



The Hudson Valley Bullshit Society

Official Minutes of the 8th HVBS Meeting of 2011 on December 28 at the Hoffman House in Kingston, NY.

- 1- On a windy, cloudy day, **Wingit** transported the Northern Group in his luxurious Toyota Highlander Hybrid to our rendezvous in Kingston. **Wingit** and **Shadow** discussed their experiences with their respective hybrids on the way to the **Hoffman House**. Arriving a bit early, members awaited **Ramrod** who appeared exactly on schedule at 11:25 AM. Upon entering the premises we were greeted by **Hostess Ginny Bradley** and, coming out of the dining room, **Host Pat Bradley**. **HVBS Official Hostess Lorayne** appeared to set a fourth place at the table and greeted us warmly.
- 2- Members placed their beverage orders - cabernet sauvignons for **PC Wiz** and **Shadow**, a Murphy's Red for **Ramrod** and a local Kingston-brewed Keegan's Mother's Milk Stout for **Wingit**. **Lorayne** checked for the Murphy's Red (not carried in the Winter months) and found they had some in stock. **HVBS** members toasted to Good Health, dear departed **Deliberator**, and the New Year. **Wingit** had brought a tote bag with memorabilia kept by **Deliberator**. These included items from his years at RPI, family pictures - some of whom can not be identified, and the graduation picture of **Deliberator's** 7th grade class. **Shadow** immediately found **Deliberator** and **Ramrod** in the photo and challenged **PC Wiz** to pick out the young elementary school **Ramrod**. He was in the back row, not too difficult to identify. Members especially enjoyed a risqué song about the rivalry between RPI and Union college. It was in pencil on yellowed paper with many stanzas.
- 3- **PC Wiz** showed a prints he had made of two pictures e-mailed by **Ramrod** of **Dan** and **Chako's** Christmas. Also a group photo with **Ramrod**, **Kay**, **Shirley** and **Shadow** at the Cappacino Italian-American Bistro in 2005, and one taken on a visit to **Ramrod's** abode in 2004 with **PC Wiz**, **Shadow** and **Deliberator** happily sitting around a table full of empty beer bottles. **Ramrod** informed us that he visited his son **Dan** and family Christmas Eve, stayed overnight and then everyone gathered at his daughter **Sharon's** home Christmas Day.
- 4- **Shadow** asked **Wingit** how the family was and he brought us up-to-date on **Mark** and **Ryan**. **Ryan** is doing well with his bowling - a 240 average. **Shadow** inquired when he might see him on local TV bowling and **Wingit** said he is trying for one of the shows. **Ryan** has graduated from SCCC with an associate degree in Hotel Management and is presently working on the night shift at the Belvedere Hotel (and a part-time job delivering medical supplies). When **Ryan** complained to **Wingit** about not being considered for a raise in pay (the hotel is owned by the Mallozzi family - not noted for generosity), **Wingit** advised him that, in his experience, he had to ask for a raise. **Shadow** concurred. **Mark**, 27, is still at Dunkin' Donuts and evidently doing well.
- 5- **Ramrod** raised the Agenda issue of **Shadow's** final retirement. He confirmed that he had indeed retired but that his boss **Lou** had insisted on **Shadow** keeping his Chrysler Sebring company car at least through January together with the company gas card. He agreed so **PC Wiz** did not pick him up at work as previously planned. **HVBS** members then toasted (one of many) **Shadow** on his retirement. **PC Wiz** disclosed that **Shadow** had recently bought a very good paper shredder and intended to begin his retirement by shredding a large accumulation of old records. Which led to a discussion of how long to keep records (especially in view of **Deliberator's** voluminous collection over the years). Although banks no longer return checks (**PC Wiz's** Key Bank has a statement serial number to print out copies), **Ramrod** advised keeping cancelled checks for five years. IRS recommends three years for income records and **Shadow** noted that he still has GE income records from his father, fascinating to us in the small dollar income figures because of the more valuable dollars of the time. **Wingit** informed us that he and his wife shred "everything".
- 6- **PC Wiz** asked **Ramrod** how his pain management had turned out. He said there was no difference yet but the results can take time and may require a second injection of cortisone. **Ramrod** described the procedure and told us that, on

examining the area of the spine for the injection the doctor had asked the nurse for "a longer needle". After this unsettling pronouncement, the operation continued successfully. **PC Wiz** told **Ramrod** that he was confident that the cortisone would be helpful - having been injected into his father's knee many years ago with success. **Shadow** informed us that he and **Associate Member Shirley** have changed their Medicare coverage to CDPHP on January 1. They are getting better coverage for less cost. **Wingit** said that CDPHP has a good plan and **PC Wiz** noted that a Consumers Union survey had them at the top for satisfaction. **Ramrod** is covered by the Empire Plan of Blue Cross. **Shadow** then told us that, at a recent party given by long-time friends and former neighbors **Bob** and **Linda**, **Randy** and **Bobbi** met **John Bennett**, the doctor who is the CEO of CDPHP!

- 7- **PC Wiz** mentioned that **Russell** and family in Virginia had sent a box of six world wines from Wine.com as a Christmas gift for he and **Shadow**. **Shadow** brought up a recent purchase at Exit 9 Wines and Liquors, his regular stop for wines, and their "points" system for extra savings. He was dismayed by the lady ahead of him with a large purchase and many points. So he asked how many his account had and was informed "87" - up a few with his purchase but so low that the woman behind him chuckled in sympathy. **Wingit**, just returned from a vacation in Maine, cited the fact that wines and liquors are much cheaper in Vermont and New Hampshire. Which led to **Shadow's** story of **Russ** and **Kris's** wedding when **Shadow** decided to give the bride and groom a bottle of Dom Perignon champagne. Being on a business trip he stopped to purchase it in a package store in New Hampshire. They didn't have it in stock but sent him to a store on his route that had it. The bottle (presently \$150 with free shipping) was priced \$25 less than New York price! **Wingit** mentioned a recent trip to the Fingerlakes region with beautiful scenery and many pleasant wine-tastings. He highly recommended the fingerlakes winery book which lists the many vintners in the area.
- 8- **Shadow** said that, on a recent visit to Virginia, while staying at the Peaks of Otter Lodge on the Blue Ridge Parkway, he and **PC Wiz** became acquainted with the Villa Appalachia winery on the Parkway specializing in Cabernet Franc grapes. Also, using the Virginia wine guide and map, they found a family operation in Fincastle, Virginia and had a pleasant wine-tasting and made a small purchase. **Shadow** then told us of **Randy's** new house with a special area in



the basement for a climate-controlled cooler for wine in the future. **Wingit** was remorseful that he had not provided a storage area under one side of his wrap-around porch when his house was built. Forty feet in length, now back-filled with soil, it would have made an ideal wine cellar. Turning to autos, **Shadow** told members about his former Dodge dealer, Scotia Motors, which lost their franchise in the Government takeover. Scotia sold more Dodge Vipers, Dodge's V-10 (0-60mph 3.6sec.) 2-seat sports car, than any dealer. **Shadow** informed us that according to **Ernie Latus**, his mechanic and now shop manager, Scotia's owner participated in a lottery and won the "final edition" last Viper off the assembly line of the original edition - worth \$185,000! (In the news: The 2012 Gen V Viper prototype

was shown to dealers by Fiat CEO Sergio Marchionne).

- 9- **Ramrod** told members that he was considering purchasing a new car and was interested in a new (Nissan) Infinity. Although his Acura has a modest 62,000 miles the car has its original brakes - quite a costly repair. **HVBS** members agreed that the Acura undoubtedly was eligible for replacement. **PC Wiz** noted that all the TV auto ads tout leasing new cars, which **Shadow** did. **Shadow** said he has had second thoughts about leasing and, now knowing the details more clearly, probably wouldn't do it again. **Shadow** summarized his reading of the book "Steve Jobs" by saying that Steve had "nothing good to say about anybody". Nevertheless, members credited Jobs with saving Apple by returning as CEO after his first firing and founding NeXT, a computer workstation company in 1985. Apple purchased NeXT in 1996 and much of OS X is based on it. Steve Jobs was a genius - but definitely not a nice guy!
- 10- In sports the topic of the moment was, of course, the pending last game of the season between the Giants and Cowboys. **Shadow** thought the Giants had a good chance since the team has all their regulars healthy, although he didn't like the chemistry of the team with so many malcontents. **Wingit** remarked on how the game has changed - throwing, not running. **Ramrod** mentioned that Victor Cruz led the team with 82 catches for 1536 yds. (season) and opined that Jason Pierre-Paul is the best defensive end in the league. If the Giants can pull off the win they will be the 2011 NFC East Champions! **Ramrod** exulted in the Giant win over the Jets (29-14) and their "fat-ass coach" Rex

Ryan. In the **HVBS** Giant season predictions **PC Wiz** is still in the chase with his 8-8 prophecy - if the Giants beat Dallas in the season's final regular game.

- 11- **Ramrod** informed us that he had his well system repaired. At our last meeting, he mentioned that he lost the prime during a power failure. The system was so difficult to prime that he had to have his plumber restore it. So he engaged to have the problem repaired but didn't know the exact location of the well. **Ramrod** told us the clever way it was found: The plumber ran a snake into the pipe and when it struck the elbow to turn down into the well it made a sound, locating the exact location to dig. He now has a new foot valve and the entire job cost under \$1000. Considering today's prices members thought it quite reasonable. **Ramrod** is now relieved to have a reliable water system again.
- 12- **Official Waitress Lorayne** arrived to take orders for final coffees and members opted for desserts. **Wingit** and **PC Wiz** went for their usual pumpkin cheesecakes, **Ramrod** for the rum cake with vanilla ice cream and **Shadow** asked for plain vanilla ice cream with chocolate fudge syrup. **Lorayne** informed him that they only had chocolate syrup, no fudge. **Ramrod** commented that he found recent TV commercials crude. He especially noted the Best Buy commercial where the woman kicks Santa off the roof since she can get all her gifts from Best Buy. **HVBS** members agreed and lamented the loss of local stores for the "big box" of today. **Wingit** remembered nostalgically his patronage of Berns Camera in downtown Schenectady where he had all his photo work done. It was possible to talk to people who actually were familiar with the products in their stock.
- 13- **Shadow** raised the issue of the tentative date for our first meeting of the New Year. **PC Wiz** had asked **Hostess Ginny** when the **Hoffman House** would be closed and was informed they have a different schedule than previous years. Closed from the middle of February to St. Patrick's Day on March 17, **HVBS** members agreed on **Wednesday February 1, 2012**, weather permitting, with a back-up date of February 8. The eighth and final meeting of 2011 was adjourned.

Thanks to **Ramrod** for his corrections and **Wingit** and **Shadow** for their reviews.

HVBS Official Scribe Laureate **PC Wiz**

January 7, 2012