

Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

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President KATIE SEEDMAN called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m. and led us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The group loudly outsung Le Levy in a version of "In the Good Old Summertime" with custom lyrics paying tribute to our buffet and our President.

There were no visiting Rotarians or guests introduced, at this time.

OPENING REMARKS

JUDITH STEINER gave the opening remarks and also joined the Presidents' Club. Her middle child, Hans-Christoph, has decided to emigrate to Vienna, Austria. JUDITH explained that Vienna is the oldest socialist governed city in the world. It has been named the world's most livable city for six years in a row by a business consulting firm, and second best in the world by The Economist magazine. JUDITH explained the city's role in providing affordable housing. The government subsidizes new housing construction and controls rent. This works because there is a political consensus that society should be responsible for housing and that housing is a basic human need. JUDITH's son, despite paying 50% of his income in taxes, is financially better off there and will be able to buy an apartment. JUDITH ended her presentation with a wish that young families could afford to live in our area and that our region should be inspired by Vienna which demonstrates an entire city can apply the Rotary test of is it fair to all concerned?



ANNOUNCEMENTS

This Friday, September 25th, there will be a TGIF event at TOM and Helen GRACON's house. Members need only bring their favorite drink to share. The Gracons are providing the appetizers. The event will be from 5-7 p.m.



New member JANE KHALAF, of Edward Jones in Palo Alto, received her red badge. Her sponsor is ROGER SMITH.



OLIVER COOLIDGE was promoted from Red Badge to Blue Badge.

EJ HONG, our immediate past President, made a presentation about The Rotary Foundation during our annual donation drive this month. EJ apologized for the blank envelopes some received. She pointed out that a \$100 contribution could provide school supplies, malaria testing or clean water support. EJ explained that of the programs 50% are district designated and that 50% goes to the World Fund. Rotary Fund Global Grants for \$30,000 or more combine contributions from different clubs. EJ's presentation ended with an inspiring video showing images of global smiles created by the Rotary Foundation projects.



PRESIDENT'S CLUB

ELIZABETH SANTANA joined in honor of the Palo Alto Players.



DICK BUSH joined in honor of all the talent in the room, mentioning the Palo Alto Players and "Chicago" which many of us enjoyed last Friday night.



BILL BUSSE joined, 70% to honor his high school's 70th reunion in Prescott, Arizona and 30% to honor Stanford's defeat of USC on the football field.



RALPH ADAMS joined in honor of surviving his wife's double knee replacement, his turning over 47 classrooms at the beginning of the school year, and his age group *best performance* at the 49ers Rush through Levi's Stadium.



JOAN PLASTIRAS introduced our speaker. JOAN mentioned that her own grandfather was a coal miner who came to California and sold shovels to the gold miners in San Francisco, while her uncle never left Chicago's Greektown. JOAN expressed appreciation for the immigrants that have made California. She introduced Mitch Postel, Executive Director of the San Mateo County History Museum, a sturdy Golden Bear, former history major and member of the San Mateo Rotary.



MITCH POSTEL spoke about the political beginnings of San Mateo County. California achieved statehood in 1850, but San Mateo is not one of the original counties. It was part of San Francisco County under the mission system. It became its own county in 1856 as a result of a political compromise. San Francisco had grown to 50,000 people, while San Mateo County was rural with farmers and lumber



mills and about 2,500 people. R.O. Tripp, owner of the Woodside Store, one of the sites of the Museum of San Mateo County Historical Society was trying to get county status. The separation movement found allies in San Francisco in 1856 because reformers started a movement to consolidate city and county government to make it easier to reform. As part of the compromise, 9/10 of the original county became a separate county. Among the early political leaders in San Mateo County were some very dubious New York politicians. One was Chris Lilly owned the Abby House in Daly City. The county line was adjusted so that his establishment would become part of the new San Mateo County. Another leader was Billy Mulligan, a 120 pound ferret-faced New Yorker, prize fighter, and gambler. He had been jailed for burglary back East and came to California in the Gold Rush. He killed a gambler in Sonoma, killed another individual in a duel, and was wounded in several gunfights. He was famed for selling nominations to the highest bidder. He was associated with David Broderick in the divided Democratic party of the time.

A third political leader was John McDougall of Belmont, land owner, and well-known drunkard.

The initial local elections were held in 1856 in advance even of the county achieving independence. As there were no newspapers, the corrupt organizers were able to seize three of the thirteen polling stations, where far more people voted than could possibly have been eligible in the local areas. Persons associated with the three leaders were elected to sheriff or other offices, but one of their affiliates, Mr. Casey,

was not successful. When his past was revealed by a newspaper editor, James King of William, Casey went to San Francisco and assassinated him. This led to the formation of the Vigilance Committee of 1856 for which 6,000 people signed up. Once the San Francisco politicians were thrown out, the city budget was reduced to 1/6 of its prior level. For many decades, activities that were too risqué to carry out in San Francisco moved over the county line. One of the most famous was the David Terry/David Broderick duel in which a state Supreme Court justice killed a U.S. senator, just over the county line in Daly City.

For years, San Mateo was known as the most corrupt county in California, the home to rum runners and the like. Change came after World War II when the population increased and the new residents voted out the corrupt old timers. Prior to that, the shady speakeasys and other locales written of by Dashiell Hammett were real places in San Mateo County.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

September 28, Susan Lutter, Chair, Board of Directors, Pan African Sanctuary Alliance: "World Community Service: Rotary in the Rainforest"

October 5, Kate Corcoran: "The Increasing Popularity of Mindfulness and What it Means to You"

October 12, Bruce Lehnert, Podiatrist: "The International Extremity Project"