



# *The Hudson Valley Bullshit Society*

## Official Minutes of the 7<sup>th</sup> HVBS Meeting of 2011 on October 26 at the Hoffman House in Kingston, NY.

- 1- Starting in a light drizzle **PC Wiz**, accompanied by **Shadow**, drove down the Hudson into a dry, brighter clime. Finding **Ramrod** already present, **Shadow** blew the Camry's horn in greeting. No reply from the figure in the Acura caused some consternation. We found our Southern Stalwart in some pain from the operation, one year ago December 7, on his right leg. **Ramrod** stated that, although he had taken some Advil tablets, the reason he was present was the judicious use of his cruise control. Members entered the premises to the greetings of **Hostess Ginny Bradley** and **HVBS Official Waitress Lorayne**. Upon hearing of **Ramrod's** disability **Ginny** offered her sympathy and, upon **PC Wiz's** mention, she congratulated **Shadow** on his pending birthday.
- 2- **Lorayne** was promptly present to receive our beverage orders. **PC Wiz** opted for his usual house Cabernet while **Ramrod** tentatively ordered a Murphy's Red. **Shadow** asked for anything on draft, usually only Bud. Informed that they had Samuel Adams Octoberfest on draft, **Shadow** ordered a brew and **Ramrod** changed his order to the same. While we waited, **Ramrod** told us that he was told his doctor was "on leave". Figuring it was a vacation, he waited until a news item appeared in the newspaper detailing that his doctor was being investigated on seven malpractice charges. He now has to get an appointment with a new doctor. **Ramrod** has not played racquetball for 2 weeks because of the pain and has concluded that, if possible, people of our age should not go for major operations. He would not have had he known of the consequences.
- 3- Adult beverages in hand, **HVBS** members toasted to the memory of **Deliberator**, our Armed Forces and to **Shadow's** birthday. **Shadow** raised the issue of the "**Ramrod**" moniker. He related that **HVBS Associate Member Shirley** liked "**Geronimo**" and personally disliked the new appellation. **Ramrod** reviewed the reason (Osama bin Laden's code name) why he changed from **Geronimo**, the "handle" he had when involved in CB radio ("that person is ancient history"). **Lorayne** arrived to take our luncheon orders. First up was **PC Wiz** who had finally settled (after mulling over several tempting dishes on the special menu) for fish and chips. **Shadow** asked **Lorayne** what the fish variety was. When informed "haddock" (a premium fish, **PC Wiz** commented) **Shadow** ordered the same except for substituting "red sauce" for the usual tartar sauce. **Ramrod** opted for the French onion steak sandwich which **Lorayne** thought an excellent choice.
- 4- **Ramrod** mentioned that **Dan** is returning from a trip to China. He told his Dad that China is a "mess" - with modern coastal cities and high incomes while "beyond the coast" it is primitive with very poor living conditions and wages. **PC Wiz** brought up the Trains News Wire item about the Chinese stopping construction of their new high-speed lines because of concerns caused by a terrible accident on a recently opened line and quality issues. The article said it was possible 6 million workers might be laid off because of this! **Ramrod** then asked how our recent trip to Virginia had gone. **PC Wiz** interjected with some prints he had made of the journey. A family photo and two of **Christopher** in the shop and on the "Tide" light-rail line. **Shadow** gave **Ramrod** the details of the system in which **Christopher**, just back from duty in Iraq, got the "on the ground floor" opportunity - before the system was even in operation. Also two prints of **Randy** and **Bobbi's** new completed house - a frontal view and a spectacular view from the air.
- 5- Then **Shadow** offered the tell the story of our trip in detail. He mentioned that it started with a side-trip to Altoona PA and then down to the Skyline Drive in Virginia. All went well until the car's engine suddenly stopped with the message that "It is now safe to stop". Well, on the Interstate it really is not safe to stop in the driving lane. The electric motor moved us to the shoulder and partly up the hill we were on. After a few minutes the engine started up

perfectly and we continued to the rest stop over the hill. The car performing flawlessly, we continued to Altoona with no further problem. Later we went past the horseshoe curve, up the hills to Cresson to a train-watching spot. Next morning all went well until the I-295 bypass around Richmond VA when it quit again. Once more on I-64. After lunch in Williamsburg we arrived at Russell's home. On Monday (the hybrid specialist isn't available on weekends) the Fusion went to the local Ford dealer. The tech found a short in a transmission module for the transmission cooling system. The automobile performed perfectly on the long trek home so we are confident it has been repaired successfully.

- 6- Turning to sports, **Shadow** commented that, concerning the NBA strike (lockout), "another two weeks would be the best thing that could happen". The big-money basketball players evidently do not have much sympathy among **HVBS** members. **Ramrod** stated that he has stopped watching college football, which he enjoyed in previous years. He is offended by the outrageous influence that money now has in the competition. **PC Wiz** remarked, to member approval, that the students should be playing for their schools' glory. Next the NY Giants were castigated for losing (36-25) to the Seattle Seahawks, a "bad team".
- 7- In good news, **Ramrod** informed us that he had received his first enhanced STAR school tax adjustment. He told us that they now have a new form for applying - you give them your Social Security number and then do not have to apply every year, as in the past. In an agenda item, **Shadow** informed us of the cost of running his generator during Tropical Storm Irene. It was about \$20 for 33 hours of running. **PC Wiz** thought it quite reasonable considering not being in the dark with no heat as the alternative. **Ramrod** used his generator for five or six hours. He lost his cable TV during the storm although **Shadow** did not. **PC Wiz** mentioned that he had smelled gas on his street corner and had informed National Grid who sent a man to investigate. Shortly thereafter, the fire department arrived and blocked the intersection along with two police cars. Except for painted markings on the street the only result was **PC Wiz** lost his telephone land line connection. Reported to Verizon - it will take a week for a repair person to investigate!
- 8- While **Dan** was in China **Ramrod** received a surprise call in the morning from **Chako**. **Max** was sick with a high fever and, since she doesn't drive, needed a ride to the doctor from **Ramrod**. The next day the fever was down - as often happens with children. **Shadow** asked how the grandkids are doing. **Ramrod** reported that they are OK. **Kristi** had her 16<sup>th</sup> birthday and, shopping with friends, came home with very high heeled shoes. **Sharon** made her return them. **Ramrod** informed us that **Casey** is now in FaceBook. Ordering dessert, **PC Wiz** and **Ramrod** opted for pumpkin cheesecake while **Shadow** ordered a slice of custard pie. Later, he called **Ginny** over and facetiously asked her what bakery the pie came from; it was so good he would like to buy one. Smiling broadly, she told him it came from "**Ginny's Bakery**" on the premises - she baked it herself!
- 9- On everyone's mind, of course, is the Greek "crisis" with the stock market yo-yoing back and forth depending on whether a "fix" is in from the European leaders or has failed in talks. Members noted that the International banks holding Greek bonds had agreed to a 50% "haircut" - accepting a new value which accepts new lesser value bonds and lowers the total Greek debt. **Ramrod** told us that of his "Greek Mafia" friends, three are American born while five were foreign born. They are all intensely interested in the news, have acquaintances in the homeland and watch Greek affairs closely. On the issue of austerity measures, **Ramrod** told us of a retired Army officer who had a pension of 3000 Euros a month - a very nice income. It has now been reduced sharply to accommodate European demands. **PC Wiz** suggested that Greece, which had never met Germany and France's conditions (along with Italy and Spain), should never have joined the European Union. They should return to the drachma and control their own destiny.
- 10- In Presidential politics, **Shadow** and **PC Wiz** are impressed with Herman Cain who has a most impressive background and is a genuine conservative. **PC Wiz** stated his lack of enthusiasm for George Romney but all members said they would vote for any Republican candidate opposing President Obama. **Ramrod** thought Cain would most likely be considered for vice-president because of his lack of political experience. **Shadow** brought up a fascinating project his company is going to be involved in on the Thruway. A slab is going to be sawed and removed across the road under a bridge. It will be replaced with precision pre-cast sections, pinned to the existing roadway, with hollow tubes for FiOS cables to pass through. **Shadow** sketched the operation and **Ramrod** was concerned about securely sealing the joints. The date for our last **HVBS** meeting of the year was determined to be **Wednesday December 14, 2011**, weather permitting.

Thanks to **Ramrod** for his penetrating review and correction.

**HVBS** Official Scribe Laureate **PC Wiz**

November 9, 2011