



Root Beer Float

**Root Beer and
Checker Club**
Established 1944
May 2023

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Checker Club**

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Issue 199

President's Message

My fellow Checkers!

We certainly have a lot going on this month. Right around the corner is our last Count Basie show, Guys and Dolls, this Sunday. We follow that with our Spring Party this Wednesday at the Atlantic Highlands Yacht Club. This event is now sold out. It promises to be a great time, thanks to the efforts of Al Zager and Sal DiFede. Within the next two months we should have at least two very interesting guest speakers, the first being Nora DeVeau Rosen, the new artistic director of the Two River Theater, and the second will be Kim Guadagno, our former Monmouth County Sheriff and the first Lieutenant Governor of New Jersey. She will be talking to us about her current role as director of the Mercy Center in Asbury Park which provides a host of services to the community, including education for inner city children, a food kitchen, drug treatment, domestic violence counseling and a host of other family support issues. Dates are in the process of being set. When we have them, we will let you know via a email from Bill Tice. As always, these events are open to spouses and friends as well. As we expect that each of these events will be well attended, it is important to give us an RSVP as soon as possible so that we can alert Bahr's if we need more dining space.

As to other upcoming events, the Lakehurst Naval Air Station trip in September is drawing a lot of interest. If you have not done so, please let Jim Powers know of your interest so that your name can be added to quickly growing sign-up list. The same is true for his planning for a Blue Claws game in August. As to both, a more detailed description of each event should be available elsewhere in this Float.

On yet another happy note, you may have noticed that our club has been gradually expanding. Membership has been steadily growing. It has been great to see the effect these "younger men" have had on the life of our group. Especially at our lunches but also at our other events, notably our Sandy Hook cycling bunch. I don't think we should be resting on our laurels, though. If you know of someone who might be a good prospect for membership, please give them an invitation to one of our lunches. You should know that their attendance for that purpose is not charged to you or them. The Club will pay for it. Further in this regard, it seems odd that most of the newer members have been brought in by just a few other members. Notable here is the role that Ed Fenton has been playing by bringing in new people. I say notable because, otherwise, it doesn't appear that Ed has many friends!

(cont. on page 2)



Club News (cont.)

President's Message continued,

Another event you should be aware of is the "hat competition." Started by Al Zager who brought our distinguished logo to the Virgin Islands and Portland, Maine, we will be looking to see which of our members can bring the good news of Root Beer & Checker to the most exotic locations in the world. Carry it with you, wear it proudly, and "throw your hat in the ring."

As I conclude and devote more time to preparing my Farewell Address, I must say two things. The first is to say: Ed, about the no friends – it was a joke, OK? The second is to remind you all, once again: "You can never say that I didn't warn you!"

Terry

From The Membership Committee

This month we're welcoming **Albert J. Thompson**, aka Al, as a new member.

Al is a Senior Technology Control Associate who lives in Red Bank. In his spare time he enjoys golf, sailing, travel and reading.

On behalf of the executive officers of the Root Beer & Checker Club, I welcome Al and look forward to seeing him at our meetings and social events.

Sal DiFede



April's Birthday Cake
via Bill Tice

Day at the Races.

The **18th Day at the Races** is planned for Sunday, August 13th in the Terrace Restaurant at Monmouth Park.

The park opens at 11:30 pm with valet parking at the Club House entrance or self-parking near the main gate. The club will have a dedicated group of tables in the restaurant and lunch will be provided with buffet appetizers and ala carte entries. Entrance will be \$6 and lunch will be \$32.95, plus tax and tip.

The event is a long-standing tradition (interrupted for three years by Covid) that has been well attended in the past.

Also, a note from Bob Kelly:

Hard to believe but I just renewed my drivers license by mail and it was FREE.

Look for your renewal in the mail – you have to renew by mail on your computer – no walk in.

Seems like NJ has a surplus and Murphy could not wait to make the most of it.

Its chump change compared to my real estate taxes, but you don't look a gift horse in the mouth even if it has weird teeth.

Club News

Our Birthdays This Month

Rod Rodman	6	Bruce Eagleson	7	Sal DiFede	13
Jim Duncan	14	Steve Salimondo	19	Marty Torbert	22
Rich Vodhanel	27	Ed Plaza	29		

May's Birthdays Cake - Bahr's Tuesday 5/16

Spring Cocktail Party - May 10th - AHYC

1 Simon Lake Drive Atlantic Highlands, NJ

\$55 p/p - cash bar - Further details page 5

FYI - Fall Cocktail Party

Boat House at the Rumson Golf and Country Club

September 13th - \$68 p/p

Speakers in the works - Details to follow

Kim Guadagno - Sisters of Charity in Asbury Park

Nora DeVeau Rosen - Two River Theater

Events under consideration: 1) A visit to Lakehurst Naval Air Station, and 2) a BlueClaws baseball game in August. Please let Jim Powers know if interested.

seamuspowers@yahoo.com

See page 4

Also: A Day at the Races - August timeframe

If interested please let Bill Tice know. **wrt2013@verison.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 !

Special Note - With respect to everyone's health, anyone with COVID symptoms, anyone living with a person with COVID symptoms, or exposed to anyone who is still within the quarantine time-frame (5 days) should not attend the lunch.

Club News (cont.)

Note: as of 5/2 I have 14 interested in the Blue Claws game and 20 for Lakehurst. If you are interested please let me know. I will let you know when they are scheduled. Jim

Blue Claws Game

Once again we are planning to attend a Blue Claws game with the date to be determined. Please let me know if you are interested in attending. The game tickets are \$16 each. On Sundays the game is a matinee usually starting at 1:05 or 2:00 pm. Let me know if you would prefer an afternoon game. Evening games start at 7:00. You would be responsible for getting there on your own. I will give you tickets at the gate.

Lakehurst Naval Air Station

Tours of the hangers and their history are given on Wednesdays and the second and fourth Saturdays from 9:30am to 1:00pm. The tours start and end at the Cathedral of the Air off Base. The following must be provided for a security check: first name, middle name, last name, birth date, and state and driver's license number. If you don't have a driver's license then a state ID will do. Passports are not accepted. This information must be provided at least two weeks prior to the tour. Once again, I'm trying to get a sense of the number of participants. Please let me know if you are interested. You are responsible for getting there on your own—car pooling is suggested.

* * * **Monmouth Park - Day at the Races - August timeframe ?** * * *

Let us know if interested !

RB&CC Annual Membership dues and other payments

In order to clarify the process and maintain sound fiscal financial policy please note that the RB&CC Board of Directors has agreed to the following: Annual membership dues are \$120 due July 1st with invoices being emailed June 1st, payments for luncheons are due monthly, payments for special events such as Spring, Fall and Christmas/Holiday parties are due in advance of the dates involved.

The Board has agreed to monitor and send out reminders as needed.

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 with a phone call, get well/sympathy card, or visit to a hospital or

Club News (cont.)



The Root Beer and Checker Club

*Cordially invites you to attend our
Spring party at the*



ATLANTIC HIGHLANDS YACHT CLUB

40°25.05N 74°01.22W

The event will be held

May 10th from 6:00PM to 8:30PM

Upon arriving you will be welcomed with a complimentary glass of wine followed by passed hors d'oeuvres and a sumptuous buffet dinner followed by coffee and dessert. Live entertainment will be provided.

Due to limited capacity, the club can accommodate only 60 guests. Reservations must be received by May 1st and will be accepted on a first-come basis. If you plan on attending please email me at difedes@verizon.com and promptly mail a check for \$55 per person to the Root Beer & Checker Club, P.O. Box 6121, Fair Haven, NJ 07704. Be sure to annotate Spring Party in the comment section of the check.

Club News (cont.) —Report of the Nominating Committee

To Members of the Root Beer & Checker Club

The bylaws provide that **the President** appoint a 3 member Nominating Committee. The President appointed the following:

Martin Torbert, Chairman
Hunter Corbin, Member
Jeff Herring, Member

Charles Shay will be stepping down from the Board.

The outgoing president, **Terence Flynn**, shall appoint three members in good standing to serve on the Board for one year along with himself. The committee urges the retiring President to appoint the following to serve on the Board for one year: **Dr Timothy Sullivan, Charles Parr and James Weythman.**

Nominations of the Committee: There are two additional classes which will require additional Trustees to serve through 2024 and 2026. The Nominating Committee hereby nominates **James Powers, Salvatore Difede, and Richard Vodhanel** for a three-year term, **Albert Zager** for a two-year term and **Steven Draper** for a one-year term to replace Charles Shay. In addition, the committee recommends that **James Powers** be appointed to the position of Vice President.

Important Note to all Members: Nominations by petition (N/P) are also acceptable. Under the terms of our Bylaws any N/P must be in writing and accompanied by the endorsement of five other members who must be in good standing. All nominees must be in good standing. Any N/P must be submitted to the Secretary, Duncan Jay, on or before May 28, 2023. Upon receipt of any N/P's, the Secretary must post them by June 1, 2023. Thereafter, the Secretary must distribute ballots on or before June 10, 2023 and the President will arrange for a written ballot and the counting of the ballots cast by June 25, 2023 as further provided in the Bylaws. If there are no N/P's, then the members nominated by the Nominating Committee and the members appointed by the President shall take office at the **Annual meeting of the Board on (date TBD).**

If the Nominees of the Nominating Committee are elected and the President appoints the members recommended by the Nominating Committee, the next Board will be structured according to the by-laws and in the following manner:

Class of 2024-2025:

Terence Flynn - Outgoing President

Club News (cont.)



Roger J. Fitzsimmons

5/30/31 - 4/7/23

Roger J. Fitzsimmons, 91 of Little Silver, NJ passed away peacefully at his home on April 7th, 2023.

Roger graduated from Blessed Sacred Grammar School in East Orange NJ, Seton Hall, Preparatory School in South Orange, and the University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana in 1952. Following his graduation in 1952, Roger served as a pilot in the US Navy for four years.

In July of 1954 he married Patricia Riely, his college sweetheart and who he lovingly referred to as “my bride” and best friend their entire marriage.

After being honorably discharged from the Navy, Roger and Pat settled in Livingston, NJ where Roger started a career in banking working the Trust Division at the Howard Savings Bank in Newark, the Union County Trust Company in Elizabeth. In 1966, he moved on to Monmouth County National Bank in Red Bank, which is now Wells Fargo, where he was Senior Vice President. That is when he and his family settled in Little Silver. While working, he continued his bank education. He was a graduate of Northwestern Trust School and Stonier School of Banking at Rutgers University.

In 1982 he left banking and joined Merrill Lynch as an Account Executive in the Red Bank office until his retirement in 2000.

Roger was very active in many local groups. He was long time member of the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick of the Jersey Shore. He was past president of the Red Bank Rotary, the Root Beer and Checker Club, and the Notre Dame Club of the Jersey Shore. He also served on the board of MCOSS, the Red Bank YMCA, and the Local Chamber of Commerce.

In 1982 the Notre Dame Club of the Jersey Shore selected Roger as its “Notre Dame Person of the Year”. The award was presented to him by Father Hesburgh, who was President of Notre Dame at the time.

In his private life he devoted many years to coaching Little League, Pony League, and CYO Basketball.

(cont.)

Club News - Roger J. Fitzsimmons (cont.)

Roger was an active member at the Church of the Nativity since 1966. He served as a Eucharistic Minister, Reader, and on the Finance Committee for five different pastors. He also volunteered at the Riverview Hospital in Pastoral Care as a Eucharistic Minister for over 20 years. He was a long-time member of the Knights of Columbus receiving his Third Degree in Foley, Alabama in 1953 while in the Navy.

Roger was a past member of Monmouth Beach Club, Beacon Hill Country Club and most recently Rumson Country Club. He loved playing golf. His love for the game inspired many family members to learn as well as many trips around the US and UK.

Roger and Pat took great pride in raising their children and in later years helping with their grandchildren. His greatest love and accomplishment in life was his family. He reveled in being on the sideline cheering his children and grandchildren on at games, and all events they participated in. He was known for bringing his small digital camera with him to document each event. Family dinners and vacations were wonderful highlights. He loved organizing family reunions in the backyard with the Fitzsimmons and Riely clans.

To his friends and family, Roger was known for his quick wit and great jokes. You could tell one was coming when he would get a little twinkle in his eye and start elbowing the person next to him while winking. His ability to tell stories and jokes to the young and old of the family was a special talent. It often left you with his infectious laughter ringing in your ears and a new understanding of the phrase “when Irish eyes are smiling”.

While Roger could be easily found in any room due to his unique laughter and deep voice, his signature bowtie collection didn't hurt, especially when paired with his white bucks, his green handkerchief, and his Navy wings on his lapel. You could always find him on the center of a dance floor or shaking hands with old friends. Both of which often led to him clapping his hand together and exclaiming “GREAT LIFE!”.

Roger was predeceased by his parents James and Anne Fitzsimmons, his brothers James Fitzsimmons and Richard Fitzsimmons and his sister in-laws Patricia Fitzsimmons and Barbara Fitzsimmons.

Roger is survived by his wife, Patricia, who he was married to for 67 years, 3 children Michael, Mark, and Barbara Kirkpatrick (David) and his four grandchildren Colin, Erin, Daniel, and Xavier. He is also survived by his sister Nancy Fitzsimmons and her twin brother Joseph Fitzsimmons, his sister in-law Peggy Fitzsimmons, and many nieces, nephews, good friends, and wonderful neighbors.

Roger lived by three guiding principles of his life Faith, Family, and Notre Dame.

Family and friends attended a visitation on Friday, April 14th at the Thompson Memorial Home, 310 Broad St, Red Bank, NJ 07701. A Mass of Christian Burial was held on Saturday, April 15th at 9:30 AM at The Church of the Nativity, 180 Ridge Rd, Fair Haven NJ 07704. Interment will be private.

In lieu of flowers, please donate to a charity of your choice or commit small acts of kindness in his memory. Roger always explained to his children and grandchildren that small acts of kindness, such as holding the door open for someone or offering a stranger a smile, make large impacts on people's lives and often start a cascading effect. On multiple occasions he reminded them that you are never too busy to be kind.

The Fitzsimmons family is grateful for the nurses and aides from Meridian Home Health Care, Hospice and the numerous visits from his sister Nancy.

Chris Brenner - Rumson Hill - 4/18

Chris Brenner, introduced by Al Zager, is a local boy from Fair Haven who has become an award-winning film maker and has produced several documentaries of Monmouth County. He previously showed us and spoke about his film about the Red Bank Airport. This time Chris spoke about his documentary of Rumson Hill – the huge McCarter estate. Due to the crowded condition he was unable to show the film. [Click on this link and you will see the film.](#)

The story begins with Thomas McCarter, born into a wealthy family, well-educated attorney who at 29 years old was the Attorney General of the State of New Jersey. He saw the many individual trolley companies with their own generating plants and had the vision to buy them up and consolidate them into one company. Thomas had two brothers who bought land in Rumson and built large homes. Thomas also bought over 500 acres from the Kemp family and built a massive home on Rumson Hill near Sycamore Lane and Ridge Road. The bridge over Rumson Rd was part of the estate later torn down because of its low height and the nuisance created by graffiti of local youngsters.



The house, built in 1905 was a massive 23,000 square feet brick and copper clad building. The beautiful sycamore trees in Sycamore Lane in Rumson and Buttonwood Drive in Fair Haven were planted as part of the estate. Carter pond in Fair Haven was created to enhance the drive up to the estate. The drive was designed for automobiles which was unusual at that time. The house included an elevator and electric power, of course, plus a swimming pool and tennis courts etc. The main entrance was just behind Navou Grill and the gates are still there.

Thomas McCarter lived until 1955. Some years before his death he sold the house and moved to a smaller house on Fair Haven Road. Developers swarmed, filling the area with homes and shaping it pretty much as it is today. Chris's films can be found at <https://www.destinationspast.com/>.



Photos and text by Jim Powers

Chris Brenner - Rumson Hill - 4/18 (cont.)



Member Photos - Al Zager

"Our synagogue, Congregation B'nai Israel, recently celebrated the 75th Anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel with a community event that featured a food truck with Israeli treats, bouncy castles for the kids and a real, live ("nameless") dromedary camel. Al wore his RB&C hat to make sure the club was represented. Not in the photo but at the event was President Flynn, Puddy and other family members."

The other photo is of me during a hike on the Gould Trail, Mount Greylock in Western Massachusetts recently.

Both are a couple more photos showing the official RB&C hat in different locations.



Member Photos - Jim Powers



Member Photos - Marty Torbert - 3/31 (cont.)



^ Marty's walking crowd
is getting bigger
4-10-23

> RB&CC Bikers enjoying
another sumptuous feast
at Alice's Kitchen
in Sea Bright. NJ
4-13-23



Member Photos - Bill Tice - 4/9

Have you been to Manhattan, NYC lately? How about DUMBO? Well, this past Easter after a three year absence we finally were able to have a family gathering and visit both. In this case on a lovely Sunday afternoon, April 9th with both sons Chris and Bill and their families. Our granddaughters Kayla and Megan live and work in the city. Kayla near the South Street Seaport, and Megan in Brooklyn. We stopped for snacks at Kayla's, enjoyed the rooftop views, and then walked to the seaport water taxi's to cross over to the Brooklyn side to have lunch.

DUMBO isn't the one from Disney, it's an area under the Manhattan and Brooklyn Bridges called, you guessed it, "Down Under the Manhattan Bridge Overpass". Of course, everyone calls it "Down Under the Brooklyn Bridge".

This is a repurposed area described on the internet as "Trendy Dumbo's cobblestone streets and converted Brooklyn warehouse buildings are the backdrop for independent boutiques, high-end restaurants and trendy cafes. Near the waterfront, St. Ann's Warehouse, in a former tobacco factory, is the heart of a thriving performance and gallery scene. The north end of Brooklyn Bridge Park features historic Jane's Carousel as well as picturesque views of the Manhattan skyline. "

Following lunch we walked around the DUMBO area hoping to take a ride on Jane's Carousel but it wasn't open yet for the season. However, a tasty stop to the nearest ice cream parlor saved the day. Then it was the time for hugs and kisses and return to Kayla's. This time we UBER'ed. First time for the grandparents (us).

Our son Bill and wife Kerry did the driving honors (always nice to be chauffeured) and we headed to the West Side Highway to take the Holland Tunnel back home. But, the days excitement wasn't over as the tunnel was closed and we sat in a monster traffic jam. Finally, with Kerry's excellent instructions we diverted through the Battery Tunnel, then to the Verrazzano Bridge to Staten Island and home. Yea !



Member Photos - Bill Tice - 4/9 (cont.)



Member Photos - Bill Tice - 4/9 (cont.)



Member Photos - Bill Tice - 4/9 (cont.)



Business Bulletin Board



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*We all long for
smooth sailing.*



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Songs of Martin Torbert 

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

Google: **Fezziwhig**

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Hats ! We've got Hats !
Thanks to Terry Flynn
for making this happen !
\$22 each billed through
monthly invoices.

Cartoon
of the
Month !

