

# Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

Weekly Newsletter

Date: February 4, 2013

Reporter: DON MORGAN

Editor: LYLE CONNELL

PRESIDENT HAL began the meeting at 12:28, with PAM BRANDIN leading the Pledge. He announced that the wife of former District Governor Arley Marley was in hospice care and asked members to sign one of the circulating cards for them.

After ten minutes for further conversation and socializing at the tables, HAL welcomed back former member KLAUS HEINEMANN, visiting from the Guala, CA, club. At his invitation BEN THRELKELD introduced his guest Jean Hamilton, WALTER HAYS introduced his guest Gerry Mack, KRISTIN WU introduced Nancy Shepherd, and LIZ KNISS introduced Barbara Swenson, whose husband, BRUCE, was very interested in today's program but had a conflicting engagement.

RICK RAYBIN's Thought for the Day addressed two events that occurred during the preceding weekend. First he dealt with and largely demolished the widespread belief that Punxsutawney Phil or any other groundhog could predict an early spring. Wowing the audience with his research into ancient European weather lore, he related use of a sacred bear as a prognosticator of spring. He also found similarities between Groundhog Day and the pagan festival of Imbolc, traditionally associated with the onset of lactation of ewes and the lambing season. Second, and briefer, he asked "Was it voodoo that caused the lights to go out?" evoking laughter among those who had watched the suddenly darkened Super Bowl.



Awards followed: a four star Paul Harris pin HAL handed to ART STAUFFER;



a three star one HAL received from BERT ROSE;

and a Blue Badge for MIKE BAIRD from BEN THRELKELD.



21-24. He urged members to donate items for auctioning at the Club's annual fundraiser evening, on March 2 at the University Club featuring live music, probably by a jazz combo. In a sacred vein he invited members to hear GEORGE FITZGERALD preach at Stanford's Memorial Church on the first Sunday of Lent, February 17, at 10am.



The meeting sang a hearty Happy Birthday to DIANA DIAMOND.

At HAL's request the meeting roundly applauded Program Committee Chair ANDY COE for arranging the talk by last week's featured speaker, Lawrence Lessig.

Not to be outdone, ART STAUFFER introduced as today's main attraction famed political analyst, professor and journalist, Larry Gerston. His topic was Post-Election/2013 Political Update. He



covered a lot of ground in a lively fashion. He proudly told of a 40 minute phone conversation with Jerry Brown that the Governor initiated by asking how Gerston could see so many things wrong with California, while he saw so many good things. The professor attributed President Obama's surprising success in large part to mining voter statistics in an incredible way, using a 120 member strong social media team, obtaining more funds from

more contributors than in 2008, and raising \$40 million just from sales of Obama fashion items, such as pins and apparel. He also cited portraying Mitt Romney as a bad person, early and often, more than offsetting the President's somnolence throughout the first debate. But more than the Democrats winning, he saw the Republicans really losing big time, by among other self-inflicted wounds, the machinations of the Tea Party, some almost unimaginable blunders by Senate candidates, and a foreign policy tour from which Romney should not have returned. He thought that Obama would enjoy a large measure of success in advancing his agenda during the next two years, but not thereafter. He returned to California politics, noting that the last time the Democrats held more than two-thirds of both legislative bodies and the Governorship was 1883. An animated Q&A session concluded the meeting, save for PRESIDENT HAL'S award of a dictionary to a needy student in honor of Larry Gerston, and a resounding round of applause for his presentation.

## UPCOMING PROGRAMS

- 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"
- February 25 Laurie Smith, Sheriff, Santa Clara County, Topic: TBA

Info: [www.rotarypaloalto.org](http://www.rotarypaloalto.org)