



CIGAR BOX BULLETIN



Retired Men's Association of Greenwich, Inc.

60 Years of Fellowship and Community Service
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Here are the volunteers who publish this Bulletin each week for your enjoyment. **Editor/Chairman:** Chet Risio. **Scribes:** Av Rivel, Gran Burgess, Kurt Schaffir, Arnold Gordon, Ed Farrell, Gerry Lessuk, Steve Elliot, Marshall Toppo, and George Stockbridge, **Archivist:** Harold Frost. **Format:** Jack Cuff, Gene Schwartz, and Andrzej Mazurek. **Graphics:** Av Rivel, **Print/Distribution:** Chet Risio.

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December 6, 2017

President DON CONWAY rang us to order at 10:00am exactly, but still had to cajole the stragglers from the back of the room to take their seats.

RALPH VIGGIANO, bounced to the lectern to lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Accompanied by our entertaining pianist, GEORGE STOCKBRIDGE, song leader GRAN BURGESS with his mellifluous sort-of-baritone voice, led the group in a spirited *Star Spangled Banner*, followed by *Always and Anchors Aweigh* (the navy vets swooned).

JERRY SCHWENDEMAN announced some blush-making correspondence about a woman patient who did not know the difference between intercourse and BlueCross, and a warning about a scam perpetrated on old men by skimpily dressed then undressed cuties stealing wallets; many wallets were voluntarily lost.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. CHET RISIO introduced his cousin, Marie Wardell, who is the Program Coordinator for Reading Champions, a Greenwich United Way service since 2008 that helps students in our schools who are beneath reading fluency levels for their grade and age. There are currently 117 volunteers from around Town, but more are needed; each new volunteer will allow the program to help two more pupils. For more information, including videos see www.greenwichunitedway.org. You may also contact Marie directly at mwardell@greenwichunitedway.org or [203-869-2221](tel:203-869-2221).

2. ARNOLD GORDON reported that the esteemed panel of STURGES, UHRY and GORDON had chosen the speakers for the RMA meeting on December 27th, at which three of our own will relate personal stories that have helped shape their lives. Drum Roll Please: BOB ROBINS, TAD LARRABEE, and CHET RISIO will offer presentations

of about 10 minutes each, followed by what no doubt will be penetrating questions from the membership.

3. JOHN FEBLES reminded us about a change in the Salvation Army bell ringing program this year. Starting this past weekend of December 2-3, through each weekend in December until the weekend of the 23rd, brave souls who volunteer to ring the bell will do so in front of the Starbucks Coffee shop on Greenwich Ave. You should email alisonbrush@greenwich.ct.gov or phone her at [203-622-3715](tel:203-622-3715) to volunteer for either a one-hour stint, or two-hour duty. Those not willing to ring the bell should make their checks payable to Greenwich Salvation Army and give them to JOHN.

4. PAUL SETTELMAYER ([203 629-2616](tel:203-629-2616)) urged members to purchase a case of ruby red grapefruit all the way from Texas (\$24 each) to support the Lion's Club many charitable services around Town. He will be just outside the Cos Cob firehouse on Saturday mornings. Yes, they are delicious, say I, a grapefruit expert.

5. El Presidente DON told us

a. To continue to use our current yellow parking passes for the Municipal Lot and Lafayette Place spots until new passes for the coming year are issued.

b. He also informed us that MIKE FERRARESE and ABBEY SMOLER will retire as Special Event Planners at the end of 2018. They are anxious to indoctrinate their replacements, so if you are interested in taking over this very important and gratifying role, please contact either of them.

c. The DON then managed to give a passable pronunciation of the returnees: FRANK ZAVATTARO from Isle of Palms, SC; AV RIVEL from Australia and New Zealand; and RALPH VIGGIANO from Pinehurst, NC and Myrtle Beach, SC (where, tsk tsk, he reportedly played miniature golf).

COMMITTEES

PROGRAM: STEPHEN MYERS encouraged all to stay to hear **Lisbeth Gronlund**, PhD, a senior scientist and co-director of The Union of Concerned Scientists. Her timely topic: "The Trump Administration and Nuclear Weapons." PETER UHRY mentioned some serious challenges facing students and institutions in higher education that will be addressed next week by Thomas Schwarz, JD, President of SUNY Purchase since 2002.

MEMBERSHIP: HORST TEBBE mentioned that there are currently 5 candidates ready for induction, three of which have been scheduled; he urged the other two and their sponsors to do the same. In attendance today were 97 members and 1 guest: Bob Grayson (g/o GERRY GIBIAN). Those celebrating **birthdays** this past week were CARL VAN AKEN (95), HAROLD KUPELSKY (85) and TOM MORRISON (82).
SPECIAL EVENTS: MIKE FERRARESE brought us up to date on four upcoming events. Details Below.

VOLUNTEER HOURS: JOHN FEBLES provided the statistics: 363 outside hours by 110 men and 40 RMA hours by 18 men; ace for the week was BRIAN MAHER with 40 hours.

THE SCOREBOARD

BRIDGE: PETER STERN told us he had high score (5220) followed by FRANK LEE (5080) and BRUNO SCHRAGE (4380).

TENNIS: MIKE SMITH reported the winners. On Court 1 ANDRE MAZUREK and almost-member Michael McDonough, Court 2 PETER TUNLEY and MIKE SMITH. BILL FAKUNDINY is Captain next week.

HEARTS: JACK SWEGER passionately told us there were 12 players at 3 tables. Table 1 completed two games (ED FARRELL and MIKE AMBROSINO were winners), Table 2, one game (TOM MORONEY), Table 3, two games (TOM HEALY and GRANT PERKINS). Moon Shots were launched by ED FARRELL, JACK SWEGER, PETER BERG, GRANT PERKINS and JOHN KNIGHT.

TODAY'S SPEAKER

STEPHEN MEYERS introduced physicist **Dr. Lisbeth Gronlund**, a member of the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) since 1992. She outlined her presentation, which covered the status of nuclear weaponry and policy issues governing their use at the end of the Obama Administration and how the Trump administration is proceeding. Several pamphlets were made available for members about the UCS and specific issues about nuclear weapons. There is currently a "nuclear posture review" underway by the current Administration that will form the basis for any future plans affecting the current arsenal: long range strategic weapons (about 2000) consisting of land-based nuclear armed missiles with 10 times the power of the Hiroshima bomb, submarine missile stock, and air launched cruise missiles (e.g., from B2 stealth bombers) and bombs (dropped from a B52, e.g.). About 150 of such tactical weapons are stored in the countries of 5 allies.

There is an additional reserve of 2000 nuclear war heads in underground storage at Kirkland Air Force Base. The US and Russia are currently bound by the START Treaty of 2010 that limits the number of deployable strategic weapons to 1550. President Obama had proposed a 30-year program for replacing the current arsenal with new and improved weapons at an estimated cost of 1.2 trillion dollars but it was not implemented. President Trump believes that START favors the Russians and wants a bigger stockpile. However, the military strongly favors maintaining the current START treaty provisions. Dr. Gronlund predicts that we will do so and will not increase our arsenal. However, she believes that our previous submarine-launched missile capability, which was retired in 2013, will be redeployed.

She addressed the crucial issue of when a nuclear first or retaliatory strike should be considered and who has the ultimate authority to order an attack. In recent times there have been three near-catastrophic errors due to false or misinterpreted signals that could have triggered nuclear missile exchanges, one each originating in the US, Russia and Norway. Any missiles launched from Russia would be detected quickly but leave only about 10 minutes before the missiles would arrive for the President to react (e.g., do nothing, order interception of the missiles if possible, launch an immediate retaliatory strike in case some of the enemy missiles were targeted at the US missile sites which would disable them).

Presently, a first launch by the US is prohibited without a declaration of war by Congress. If retaliation is needed, there is a formal chain of command starting with the President, but the use of checks and balances involving other senior-most civilian or military decision makers is not necessarily clearly defined and the President appears to have sole authority to launch a nuclear attack. The UCS proposes that a decision by the President to use nuclear arms must be unanimously agreed to by the next two Government officials in succession order for the Presidency, viz., usually the Vice President and Speaker of the House.

Dr. Gronlund closed with some brief comments about the North Korea situation. As reported recently, they have missiles capable of reaching almost any US city, including Washington, DC and New York City. Surgical strikes against North Korean nuclear installations are nearly impossible and any military incursion will put South Korea in grave danger, even without the use of nuclear weapons. Negotiations with their regime are essential and use of an emissary to start the process is highly recommended. The usual lively Q&A session added additional piquancy to the occasion.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Open to all members, guests, candidates and spouses. Checks to be made out to RMA, and must be received within two weeks or the reservation will be cancelled. Contact MIKE FERRARESE (myagentmike@yahoo.com / [203-554-0678](tel:203-554-0678)) or ABBEY SMOLER (abbeysmoler@gmail.com / [203-531-0235](tel:203-531-0235)).

New York Philharmonic Rehearsal, January 11, 2018. Lunch at the Atlantic Grill, \$110. Bus departs from St. Catherine's parking lot at 7:45 a.m. Status: Wait Listed

Elmsford Dinner Theater, "A Chorus Line" February 22, 2018, Lunch at the theater, \$95. Status: Wait Listed

Bruce Museum, March 22, 2018, Lunch at the Millbrook Club, \$95. Transportation: Self. Arrive at Bruce Museum at 9:45 a.m. Status: 30 places available

West Point tour, April 19, 2018. Lunch at the Thayer Hotel, \$85. Bus departs 8:45am from St. Catherine's' Church parking lot. Status 35 places available.

NEXT WEEK'S SPEAKER

Thomas Schwarz, JD, "Major Challenges Facing Higher Education Today"

Scribe: ARNOLD J. GORDON

Retired Men's Association of Greenwich, Inc. · 37 Lafayette Place · Greenwich, CT
06830 · USA