

OCTOBER 2025

# DARIEN

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MEMBERS OF THE DARIEN  
MEN'S ASSOCIATION



# IN THE COMPANY OF MEN

## DARIEN MEN'S ASSOCIATION — A COMMUNITY GATHERING OF INQUISITIVE, EXPERIENCED, FRIENDLY AND ENERGETIC MEN

Established in 1977, and now approaching its 50th year, the mission of the Darien Men's Association (DMA) is to provide a community in which retired and semi-retired men can find fellowship, friendship, intellectual stimulation and fun by participating in a range of activities designed to nourish both body and mind, as well as providing service to the larger Darien community.

Men over the age of 50 are welcome, and some of our nearly 360 members remain active well into their 90s. Most members live in Darien, at least most of the year, although we also have members with connections with Darien who may have moved to another town nearby or even abroad. One member still attends regularly via Zoom from Slovenia; others are eager to maintain the connections and stimulation in winter months away.

It is not unusual for those who have spent decades dedicated to their work to have neglected the kinds of strong and active social relationships that are the virtue of living in a community like Darien. The DMA provides introductions to others with similar interests and experiences or complementary ones, sharing curiosity and knowledge, as well as time in favorite activities. For many, the DMA creates a new purpose in life as they adjust to retirement.

This is a group that is unusual in avoiding hierarchy. It is truly a collaborative organization involving over 30 members taking leadership roles for discrete activities on their own initiative and always open to suggestions from members. Although we are vigilant to ensure our activities remain nonpartisan and consistent with our mission.

At the heart of the experience is a general meeting every Wednesday morning from 10 a.m. to noon starting in the beginning of September through the end of May. The first hour of our general meeting provides a chance for informal conversation among members, and reports and invitations from the various activity groups. The second hour is devoted to our Speakers Program, described below.

The meetings take place in the garden room at the Darien Community Association's Meadowlands and by Zoom. More than 100 members regularly attend in person with another 20-30 on Zoom.

Throughout the week smaller groups participate in activities that includes everything from a book club to bowling. Members are free to start any other activity that can attract a following. About 6-8 times a year we have field trips to museums, the theater, or to other cultural events—always combined with a meal and general bonhomie, with spouses and partners invited. The hiking group organizes nature walks while the Happy Wanderers take excursions to explore places of interest such as varying historic locations or iconic neighborhoods in New York City. Two of our social high points are our annual holiday party at The Country Club of Darien and our season-ending picnic at Weed Beach in June.

The central element of our calendar is the Speakers Program. During each of our weekly Wednesday meetings we present notable speakers on a variety of subjects, nonpartisan and on topics of geopolitical, social, cultural, historic or local significance. Recent speakers have included the Director of the Office of Emergency Management who was on duty at the World Trade Center on 9/11; a distinguished saxophonist, composer, mathematician and music curator who entertained and enlightened us on the relationship between music and math; an historian on the role of Thomas Watson, Jr., as IBM pioneered the digital age; the former US ambassador to Russia on his impressions of Putin; a former national security council staff member on the Ukrainian situation; an anthropologist on Connecticut when the mastodons roamed here and its earliest inhabitants fished and planted here 12,000 years ago; an expert on the stone walls of Connecticut; the New York Times Washington Bureau chief on the challenges to news-gathering today; the editor of the Economist magazine on the issues facing the world ahead; the former



president of Juilliard on the history of Lincoln Center; and Ron Darling, the Mets' pitcher in the historic World Series of 1986, on his experiences in the majors.

During the past year we have also hosted updates on international, national, state and local issues from prominent politicians including U.S. Senator Chris Murphy, U.S. Congressman Jim Himes, former Congressman Chris Shays, Connecticut Attorney General William Tong, the general leading the Connecticut Veteran's Administration and our own Darien First Selectman Jon Zagrodzky.

As part of its ongoing support of community service activities, DMA members volunteer at many worthy organizations individually and as part of DMA organized efforts. For years, the DMA has spent several days soliciting cash donations for Darien Human Services outside Palmer's Market in December, regularly collecting over \$5000. Additionally, the DMA has made a special commitment to help At Home in Darien meet its mission "to help seniors live independently, comfortably and with dignity in their own homes and the community as long as possible" by facilitating ways for DMA members to contribute their time and by arranging fundraising activities on the organization's behalf. Most recently the DMA organized a benefit golf tournament that resulted in a raising over \$7500 for them.

For more information on the DMA, please visit [www.dariendma.org](http://www.dariendma.org). Anyone wishing to attend an event as a guest and become a member can send their interest to [dariendma@gmail.com](mailto:dariendma@gmail.com).

#### MEMBER FORUM

"DMA is a remarkable organization because of the role it plays for our members at a time in their lives where personal relationships and connections are critical to the quality of their lives. It creates opportunities to make new or enhance existing personal connections and relationships, adding purpose and finding new things (or rediscovering old ones) to continue to grow and prosper."

*Frank DeLeo member since 2018, President 2024-2025*

"I volunteer enthusiastically for DMA because all of its members are true to its mission of promoting fellowship, fun and community service. I never feel that I am being taken advantage of (as I have felt in other organizations) because so many members put in efforts that equal or exceed my own."

*Mike Kadish, member since 2022, current newsletter editor*

"DMA is an extraordinary organization, defined by the depth, diversity and quality of its sponsored programs and events, by the broad experience and background of its members, by their curiosity, and by the devotion of its members to the goals of fellowship, fun and community service."

*Tom Igoe, member since 2017, President 2023-2024*

"The DMA provides me with a sense of belonging to a community of people who care about each other, enables me to enjoy the intellectual components of some of the activities and the speakers' sessions, and have some fun in the process."

*Bryan Hooper, member since 2014, President 2021-2022*

#### REGULARLY SCHEDULED DMA ACTIVITIES

Many DMA activities schedule events monthly and some (such as pickleball and table tennis) several times a week. Camaraderie, humor, and occasionally competition prevail. Any member can propose a new activity and encourage participation as it gains regular members. Here is a list of our current activities:

- Book Club
- Investment discussions
- Bowling
- New Wave Singers
- Bridge
- Pickleball
- Hiking
- Cribbage
- Table Tennis
- Current Affairs
- Tech Talk
- Golf
- Happy Wanderers
- Woodworking