

HOBBYISTS GENERAL MEETING MINUTES – January 8, 2026

Birthdays: The January birthday slide was displayed as members arrived. 37 Hobbyists have birthdays in January, including 5 lifetime members (Joel Sachs, Joseph Ippolito, Melvin Flanzman, Chester Greenleaf, and Lucillo Uliana). Today is Chris Stout's 84th birthday.

Meeting called to order by President Peter Weinstein at 10:00 a.m.

Pledge of Allegiance led by Ed Houlihan.

President's Report - Peter Weinstein

- A new cornhole club is in process of being organized by Stu Levine. Dates, times, places to be advised, probably at the next General Meeting.

Treasurer's Report – Gary Engelhardt

- Last year, our CD earned \$1,440 in interest. As interest rates are now falling, our yield will be a bit lower. But since the CD balance is now higher than last year, the overall interest earned may be about the same.
- Hobbyists who help themselves to coffee at the General Meeting should be sure to throw a dollar into the cash box. Compared to the number of cups consumed, the box has sometimes been short.
- There are still 31 members who have not yet paid their 2026 dues. They will be receiving phone calls to remind them to pay.
- The club is very solvent. All activities are run to be self-supporting, generating neither an overall expense nor an overall profit for the club.

Membership – Bob Mosher

- There were 103 members present at this morning's meeting, with an additional 4 participating on Zoom.
- As of today, there are 430 total members, including 71 life members and 359 general members.
- There were no new members inducted today.
- We have nine new applicants already in 2026. In 2025, we finished with 46 new applicants.
- A reminder that when you notice blue on someone's name tag, that indicates that he is new. If you see a new guy standing or sitting alone, please reach out and engage him in conversation to welcome him.
- To mark the club's upcoming 60th anniversary, multi-color pens and eyeglass wipes were placed on chairs for this morning's meeting.

Speakers – Steve Friedman

- Today's speaker is Hobbyist Rick Rosenthal, who will be making a presentation about his recent African safari.

Hobbyists Concerned - Peter Philip

- We mourn the passing of two Hobbyists since our last meeting: Richard Spalckhaver and Alan Krasnow.

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Activity Chairman Reports:

- Beer Appreciation - Rick Rosenthal: Next gathering is on Thursday January 15 at 6:30 pm at the Mason Jar, 219 Ramapo Valley Rd., Mahwah. The group is open to suggestions for future venues. Looking for places that serve good burgers and that have a variety of beers on tap.
- Bocce - Steve Friedman: Bocce will resume outdoors when the weather breaks in March. Emails will be sent to all people on the bocce distribution list. If you would like to get on the email list, send Steve an email at stefri4@yahoo.com.
- Book Club – John Sterling: The book club meets on the third Friday of each month at 10 am in the church library. The next meeting is on Friday January 16. The book being discussed is “Presidents at War” by Steven Gillon. Please see the Book Club’s activity page on the Hobbyists website for a brief description. Cliff Matthews gave his own endorsement for the book.
- Bridge Club – Mike Murphy (P. Weinstein filling in): The bridge club gathers every Thursday at 12:00 noon in the rear of the church auditorium. The first January session will be immediately after today’s General Meeting.
- Chess Club - Rick Pascal: The chess club has grown from 3 or 4 players 1 ½ years ago to 12 to 14 players today. There are people with all levels of skill. We do not keep scores or rankings. Socializing and exercising your brain are more important than winning or losing. The chess club meets on Wednesdays from 9:30 am to 12:00 noon in the rear of the auditorium at the church.
- Golf – Paul Fazio: Golf runs from early April through late October. Anyone interested in playing golf with the Hobbyists must register through the link on the golf club’s activity page on the Hobbyists website. Registration is open from January 1 through February 28. The cost to register is \$15 if paid by February 28th (\$20 if paid after that date). Paul walked through the various sign-up options on the website: regular or substitute, Tuesdays, Fridays or both. He also walked through other information and links on the activity page for tournaments, travel Tuesdays, finding courses, posting scores, indoor golf, etc. Please visit the very thorough activity page for details and instructions.
- Habitat for Humanity – Bob Becher: Habitat for Humanity appears on the Hobbyists calendar on Wednesdays at 8:00 am. While Wednesday has traditionally been the most active day for Hobbyists, scheduling can be more flexible from Tuesdays through Fridays for guys who are interested in working on those days. Not everyone has to participate on the same day. But Bob is working with the coordinator for Habitat to come up with a program that will run maybe once per month where a larger group of Hobbyists can go together, providing more opportunity for socializing while working.
- Hobbyists Songs – Steve Friedman and Dick Boswell: An example of the club’s parody songs was played at the meeting: “Maple Avenue Movie Song”, a song about the Movie Lover’s club. Steve and Dick continue to generate new songs and are attempting to cover Hobbyists activities not yet considered by their past parodies. There are two songs currently in progress where they are asking for members to supply photos to illustrate the video presentations. One is “Hair” where they need photos of members from their youth (when we all had hair). The other is a song about Hobbyists eating lunch together, where they are seeking photos from ROMEO, Wine Appreciation, Fellowship Lunch, and other such lunch gatherings.
- Investors Club – Mike Flannery: The group meets quarterly, with the next meeting scheduled for Wednesday January 28th at 1:30 pm. Meetings are held in the church auditorium and also on Zoom. In 2025 the meetings were well attended with 20+ members at each meeting. John McDonagh will be leading a discussion at the January meeting about the history of the Fed. We are also discussing a hedging tool called the trailing stop loss.

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- Military History – Tom Heed: The next meeting will be Monday January 26th at 2:00 pm in the church auditorium. The topic will be the American way of war, illustrated by a comparison of Washington's siege of Yorktown and Napoleon's siege of Toulon twelve years later. Yorktown was the mature Washington's final battle while Toulon was one of the first for the young Napoleon.
- Movie Lovers – Dick Oswald: The next movie will be "General Della Rovere", directed by Roberto Rossellini and starring Vittorio de Sica. The movie will be screened Tuesday January 13 at 1:30 pm at the Ridgewood Community Center.
- Music Lovers – Jim McKeown: There is no program for January. Upcoming programs for the first half of the year (modified in a subsequent email sent by Jim):
 - February 13: Hobbyists Song Parodies – Steve Friedman and Dick Boswell
 - March 13: Broadway Blockbusters Part 3 – Rick Pascal
 - April 10: A Night at the Opera (for Opera Haters) – Jim McKeown
 - May 15: Rogers and Hart – Rick Rosenthal
 - June 12: Tattoo & Music of Scotland – Janet Daley and Jim McKeownAll programs begin at 10:00 am in the church auditorium.
- Newsletter – Rick Pascal: The newsletter underwent a recent modification in December, with some changes to the graphics (including emojis!) and other content. We hope that members enjoyed it. The Spring newsletter will be coming out in March. All activity chairmen are encouraged to provide reports and pictures and anything else of interest.
- Navigating Retirement – Mitchell Milch: This is a new group that meets monthly on the first Wednesday at 2:00 pm. There is no meeting in January. Meetings will resume February 4th. The group explores the change process as applied to retirement. The objective is to mindfully and productively grapple with whatever conflicts or resistances may stand between where we are and where we want to be, moving the dial towards becoming our best selves.
- ROMEO – Cliff Matthews: Retired Older Men Eating Out (a few alternative acronyms were mentioned) is a monthly luncheon meeting for Hobbyists which gathers on the third Friday of each month at noon. Meals are good and relatively inexpensive. ROMEO provides a great opportunity to meet new people and to catch up with long-time friends. The next ROMEO will be on Friday January 16 at noon at Justin's Ristorante, 234 Lafayette Avenue, Hawthorne.
- Volunteer Service – Joe Hammer: Volunteer Service is open to members who want to attend regularly as well as to members who come when they can between commitments to other Hobbyist activities. We volunteer two Tuesdays per month at Eva's Village in Paterson, which is a full-service rehab, food kitchen, culinary school and shelter. We do the place settings, serve food and clean up afterwards. In 2025 we peaked at serving between 450 and 500 people in a single day. Recently the number has dropped to about 250 per day, due to concerns by patrons, many of whom are immigrants, about congregating in one spot. Eva's Village has asked us to limit our volunteers to six per week. We have 18 Hobbyists on our list, so we are pretty well subscribed. We are considering expanding to three visits per month instead of two. Our volunteers carpool from Graydon, leaving at 10:00 am and returning at 2:00 pm. Anyone interested in signing up should contact Joe Hammer at 201-675-0651.

President's Closing Statement - Peter Weinstein

- We continue to be in dire need of a new chairman (and, hopefully, a new co-chairman) for the Trips & Tours activity. This has been a great activity that brings people together for interesting trips both locally and internationally. It would be a shame if it were to go away.

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The business meeting concluded at 10:57 a.m.

January program: Rick Rosenthal presented a slideshow of his African safari.

Respectfully submitted by:
Dick Boswell, Secretary