

Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

Date: January 19, 2015

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CORRUPTION ON STEROIDS...or... THEY HAD A BALL IN BELL!

It was one of those amazing "It can't happen in California stories"...but it did. Our program today was presented by a fellow Rotarian who had the job of cleaning up the mess. ARNE CROCE gave us a brief review of corruption run amuck in Bell, California...one of 88 mostly invisible cities in Los Angeles County. A few of the details from his enlightening presentation are at the end of this Pinion under "THE SCAM".

FIRST THINGS FIRST



In lieu of our usual introductory introductions, President E.J. invited BERN BEECHAM to the podium for unusual OPENING REMARKS. BERN proceeded to shared information on how ancient surnames, educational backgrounds and family origins preordain social mobility and our chances to succeed in life. For example, if your ancestors attended Oxford in 1800, you have a six times better chance to succeed than if they went to Cal...at any time history. Or something like that.

NEXT UP...AND APPROPRIATELY SO WAS



...our Immediate Past President, the ever gracious and loquacious HAL MICKLESON. HAL joined the President's Club in honor of his return from an extended vacation in Chicago. Who said "vacation"? His one week visit with relatives turned in to four weeks...the last three recovering from pneumonia. Welcome back, Hal. We were holding our collective breaths while you were just trying to breathe.

GUESTS

Rich Gordon's Chief of Staff Jeremy Dennis was introduced by ANNETTE GLANCKOPF.

The University Club's STEVE ROSS introduced our jointly sponsored Rotary Global Scholar, Trwan Bello. Trwan is studying Artificial Intelligence at Stanford. He shared slides on the subject with we Rotarians having a modicum of the real kind. Welcome Trwam and Go Stanford!



WE DID IT!

Thanks to participation by 85% of our membership and their exceeding 28k in contributions to our ENDOWMENT FUND, Fund Chairman BILL FOGARTY was able to announce that we did in fact make it! For the 15% who may not know what we made, it was ROGER SMITH's matching contribution

challenge that netted an additional \$22k for our endowment coffers. The Fund now exceeds \$735,000, and spins off 5% annually for our charities. This year it will add \$36,750 to our contributions. Way to go Rotarians!!! ROGER ended the presentation with a check and a non-sequitur, as follows. "Why am I here?...God wanted me to get more exercise!"



BREAKFAST, ANYONE?

Our inaugural Rotary Vocational breakfast will probably be over before you receive this Pinion. It was undoubtedly a roaring success thanks to LISA AKSERAD and JACKIE SCHOELERMAN.

PREZ CLUBBERS

How about a 65th college reunion! In recognition of his 65th from the New York Maritime College, Ed "I was sworn in by Fleet Admiral Nimitz" DANGLER ponied up 100. His non-sequitur was "Compromising photos can greatly assist fund raising efforts"! Thanks Ed...we'll pass that on to our "Crab leaders".



PP IRIS KOROL joined in honor of ROGER SMITH'S charitable contribution. For the 100 simoleons she also included BILL FOGARTY our behind the scenes endow-manager.



CERTAINLY NOT "BUSH LEAGUE"

According to our ANNUAL CRAB FEED FUND RAISING gurus...BRUCE and GINNY ...DICK and PATTY BUSH have joined our list of Corporate Donors! Many thanks from Rotary!

OTHER BIG NEWS...Crab Feed Dinner tickets are for sale next Monday. We have room for 250+ at the new Mitchell Park Libe...so buy tickets early and invite your friends and any relatives who are on speaking terms. The date is Saturday, March 14, 5:30 p.m. \$65 per person, all inclusive + FUN!



(About this time I faded out, but seem to recall ROB LANCEFIELD thanking DON LANGENDORF for getting a last minute reservation at his family's hotel in S.F. so that ROB and RITA could once again celebrate their wedding night...or something like that.)

HOW DID THEY PUT HUMTY DUMTY BACK TOGETHER?

1. Arne was asked to be Interim City Manager.
2. Many outside experts wanted to help and provided pro bono services.
3. A balanced budget was created with public input.
4. New contracts for city services were arranged.
5. Sky high building permit fees were reduced. and so it went.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE BAD GUYS?

1. Robert Rizzo was sentenced to twelve years in prison.
2. As you can imagine, the City Council was involved. Five of the six received 4 year sentences

The Moral of the story...Be sure your community has a Rotary Club with "City sleuths" like DIANA DIAMOND AND DARYL SAVAGE!

PREZ ELECT KATIE DOES THE INTRODUCTION HONORS



"Our speaker Arne Corce was a city manager for some 35 years, being recognized in 2006 as City Manager of the Year by the California City Management Foundation. As a result of resurrecting the City of Bell Arne was given the 2012 California Distinguished Service Award by ICMA professional organization. Arne's true claim to fame is that he is a San Mateo Rotarian."



So just what led to the above citations?

UPCOMING EVENTS

February 2 Matthew Tiews, Executive Director of Arts Programs, Stanford

February 9 Carolyn Hinds, Guide Dogs For The Blind

February 16 Dickens Olewe, Knight Fellow "Outsourcing Journalism in Kenya: The Increasing Influence of Political Cartoonist and Independent Commentators"

THE SCAM

Talk about corruption...how about City Manager Robert Rizzo skimming 1 million dollars a year from the City coffers! Here are a few of Arne's bullet points:

1. He set up fictitious job titles for himself drawing full salary for each.
2. He arranged 26 weeks of paid vacation for himself.
3. He set up stealth elections with no way for citizens to be engaged.
4. He set up special bonds to pay off special bonds. (Whatever that means.)
5. There was no audit of the books.
6. There was no local media.
7. He was a charismatic leader.

THE UNRAVELLING

1. When he ran out of ways to raise money he set up a regional police force.
2. In the process the local police contacted the press.
3. When the LA Times investigative reporters got involved...so did the whole nation.