

***RETIREE MEN'S ASSOCIATION OF GREENWICH, Inc. (RMA)
invites you to attend its meeting on Wednesday, Dec.17, 2014.
First Presbyterian Church, Lafayette Place, Greenwich, CT.***

DR. ELIZABETH PISANI

***Corruption Makes The World Go Round: Lessons from Sex,
Drugs and Indonesia***



Dr. Elizabeth Pisani is a true polymath: with masters' degrees in Classical Chinese and Medical Demography and a PhD in Infectious Disease Epidemiology, she has worked as a journalist, a medical researcher, a policy wonk and an author, but describes herself simply as an "incurable analyst".

Her most recent work centres on understanding corruption. Why is it apparently more widespread in some countries than in others? Is it always harmful? Dr.

Pisani's preliminary conclusions are perhaps surprising: in highly diverse democracies, "corruption" can be a force for integration and stability. She argues for more nuanced analysis of the difference between "good" and "bad" corruption.

This approach -- taking a clear-eyed look at the evidence and then responding with common sense rather than by politicking or moralising -- dominated Dr. Pisani's work on HIV, a field she worked in for many years as a researcher and adviser to ministries of health across Asia as well as to the international and US public health establishment. It is colourfully described in her first book *The Wisdom of Whores; Bureaucrats, Brothels and the Business of AIDS*, described by *The Sunday Times* as "an important and a wise book" ... It's hard to think of anyone who shouldn't read it... the scenes in southeast Asia's grubbiest sex joints read like a glorious low-life travelogue, and she's funny, too"

Much of Dr. Pisani's analysis of corruption developed during her more recent exploration of the mystery that is Indonesia. Spread over 13,000 islands, its population of 250 million is overwhelmingly Moslem and enthusiastically democratic. Participation in elections is far higher than in the United States, and social media are abuzz with political gossip -- Jakarta tweets more than any other city on the planet -- yet citizens regularly joke that they wished there was a World Cup in corruption: Indonesia would be sure to win. Her new book, *Indonesia Etc.: Exploring the Improbable Nation*, attempts to unravel these and many other contradictions. The *New Yorker* called the book: "...exuberant and wise....Pisani is an exceptionally resourceful observer of the on-going battle to define Indonesia", while Simon Winchester, writing in *WSJ*, said it is "...a spectacular achievement. One of the best travel books I have read....Ms. Pisani is a force of nature"

Dr. Pisani's degrees are from Oxford and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. She has worked for Reuters and The Economist and still contributes essays to The New York Times and the Foreign Affairs Quarterly. She speaks two Asian and three European languages, and has given TED Talks in one of each. When possible, she retreats to her parents' home in Old Greenwich, and a "cannot-be-reached" cottage in the west of Ireland, where she indulges her enthusiasm for sea kayaking.

Our business meetings begin at 10, and our speakers are scheduled for 10:30. No Charge, and No Reservations are required. For additional information, call Bernard Schneider, 203-698-2558; bgsesq@gmail.com. See our website greenwichrma.org.