

Ramrod



Gladiator



PC Wiz



Surveyor



The Hudson Valley Bullshit Society

Official Minutes: 1st HVBS Meeting, January 14, 2016 at the Hoffman House in Kingston, NY.

1- On a pleasant partly-cloudy mid-January morning **Gladiator**, who had previously picked up **Surveyor**, arrived at **PC Wiz's** house. Upon entering the premises **Gladiator** place a cell phone call to **Ramrod**. With no response to two tries, **Gladiator** turned to the land-line. Success! **Ramrod** was queried on having his cell phone turned on with a fully charged battery – he maintained he was prepared. Making good time in **Gladiator's** Fusion hybrid, we arrived early with **Ramrod** making his entrance a few minutes later. Members found his car doors locked as **PC Wiz's** cell phone rang. Without looking at the caller's name, **PC Wiz** handed the phone to **Gladiator**; **Ramrod** informed him that the call was proof that his cell phone was charged and operating. He then left his Passat and we entered the **Hoffman House**, now with the patio uncovered and abandoned.

2- Greeting **Pat Bradley** behind the bar, **PC Wiz** turned the corner into the dining area and found **HVBS Official Waitress Lorayne** – on a Thursday. As the members entered they also expressed surprise, believing Thursdays are her 'day off'. **Pat** had a nice fire going in the fireplace and **Gladiator** and **Ramrod** expressed an interest in being seated in front of the warmth. The table being only for two, we took our usual places on the corner table with **Lorayne** pointing out the heater outlet in the wall behind **Gladiator**. She then took our beverage orders: hot cider and rum with a cinnamon stick and slice of orange for **Ramrod**. **Gladiator** then ordered the same (strong) and **Surveyor** followed suit. **PC Wiz** opted for a red wine – a pinot noir.

3- **Gladiator** announced that he didn't want to hear any 'State of the Union', 'State of the State' or end of the year speeches. Members agreed. The drinks having arrived, **Gladiator** proposed the traditional toast to our founding member **Deliberator**. Everyone joined in and wished for a happy New Year and good health. **PC Wiz** chimed in with a happy birthday wish for **Surveyor** – **Ramrod** objected with the observation that his birthday had passed. **PC Wiz** pointed out that it was on December 26 and had not been officially noted with the **HVBS** commemorative free lunch. **Gladiator** then examined the 'Official Agenda' and started down the items suggested for discussion. On the first item, fuel prices, **Ramrod** said the lowest in his area is \$2.05 – much the same as in our area. **Gladiator** said that with oil at \$30 a barrel the price should be closer to \$1.00 – hinting that government is keeping it up in New York to keep gasoline tax receipts up. Member commented that prices certainly are very slow in going down but rises are quickly passed on.

4- Noting that GE has dropped all health plans for retirees, **PC Wiz** related his signing up for new Medicare supplements through a GE hired service 'OneExchange'. They handled the paperwork and **PC Wiz** is eligible for a \$1000 yearly compensation (for plan costs) through them. **Ramrod** told us his brother James had no idea why CDPHP dropped his coverage – which is **Gladiator's** plan – while others were not dropped. **Ramrod**, uncertain of the name, said he now is covered by the 'Get Well plan' (Wellcare Health Plan?).

5- **Lorayne**, having earlier dropped of menus, came for our lunch orders. **Ramrod** ordered a French Onion Steak sandwich, medium with **Gladiator** selected the Grilled Chicken Breast sandwich ‘with no jalapenos’. **Surveyor** then opted for the Chicken Marsala sandwich (with mushroom Marsala sauce) and **PC Wiz** ordered the grilled swordfish with black bean salsa and rice from the specials menu. **Gladiator** then turned to the next item on the agenda – sports. With the NY Giant season ended with a losing record of 6-10, the team not qualifying for the playoffs, it was noted that the Giants had managed to verify the predictions of two **HVBS** members. Uncannily, **Surveyor** and **PC Wiz** had crystal-balled the result at our August 20, 2015 meeting. **Ramrod** had chosen a neutral 8-8 while **Gladiator** had prognosticated a pessimistic 4-12. Coach Coughlin resigned his position with rumors that he had conversed with the Eagles and perhaps the 49’ers. **Surveyor** mentioned that the coach had walked past Ann Mara (died January 31 at 85), co-owner of the Giants, which confirmed **PC Wiz’s** suspicions that he had been fired. **Surveyor** commented that it should have been Giant general manager Jerry Reese who should have been gone and **Gladiator** agreed.

6- **Ramrod** brought up the suicide of former NFL running back Lawrence Phillips in relation to the frequent news about the behavior of these favored athletes. Phillips, a star Nebraska running back, had a very troubled background in violence and drugs. **Ramrod** commented that the future of football is uncertain. **Surveyor** said football has no future with the young athletes concentrating on soccer, the true international sport. **Surveyor** remarked that the football game is so fast and the players so big that it is scary. To **Ramrod’s** query on the NY Rangers **Gladiator** again referred the team as schizophrenic – great performance one game only to be unable to score in the next.

7- In the news **PC Wiz** reported that he had heard on the radio that the proposed toll for the new Tappan Zee Bridge would be \$15, up from the present \$5. **Ramrod** commented that that was in line with the New York City bridge tolls. **PC Wiz** had a print of an architects’ picture of what the new ‘Rivers Casino and Resort’ will look like when finished. **Ramrod** said we are being deluged with casinos when **PC Wiz** reported that the Schenectady project has finally been given their gambling license. **Surveyor** informed us that he had recently visited the Turning Stone Casino in Verona New York. He found it surprisingly empty. **PC Wiz** commented that in addition to the new NY casinos one is being built in nearby Springfield Massachusetts.

8- **PC Wiz** said he was pleased to have his final estimated tax payment for 2015 made; **Gladiator** concurred that he also had his completed. In this regard, **PC Wiz** mentioned that there is a new line on the State form for estimated tax payment – for the ‘MCTMT’ (Metropolitan Commuter Transportation Mobility Tax). It includes Dutchess County and is a tax on self-employed incomes (a ‘0’ for **PC Wiz**). **Ramrod** maintained that he has never filed an estimated tax – it was clarified when he informed us that he has tax withheld from his income. In politics, **Ramrod** mentioned that former NY mayor Bloomberg is considering running for governor as an independent.

9- **PC Wiz** informed **HVBS** members that **Associate Member Shirley** has purchased an Amazon Kindle tablet for reading e-books. First observations are that she prefers printed books but the tablets are obviously the wave of the future. **Ramrod** mentioned Microsoft’s announced dropping of support for their browser, Internet Explorer, in versions 8, 9, and 10. **PC Wiz** confirmed the story and has the latest version 11 on his Dell. However, he is getting insistent messages to download System 10 which has a brand-new browser ‘Microsoft Edge’. **Ramrod** says **Dan** said not to install the new system and **PC Wiz** seconded the advice. **Ramrod** mentioned that Time Warner (his service provider) has been hacked; neither he nor **Surveyor** has been affected. **Gladiator** who has downloaded the latest Apple System El Capitan to his iMac, replacing the original Snow Leopard, informed us of some problems with the change but they are coping.

10- Lorayne appeared and took orders for our final coffees. When they arrived, she told us of the available special desserts with just one remaining serving of rum cake. After perusing the printed menu, members gave their considered orders. **Ramrod** went for the rum cake, **Gladiator** and **Surveyor** both opted for the ‘Almond Joy chocolate bomb’ while **PC Wiz** ordered the ever popular Amaretto cheese cake. **Ramrod** ruminated that he only uses his computer for email and the news sites – not requiring, or wanting, the continual updates systems need to cope with the latest ‘streaming’, ‘the cloud’, etc. **PC Wiz** concurred but commented that we have no influence on this ‘planned obsolescence’. This led **Gladiator** to quip “all **Ramrod** needs is ‘System 1A’.

11- Ramrod also complained that he still is not able to receive phone messages on his new cell phone – it insists on a password to play the message while he has never established a password. The phone not allowing him to set a new password, members recommended he contact his telephone carrier for help. In commemoration of his birthday on December 26 (a sprightly young 62!) per the **HVBS** bylaws, **Surveyor’s** repast was covered by the members. Determining a date for our next meeting, considering the **Hoffman House** Winter closing, we came up with a tentative date of **Wednesday March 2, 2016** – although **Surveyor** cannot be present. This most enjoyable debate and discussion ended and the meeting was adjourned.

Thanks to **Ramrod** for his diligent, thorough review of the preliminary minutes for **PC Wiz**’ errors.

HVBS Official Scribe Laureate **PC Wiz**

February 11, 2016