioner of Holy Cross Church in Rumson and of Holy Cross Church in Vero Beach.

A memorial service took place at 11 a.m. Dec. 29 at The Church of the Nativity, 180 Ridge Road, Fair Haven. In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to either the Humane Society of Vero Beach, 6230 77th St., Vero Beach, FL 32967 (hsvb.org) or Tunnel to Towers Foundation (t2t.org).

Memories and condolences may be shared at johnedayfuneralhome.com.

Holiday Party—December 13th



Holiday Party (Cont.)



Holiday Party (cont.)



A Presentation by General George Washington – 12/19/23 by Sam Davis, President of the Morrisville, PA Historical Society

While the Continental Congress was meeting in Princeton, Rockingham, NJ, a home first known as the Berrien Mansion, served as General George Washington's final Revolutionary War headquarters for over two and one-half months in 1783. On October 31, 1783, Washington and Congress received the long-awaited news that the final version of the Treaty of Paris officially ending the war had been signed and the thirteen colonies were indeed independent of Great Britain. Following the reading at Nassau Hall one of his officers said to him, "General, you look tired." He answered

So, you're right. I am. I'm tired and I don't feel well whatsoever. So, we walked into the house. And I looked at myself in the mirror, and I thought about what my officer said, and he was right. I did not look well.

Then I started to think back. When I first started, The revolution in 1775. I was a very handsome man. Very strong. Then things happened. The things that happened during those times took life out of my body. And it took a toll on me. And the toll was seeing my men for those eight years starving. Many of my men as you know, at Valley Forge, many were without shoes. They were starving at times. They were starving so badly that they would eat their dogs. And then they would eat the bark off the trees.

And I saw this. And it took life out of me. It was very, very horrible for me to see this. To see my brave men fighting for freedom and liberty and then suffering as they did. All I could do was write to congress to ask for food, supplies, and clothing. Many of my men were almost bare. And then the winter wind came, and they were freezing. And they were putting up tents. And pots. And the stench. So many of my men did not take a bath for weeks. They were suffering. And now they were asked to fight.

I remember when we crossed the Delaware River and were walking to the town of Trenton. And at that time, there was a nor'easter bearing down on us. And the sleet and the snow and the cold. It was horrible. And so many of my men did not have any shoes. They would wrap rags around their feet. To protect them from the ice. But so many times the ice would pierce through those rags and into my men's feet. And they were dropping blood on the ground so much so that I saw this as they went. They were dropping blood, patriots' blood, that time can never wash away. So, I continued to write to congress for help. And it always fell on deaf ears. (cont.)



A Presentation by General George Washington – 12/19/23 by Sam Davis, President of the Morrisville, PA Historical Society (cont.)

But then, it goes on. In the battles of Trenton and Princeton my men would be out in the fields, fighting the Hessians and the British and many were left dead on the field. At the end of the battle, we had to move quickly because the enemy would be right on our tails, so we had to leave the field. And my men would still be there. Laying there, dead without a proper burial. And what would happen to them? Well, the vultures and the wolves would tear at them. Years later the bones would still be there on the ground.

They would never receive a proper burial or be identified later by wives and children. What happened to my father? What happened to my husband? What happened to my son? Never to come home. Never to return. And all. The way through the lives of the mothers. Children. The wives. They would never know whatever happened. Even to this day. So many of the men. The Revolutionary War was like no other. No communication. No identification. Nothing. My brave men who won the Revolutionary War. Those men. Need to be remembered. Forever.

We in this time don't understand what they went through. The torturous times. The winter of 1780 was the worst winter on record. The snow was as high as the roofs. My men. Gave it all. They gave it all. They suffered. They sacrificed and then they died. I'm sorry to leave you with those words. But these are the words that we all should remember. We have the glory of successfully winning the revolution. What exactly did the men go through? That is what we really need to remember. We need to remember in our souls, not only for the men, but also for the women. I will always say without the women of the revolution, we would have been in trouble. I truly believe that the women were the backbone of the revolutionary War. (cont.)



Photos by
Paul Hester
&
Lynne and
Bill Tice



A Presentation by General George Washington – 12/19/23 by Sam Davis, President of the Morrisville, PA Historical Society

General Washington (Sam Davis) then said he would present a book on The Revolutionary War Trail to the person who asks the best question, and there were many.

How old was General Washington when he passed away? I was 67 years old. Born February 1762, I died December 14th, 1799, right before the next century which I missed by a few days. After working on the plantation (Mount Vernon) in the rain I came down with a very bad strep like ailment called Quinsy. My doctors bled me as was common at that time. My last request was a kiss from my wife Martha.

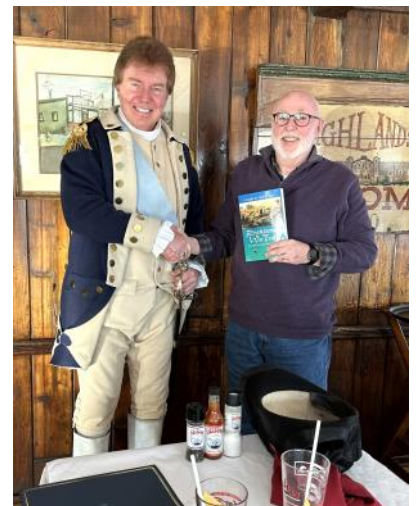
Was the American victory (Sept/Oct 1777) at the Battle of Saratoga a turning point in the Revolutionary War? Great question! Who asked that? I say it was it was the “*tipping*” point because France finally came to the realization that we might have the ability to win and decided to support our cause. The “*turning*” point of the American Revolution was the crossing of the Delaware into New Jersey for the Battle of Trenton, the second Battle of Trenton (a.k.a. the Battle of Assunpink Creek), and the Battle of Princeton.

“It may be doubted whether so small a number of men ever employed so short, a space of time with greater and more lasting results upon the history of the world” (Travillion, a British Historian). At the end of the Battle of Yorktown, Cornwallis surrendered. And when he surrendered, we had a ceremonial dinner as was customary. We had a long table with our foreign generals seated around me and the British General Cornwallis at the other end. We toasted each other and when it was General Cornwallis's turn to make a toast to me, he stood up with his glass held high in the air and said: *“When the illustrious part of your excellency is born on the long and arduous contest as a matter of history, fame will gather your brightest laurels from the banks of the Delaware River.”* Cornwallis knew that the crossing of the Delaware River and the three battles that followed was the turning point of the American Revolution. If it wasn't for those 10 days would there have been anything else? It would have been over.

General Washington also answered questions on the size of his army/militias, their enlistments, troubles with his generals, and other battles such as White Plains, Camden, and the escape from Brooklyn into Manhattan and ultimately over to NY/NJ/PA.

Thank you, General Washington (Sam), for taking the time from your busy schedule to give a presentation to our group! Entertaining any public office aspirations?

PS: General Washington presented RB&CC member Gene Ritchie with the book *Revolutionary War Trail* by Mark Di Lommo for asking the Battle of Saratoga question. Bahr's owner and staff had pictures taken with GW



Holiday Photos

Paul and Marge Baeri

Marge and I took a quick trip across the Verrazano a few weeks ago to see the spectacular light show in Dyker Heights Brooklyn.. it's a 15 square block neighborhood with the most spectacular light display we've ever seen ... there was an article in the WSJ this weekend that stated that some homeowners spend as much as \$15,000 to have their houses professionally decorated (thank you Bob Kelly for pointed that out). I've included a few pics but seeing it in person was a once in a lifetime thrill.



Holiday Photos (cont.)

Paul and Marge Baeri



Holiday Photos

Guy and Carolyn Albanese

Carolyn and I, along with our three kids and their spouses and 6 grandchildren from 6-weeks to 6-years



Holiday Photos

Al and Robin Zager

Here are two photos. One is Robin and me with our friend, Mary Beth, after she performed in the "Nutcracker" at Montclair State University with her daughter and granddaughter being in the cast as well. The other is Robin at the Howth Yacht Club outside of Dublin, Ireland, pointing to the Atlantic Highlands Yacht Club pennant hanging there.



Holiday Photos

Marty and Pat Torbert

... and family in St Thomas for Christmas.



Marty Torbert's 6th Fezziwhig Album!

This is my 6th album. It will be released on January 8th titled "FEZZIWHIG VI". All songs are original as were the first 5 albums. It will be available on Spotify, Apple Music, You Tube Music, Amazon Music, Deezer, I-Tunes and all of the 156 streaming services worldwide.

Here's a link to "Desperately Cute" ;
one of the songs on the album.



Holiday Photos

The Paul and Alli Hester Family



Holiday Photos

The Paul and Alli Hester Family (cont.)



Holiday Photos

Rich and Nancy Vodhanel

Three from the Holiday Party and one of the Biker Men at Luigi's on 1-2-24



Holiday Party Photos

Lynne Tice



Holiday Photos

Bill & Lynne Tice

Connecticut Christmas Eve
and a recent show at Count Basie (Mark Tremonti Sings Sinatra)



Holiday Photos

Bill & Lynne Tice, our son Bill, and Jim & Cheryl Powers

We attended a train show at InfoAge in Wall Township in December. Of course they also had all the other museums and we even got on TV.



Business Bulletin Board



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Songs of Martin Torbert

Recorded by the artist "Fezziwhig" available on the Web at:
Spotify/Apple Music/iTunes/YouTube/Amazon Music/Deezer/ReverbNation/Etc.

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*We all long for
smooth sailing.*

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**Hats ! We've got Hats !
Thanks to Terry Flynn
for making this happen !**

**\$22 each billed through
monthly invoices.**



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Cartoon of the Month !

