

Ramrod



Shadow



PC Wiz



Surveyor



The Hudson Valley Bullshit Society

Official Minutes: 1st HVBS Meeting, March 18, 2015 at the Hoffman House in Kingston, NY.

1- PC Wiz, designated driver, picked up Shadow and we drove to the Northway Exit 9, South to the Thruway to enter at Exit 24. The Northern Terrific Trio was reduced to the Dynamic Duo by the absence of Surveyor – still enjoying his Florida ‘Southern retreat’. Early reports had the Southbound lane closed early in the morning by an accident involving a compressed gas tractor trailer slipping on ice. To Shadow’s suggestion, PC Wiz had checked the Thruway web site which showed the road open. On passing the 21B area we found the right lane closed with the truck in the ditch. Tow trucks were preparing to remove the wreck. The weather was clear but with strong wind gusts. Because of a doctor appointment for Ramrod, our meeting time was moved to 12:00 Noon. Upon arriving at 11:37 AM we found Ramrod’s platinum VW already parked in his usual handicapped spot.

2- Upon entering, we were greeted by the bartender, host Pat Bradley and the waitresses. We found Ramrod at our customary table chatting with HVBS Official Waitress Lorayne. Noting that Ramrod already had a hot cider and rum before him (his second, we later learned) Lorayne turned to Shadow and PC Wiz for their orders. Shadow opted for a Heineken while PC Wiz asked for a Malbec after perusing the wine list. Members toasted our first gathering, founding member Deliberator and our absent Surveyor. As noted in the agenda, there is now a confusion concerning our HVBS monikers. It seems that the recent Winter travails resulted in Ramrod acquiring the code names “Ice Man” or “Popsicle”. With Winter evidently waning, Ramrod decided to stay with his long-time manly “Ramrod”. Snowman, who in reality is “Shadow”, came out of the closet and is now the “Gladiator” (pending approval by the HVBS membership. Ramrod spoke on the issue of legitimacy – stating that our bylaws require a unanimous vote of attending members so that a capricious vote by a returning Surveyor could not overturn the new moniker. A vote was held and it was unanimous – Gladiator will replace the venerable “Shadow”.

3- Ramrod reported that Dan, who recently returned from China, had told him there was no Washington DC international airport available for him. PC Wiz and Gladiator brought up Dulles International which certainly does have international flights (Reagan – formerly Washington National – does not). Members concluded that there was some misunderstanding. Dan spoke of a division between two classes of Chinese, with the more modern group adopting the latest Western products and methods. But he found them lacking in originality and has concluded that the Chinese are not capable of innovative advances. PC Wiz cautioned that it sounded strikingly similar to Western views of the Japanese – early copiers but eventual innovators. Ramrod related that Sharon and the girls had visited him last Sunday. They had dinner at the Outback. Casey was concentrating on her smart-phone and Ramrod told her to put it down, which reminded the members of the e-mail Ramrod sent recently about Japanese behavior – especially the prohibition of smart-phones and tablets in restaurants. Ramrod told us of a study that found the phones are affecting the intelligence of children.

4- **Gladiator** asked **Ramrod** if the ‘cyber-bullying’ of **Casey** in the High School is still going on. **Ramrod** said **Sharon** considered a private school after this term but found it too expensive. She is also considering moving to a different school district, which may not solve the problem. **Gladiator** raised the question of ‘Common Core’, so prominent in the news with Governor Cuomo (and Mayor DeBlasio) pushing it. **Ramrod** told us that, since **Casey** is affected by it, **Sharon** investigated ‘Common Core’ requirements. **Sharon**, with a degree majoring in mathematics, found she could not understand how Common Core solved a simple math problem. **PC Wiz** mentioned he had seen a demonstration of the math on PBS and also found it baffling.

5- **Gladiator** informed us that he has two birthdays coming up in April. **HVBS Associate Member Shirley** will be 80 on April 15 and her friend (and fellow foundation member) Phyllis will be 90 on April 13. Weather permitting; their birthdays will be celebrated with a dinner at Saratoga Lakes’ Ripe Tomato. **Ramrod** said he was checking up on Amtrak for a trip on the Acela to visit Dan and family on May 7 in Annapolis. He found Amtrak is offering a discount from New York City but not from Stamford – which is much more convenient for him. The shocker is that going by the Northeast Regional Amtrak would cost him double! **Lorayne** took our orders for lunch: **Ramrod** selected a medium-well French onion steak sandwich, **PC Wiz** decided on the fish and chips. **Gladiator** asked if **Lorayne** could bring a smaller portion, like a half-sandwich, for him. She said she would see to it and **Gladiator** then ordered the French Dip.

6- **Ramrod** expressed his outrage concerning Federal Government excesses and waste. He said there are 125 billion dollars in improper payments in Social Security alone. He then told us a most shocking statistic: in the World, the entire global population, there are presently about 35 people 112 years of age. In the United States alone there are 6 ½ million active Social Security numbers with 112 year old people! **PC Wiz** stated his despair that we frequently hear of these problems but, it seems, nothing is ever done about them – promises from the politicians but no results!

7- Turning to sports **Ramrod** asked **Gladiator** how ‘the hottest team in the league’, the Rangers, leading in the Metropolitan Division, are doing. **Ramrod** referred to the returning Lundqvist which should strengthen their team. **Gladiator** said the 20 year-old “kid” Mackenzie Skapski was great against Buffalo and that Alain Vigneault is ‘a hell of a coach’. **Gladiator** then stepped up to make the prediction that the Rangers will win the Stanley Cup this year! **HVBS Official Waitress Lorayne** returned for possible dessert orders. **Gladiator** thanked her for the sandwich serving she had brought, it was ‘perfect’. **Gladiator** and **Ramrod** agreed to share an apple cobbler with vanilla ice cream and **PC Wiz** decided on just vanilla ice cream. **PC Wiz** picked up a free copy of the Wall Street Journal at the Burlington Vermont Air Terminal recently and was surprised by the price of the paper. He gave up the paper when they went from 75c to \$1.00; it is now \$3 an issue. In the news was the story of Apple’s Tim Cook offering Steve Jobs a liver transplant, which Jobs rejected. **Ramrod** and **Gladiator** were familiar with the fact that the reduced liver regrows in the donor. **Ramrod** mentioned that **Dan**, requiring a new laptop, is considering an Apple because they are the best quality. **Gladiator** agreed.

8- **Lorayne** dropped off the luncheon bill. Because of his recent birthday, **PC Wiz** received a pass with a free lunch – per **HVBS** bylaws. **Gladiator** did the tabulation and the tab was paid in cash, **Lorayne’s** favorite payment method. She later returned with a large smile and thanked **Ramrod** and **Gladiator** for the generous tip. The question of a date was debated and a tentative date, subject to consideration of **Surveyor’s** commitments, of **Wednesday April 22, 2015** was decided. The meeting was adjourned.

Thanks to **Ramrod** and **Gladiator** for their review of the preliminary minutes.

HVBS Official Scribe Laureate **PC Wiz**
April 14, 2015