

Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

Weekly Newsletter

Date: August 18, 2014

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Editor: LYLE CONNELL



President-elect **KATIE SEEDMAN** convened our meeting in the absence of President **EJ HONG**, who was saying teary farewells to her first-born at college.

VISITING ROTARIANS AND ROTARACTUALS

Rick Nelson visited us from Elizabeth City, North Carolina, and Harry Boehne joined us from Germany. Harry is here for a year, so we are likely to see him again on

upcoming Mondays.

GUESTS OF ROTARIANS Thirsty for knowledge

DAN QUINN introduced his guest, Adam Stern, who is Executive Director of Acterra and came with an interest in our speaker's topic. **STEVE PLAYER's** guest, Roger Stuhlmuller also has a special interest in water as founder of Stuhlmuller Vineyards.

OPENING REMARKS



"Adults are outdated children," quoted **MIKE COUCH** as he inspired and amused us with quotes about, and from, the younger set. Maya Angelou said her greatest blessing was her ability to turn people into children. From the mouths of his own grandbabes, Mike quotes "You look different with your shirt off," which he did believe was intended as a compliment. Mike concluded with the words of Herbert Hoover: "The soul is healed by being with children and children are our most valued resource."

ANNOUNCEMENTS, REPORTS AND REMINDERS

STEVE EMSLIE alerted everyone to check your inbox for an electronic survey to collect feedback on our weekly programs.

MIKE BAIRD reminded us of the **Boy Scout kick off this Saturday, Aug 23, at 12 noon at Mitchell Park** – everyone is invited to come to this free event and support scouting. And Saturday, Sept 20, is Rotary Day at the A's - Mike will be selling tickets next Monday, \$20-\$36/seat.



Andrew and Janel, with Rotaract Silicon Valley, said their club would like to support our activities. They also invited us to support their event on Sept 18, a fashion show and silent auction to benefit relief for typhoon victims: 6-9:30 PM at Corinthian Grand Ballroom, San Jose. Tickets

were available from them at the meeting.

BEN THRELKELD invited everyone to the New Member Social on Sept 18, 5:30-7:30. The Club will provide appetizers and all we need to do is each bring a bottle of wine.

MEL MATSUMOTO says there are a few more slots available for Sept 3, 10 AM vocational visit to Stanford Hospital.

KATIE read a statement from **NINA MOORE** about why she joined Rotary, having been drafted by friend some 27 years ago.



Some people go great distances to see how other Rotary Clubs operate - **ANDREW PIERCE** traveled to Arusha, Tanzania for a recent meeting, where he received a flag which he presented to our club.

PRESIDENT'S CLUB CONTRIBUTIONS

JON STOUMAN's son Jacob was recently married on the edge of



Donner Lake. Jon and O'Malley managed to serve an almost-zero-waste rehearsal dinner to over 100 people at their Donner home. With "zero waste service packs" from Walt Hays and the City's Zero Waste program, Jon only sent one napkin to the trash (or home in someone's pocket).

CASH ALAEE impressed his friends when he managed to get a friend's newborn girl placed in a Rotary Crib (donated by the Redwood City Club) at El Camino Hospital. Always recruiting.



PROGRAM – "California Drying"

HAL MICKELSON brought his dry wit to the introduction of our esteemed speaker, Barton "Buzz" Thompson, Professor of Natural Resources



Law and Director of the Woods Institute for the Environment at Stanford. Hal alerted us not to confuse this Buzz with the other Buzz Thompson who was also a student at Stanford in 1973, the other one being the band's drum major. After summarizing Professor Thompson's many honors and accomplishments, encouraging members to sign up for the next Stanford trip that Buzz will lead, Hal concluded with an esoteric

reference to Buzz's ability to quote from Mel Brooks' *Blazing Saddles*. Buzz claimed it was the best intro he has ever received.

California has probably best water system in the world, but is in the midst of its worst drought in history. Buzz projects a 50-50 chance that next year will continue in drought, and regardless of what happens next year, there will be more droughts in the future.

Looking at the paleo record, the recent 150 years are relatively wet, with droughts lasting about 5 years; but 800-1000 years ago, droughts often lasted 10-15 years, with only a couple of years between. So, things could be worse. And climate change will add to the problem, with less snow pack and changing rain and heat patterns.

Coping mechanisms include: ground water (this year, the central valley will make up 80% of its surface loss with ground water); surface reservoirs; conservation; water markets (farmer might forego an annual crop and sell water rights to a municipality); or take it from fish (fish usually suffer the greatest percent water cut during drought, compared with municipalities and agriculture).

There have been increased challenges to our coping mechanisms. Ground water has not been recharged in areas of the central valley, so the aquifer has been steadily declining in recent decades without recovery during wet years. Surface storage seems to be close to maximum capacity – in CA, perhaps 1% more deliverable water would be available with increased construction of dams. Conservation is more difficult because demand has hardened: water use has been steady since 1970 despite a huge growth in population, showing that we are already conserving, though there is more we can do. And finally, the Endangered Species Act makes it harder to take water from the fish.

What can we do? Greater conservation is possible, and we could enforce it, though enforcement is not popular. We should charge the true price of water, though many object. Water markets could be more active (and the biggest buyers have been for the environment, to put back into streams). We could recycle more water – we currently recycle 11%. Thompson does not recommend desalination because it is a heavy energy user, and energy costs makes it so expensive that desalination plants in US and Australia are sitting idle. He also does not advise building more surface reservoirs because the water gains would be small.

In response to questions, Professor Thompson said he believes that the state's response to the drought was been too timid initially, but the legislative plan to regulate ground water pumping is the single most important thing can be done for this year and the future.

FUTURE PROGRAMS and EVENTS

August 25 Coleen Bailey, Exec Director, National Steinbeck Center 75th Anniversary of the “Grapes of Wrath” by John Steinbeck

September 1 Dark

September 3 10 a.m. Vocational Visit to Stanford Hospital, contact Mel Matsumoto

September 8 meeting: Mary Wadden “ The History of Silicon Valley in Pictures”

September 15 meeting: WALT HAYS World Community Service

September 18 5:30-7:30 pm., New Member Social at the home of Past President MIKE COUCH

September 20 Rotary Day at the A's, contact Mike Baird for tickets Proceeds benefit Camp RYLA for our Interact students

September 22 meeting: Palo Alto City Council Candidates Forum

September 29 meeting: World Community Service.2: speaker TBD

Info: www.rotarypaloalto.org