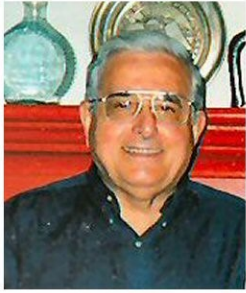


*Ramrod*

*Gladiator*

*PC Wiz*

*Surveyor*



## *The Hudson Valley Bullshit Society*

Official Minutes: 3rd HVBS Meeting, May 11, 2016 at the Hoffman House in Kingston, NY.

1- **Surveyor**, attending his first meeting since returning from vacation in Florida, picked up **Gladiator** and **PC Wiz** on a bright, clear day. After an uneventful trip, we entered the **Hoffman House** parking lot. **Surveyor** noted the completed new shingle roof and **Gladiator** mentioned a conversation with the roofer, who said that it was exactly like installing an asphalt shingle roof. **Surveyor** observed that the roof still had the original sags and commented that it might be impossible to repair. **Gladiator** cited the historic status of the building most likely prevented re-building the roof. **Ramrod** arrived in due time and did not recognize the classy vehicle the Northern Nabobs had arrived in.

2- Although the patio was in order on this pleasant day, heading for the upper 70's or low 80's, **HVBS** members entered the premises greeting **Host Pat**, our friendly bartender and **HVBS Official Waitress Lorayne** hastening to add settings to our traditional corner table. **Lorayne** then took our orders for suitable adult beverages. **Ramrod** started with a Jack Daniels Old Fashioned followed by **Surveyor** selecting an orange vodka cocktail. **Gladiator** ordered a Tanqueray gin and tonic with **PC Wiz** opting for a Keegan's 'Mothers Milk' stout. Members toasted to the return of **Surveyor**, who missed only one meeting, the memory of **Deliberator** and general good wishes. **PC Wiz** passed out the Official Agendas and **Gladiator** immediately objected that it had an obsolete logo with the '**Shadow**' moniker. Sadly, he was correct – **PC Wiz** had not noticed the error.



3- **Ramrod** produced a sheet of 'bad' jokes he had culled from stories he considered sending to his group. Unfortunately, **Ramrod** had forgotten his glasses so the reading was a bit tortured. However, the reading of the jokes brought forth much laughter – they were really great! **Gladiator** took the sheet from **Ramrod** and found that there were quite a few he had missed. A fine start to an outstanding meeting! **Gladiator** then produced three photographs he had taken of the Tappan Zee Bridge project from the Amtrak train to New York City. He noted that there will be two separate bridges for directional travel. **PC Wiz** mentioned how much higher the new bridge piers are and **Gladiator** pointed out that there would be much greater clearance for river traffic.

The above picture, one of the three, was taken on a dark, rainy day from the speeding Amtrak train. On the right is an aerial view of the construction next to the old bridge.

4- **Surveyor** was visited by wife **Debbie** once during the winter. He mentioned that there is an 11% tax on rentals in Florida and, because of demand, a minimum of three month rentals. So **Surveyor** was surveying properties for sale. Finally, after a flurry of telephone calls he made an offer that was accepted. Meanwhile, **Debbie** arrived and loved the



property. They found the owners very congenial and now own a first floor marvelous condo – no more rentals.

5- While on the topic of Amtrak, **Gladiator** asked **Ramrod** how his recent trip to visit **Dan and Chaco** in Maryland had gone – hopefully they had not encountered any wayward back-hoes! **Ramrod** said he enjoyed the trip but found the Amtrak cars rocking, so much motion that he had problems in the trains' facilities. Not only the motion but the car had a problem with its flushing. He mentioned the liquid was blue and **Surveyor** told **PC Wiz** it was the same chemical used in 'porta-johns'. **Gladiator**, always helpful, advised **Ramrod** to always ride in the last car on Amtrak, the last seat and jump off! On a more serious note **Gladiator** related an article in the latest '**Trains**' magazine. It concerned the story of President Coolidge sending papers on a train from Washington D.C. to New York City in 1927. The train arrived in 2 hours 50 minutes – coal-fired steam engine, jointed rail and all. Today the electrified Acela Express takes 2 hours 58 minutes – 89 years later! No noticeable progress to 'modern' times.

6- **Russell** joined **Gladiator** and **Shirley** in New York, flying in to La Guardia airport. His flight had been delayed by rain storms but their cabs arrived within a minute at their destination. **Russell** (and **Dan**) has the TSA PreCheck pass which helps him to avoid the long lines at airports; **Surveyor** mentioned that, although possessing the pass, he recently had to go through a random search. **Ramrod** commented that there is a lot of talk about returning the TSA back to a private operation. (The much longer TSA lines have become a campaign issue – overlooking the fact that in Brussels the bombs went off in the terminal!) **Gladiator** informed us that **Russell** is scheduled to fly to Japan on business and **Ramrod** said **Dan** had just returned from a solo trip to Germany. He commented that the trains were on time – to the minute – similar to the trains in Japan. **PC Wiz** noted that Donald Trump has observed that our facilities – airports, terminals, etc. – were far behind the rest of the world.

7- Our busy **Official Waitress Lorayne** (a crowded patio on this fine day) arrived to take our luncheon orders. This time everyone ordered from the printed menu. **Ramrod** decided on the French Onion Steak Sandwich while **PC Wiz** settled for a pastrami Reuben. **Surveyor** ordered a Garlic Steak Sandwich while **Gladiator** chose the Grilled Chicken Breast Sandwich. Asked about drink refills, **Ramrod** complained about the glass his Jack Daniels had been served in. It was an Old-Fashioned (Rocks) glass and he wished the refill in a tumbler (or water glass) type. "No problem", Lorayne said as she returned with **Ramrod's** drink in the glass he requested.

8- The discussion turned to sports with **Ramrod**, who watched last night's Yankee – Kansas City game (NY10-KC7), asked if others had seen it. **Surveyor** was the only other member who watched the game. Teixeira is sidelined with a neck sprain. He and ARod are 'over the hill' in **Ramrod's** estimation. **Gladiator** said he is hoping for the Pittsburgh Penguins, who just won a playoff series against the Washington Capitals, to win the Stanley Cup this year. The Penguin coach, Mike Sullivan, was drafted by the NY Rangers in 1987 and was the Ranger Assistant Coach from 2009 to 2013. Also, **Gladiator** mentioned, they have three former Rangers on their team – Ryan Callahan, Anton Stralman, and Brian Boyle. Referring to an agenda item, **Ramrod** brought us up-to-date on the catastrophic Greek situation. They are required to have a 3.5% budget surplus by 2018 to qualify for the next EU loan. **Ramrod** told us of the Greek pension system where not only the retired army general gets a pension but his daughter also qualifies! As to a possible Trump VP, **HVBS** members had no clear suggestions although **Gladiator** thought Condoleezza Rice would be a fine choice (black and a woman are perfect but she has no political background to balance Trump, **PC Wiz** noted).

9- **Lorayne** appeared to take our coffee orders. Upon returning she recited the dessert offerings. **Ramrod** requested the Almond Joy Bomb and **Gladiator** seconded the choice. **Surveyor** ordered the strawberry cheese cake and **PC Wiz's** choice was a dish of rainbow sherbet. **Ramrod** told us **Dan** watches little television and doesn't have cable (and the sports channels). What he, and most Millennials, does is to own a Roku and watch streamed movies from Netflix, Amazon and Hulu. Which led **Ramrod** to declare that he will never subscribe to online payment – **Gladiator** strongly agreed with him, insisting he will pay with cash or check. **PC Wiz** pointed out that cash is no longer accepted in more places such as the bridges into New York City where you have to use EZ-Pass or, as **Surveyor** pointed out – you will receive a bill with your license photo. Both **Ramrod** and **Gladiator** thought that would be fine! **Ramrod** informed us he has fired his yard care service (again). Although their service is limited he finds father and son do a good mowing and trimming job. **Gladiator** asked how his search for a new coupe was proceeding. **Ramrod** said he is no longer looking for a new car because of the low trade-in value on his Passat. Discussing the date for our next session, **HVBS** members decided on Wednesday June 8, 2016 as a tentative date. The meeting was adjourned.

Thanks to **Surveyor** for his vote to accept the preliminary minutes and to **Ramrod** for his seconding the motion.

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

May 16, 2016 -- *Converted to Official Minutes and PDF to the web site June 6, 2016 --*