

Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

Weekly Newsletter

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Editor: LYLE CONNELL

CALL TO ORDER

President **HAL MICKELSON** opened the meeting at 12:26 and introduced **KAREN KIENZLE**, who led the Pledge of Allegiance.

President **HAL** introduced Visiting Rotarians Julie Schatz, Financial Planner, Menlo Park; and Lancelot Lin, Real Estate Developer, Keelung, Taiwan, who gave us a banner from his club.

Guests of Rotarians: **ROB LYMAN'S** wife Catherine Lyman; **BILL BETHKE'S** wife Marlene; **MIKE BAIRD'S** guest, Jennifer Ellison; **ANNETTE GLANCKOPF'S** guest, Jackie Schoelerman; and our former member **NICK NICHOLS**, now living among the urban sophisticates of San Francisco, the guest of **JOHN KIDD**.

OPENING REMARKS

LE LEVY was inspired by a friend planning to retire in a couple of years. The friend asked LE what he should do in retirement, what sort of social engagements should he have? LE suggested he consider joining a Rotary Club. There he would find social contact, the opportunity for community service, and interaction with a broad range of members from business, as well as non-profits, and government. When considering retirement, consider Rotary.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

BILL BUSSE, BRUCE GEE, and TODD LEWIS created a special 95th birthday card for **SAM WEBSTER** from the Club.



The January 14th edition of the Club Telecommunications List, prepared by **JOYCE CUSICK** and printed by **BRUCE GEE**, was distributed to the folders.

President **HAL** announced that beginning in May, our Club will charge \$18 for lunch. (Rotary Clubs in Los Altos, Los Altos Sunset and elsewhere nearby are currently charging \$20 for meals.)

PRESIDENT'S CLUB CONTRIBUTIONS

ED DANGLER made a contribution to the President's Club to thank **JOCELYN VILLARUZ**, who greeted him with flowers after his recent hip replacement at Stanford Hospital.

GINNY LEAR visited former member and current Under Secretary of Education, **MARTHA KANTER**, during a visit to Washington for the Inauguration.

BILL BUSSE contributed \$132 in honor of **SAM WEBSTER'S** 95th birthday plus his 37 years in Rotary.

PROGRAM

ROB LYMAN introduced our Speaker Professor Lawrence Lessig. He is director of the [Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics at Harvard University](#) and the Roy L. Furman Professor of Law at [Harvard Law School](#). Previously, he was a professor of law at [Stanford Law School](#) and founder of the [Center for Internet and Society](#).



Professor Lessig started by stating that every law professor is a wanna-be physicist, who is interested in theoretical anomalies. His anomaly of interest is how democracy works. He cited, as an example, what was the #1 issue in Congress in 2011, the Bank Swipe Fee Controversy. How should the swipe fee be divided between the bank, the credit card company, and the merchant? This occurred at a time when the U.S. was engaged in 2 wars and an extremely high unemployment rate. He went on to point out that the Congress is dependent on a small number of funders for their re-election and tends to keep their funders happy. As an example, the Democratic leadership in the House recommends to newly-elected members to spend 4 hours per day calling contributors, compared to 2 hours/day on Committee or Floor assignments, and 1 to 2 hours/day on constituent service. "Always lean to the green!" This is not some environmental interest. Professor Lessig alleges that the U.S. has evolved from the hopes of James Madison that the government should be exclusively dependent on the people alone, to one in which the government is dependent on the funders. 75% of Americans believe that money buys results in the Congress. This belief undermines trust in Congress. In fact, a higher percentage of Americans had trust in the British Crown at the time of the American Revolution than the percentage of Americans who today trust Congress. The Congressional agenda is based on which issues will raise money; the target is campaign cash. The goal of many in Congress is to become a lobbyist on K Street, where the average increase in income from that of a Congressman is 1,452%.

Professor Lessig has founded an organization called Rootstrikers to address this problem. Members who would like more information about the material in Larry Lessig's presentation can contact Szelena Gray, Campaign Director of Rootstrikers, who was Larry's guest at the meeting, at szelena@rootstrikers.org. The web site for the organization is simply www.rootstrikers.org. He has also written a book, [Republic, Lost: How Money Corrupts Congress—and a Plan to Stop It](#), which is available on Amazon.com.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

February 4 **Larry Gerston, Professor of Political Science, San Jose State**, Post-Election/2013 Political Update

February 11 **Eric Westervelt, Knight Fellow**, North Africa Experiences

February 18 **Thomas Phillips, Former Chief Justice of the Texas Supreme Court**, "California's Supreme Court: Even Stranger Than Texas"