



Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

Weekly Newsletter

Date February 2, 2009

Reporter: PIETER KARK

Editor: NICK NICHOLS

We had an exciting, fully-packed meeting with an excellent attendance. SCOTT GLISSMEYER led the Pledge of Alliance.

VISITORS & GUESTS

TONY CARRASCO introduced Visiting Rotarians and Guests. Visiting Rotarians included the incoming District Governor Loren Harper from Warm Springs Rotary, and both Lei-Lani Keelan and William Grindley from Palo Alto University Rotary. We also had TOM GRACON's guests Lisa Stotler and Dionne Bunsha, CHESLEY DOUGLAS' guest Debra Lepold, TONY CARRASCO's guest Sumi introduced by BRUCE LIEDSTRAND, and JUDITH STEINER's guest Lotay Rinchen from Bhutan.

OPENING REMARKS

BOB WHITEHAIR made opening remarks by pointing out how Eleanor Roosevelt's life and contributions illustrate Rotary's Four-Way Test.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Lei-Lani Keelan invited us all to attend the University Club's Fund Raiser and Silent Auction, which will be held Saturday, March 3rd at the Palo Alto Sheraton Hotel from 5:30 until everything is concluded. Details are available through the University Club (www.paloaltouniversityrotary.org).

KEVIN CURRY asked us to suggest restaurants, and to match restaurant donations for our own Palo Alto Rotary Club's Fund Raiser and Silent Auction, "An Enchanting Evening" (March 21st). When a member donates \$50 to match a restaurant's \$50 donation, the result is a \$100 item for the Silent Auction. Sign-up sheets for Restaurant Matching Funds will be on our tables again next week. Brian Steen thanked those who have generously donated wine, and asked for 9 or 10 more of us to make wine donations for our Silent Auction.

AXEL MERK will discuss the State of the Economy for us at Ming's on February 11th from 4:30 to 5:30 (followed by a no-host bar). Please register by sign-up sheets on tables, or contact Prez MIKE.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Lotay Rinchen gave a 10-minute slide presentation on Bhutan, an ancient kingdom in the Himalayas between the northeastern portion of India and China, and as of a year ago, by efforts of the new king (educated at Harvard and Oxford), the world's newest democracy. The Royal Family has established Gross National Happiness, a mixture of material and spiritual improvement. Bhutan is a beautiful, spiritual place to visit and the wild marijuana is all fed to pigs, none to people. MIKE COUCH encouraged us to go.

PROGRAM

Dionne Bunsha, a Stanford Knight Fellow, spoke to us on "Who's Riding the Tiger? Exploring the Underbelly of the Shining India Hype". It was a fascinating and insightful talk on the problems India faces, with its dichotomy of having more billionaires than any other country, but with half the population of cities like Mumbai (Bombay) living in slums or on the streets, and long-standing national policies that have driven many farmers into overwhelming debt, poverty, and suicide. Contaminated water leads to hundreds of thousands of deaths each year from diarrhea – a preventable disease. Corruption is a key issue, but there are visionaries living the lessons of Gandhi, who are the likely movers to turn matters around.

The talk led to a question and answer period, with input from BETSY BECHTEL on the problems of infrastructure and clean drinking water, RALPH ADAMS on India's contradictions of gender and religious prejudice, VICKY CHING on class structure, ROB LANCEFIELD on farming and failing banks, BILL LOVE on bribery interfering with the work of charities, DICK FREEMAN on the conflict in Kashmir (Bunsha placed that on Nehru's failing to keep his word on a plebiscite), SY GREENSTONE on his observations on a trip some years ago, JUDITH STEINER on the value of donating computers to villages, and DIANA DIAMOND on whether the government is corrupt, lazy, or indifferent (yes to all).

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

[Palo Alto Rotary - Speakers Schedule](#)

February 9 – Dr. Jennifer Tremmel – "Women's Heart Health"

February 16 – Dark for President's Day

February 23 – Erie Mills – "the Making of an American Opera Singer: the Evolution Into and Out Of a Singing Career"

NEARBY MEETING PLACES:

[Palo Alto Rotary - Meeting Information](#)