



# CIGAR BOX BULLETIN

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



[www.greenwichrma.org](http://www.greenwichrma.org)  
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**SCRIBE: ARNOLD J. GORDON**

"Diet – A system of starving yourself to death so you can live a little longer."  
Totie Fields

The schmoozing regulars, up to 45 of them, logged on between 9:30 and 10am to exchange pleasantries and difficulties before President **RUSS HARDEN** opened the Zoom business meeting at 10:02am. For those inclined, the popular pre-meeting meeting will begin at 9:15am from now on; use the same link as for the business meeting. **LEN CARUSI** proudly broadcast the Melody Men rendition of the RMA song, with everyone muted to obviate the usual cacophony of member sing-along. Recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance by **TONY COCCHI** then followed.

Corresponding Secretary **ARNOLD GORDON** alerted members to a Covid Town Hall Zoom program under the sponsorship of Greenwich Hospital and others; since it was scheduled for Thursday evening, January 28<sup>th</sup>, before the CBB would appear, he posted the link in the Chat Box for all to access. He also posted several other useful online sites and sources for information and appointment scheduling for the covid-19 vaccination; all that information was sent as a special message to the RMA membership by **LEN CARUSI** on Thursday, January 28<sup>th</sup>. Here again is the information:

For the most up-to-date information from the State of Connecticut on COVID-19:  
[ct.gov/coronavirus](https://www.ct.gov/coronavirus).

Connecticut has put together a web page for coronavirus vaccine questions regarding eligibility, how to make an appointment and how to locate vaccine administration sites.  
<https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus/covid-19%20vaccinations>

Greenwich Time comprehensive vaccine tracker:  
<https://tinyurl.com/yys2xk6b>

How and where to register for the vaccine:

<https://tinyurl.com/y4krj4tt>

Standard CDC form for requesting an appointment:

<https://dphsubmissions.ct.gov/OnlineVaccine>

Substitute ny for ct for locations in New York State.

After all that serious stuff, **BOB LUCE** told the assembly about a man who had to negotiate with a burglar while a nude woman was in his bed.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. **PETER STERN**, Membership, noted a maximum of 70 in attendance. There was one guest: Steve Meskers (g/o **PETER BERG**, **HOWARD RICHMAN**, and **HOLLISTER STURGES**). Steve is scheduled to be inducted at the February 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting. Birthday celebrants were: **JIM KINGSLEY 76**, **DIETER BLENEMANN 86**, **BOB STRONG 72**, and **JACK WEIR 74**. **PETER** mentioned that inadvertently, **PETER ARTURIS'** 94<sup>th</sup> birthday was overlooked at the November 11<sup>th</sup> meeting. So, **DR. ARTURI**, a very happy 94.2 years birthday today. They all were wished well with the recorded Happy Birthday song.
2. Treasurer **JEFF JUNKER** noted that regularly scheduled bills were paid last week, including the RMA's Zoom membership fee.
3. **MIKE AMBROSINO** for Visiting said that **HORST TEBBE** had back surgery on Tuesday to fuse two vertebrae. He will be in Greenwich Hospital for three days and is expected to be ambulatory after that and going home. Full recovery is expected to take 3-6 weeks but that will not deter him from doing his noble and much appreciated work for RMA! We wish **HORST** a painless and rapid recovery. Please let **MICHAEL** know if any of our members are ill or hospitalized (brooklynoil@yahoo.com).
4. **JIM FISHBEIN** reminded everyone to complete and return the recently e-mailed survey on RMA Zoom meetings, which requires only about 6 minutes to complete. He thanked **LEN CARUSI** for helping send out the Survey Monkey questionnaire. Make sure to check your Junk/Spam folders if it is not in your Inbox. A terrific response thus far: within 2 days, 119 returns. The interim results: about half attend twice/month, 90% 1 or more times. However, 27 rarely attend (boy, they do not know what they are missing!). **TIM BROOKS**, who worked with **JIM** on the survey, mentioned that a few people who do not attend meetings have not responded. All non-responders will be contacted by phone. One of the

more controversial questions in the survey dealt with the \$2 collected from attending members at the in-person meetings (goes mostly toward refreshments). From the comments at the meeting, consensus seems to be building that such an “assessment” should be added to the annual dues, which would simplify the process and make the sharing of the costs more equitable.

5. **GEORGE UBOGY** urged everyone to watch today’s speaker, Dr. John Hughes, Professor of Medicine at Yale University School of Medicine, who will describe the often-controversial healthcare topic of “The Moral Imperative to Say No: The Inevitable Link Between Equity and Rationing.” Details below.
6. **HOLLISTER STURGES** mentioned that the speaker originally scheduled for next week, a member of the famous Grucci fireworks family, had to postpone his appearance due to a death in the family. However, we will be fortunate to hear from Flemming Heilman, born in Malay of Danish parents, an industrial executive, humanitarian and author who will discuss “Capitalism, Socialism and Corporate Politics,” based on his book “The Unacceptable Face” (see <https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/1018642>). A very timely topic indeed.

### FUN AND GAMES

1. INDOOR TENNIS: **TOM HEALY** reported that on Friday, January 22<sup>nd</sup>, **ANDRE MAZUREK** and **BRIAN MAHONEY** defeated **JOE MANCINELLI** and **TOM** on Court 1, while on Court 2, **PAT MacCARTHY** and **BILL HOWLAND** beat **BOB FRISHMAN** and **BILL FAKUNDINI**. Team captain for this week is **DON BREISMEISTER**.
2. PLATFORM TENNIS: **RUSS HARDEN** mentioned that at the regular play time at Loughlin Courts on Tuesday morning at 9:30, he and 7 others were able to get in 4 games.
3. TAI CHI: **WILL MORRISON** thanked **ARNOLD GORDON** for forwarding a medical study that shows how Tai Chi can mitigate arthritis. And thanks to **BOB RIMMER** for sending an article comparing Tai Chi and Yoga. The main message is that if you like to move, Tai Chi is for you. Since March of last year, The RMA Tai Chi classes through Zoom have been regularly attended by **DICK** and Polly **FRANCK**, **GRANVILLE BURGESS** with his brother Frank and sister-in-law Diana, and **BRUNO SCHRAGE**. Mondays and Wednesdays 3:00pm via Zoom. Spouses are welcome. Contact: [wdmorrison@gmail.com](mailto:wdmorrison@gmail.com); Zoom <https://zoom.us/j/99622029436>, Meeting ID: 996 2202 9436, Passcode: raisehands
4. WALKERS: **TAD LARRABEE** and his gang of a full dozen walkers went to Byram Park and then along Byram Shore Road where they walked on the beach to the most southwesterly part of Connecticut, about three miles of level walking on a nice day. It

was a fun day! The group normally walks at 9 AM every Thursday. If interested, please e-mail **TAD** at [tadlarra@optonline.net](mailto:tadlarra@optonline.net).

5. BRIDGE: **TONY COCCHI** mentioned there were 5 players last week, so they played a round robin system. The scores were based on four game averages. **JOHN FEBLES** left early, and while he was the top scorer, he didn't have enough games to qualify for the "medals." First place, **ED MASTOLONI** with 806 points, second was **RON FREIDMAN**, 549 points and third, **TONY** with 450 points. They play every Wednesday at 1pm using the Trickster bridge app; if interested, contact **TONY** ([tony.cocchi2@gmail.com](mailto:tony.cocchi2@gmail.com)).
6. HEARTS: **DON CONWAY** was on top of his game with the report: only one group played on Thursday, the 21<sup>st</sup>; players were **JOHN KNIGHT, MICHAEL AMBROSINO, GRANT PERKINS**, and **DON**. **GRANT** won the first two games; **DON** won the third and **MICHAEL** won the 4th and 5th games. **GRANT, MICHAEL** and **JOHN** each had one moon shot.
7. PICKLEBALL: **TONY COCCHI** reported that 4 men rotated teams in playing several sets on Monday. It was so cold that play had to cease when the plastic whiffle balls actually cracked, which gives new meaning to the term ball-breakers. Weather permitting, play occurs at 1PM at Christiano Field. Anyone interested should contact **TONY** ([tony.cocchi2@gmail.com](mailto:tony.cocchi2@gmail.com)).

### SPECIAL EVENTS

No events are currently scheduled and any for the future will depend on the pandemic situation.

### SPEAKER PROGRAM

Moderator and presenter **GEORGE UBOGY** welcomed everyone and introduced John Hughes, MD, Professor of Medicine, Yale University School of Medicine whose topic was "The Moral Imperative to Say No: The Inevitable Link between Equity and Rationing." He has special interests in medical policy planning, healthcare economics and medical ethics, and is a board-certified internist. He has been voted "best attending physician" by the Yale house staff on several occasions. He is also the Associate Director of the Program for Biomedical Ethics and is an attending physician at the West Haven VA Hospital. The tension between Equity (fairness) and Cost Containment in healthcare was a major theme of his presentation. The US spends considerably more on healthcare as a percent of GDP (17%) and in per capita costs than any other country; much of the disproportionate spending is due to administrative costs, about \$900 per person, vs the nearest other country, Germany (about \$300). Over the years, healthcare cost increases in the US have far outpaced the growth in GDP. However, although the US spends more on healthcare than any other developed country, it compares unfavorably to 33 other OECD countries in several measures of health outcomes, such as life expectancy, infant mortality, and unmanaged asthma and diabetes.

Dr. Hughes pointed out that costs, access, and quality/quantity of healthcare form what is referred to as the Iron Triangle. Can one maintain quality and widespread access while controlling costs? He opined that it is possible but only if the quantity of healthcare is lowered (excess testing, defensive medicine, unnecessary treatments, ...). Controlling costs is a major challenge, involving such actions as proper oversight (stewardship), setting of priorities and limits, and the difficult notion of rationing. Economists define rationing as the allocation of scarce resources, but in healthcare it therefore entails denial of care to those who might benefit. Examples abound during the current covid-19 pandemic whereby, for example, hospital staff must review who should be removed from the ICU to make room for yet more patients. That is an example of implicit rationing, the central allocation of resources and at the point of service (funding, pricing, available number of facilities and specialists, available medical supplies). This is in contrast to explicit rationing, which involves the restriction to care, denial of access, imposition of special eligibility criteria, or denial of cost coverage for treatment.

Is it possible to avoid rationing? Dr. Hughes explained that there are alternatives that require important controls: eliminate what is recognized as unnecessary duplication and waste, and fraud. The parallel major challenge is control of ever-increasing costs of medical care; key areas include administrative costs (about 25% of hospital operations, twice as much as in other countries), reduction of malpractice costs which in turn would mitigate defensive medical practice. Examples of how rationing (managing scarcity) has been applied were cited for the UK: denial – the government will not pay for cosmetic surgery, dental or vision care; selection – treatment for those most likely to benefit; delay – waiting list for other than emergencies (queue system). Dr. Hughes had the following advice for politicians, government officials and healthcare/insurance systems:

- Limit cost increases to GDP growth rate
- Do not use the “R-Word” (rationing)
- Keep all existing benefits
- Focus on statistical lives, not individually identifiable lives (i.e., use population-based data not anecdotal, single patients)
- Avoid or minimize explicit rationing, but if necessary do so with conspicuous fairness

Summarizing, the speaker emphasized that resources are limited, spending is out of control, distribution of healthcare is inequitable resulting in health inequalities, and some form of rationing is essential and inevitable. As usual, a lively Q&A session probed the topic further.

#### **NEXT WEEK’S SPEAKER**

**February 3rd**, Flemming Heilman will discuss “Capitalism, Socialism and Corporate Politics.”

**NOTE TO CBB CONTRIBUTORS:** next week's CBB scribe will be **TIM BROOKS**. Please send a copy of any remarks you want included in the CBB to **TIM** at [tbroo@aol.com](mailto:tbroo@aol.com).

**NOTE TO RMA Members:** The CBB Team works every week to write and publish an informative and concise bulletin for our members enjoyment. We can truly use new members to join the CBB Team. Please contact **JOE MANCINELLI** at [jlmanc@optonline.net](mailto:jlmanc@optonline.net) if you are interested in supporting this continuing effort.

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### RMA 2020 CALENDAR

Weekly Repetitive Activities			
Date	Time	Activity	Contact
Mondays	1:00pm	Outdoor Pickle Ball at Christiano Park	Tony Cocchi @ <a href="mailto:anthony.cocchi@lehman.cuny.edu">anthony.cocchi@lehman.cuny.edu</a>
Tuesdays	9:30 to 11:00	Platform Tennis, Loughlin Ave. Cos Cob	James Dean @ <a href="mailto:jhdeanco@gmail.com">jhdeanco@gmail.com</a>
Wednesdays	10:00to 11:00	RMA Weekly Zoom Meeting	Horst Tebbe @ <a href="mailto:onehorst@optimum.net">onehorst@optimum.net</a> or Len Carusi @ <a href="mailto:lencarusi@gmail.com">lencarusi@gmail.com</a>
Wednesdays	1:00 to 3:00	On-Line Bridge	Andre Mazurek @ <a href="mailto:mazurek.a.g@gmail.com">mazurek.a.g@gmail.com</a>
Wednesdays	3:00 to 4:00	Zoom: "Tai Chi New Joiners"	Will Morrison @ <a href="mailto:wdmorrison@gmail.com">wdmorrison@gmail.com</a>
Thursdays	9:00 AM	RMA Walking	Tad Larrabee @ <a href="mailto:tadlarra@optonline.net">tadlarra@optonline.net</a>
Fridays	1:00 PM	On-Line Hearts	Don Conway @ <a href="mailto:spiderduck4@gmail.com">spiderduck4@gmail.com</a>
Fridays	1:30pm to 3:00pm	Indoor Tennis	Andy Holmes @ <a href="mailto:andyholmes56@gmail.com">andyholmes56@gmail.com</a>
	Various Times TBD	On-Line Hearts	Don Conway @ <a href="mailto:spiderduck4@gmail.com">spiderduck4@gmail.com</a>