

Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

Weekly Newsletter

Date: April 8, 2013

Reporter: GINNY LEAR

Editor: LYLE CONNELL

BOB SMITHWICK'S Memorial Service is Friday, April 19, 1:45 p.m., in the Smithwick Theatre on the Foothill College campus. A violin virtuoso will begin the service and an open forum will be included. **Free Parking** will be available in Lot 1, with stairs up to the Theatre, or in Lot 5, with a flat walk across the campus – best for handicapped or wheelchair access. Allow yourself extra time.

Today's meeting began with President **HAL** inviting **GINNY LEAR** to lead the Pledge of Allegiance. Visiting Rotarians were Klaus Heinemann of Gualala Rotary, plus Carmen Solarzano and President-elect Ramesh Hariharan of the EPA Bayshore Rotary Club (with an announcement listed at the end of this Pinion). Rotarians with guests were: Neil Rauschhuber, introduced by **WALT HAYS**; Christy McDonald, by **BEN THRELKELD**; and Nancy Bjork by **JUDITH STEINER**.

Our Thought for the Day was inspirational, led by **BILL BUSSE**. It was about the Four Way Test as a



guide to life. We were invited by Bill to "stay with me" as it was a long trip back to the beginning. We started in Spokane, where Bill and Barbara went to watch the Stanford Women play BB and lose to Alabama. Then, we were back to 1942, with the Prescott High

School Badgers, where the saying on the gymnasium wall said "For when the One great scorer comes to write against your name, He writes – not that you won or lost – but how you played the game." **BILL**, the Four Way Test, the Stanford Women's BB Team, and the Prescott Badgers, ALL scored well here.

GEOFF ZIMAN joined the President's Club in honor of a new granddaughter. A \$50 Blue Light Special was offered and **BOB McCOWAN** announced that today was his birthday! Best Wishes **BOB**!

Future programs were announced as an inspiration to bring a guest, with potential as a member. A wine auction was held with two ½ cases of Edna Valley Chardonnay being purchased in spirited bidding by **JUDITH STEINER** and **BILL BUSSE**, with proceeds to PARC Annual Charities Fund. Thank you to the donor and bidders!

Team Rotary today was Welcome Desk: **DICK MANSFIELD**; Cashier: **ALEX SCOLLON**; Room set up: **STEVE MADSEN**; and Pinion writer: **GINNY LEAR**.

TOM GRACON introduced our outstanding speaker from the Stanford Knight Fellows Program: Melissa Chan. Melissa was born in Hong Kong and moved



to Southern California as a young child. She graduated from the London School of Economics and Yale Journalism School. As a reporter for Al Jazeera English for five years, she has covered the Beijing Olympics, earthquakes and

hepatitis outbreaks on college campuses, and is the first credentialed reporter asked to leave China in 14 years. She reports stories with very little editorial management, having filed over 400 stories, with only about half a dozen being turned down. We were shown clips of three stories reported (the full versions are available on YouTube, with links below.) The first one is on "Black Jails" where Chinese citizens are held secretly for very little reason, but often for having spoken out on local injustice. The existence of these jails is denied by officials at all levels of government. Next was a story on farmland being taken by local officials to develop, even when there is no demand for what is to be built. The story shows villagers accusing officials of violence. The last is on schools for young Communists. There are 78 million members of the Communist party in China. There is

a school for leaders and a Communist Youth League still exists for ideological education.

Melissa explained that she travels with a film crew of four and 12 pieces of equipment. They are often followed, their passports are copied and sent to police, the subject of an interview may be locally intimidated. Since the Olympics, there is much more repression of news for the people. There is a lot more surveillance and uncertainty. All social media are unavailable to the people, and the reports Melissa films are never seen by the local people.

Questions were many, beginning with why she was asked to leave China. There was no official explanation. Her work visa was not renewed and she was asked to leave in one hour, which she did. Melissa spoke of China's repression of any organization with a hierarchy, such as Falun Gong, which is extremely critical of China. The Epic Times news, which we see in the yellow boxes around town are published by Falun Gong. The Catholic Church with a Pope, Rotary, and the Tupperware company, are among a wide range of other examples. The question about Al Jazeera, owned by the head of the Qatar government, being unbiased, is one that is often asked. She said there is a "big wall" between funding and editorial. An important note is that none of the major American networks, ABC, CBS, and NBC have news bureaus in China.

Below are the links to the full versions of the reports Melissa shared:

1) The 5-minute report on black jails in China:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NsN4-A1G5zc>

2) The story on land grabs:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rB08UL-INXA>

3) My visit to an induction ceremony for young Communists:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KGczecC4hw>
[w](#)

Many thanks, Melissa, for this wonderful program.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: The President-elect of **The Rotary Club of EPA Bayshore** invited us to participate in their annual Grand Salsa (dancing) night and raffle which is a fundraiser for 200 hearing aids for needy people in India. Every dollar raised by RCEPA for this project is being double-matched by the RC of San Jose, up to \$2,000.

The event will be held at The Tequila Lounge, 851 Main St., Redwood City. For further information, contact P-E Ramesh at (408) 806-6217. It's a great party!

THE ROTARY CLUB OF PALO ALTO UNIVERSITY, sponsored by the Rotary Club of Palo Alto 25 years ago, has invited us to enjoy their annual Gala Fundraiser on May 4th, 6:00 – 9:00 pm., at the University Club, 3277 Miranda Ave, Palo Alto. Tickets are \$90 each. All proceeds benefit their various community and international service projects. Tickets are almost sold out, so if you would like to attend, please email Ted Marston (ted.marston@gmail.com) with a cc to President Eliot Terborgh, eliot@terborgh.net, at your earliest convenience. Another great Rotary party!

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

April 8 -- Melissa Chan, Knight Fellow, Topic TBA

April 15 - Palo Alto Mayor Greg Scharff, The State of the City

April 22 - Russ Hancock, President/CEO Joint Venture Silicon Valley, Topic TBA

April 29 - Emma Seppala, Associate Director, Stanford Center For

Compassion, Altruism and Education, Compassion and Service

Info: www.rotarypaloalto.org