

Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

Weekly Newsletter

Date: June 17, 2013

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Close to 12:15 PM, "pro tem" President STEVE EMSLIE opened the meeting and had us all engage in a salute to the flag, before allowing us to return to munch our lunch and engage in animated conversations.

When STEVE resumed his place at the podium, two visitors were introduced – Kathy Shen (Chief People Officer at Palo Alto City) by MONIQUE le CONGE, and Kathleen Alexander by HENRIETTA BURROUGHS.

After momentary confusion, SUSAN LUTTER was invited to give opening remarks. SUSAN provided us with an interesting list of events that had taken place on this date. It included such varied incidents as The Battle of Bunker Hill in 1775 and the Watergate Break-in in 1972.



STEVE EMSLIE then thanked the following members of the Presidential Debunking Dinner

Committee for their successful humiliating efforts last Monday: DICK FREEMAN, LE LEVY, JOHN KIDD, BILL BUSSE, BRUCE GEE, E.J. HONG (together with her two talented daughters, Nicole and Natalie), GINNY LEAR, KATIE SEEDMAN, SHERRI SAGER, ART STUAFFER, DARYL SAVAGE, and GLORIA HOM.

BEN THRELKELD, Chair of the Membership Committee, presented Blue Badge promotions to JON STOUMEN and MONIQUE le CONGE.



Paul Harris pins with multiple gems (= multiple kilobuck

contributions to the Rotary Foundation) were presented to MEL MATSUMOTO, CHALMERS SMITH, LOU KAVANAU, LEANNAH HUNT, JERRY ELKIND, HAL MICKELSON, BILL BUSSE, and CHESLEY DOUGLAS.

An announcement was made that those interested in the formation of a friendly bicycling group should meet with BRIAN STEEN and LE LEVY immediately after the meeting.

DIANA DIAMOND introduced our distinguished speaker who was Michael Kirst, President of the California State Board of Education and a Stanford University Professor in the business and education schools. He has five decades of active involvement in state education, as well as a close personal friendship with our governor, Jerry Brown. The speaker started by describing how the school system funding in the California State Budget had been completely overhauled, and how an entirely new approach is being made to setting up common core standards.

English language, arts, and mathematics are the key elements; and the aim is towards having fewer subjects, aiming higher and going deeper into them. Multiple choice testing would be replaced by computerized adapting tests with questions that required answers using evidence, interpretation and reasoning. The approach is more appropriate to the needs of the 21st century; and the changes represented much more than tinkering around the edges.



The speaker acknowledged that implementing the proposed changes presents a great challenge, but stated that there was strong support from industry and educators. The many foundations in the Bay Area concerned with education were united around the changes and pushing strongly for them.

In the question period, LE LEVY asked how the change would affect the responsibility of local school boards, and was told that more local control was intended. JOHN BARTON asked if there could be imposition of federal curriculums, but was assured that this cannot happen. GINNY LEAR expressed concern that this multi-year project could be derailed in future years, but it was explained that there was a clear non-partisan commitment; so there should not be concern. LEANNAH HUNT asked about funding and was assured that the new budget would mean more money to low-income districts with the big winners being charter schools. In response to a question from BETSY BECHTEL, we were told that the No Child Left Behind Program was outmoded. HENRIETTA BURROUGHS asked where opposition to this massive change might come from, and were there people who felt it was too radical and too hard to implement. The speaker did not seem to think that any significant opposition was likely for a variety of reasons.

Very appropriately, the giving of a dictionary to a third grader at Green Oaks Academy will be made, as usual, in honor of the speaker.

Next Monday, E.J. HONG will be taking over. On Monday, July 1, we will be dark because of the holiday that week. Note that the meeting on July 8 will be a trial run at our possible new meeting home, the Elk's Club on El Camino.

The operating crew today comprised KATIE SEEDMAN handling visitors, MEL MATSUMOTO taking the lunch money, MONIQUE le CONGE riding herd over the sign-in, STEVE MADSEN doing his usual fine job with set up, and GEOFF ZIMAN scribbling the Pinion.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

June 24 **Joel Brinkley**, Foreign Policy Update

July 1 **DARK** for Independence Day

July 8 **Bishop Patrick J. McGrath**, Diocese of San Jose, An Insider's Look at the Vatican

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