



CIGAR BOX BULLETIN

Retired Men's Association of Greenwich, Inc.

www.greenwichrma.org

This Bulletin is brought to you each week by these volunteers
Scribes: **Av Rivel, Kurt Schaffir, Arnold Gordon, Ed Farrell, Gerry Lessuk, George Stockbridge, Dan Fredland, Joe Mancinelli, Frank Scarpa, Marshall Toppo.** On leave: **Steve Elliott,**
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Volume 66 Number 14 August 8, 2018 Scribe: GEORGE STOCKBRIDGE

See Member Profile of Joe Dowling at end of meeting notes

President TAD LARRABEE rang the bell at 10am to start the meeting.
JOHN CARON led us in the Pledge of Allegiance.
Song leader JERRY SCHWENDEMAN directed us in singing "America the Beautiful", "Tie a Yellow Ribbon Round the Old Oak Tree" and "Bye Bye Blues", very ably accompanied on the Steinway by BOB MORGAN.
Corresponding secretary AV RIVEL related a tall tale about a farmer experiencing the Big City for the first time, and discovering a magic machine that changed old ladies into pretty young girls.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Returnees: STEVE BOIES from Cincinnati, OH & Calistoga, CA; CHET RISIO from Mad River, VT. RICH BISK gave a short summary of last week's speaker's lecture on Transcendental Meditation. He said we can find more on www.tm.org/videos.
2. JOHN CRAINE announced that the annual Raft-Up will be Thursday, August 9. It will feature both sailing craft and power craft. Gather about noon at the picturesque anchorage off Great Captain's Island. The itinerary will include Island Beach and Wee Captain Island. The Raft-Up should wrap up about 2:30pm.

COMMITTEES

MEMBERSHIP: ED FARRELL gave the Membership Report: There were 89 members and 1 guest Bob Meaney, guest of HORST TEBBE. Celebrating birthdays were PETER CRUMBINE, 80; BILL BURKE, 77 and JOE MANCINELLI, 68.

VOLUNTEER HOURS GEOFFREY BURGESS reported on Volunteer hours for the week ending 8-8-18: There were 307 hours from 107 RMA members for outside activities; 107 hours by 17 members for RMA activities. PETER BERG had the most hours, forty.

THIS WEEK'S SPEAKER: BOB ROBINS informed us that today's speaker will be RMA member ROBERT WHITBY, speaking on the subject "Climbing Six and a half of the Seven Summits".

NEXT WEEK'S SPEAKER: GEORGE UBOGY advised us that next week's speaker will be GEORGE UBOGY, speaking on "A Passion for Music" including musical plagiarism; the Cornell Chimes and the art of making a musical arrangement.

SPECIAL EVENTS: MIKE FERRARESE. See details below.

FUN AND GAMES

BRIDGE: LEN SAARI gave us the scores: JOHN HOFFMAN was high man at 2200; JOHN FEBLES with 1600; close behind was BERT KLEBANOW with 1580. There were 7 players. Note: There is no bridge next week, August 15, as the YMCA is closed.

GOLF: JIM SANTORA informed us that on Tuesday, August 7, 14 golfers braved the heat; 6 played all 18 holes. Closest to the pin on 7 was BRUCE PANTANO. None of the 6 hit the green on 15. Longest drive on 17 was made by ROS CURTIS. Next week's host will be PETER STERN. Notice before you sign up: The Griff will be aerating the greens so there will be some temporary greens and reduced greens fees for \$20.

TENNIS: MIKE AMOROSO said that next season the fee for a full year of tennis will be \$440; for a half year \$220, beginning 9-9-18.

PICKLEBALL: JOHN KNIGHT reported on pickleball. He said the town has resurfaced and repainted the 4 courts. They can accommodate 16 players at a time; nets are provided, as are balls to play. Last Thursday there were 8 players. He invited us all to come out and play. Games are at the Loughlin tennis courts Thursdays from 9 to 11 a.m.

HEARTS: JACK SWEGER reported they had 12 players at hearts on August 1. There were 3 tables. Table 1 completed 3 games. All three were won by GRANT PERKINS. Table 2 played 2 games. Both were won by ED FARRELL. Table 3 finished 2 games. PETER STERN won both of them. LOU TRAVATO and PETER STERN shot the moon twice; GRANT PERKINS, ED FARRELL and JOHN STANKUNAS each made the moon trip once. JACK invited all who like to play hearts to come.

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) or

ABBEY SMOLER (abbeysmoler@gmail.com / 203-531-0235).

Sound Water Cruise: August 30, 2-4 p.m. Snacks served aboard. Cost \$35 Self-drive. Status: 5 openings.

Goodspeed Opera House, "The Drowsy Chaperone" Oct. 25. Lunch at the Gelston House, \$125pp Bus leaves St Catherine's at 9:15am Status: 23 openings.

TODAY'S SPEAKER

RMA member **ROBERT WHITBY**. He started climbing mountains when he was 10, with his dad. Since that time, he's climbed peaks in Australia, South America, U.S. Denali in Alaska, France's Mont Blanc in Europe, Kilimanjaro in Africa, and more than halfway up Mount Everest when he became ill. He spent many weeks and \$80,000 in a Tibet hospital recovering. His talk was richly punctuated with color slides, some of them showing them hanging on to ropes or rope ladders up sheer icy slopes.

NEXT WEEK'S SPEAKER

GEORGE UBOGY Re: Musical Passion and Plagiarism

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Member Profile of JOE DOWLING

This is the 26th in a series of Member Profiles intended to allow Members to get to know each other beyond a face and name tag

JOSEPH MICHAEL DOWLING, Jr. was born April 18, 1939 in Newark, NJ. He was the first child of a couple married only a year prior. Anne Wiegand and Joseph Michael Dowling, Sr., were a bright young couple but the responsibility of fatherhood was more than Joe, Sr. could handle. Soon after a second child, Dianne, was born in 1941. A reprieve of sorts to the disintegrating marriage came with World War II. Joe, Sr. was drafted and in the ensuing years he never returned to the family.

This was the first of two traumatic events that would adversely affect young Joe. Both were devastating and determined the life that would follow. In his formative years, Joe's physical skills were evident in his ability to play football, baseball, handball and boxing. Those energies, in the absence of his father, were also applied to assuming early on the role of "man of the house". His earnings from shoveling snow, a paper route and carrying groceries for shoppers at the supermarket were put into the family coffers.

Those early years, while difficult, were not without their idyllic moments. One of these was the annual summer trip to visit an aunt on Clark Island in Maine. Those carefree summers. Rafting and swimming in the ocean, soon came to an end in 1952.

Polio, a disease that affects the central nervous system, was most active in summer months. Parents were apprehensive of their children playing in public places. In 1952, three years before Jonas Salk perfected the polio vaccine, the incidence of polio cases peaked.



Joe, 18 years old and his 1955 Lincoln. Leg braces are under his trousers

That Maine summer, the energetic thirteen-year old Joe felt the first signs of weakness and lethargy. The ensuing days of exhaustion laid bare that his life had been seriously altered. Near or total incapacity of his lower leg muscles would require leg braces and crutches. But to a determined boy of 13 these only stiffened his resolve. He would walk again.

**Nov, 1982, the New York City Marathon, 26.2 Miles, 25,000 plus racers
Race start; The Verrazano-Narrows bridge. Race finish; Central Park**

"Fifteen minutes into the race I realized that I had won a victory of sorts. My attempts to enter the race had previously been denied by the race committee on the grounds that I, and others like me, would present a hazard to the other racers. Our efforts to claim the right of disabled wheelchair racers to participate had become the "Movement" and was encouraged by the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act the previous year.

Determined to race, three of us wheelchair racers managed to discreetly hide among the throng of non-elite runners well out of sight of race officials and out of contact with each other. I had one dominant thought; failure to finish was not an option.

For the preceding two years I had trained more than 20 hours a week to be physically and mentally fit for what lay ahead. As I rolled off the bridge I encountered the uneven road surface which was often obscured by fellow racers less than 6" in front and on both sides of me. There was never an opportunity to break free of the pack which meant holding back on the downhills; usually the favorite part of any course. Without restraint I could hit 30 miles an hour downhill. Organizers used that premise to declare wheelchairs "inherently unsafe" for road racing.

But on this day, and in the years that followed, the other racers were not only supportive but encouraging.

"Wheelchair on the right, wheelchair on the left" could be heard throughout with the occasional "Can I give you a little help up the hill?" and the "Go man" and "You're amazing".

My favorite was in Harlem: a woman dressed to the nines going to or coming from church who greeted me with a cheery, "Welcome to Harlem, Baby, the best city in town". That did not overshadow the awestruck little children spectating in Brooklyn.

As I neared the finish, I realized I had not only raced but, I had protested unfair treatment. At the finish line I shuttled to one side for a quick removal from sight. But even that could not diminish the euphoria I felt of the race and its people."

(Joe had finished third with a not too shabby time of 3:07 behind two legends of the sport; Bobby Hall was first and Marty Ball was second.)

In the early 1950s the streets of Newark fostered a "wiseguy" attitude in Joe's mid-teens. He soon realized the life of a street punk would end badly. He buckled down and became a serious student especially good in math. He set his mind on becoming a CPA and would be the first in his family to attend college. He took a full time job at Prudential Life Insurance and attended night classes at Seton Hall University. He graduated in 1965 and took a job with a small CPA firm and worked toward his own certification. On becoming a CPA his next job was with the accounting firm, Arthur Young & Company.

A brief first marriage for Joe, his mother's second marriage, and increased managerial positions at work gave Joe a wider vision of life and greater grasp of what he could achieve in life.



In his prime in the 1990's

His passion for classical music led him to learn to play the Hammond organ. That instrument requires the organist to also play the foot pedals. No small endeavor, but Joe still had some function in his legs. He also took up the recorder and the flute. He eventually focused on the flute and took lessons at the Dalcroze School of Music. His life took another turn. He met another flutist, Mary Fike.

Romance blossomed and Joe and Mary were married on New Year's Day in 1978. Later that year they had their first child, Sean. They had moved into a white colonial home in Old Greenwich. At thirty nine years old, Joe now had what 25 years earlier appeared to be impossible; a lovely wife and home, a child, absorbing hobbies and a great job. But "big firm" life nagged at his independent spirit. He quit his job, opened his own CPA office and struck out on his own in 1979.

1989, Oita International Wheelchair Marathon, Oita Prefecture, Japan

"In 1989 I was invited to race in Oita, Japan; my first International Championship event. Five hundred wheelchair racers with more than 200 from more than 50 countries. It was established in 1984. It was, and still is, the largest wheelchair race on the planet. All we have heard about Japanese precision and top drawer treatment is true and it was manifested with no detail ignored.

What a rush to be on the starting line with unarguably the very best and fastest racers in the world.

The opening event the night before was LA Olympic style. In attendance in different years was the Emperor's brother and his sister, Princess Keiko. As the team leader, I was chosen to be on the receiving line and honored to shake the hand of the Princess and bow graciously to the Prince.

The race itself almost defies description. What can you really say about 26.2 miles with men and women pushing as hard and as fast as they can to beat an old rival or a new friend. The time passed so quickly, even after a 10 minute stop to repair a front tire. That disappointment was forgotten when the panoply of the closing award ceremonies began." (Joe has competed 9 times in Oita. It is still his favorite with #10 on his bucket list when he turns 80.)

As Joe entered middle age, with the challenge of mastering a successful business career well on its way, he entered another phase of his life. Always a fine athlete, he now looked forward to swimming, weight lifting, handcycling and wheelchair races.

The Burke Rehabilitation Hospital in White Plains offered the perfect venue for Joe's ambitions. He joined their swim team, lifted weights and for the first time, borrowed a racing wheelchair. He found racing around the Burke campus was exhilarating. So he entered wheelchair races. His embrace of disability competition coincided with a world wide attitudinal change. A disability is not something to be pitied but an opportunity to challenge one's self.

This was the challenge Joe's psyche demanded. As a member of the Burke Bullets Joe and his teammates entered competitions nationwide.

The 1980s saw an increase in disabled competitions and Joe was right there. In 1981 Joe was in his early forties and it marked the beginning of his athletic career. It also noted the additions to his family of their second child, Shannon, and the third, Erin.

The barriers to disabled participation in competitive sports were being shattered and public perception had become positive. Joe still entered swimming competitions but his focus was more on wheelchair racing. From 1988, when he won the NYC Marathon, through 2012 Joe appeared in approximately 133 competitions for wheelchair racing,

swimming, billiards, weight lifting, triathlons and hand cycling. Apart from events all over the US his competitive spirit took him to Switzerland, Australia, Japan and Canada. Through all of these endeavors he maintained a strenuous workout ethic. Rising early to exercise and keep fit and cycling 100 or more miles a week. He also set an example for his children, urging them to do their best in school and athletics. Joe joined the RMA in 2016 and was sponsored by Wayne Wright. He volunteered for the Tax Assistance Program with Martin Waine. He played with the hearts group and is now on the Pickleball roster.



Joe's family and in-laws

2003 The Midnight Sun Ultra Challenge, Fairbanks, Alaska

“Now called the Alaska Challenge, this race initiated a handcycle category. It is a 267 mile stage race over six consecutive days from Fairbanks to Anchorage. To say it is demanding and difficult is obvious from its description as “The Iditarod of Wheelchair and Handcycle Racing”. It is straight down the main highway thru Denali Park. The natural beauty of Alaska makes it feel like just a stroll in the park. Even the ever present grizzlies and moose were not enough to keep me from competing. Doing double marathons each day was exhilarating and challenging. Each racer had his own crew of two following him/her every foot of the way in a car to provide safety from the eighteen wheelers who owned the road, hand down water, assist with the God forbid equipment failure and provide minor medical aid from blisters, cuts and bruises.

A day's race can take anywhere from 2.5 to 8 hours and spread over a 55 mile course. Many of the towns volunteer to put on that night's feast and often the townspeople attending far outnumber the 100 or so racers, crews and general race volunteers. My last Alaska Challenge was In 2011 at age 72. I was the oldest finisher. Seven down with one more to do. At age 80 my bucket list is short but keeps me going

An illness that could have doomed Joe to a life of indolent apathy instead had compelled him to reach out far beyond the bonds that held him in restraint. His was a life of setting goals far beyond what was expected. He determined early on that which confined him would not define him.

His motto is simple; “Life—just live it.”