

Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

Weekly Newsletter

Date: December 2, 2013

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Today's meeting had a special impact because of the stormy personal journey of our speaker, the dramatic way his family experiences were presented, and the attention he drew to a largely-hidden dark aspect of our society.

The meeting started with PRESIDENT STEVE leading us in our usual salute to the flag, followed by visitor introductions. Rotarian Visitors: We welcomed two former members, Dick Carlson from Tucson, Arizona, and Peter Guentermann from Munich, Germany, as well as Jim Philbrick from Saratoga. Other Visitors: Accompanying our Rotarian Speaker, Tom North, was his wife, Connie North; ANDY PIERCE was hosting his son, Ted Pierce, a non-profit executive; and BEN THRELKELD's guest was Crissy Coolidge, daughter of our aviator member OLIVER COOLIDGE.



DIANA DIAMOND presented profound opening remarks on the subject of happiness and whether meaning and contentment were more appropriate terms to use.

Paul Harris



Fellowship recognitions were presented to DAVE PRICE (first timer) and SHERRY SAGER (second timer)

Former member Peter Guentermann returned to the podium with HAL MICKELSON, because Peter had kindly brought a pair of gifts to be auctioned off for charity. They were a beer steined decorated iPhone 5, as well as a separate large beer stein. Both items were symbolic of his home city of Munich. After some lively bidding, ROGER SMITH captured the prize at \$135. ROGER then proceeded to generously hand over the beer stein to CHESLEY DOUGLAS to recognize CHESLEY's Alma Mater San Jose State's football win over rival Fresno State.



BILL FOGARTY reminded us of the importance of contributing to our Endowment Fund, and that doing it before the end of the year would be a good thing to do, besides providing a tax deduction.

IRIS KOROL joined the President's Club in honor of ROGER SMITH's remarks last week. It was announced that IRIS and her husband, Hal, were Silicon Valley Philanthropy Day honorees, and were featured in a special supplement of the San Jose Business Journal.



Our speaker was introduced by BRIAN STEEN. Tom North is the Director of Investment at the Wells Fargo Bank in Carmel. Tom is the fourth of eight children, who lost their father at an early age. Their mother subsequently married a man with ten children, with whom she produced two more children. This family was the inspiration for a book that ultimately was the basis of a successful 1968 film called "Yours, Mine and Ours," starring Lucille Ball and Henry Fonda. Unfortunately,

life in the real family did not match the big happy family depicted in the film. The children were subjected to such severe violence and abuse that it was a struggle for Tom to find a way to escape. Tom described how he managed to survive and then, through transcendental meditation, slowly rebuilt his life. Eventually through family counseling sessions, he has been able to help his siblings to come to terms with their ordeal. In a moving way, Tom shared with us how he was lead to portray the true shocking story of his life in a book called "True North."

In question time: JOAN PLASTIRAS - what factor family size played in producing the stress? Greater number produces greater stress; DON LANGENDORF - if the speaker recalled the family connection to promotion of his company's bread? Yes, indeed, with the singing of the jingle; NANCY PETERS - what was mother's approach to her second marriage? Rescue of ten children; HENRIETTA BURROUGHS - What became of the children? All alive, but many dysfunctional; ROB LANCEFIELD - What about discipline? In the absence of love very harmful; Ted Pierce - Did the rest of the family support the book? Only Tom's siblings; LEANNAH HUNT - Was the step-father remorseful? Read the book!

FOR PARTY ANIMALS: Do not forget our Annual Rotary Holiday Party, kindly hosted this year by DICK BUSH and Patty McGuigan at 1530 Waverley Street on Thursday, December 12, from 6 - 9 PM. Bring an hors d'oeuvres plate and lots of goodwill to share. KAREN KIENZLE would appreciate offers of volunteer help.

Today's service crew were DICK MANSFIELD handling visitors, PAM ANTIL handling lunch money, BRUCE GEE handling Holiday Party sign ups, GINNY LEAR handling the set-up, KATIE SEEDMAN manhandling sign-up delinquents, and GEOFF ZIMAN mishandling the Pinion.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

December 9 Tanya Peterson, Executive Director San Francisco Zoo

December 16 West Bay Opera

December 23 Dark

December 30 Dark

Info: www.rotarypaloalto.org