

# CIGAR BOX BULLETIN

Here are the volunteers who publish this Bulletin each week for your enjoyment: **Editor:** George Stockbridge, Chair; **Scribes:** Gran Burgess, Av Rivel, Kurt Schaffir, Peter Uhry, Bernard Schneider, Jim Butler, Arnold Gordon, Ed Farrell; Martin Grayson, Emeritus; **Format and Layout:** Gene Schwartz, Fred Waldron; **Archivist:** Harold Frost; **Printing:** Chet Risio, Larry Schmitz

**Volume 62, No. 30**

**December 10, 2014**

*"Palliative Care and Hospice Care give you a purpose and a drive for your life" Donna Colletti, MD*

President BOB PHILLIPS rang the meeting to order at 10 a.m. ARNOLD GORDON led us in The Pledge of Allegiance; GRAN BURGESS conducted our singing of "America the Beautiful", "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer", and "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" ably accompanied on the Steinway by BOB MORGAN. Serving as Corresponding Secretary was jokester TOM HEALY, who regaled us with the story of a pirate with wooden leg, hook and eyepatch quizzed by a bartender.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** BOB PHILLIPS advised us that photos taken at the Annual Dinner are available on our website. TIM NOLAN told us that the next meeting of the Retired Old Men Eating Out group will be January 21, and urged us to put it on our calendars now. ARNOLD GORDON said that the survey of RMA members' volunteer activities will continue for a few more weeks. DAVID DOWNS spoke of the wonderful work that the Salvation Army does for underprivileged persons in Greenwich, and of the Food Bank it keeps at Town Hall for those in need. It also provides school supplies, clothing, disaster relief, food vouchers to local grocery stores, energy and utility assistance. You can write a check drawn to Salvation Army, or make a cash donation through DAVID. JOHN FEBLES pleaded with us for volunteer bell-ringers for weekend days between December 12 and Christmas Day. He told us that total red barrel collection for last weekend was \$911. Call JOHN at 203-869-5343 to volunteer (e-mail [JFebles13@gmail.com](mailto:JFebles13@gmail.com)). SAM MARASSO testified to the pleasure he derives from ringing the bell in front of the kettle.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:** For **Visiting:** CHUCK STANDARD reported that JIM DANIEL is still in rehab at Witherell, SANDY BUCHSBAUM is recovering at home and MANNY BONVENUTO hopes to be back with us next week. **Membership:** JIM FAHY gave us attendance figures of 107 members, 5 candidates: Jim Fishbein, Rick Holz, Don Minini, Harvey Bozzi and Ted Elsing; 2 guests, Don McCulloch, g/o ARNOLD GORDON, and Martin Buss, g/o WIN ADKINS. The birthday boys were: DANA LOW, 82; TOM MORRISON, 80; TED CHIN, 79; and LANE GRIJNS, 77. **Volunteers:** MIKE HAYDEN reported for the week ending today are: 682 hours for outside activities by 53 men, and 153 hours for RMA activities by 55 men. Boasting most hours -28- was FRED BROOKS.

**Inductee:** Sponsors BOB WYLIE and HOLLISTER STURGES introduced candidate Jim Fishbein. A native of Chicago, Jim is a graduate of both CalTech and Stanford. He was in management at GE and GE Capital, then an industrial consultant. He enjoys reading and recently has been in the Great Books discussion group at the library. JIM FISHBEIN was enthusiastically welcomed into full membership by a resounding chorus of AYE's. **Special Events:** RICH LIMBACHER reported, see details further below.

**GAMES:** KURT SCHAFFIR dealt us the **Bridge** report of December 3: 12 players, top scores 4300 by BRUNO SCHRAGE, 3610 by JOHN FEBLES and 3440 by WAYNE DEVRIES. **Tennis:** RANDY MOTLAND reported top scorer on court one was HENRY BAKER; on court two was PETER STREICH.

**TODAY'S SPEAKER** was Dr. Donna Colletti. M.D. Greenwich Hospital, Medical Director Greenwich Home Hospice and Palliative Care Service. The theme of her talk was educating, empowering and comforting patients while "sustaining hope". Palliative Care is care of the "whole person" -- what the patient's hopes and wishes and goals are; improving the patient's quality of life both in hospital and at home. Its emphasis is on sustaining quality of life to the greatest extent possible. It prevents unnecessary suffering, relieves pain, works in conjunction with the oncologist on the case, the hospital chaplain, the surgeon and/or physician, and the family, keeping lines of communication open. . It keeps track of the patient's "trade-offs" as he or she rearranges what becomes most important to them. Its focus is on the patient's preferences and is often given together with curative treatment as an extra layer of support.. Or, it can be the next step after medical care has proven to be giving diminishing results. Medicare will cover palliative care in hospital. It will cover palliative care in your home provided that a caregiver is living there.

Hospice care is the last step in palliative care, when a doctor's written prognosis is that the patient has 6 months or less to live. It must be signed by two practicing physicians, and have the patient's consent. Hospice comes to your house to treat you, listen to your concerns, wishes, priorities and treat you with compassion. When the patient signs on to hospice care, Medicare will pay for it if the patient does not return to the emergency room. The patient and family have all understood that his or her foremost priority is to die at home surrounded by family.

She spoke urgently about making available to your physician "advance directives" including a health proxy and a living will, both of which are normally drawn up for you and your family by your attorney. She covered also "do not resuscitate" bracelets worn by a patient who does not want defibrillators, respirators or any life-sustaining treatment administered to them should they be unable to speak and if no family member or health proxy can be reached immediately. Such "advance directives" must be communicated to the surgeon or family physician. Very often, the patient and the family prefer to wait to make this directive only when the patient has entered into palliative care. She also spoke of POLST -- Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatments-- which is legal in the State of New York, but not yet in Connecticut.

Dr. Colletti strongly recommended the current best-selling non-fiction book, "Being Mortal", and showed a copy of it to the audience. Written by Atul Gawande, surgeon at Massachusetts General Hospital, it covers extremely well what palliative care and hospice care involve, and give case studies, following patients through months or years of medical care, palliative and hospice care. He tells of his own father's case, who had also been a surgeon at Mass General, when he began feeling symptoms that would potentially end his ability to do surgery. How his case worked out will amaze you. It follows his and many other cases that illustrate what "being mortal" is all about.

**NEXT WEEK'S SPEAKER:** Dr. Elizabeth Pisani, daughter of RMA member Roger Pisani. She has traveled the world, is an acclaimed author, having received praise by many literary authorities.

*George Stockbridge, Scribe*

### **SPECIAL EVENTS**

**Thurs. January 22, 2015: Metropolitan Opera backstage tour.** \$80/per person, lunch at Le Rivage 46th St.; there are still six openings.

**Thurs.Feb. 5: Lincoln Center- NY Philharmonic rehearsal,** \$98/pp, Atlantic Grill. St. Catherine's 8am., is on ticket exchange.

**Thurs. March 19: La Mont-Doherty Earth Science/Columbia University;** \$50p/p, lunch there, 36 seats remaining.

Special events are open to members, spouses, candidates and guests. Contact Richard Limbacher 203-531-9515 or Gerry Lessuk 203-698-9451.

*Dr. Colletti's talk today can be viewed on Channel 79 for the next two weeks, and on [www.vimeo.com](http://www.vimeo.com) for many years to come. Visit our website at [www.greenwichrma.org](http://www.greenwichrma.org).*