

Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

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After President EJ HONG noted that the Rotary Club of Palo Alto had gone to the dogs today, she allowed LEE PFAB to lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

VISITING ROTARIANS

Brian Baun visited us from Denmark, which he claims is the happiest country in the world! He brought us a flag, and his son, Joachin, who would like to attend Gunn next fall if he can find one or more sponsor families.

GUESTS OF ROTARIANS

Pam Kudol, who works at Avid Bank, joined us as the guest of KATIE SEEDMAN. BEN THRELKELD introduced his guest Edwardo D'Ignoti, who owns Arte Ristorante on University Avenue in Palo Alto. Mary Alice Thornton, wife of DAVE THORNTON, joined us for our program and to serve as the good-natured touchstone for Dave's opening remarks!



OPENING REMARKS

Inspired by this coming Valentine's Day and by today's program, DAVE THORNTON described his year-long, relentless, but fruitless wooing of Millie, the labradoodle who loves Mary Alice but completely ignores Dave. Summarizing his conflicted feelings for this sweet dog, Dave left us with two beautiful haikus:

Today I sniffed
Many dog behinds...I celebrate
By kissing your face.

I am your best friend
Now, always, and especially
When you are eating.

ANNOUNCEMENTS, REPORTS AND REMINDERS

BRIAN STEEN let us know that LE LEVY had heart surgery last week and is doing well and is happy to have visitors.

BEN THRELKELD awarded ZAFAR IQBAL his blue badge, and then Ben updated us on membership. With four new members so far this year, we are a bit behind our goal, so please search your contact list for ideas of who would be a good fit. Ben thanked DAVE THORNTON for bringing us CHARLIE WEIDANZ; STEVE



MADSEN for introducing us to new member RICHARD KELLER; DERRICK BRITT for bringing SHEETAL BAGDE; and STEVE EMSLIE for introducing us to AVO IZMIRLIAN.

PETER SHAMBORA and GINNY LEAR gave an update on the Crab Feed. Please get your tickets online or at the meeting, and keep those auction item donations coming. Great FUN is planned on MARCH 14th!



LISA AKSELRAD reported that the Vocational Breakfast was very successful. The next gathering of "Rotary Means Business" is Feb 18 at 7:15 AM. Click this ink for detailed information.

<http://www.rotarypaloalto.org/RotaryMeansBusiness.cfm>

PROGRAM – Carolyn Hindes, GUIDE DOGS FOR THE BLIND



ART STAUFFER began with an audience quiz about our own dog ownership (high!) and dog training ability (low!). Our speaker, however, knows about well-trained dogs. Carolyn Hindes is Administrative Coordinator for Guide Dogs for the Blind. She brought Gaston, a 6-month-old black lab in training, which lay at Carolyn's feet the entire duration of her talk.

Guide Dogs for the Blind started in 1942 in Los Gatos and now is centered in San Rafael, with a second campus in Oregon. They breed their own black labs, golden retrievers, and a lab-retriever cross, and they trade puppies and semen with other service-dog groups around the world to avoid inbreeding.

From 8 weeks to 18 months, the puppies live with puppy raisers, during which time they will learn basic obedience and socializing.

There are 1200 puppy raisers around country. About 50% of the dogs don't make it, due to temperament or for medical reasons. They try to place the "failures" into other service-dog work, and if the dog can't be placed, the raiser has first choice, then others can adopt (there is a 2 year waiting list.)

To be matched with a dog, a person must be legally blind, though some have partial vision. The blind person must have good orientation ability – i.e., know where places are and how to get there. The dog allows them to get places safely. The blind person lives on campus with the service dog for 2 weeks of training, and must pass test at the end. They have invested about \$115,000 in the dog by the time it goes to its owner. Total funding is \$30million/year, mostly from individuals. They graduate about 375 teams/year, and have about 2200 active teams in the field now. Everything is free to the blind person, and they get a \$250/year stipend for veterinary expenses.

Guide Dogs retains ownership of the dog, and can remove the dog any time if they think there are problems. A dog works about 7 years, after which the blind person may adopt, or the puppy raiser will be given the next option to adopt. The blind person can adopt his/her retired dog and still get a new one. Some retired dogs are very happy to retire, some want to butt in and do the work.

There were lots of questions from a room full of dog-lovers! Carolyn invites us to make a road trip to San Rafael, where they welcome visitors



UPCOMING EVENTS

- February 16 Dickens Olewe, Knight Fellow "Outsourcing Journalism in Kenya: The Increasing Influence of Political Cartoonist and Independent Commentators"
- February 18 Rotary Means Business Meeting Mitchell Park Library, Midtown Room
- February 23 Bill Liberatore, Director and Advanced Vocal Group from Gunn Choir