



# Root Beer Float

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

## IN THIS ISSUE

Birthdays  
Club/Other News  
Event Previews  
Phoenix Productions  
Floats to the Top  
Member News  
Business Bulletin Bd.  
Cartoon of the Month

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*A publication of the*

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Checker Club**

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### Editors

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Paul Hester

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**Issue 209**

## Root Beer and Checker Club President's Message March, 2024



The Ides of March are approaching. Watch out, especially if your name is Julius. Spring is almost here, but you know about March – in like a Lion and out like a lamb. I still have my snow shovel ready.

March– that means: Daylight Savings Time, St. Patrick's Day, and Opening Day – play ball!. One of my favorites is Pie Day on March 14, since 3.14 are the first three digits in the famous constant Pi. Some people are getting ready to travel to Texas for the next great Eclipse on April 8. And of course we are enjoying our Root Beer and Checker lunches - every Tuesday at Bahrs' and on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Fridays of the month at Luigi's in Little Silver.

Some upcoming events for the Root Beer and Checker Club:

March 17, musical 'Sunday in the Park with George', at the Axelrod Theater. There are still a few tickets left if you would like to see this highly acclaimed musical by Sondheim. For more info, please refer to the article in this issue of the Float.

March 19, lunch speaker: yours truly. I will give talk on how Optical Fibers are made.

Spring Cocktail party in mid-May: arrangements are in progress. Also, a fall Cocktail party is being arranged for mid-September. Stay tuned.

Speaking of Eclipses, my wife Nancy and I drove to Tennessee to see the great 2017 Eclipse, see my article below. I enjoyed looking at our photos and picking out a few to share. The first photo of the Johnny Cash museum in Nashville shows some lyrics from his song: *As Long as The Grass Shall Grow*— it concerns the controversial loss of the indigenous Seneca nation land in Pennsylvania due to the construction of the Kinzua Dam in the early 1960s. The Seneca land treaty, authorized by George Washington, was broken by the government using eminent domain to build the dam to protect Pittsburg from flooding. The Senecas had to relocate to upstate NY. I did not know about this until we visited Nashville to see the eclipse. You learn something new every day, hopefully. (cont.)

## Club News

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

Finally, I would like to thank the many club volunteers keep everything running smoothly for the Root Beer and Checker Club.

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>

Rich Vodhanel, President of the Root Beer and Checker Club



**February's  
Birthday Cake**  
Photo - Jim Powers

#### Frank is still MIA!

Not Frank Haftl, but our Root Beer and Checker Club mascot and Looney Tunes tweetie bird 'Frank'.

This photo shows Frank Haftl proudly displaying Looney Frank.

In honor of Frank Haftl's legendary jokes (which are funnier in German!), Looney Frank is the prize awarded for a week to a club member who tells a great joke during lunch. Thanks for Al Zager who instituted this time honored tradition for our club. But unfortunately Looney Frank is now MIA. It would be appreciated, with no questions asked, if someone would return Looney Frank.



### From The Membership Committee

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

Steve, as he likes to be called, and his wife Laurie hail from Middletown. Steve is a retired attorney who is a member of the Tower Hill Church.

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

*Sal Di'Fede*

Chairman, Membership Committee

**If you have outstanding club payments and did/do not receive a invoice from  
Donna Topinka please advise Charlie Parr  
[cdparro3@msn.com](mailto:cdparro3@msn.com)**

## *Club News (cont.)*

### **Our Birthdays This Month**

Steve Bassett	5	Sam Chevalier	9	Charlie Parr	12
Dave Greene	23	John McGlone	23		

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

**Speaker** - Rich Vodhanel - Making fiber optical cables - Tuesday **3/19**

March's **Birthdays Cake** - Bahr's - Tuesday **3/19**

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

Spring Cocktail Party - AHYC - Thursday **5/23**  
60 attendees max - Details to follow

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

**Phoenix Productions - Count Basie** - Details on pages 6 & 7

**Possible multiple speakers also in the works** - Details to follow.

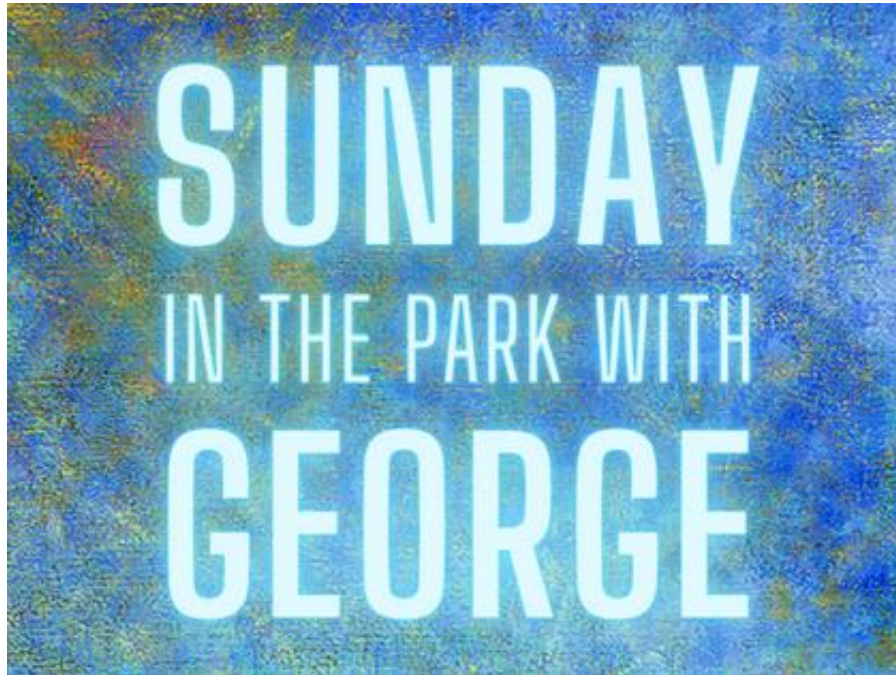
**Possible visit to the Battleship New Jersey.**  
Guided tours are every day, starting at 12 noon, \$35 for seniors. Details to follow.  
If interested please contact Bill Tice - wrt2013@verizon.net

**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**

***Six 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

***Club News (cont.)*****Phoenix Productions 2024-2025 Season Shows:**

**It is time to renew the RB&C tickets for Phoenix Productions shows:**

**Cost for 3 Shows: \$107.10 per ticket**

**NOTE: If we can obtain another senior discount a credit will be issued. Of course, that is TBD! If we get a discount a credit will be applied to your RB&C account.**

**Shows & Dates:****West Side Story - Sunday July 28, 2024, at 2:00 PM**

Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet is transported to modern-day New York City as two young, idealistic lovers find themselves caught between warring street gangs, the "American" Jets and the Puerto Rican Sharks. Their struggle to survive in a world of hate, violence and prejudice is one of the most innovative, heart-wrenching and relevant musical dramas of our time.

**The Color Purple: The Musical – Sunday, November 17, 2024, at 2:00 PM**

An unforgettable story of enduring love and triumph over adversity, The Color Purple is a landmark musical from the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel by Alice Walker. This stirring family chronicle follows the inspirational Celie, a downtrodden young woman whose personal awakening over the course of 40 years forms the arc of this epic story. With a joyous score featuring jazz, ragtime, gospel, African music and blues, THE COLOR PURPLE is a story of hope, a testament to the healing power of love, and a celebration of life. *(cont.)*

***Club News (cont.)*****Kinky Boots – Sunday, May 4, 2025, at 2:00 PM**

*Kinky Boots* is the big-hearted musical extravaganza featuring a joyous, Tony-winning score by pop icon Cyndi Lauper, and a hilarious, uplifting book by four-time Tony winner, Harvey Fierstein. Charlie Price has reluctantly inherited his father's shoe factory, which is on the verge of bankruptcy. Trying to live up to his father's legacy and save his family business, Charlie finds inspiration in the form of Lola, a fabulous entertainer in need of some sturdy stilettos. As they work to turn the factory around, this unlikely pair find that they have more in common than they realized... and discover that when you change your mind, you can change your whole world.

**The deadline for letting me know & send in your check is 4/5/2024. This will allow us to get the best seats.**

**NOTE: Please send SEPARATE CHECK noted Phoenix Shows. Do NOT include any other funds with the check. This makes record keeping easier.**

**If any questions, contact Ed Fenton at [efentonjr@gmail.com](mailto:efentonjr@gmail.com)**

## *It FLOATS to the Top (Paul Hester)*

Welcome to the inaugural issue of this new section. Here we'll look at one member of our great Club and highlight who they are and what they've done in life and for our group. This section will appear at least quarterly. With that in mind, let's see who FLOATS to the Top this month.

As I thought about this new section one individual immediately popped into mind, Lewis Anderson. It's only appropriate that the man who brought the Float back to life be its first recipient of this monthly recognition.



Lew was born in April 1938 in Sharpsville, PA, a small town in Western PA, near Youngstown Ohio. He graduated Penn State with a degree in Electrical Engineering in 1960, receiving a Naval ROTC commission.

Lew served in the U.S. Navy from 1960-1963. He was an Engineer Officer and served on the USS Brister (DE-327), an Edsall-class destroyer escort recon in the South Pacific.



In addition to his Naval Service, Lew attended graduate school at MIT and Ohio State University. He worked for Bell Labs for over



thirty years from 1965 - 1999, mostly in Local Telephone Switching. One of his major projects was the No 5 ESS, a Local Telephone Switch. Additionally, he managed software development and software architecture.

Lew moved to New Jersey in 1991 and “retired” in 1999. I put that in quotes because when you do as much as Lew does, you can hardly call yourself retired. He served as a Trustee at Brookdale Community College from 1999 - 2012. He joined the Root Beer and Checker Club in Dec 2004, sponsored by Dave Smith. He served as a RBCC Board of Trustees from 2006-2009 and later as President from 2008 - 2009. In 2005 Lew started the West Point Football Game trips on Sea Streak at the request of Richard Huff, President, leading about 18 trips since. He has been a member of Sailing Clubs since 1963 and sailed a Flying Scot.



## *It FLOATS to the Top (Paul Hester) cont.*

As mentioned earlier, Lew started/restarted the Root Beer Float sometime around 2006 at request of Ralph Wyndrum, President. He served as its Editor for the next 10 years. He spearheaded the movement of lunches from Knights of Columbus to Nauvoo Grill Club in Dec 2008 and started and continued to maintain the Root Beer Club Web Site. He spoke about Bitcoin (with Stuart Van Winkle) in April 2014.



Lew spends his spare time volunteering at Riverview Medical Center. And of course we're lucky to get some of that spare time enjoying his company at our weekly lunches.

Lew is a 2011 recipient of the coveted Eight Ball Award.

His hobbies include: Antique Cars, Sports Cars ("Drivers Education"), Wood Working, Ham Radio and Bike Riding.

Lew is married to Joyce Vickerman since 1961. He has one son and 2 grandchildren.



## Lunch at Bahrs - Paul Hester





## 2017 Great Eclipse expedition to Nashville, TN Rich and Nancy Vodhanel.

The next great eclipse that crosses the USA from Texas to Maine is coming up soon, April 8, 2024. For the August 21, 2017 eclipse, Nancy and I drove out to Tennessee, to a spot near Nashville. The widely anticipated 2017 eclipse path of totality entered the USA at the Oregon Coast, crossed the entire USA, and exited to the Atlantic near Columbia, SC. Rather than flying all the way out to Idaho, we picked a spot we could drive to – hoping for good weather. We stayed in Cookeville, on the path of totality, just east of Nashville. The weather was great, sunny skies with no clouds! We made a week long ‘expedition’ for a 2 minute and 20 second total eclipse viewing experience, with some fun sightseeing along the way. These photos were taken during our 2017 eclipse expedition to Tennessee.

Nancy and I spent two days in Nashville and took in a show at the Grand Ole Opry. On the way out of town, we visited the Gaylord Opryland Resort and saw the high water mark from the disastrous flood of May, 2010. The stage of the Grand Oly Opry was also flooded then, and had to be rebuilt.

Our hotel in Cookeville allowed people to sit out on their lawn to watch the eclipse. We had special glasses that let you safely look at the crescent sun. During totality, the moon completely blocked the sun and it was safe to take off our glasses. The solar corona was bright and shimmering. The sky and everything around us was very dark, like after sunset. That was a magical once in a lifetime experience.

On the way home, we spent a day at Biltmore in Ashville, NC, then drove through the Great Smokey Mountains National Park, and even passed right by Dollywood. *(cont.)*

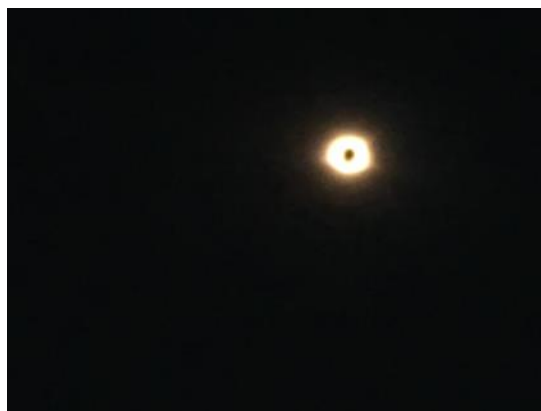


^ Getting Close

> iPhone Photo



^ Eclipse photo  
taken by  
Professionals



## 2017 Great Eclipse expedition to Nashville, TN Rich and Nancy Vodhanel (cont.)



< Who turned out the lights

> Solar spotter eclipse viewer



< Eclipse images were everywhere

> Yee-Haw!



< Rarely seen astrological curiosity

> But wait there' more!





## 2017 Great Eclipse expedition to Nashville, TN Rich and Nancy Vodhanel (cont.)



Elvis was here!



Gaylord Opryland Resort Nashville



Biltmore



Bachelorette posse in Nashville



Legends Mural with Taylor Swift



Gaylord's lazy river float



Nancy's eeclipse viewing glasses



Shredding my guitar



Gaylord's red line shows flood line May 2010



Johnny Cash Museum Nashville



Rich viewing his Clipse tee shirt



Eclipse viewing gathering Cookville TN



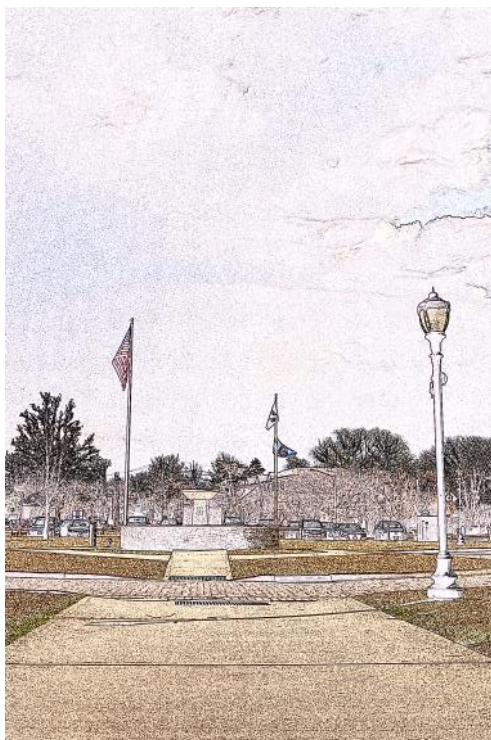
## *Scenes of Manasquan - Jim Powers*

Jim Powers, Dan Levine, and friend Mike Lanza spent a pleasant couple of hours strolling around Manasquan, NJ looking for scenes for a photo or two. Here are the results.





***Scenes of Manasquan (cont.) - Mike Lanza***



## The “Hills” of Malta - Jerry Mahood

This picture gives a taste of Malta’s “hills.” Note not mountains. Taken from a post WWI fort toward the Knights of Malta Palace (square building on top middle left). Other building is a later, but not defunct, hotel. White building in distance center is town of Melinda.

Hills are terraced for agriculture but none of them seem to be being used now. Series of “hills” to the left distance. Growing is at base of hills and they are watered. The island is hilly, very rocky, and very dry, not unlike the Greek islands, also on the Mediterranean, that I’ve seen before. *GM*





**Root, Root, Root for Providence - Ed Fenton**



## Moon, Mountain, and Basilica - Rich & Nancy Vodhanel

My wife Nancy found this amazing photo on the internet with info on how it was taken. It describes a photo capturing a rare alignment of the crescent moon setting behind a mountain with a basilica in the foreground. The photo was taken near Turin Italy last December. *RV*

### Photographer Captures Moon, Mountain, and Basilica in One Incredible Photo

Photographer Valerio Minato had to wait for six years to capture a stunning triple-alignment photo of the crescent Moon setting behind a mountain with a Basilica in the foreground.



Valerio Minato took the one-of-a-kind photo near Turin, Italy on December 15, 2023 after his five previous attempts to get the shot were thwarted by bad weather. He called it a “fulfillment of a dream.”

**Shooting the Photo:** Minato was perched in the small village of Castagneto Po; from there, the Basilica of Superga is roughly 35 miles and Monte Viso is a further 60 miles. To bring these elements together, Minato used a 500mm f/4 lens attached to a Canon R5 camera.

Describing it as a “magical moment”, Minato explains that for a few brief seconds — Monte Viso, the Basilica of Superga, and a crescent Moon gave a unique spectacle. The amazing photo was recently selected by NASA for its Photo of the Day; the space agency explains that although the setting Moon is captured in a crescent phase, the exposure still captures the entire Moon thanks to the aptly-named da Vinci glow; which is doubly-reflected Earthlight. Earthlight — also known as the Moon’s ashen glow — is indirect sunlight dimly illuminating the otherwise unilluminated portion of the Moon.



## RB&CC Bikers Brave the Cold Weather - Rich Vodhanel

The two sandy photos (pun intended) were taken by Al Zager in Nov., 2023  
on the Sandy Hook bike path

The IT WAS COLD photos show intrepid Root Beer Bikers braving very cold conditions two years ago, out on the Sandy Hook bike path. Shown are Al Zager, Dennis Swijter, Steve Draper, and Rich Vodhanel





## The Year of the Dragon - Bill & Lynne Tice

Thanks to our good friend Bing Chow, family & friends, we were invited to a Chinese “Year of the Dragon” party on February 10th at the Sang Kee Asian Bistro in Wynnewood, PA.





## Business Bulletin Board



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**Songs of Martin Torbert**

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

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smooth sailing.*

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

**\$22 each billed through  
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## Cartoon of the Month !

