



Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

Weekly Newsletter

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Reporter: GEOFF ZIMAN

Editor: NICK NICHOLS

“Well, how was the Rotary meeting today?”

Much as usual. DICK MANSFIELD efficiently noted the visitors. E.J. HONG suitably supervised the electronic sign-in. KAY WILSON took good care of the lunch monies and tickets. STEVE MADSEN had the setup ably taken care of (except that there was a podium microphone glitch, which caused a little delay in the start of the meeting).

President MIKE McMAHON got things under way ** by leading the Pledge of Allegiance. He then proceeded to welcome visitors. Ex-Club member and Panama expat MARK HEYER brought fellow Boquete Panama Rotary Club member, Jim McCallum. Rotarian Lawyer Sabine Decker from Augsburg, Germany was welcomed. Members with visitors included: CASH ALAEE with James Wright (Citibank branch manager); TOM GRACON with Joel Heimlich (guest of speaker); RICK RAYBIN with Oliver Coolidge; ANNETTE GLANCKOPF with Brian Schmidt (water district executive); WALT HAYS with Kristin Wu (attorney); MIKE COUCH with Wendy Qiu and Boshiauw Hsu (Gunn HS YCS -Interact); DAVID NEGRIN with wife Shirley; DAVE THORNTON with wife Mary Alice.

BRUCE SWENSON provided opening remarks on the appropriate theme for Valentine's Day. He traced the history of this event from a Papal Saints' Day practice starting in 500 AD through to references from Chaucer and Shakespeare. Apparently, from late 18th century through 1950, insulting vinegar (Anti -Valentine) cards were often sent (even COD!); and he showed two interesting examples. Some Valentine facts he quoted were: 110 million roses (mostly grown in South America) are bought; 73% of the cards are sent by men; 15% of the cards are sent by women to themselves; 3% of the cards are sent to pets; in total more than 1 billion cards are sent, of which 650 million are sent by children in the 8 – 10 age group, with teachers being the most popular recipients. [Editorial note: I wonder how the wildly increasing use of social networks will impact these figures in the future.]



ROB LYMAN reminded members that by attending the upcoming special Endowment Meeting they could learn more about planned giving. Date is Wednesday, February 23 from 7 – 9 PM at the Borel Bank on Lytton Avenue in Palo Alto. RSVP to Rob at robl@ljwealth.com by Wednesday, February 16. Rob's message was amplified by JOYCE CUSICK. As beneficiaries of good fortune, we have an obligation to help secure the future. Charity begins at home.

WALT HAYS got to the podium to introduce former club member Mark Heyer, so that he could show



pictures of the town of Boquete, Panama, where he is now living. Mark used his pictures to dramatically illustrate the impact of the local literary project that our club has contributed to.

Mark explained how great the need is, and how he would like to expand the project to a larger area of Panama.

At this point TOM GRACON introduced our speaker Dr. Larry Gerston. Well-known as a San Jose State University professor, political analyst on TV and radio, op-ed columnist and author of numerous books on political topics, Dr. Gerston was amply qualified to discuss his topic “California Meltdown: Can This State be Saved?” He started by vigorously pointing out that



California is a big state with big problems. He reviewed our infrastructure meltdown, our failing public education, our increasingly expensive higher education, our deteriorating highways, our expanding prison population, our failure to produce enough qualified

people for the future and the growing chasm between the haves and have-nots. The government is spending more than we take in and the shortfall is \$20 billion. He attributed a good part of the problem to sales tax exemptions and the inequalities arising from Proposition 13. Businesses do not move as frequently as people do with the result that property taxes on businesses have dropped to only 20% of the total. He colorfully described California as a “Pasture of sacred cows.” Starting from this dismal picture, he castigated term limits, too many bills written by lobbyists and state

ballot referendums. Local governments were also on his list of failing institutions; and he questioned the economics of Santa Clara County having 32 different school districts, 9 separate police departments, and 16 separate fire departments. In response to a question, he gave praise for passage of the new redistricting referendum. Although not entirely an uplifting talk, members seemed to be impressed by the lively, well-delivered, and thought-provoking presentation.

Before concluding, two additional pieces of club business were hastily conducted. STEVE EMSLIE reminded members of the Saturday, April 9 Club Fundraiser, before having JOHN KIDD conduct a quick auction. Natalie Hong (daughter of E.J.) had provided four boxes of delectable cup cakes. One pair of these boxes went to DAVE PRICE for \$60 and another pair to TODD LEWIS + SALLY TOMLINSON for \$50. ROGER SMITH made off with two tickets to the Stanford-USC Basketball game for \$30.

Reminder: There will be a regular meeting next Monday, February 21 (President's Day)"

*** The latest style manuals say this spelling form, as opposed to "under weigh" is now preferred. The important point is that, however it is spelled (or spelt), it is a suitably colorful (or colourful) term to use in connection with an ex-mariner. [No wonder people find ESL classes difficult!]*

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Palo Alto Rotary - Speakers Schedule

February 21 – **Hans Steiner**, *ADD: Driven to Distraction*

February 28 – **Leeor Neta**, *A Second Chance for East Palo Alto Youth*

March 7 – **Jay Thorwaldson** (PA Weekly), *Top Ten Stories of My Career*

March 14 – **Cash Alaei**, *Reflections on Iran*

March 21 – **Chris Longhurst**, *Data-Driven Approaches to Improve Health and Healthcare*

March 28 – **Ken DeLeon**, *Overcoming Adversity*