

Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

Weekly Newsletter

Date: February 11, 2013

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WHAT AN INCREDIBLE BONANZA!

Once again we were treated to an outstanding presentation by one of Stanford's Knight Fellows. Today's talk was among the very best. Eric Westervelt brought us up to date on the volatile scene in the Middle East and North Africa, while including his thoughts on the future of journalism in this digital age. Our thanks to TOM GRACON for arranging to have the Knight Fellows share with us their views on world affairs. Take a look at the more detailed account of Eric's presentation in "OUR PROGRAM" below.

WITHOUT A QUESTION...

The singing of "America the Beautiful" and "It's a Grand Old Flag"



was a great substitute for the Pledge of Allegiance. Special thanks to our pianist Nicholas Isaacs, a guest of MIKE COUCH, or whatever his name is....Prez HAL couldn't quite come up with Mike's name. And according to my sources, that was only the

second time Hal has ever made a mistake. What was the first time you ask? That was the time he thought he had made a mistake, but hadn't!

BESIDES MIKE'S GUEST...our esteemed pianist...our other guests were the speaker's wife, Lisa Woo, and Rotarian Jim Grace of the Saratoga Club.

OUR VALENTINE SWEETHEART AUDREY RUST



....gave us the historical background on St. Valentine's Day along with some of the unusual customs related to this special day. For example, approximately 1 billion cards are purchased...85% by women! The average spent by each "lover" is \$131. (Gad zooks! Some folks out there must be buying the equivalent of the Hope diamond.) Oh yes...you should

know that Ken and Barbie were engaged on Valentines Day, which led AUDREY to suggest that we all call a friend and tell him or her that we love them. Perhaps a card will do!

DICTIONARIES WILL BE GIVEN OUT TO GREEN OAKS ACADEMIANS!

MIKE COUCH invited our members to accompany him in

handing out 100 books to some very happy kids at the Green Oaks Academy in East Palo Alto. He promises it will light up your life.

CAMEROON ANYONE?

The dates for our trip will be November 9 to 16. Coordinator SUSAN LUTTER would like a commitment by early March. This is an outstanding opportunity to experience International Service first hand. Contact Susan at 650.283.5271 for details.

A HOLE IN ONE BY JOHN O'KEEFE?

You've got to be kidding!

WE'RE BAKING CLAMS ON SATURDAY MARCH SECOND!

According to our main man, CASH ALAEE, the dress will be casual...preppy, if you'd like...but the cuisine will be anything but casual...whatever that means. Anyway, make plans now and invite friends, relatives & neighbors to join us at the University Club from 6 to 10 pm for what may be our best ANNUAL FUND RAISER ever! Auction items will be accepted for a few more days, as will corporate sponsors. Bring your checkbook next meeting. KATIE will be more than willing to sign you and your guests up!

ROMAN JOINS THE PRESIDENT'S CLUB!

Due to Monday business activities with his associates in Moscow, ROMAN KAGARLITSKY has missed every meeting since President HAL came on board. As a penance ROMAN, contributed 3,000 rubles to The Club. Spasiba, Roman!



OUR PROGRAM WAS..."NORTH AFRICAN and MIDDLE EAST EXPERIENCES"

And what experiences Knight Fellow Eric Westervelt has had! Eric took leave from Reed College at age 19 to work for NPR and rose to lead reporter. His travels are mind boggling. 25 times in Iraq...numerous visits to Afghanistan...to Israel for purported peace talks, which morphed into 5 wars and numerous skirmishes...in Tahrir Square, Cairo, for the very

first mass protest...in Damascus for a year studying Arabic...spent time in Benghazi, which he described as a weird chaotic place and was in Tunisia covering their Arab Spring.

Eric has certainly seen first hand what we have read about...which leads to his basic topic, "*The lack of international news coverage in this digital age.*"

O Most papers no longer cover international news as they did before the Internet.

O We need reporters on the ground to get to know in depth what goes on.

O The New York Times and Wall Street Journal are the only American papers still committed to foreign news. NPR is still in the field.

O Syria doesn't get the coverage it deserves. It is a very dangerous place for reporters. A plus is that the young people in Syria upload comments and photos to U-Tube, Facebook, and Twitter.

O Eric is working to find ways to help solve the lack of foreign coverage. How do we adapt in the Internet Age?

You just read an example of the afore mentioned media problem...Poor coverage by your Cub Reporter. However, if you were at the meeting, you were treated to a first class presentation on a vital subject. Our thanks again to TOM GRACON for his continuing recruitment of Knight Fellows. Simply outstanding!

JOURNALISTIC FOOTNOTE

Our speaker's presentation regarding news media coverage of international issues reminded President HAL of the old joke about the end of the world, as reported by leading newspapers: The New York Times: "*World Ends: Third World Hit Hardest.*"...The Wall Street Journal: "*World Ends: Dow Down 13,600.*"...The Washington Post: "*World Ends: Unnamed Source Says White House Knew in Advance.*" And the Palo Alto Weekly: "*World Ends: City Council Sets Two-Year Study of Effect on Neighborhoods.*"

CLUB FOOTNOTE

We will not be dark, but instead will meet as usual, on Presidents' Day, Monday, February 18.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

February 18, Tom Phillips, former Chief Justice of the Texas Supreme Court, will be talking about "California's Wild and Woolly Supreme Court: Even Stranger Than Texas."

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

Info: www.rotarypalalto.org