

Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

Date: November 9, 2015

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The meeting was called to order at 12:30 by President KATIE SEEDMAN who led us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

VISITING ROTARIANS AND GUESTS OF ROTARIANS

Frequently Rotarian Klaus Heineman of the Gualala Club was present, as well as visiting Rotarian Louis Esbin of the Santa Clarita Valley Club.

JOCELYN VILLARUZ introduced her guest, Laura Day, from Washington. MIKE BAIRD introduced his guest, Thomas Chan, who talked to us about his Boy Scout Troup No. 5 and its work and awards, including community service and assisting with water projects in Cameroon.

OPENING REMARKS

Opening remarks were given slightly out of order, came from GEOFF ZIMAN. He spoke about Veterans' Day from his perspective as a British Army vet. In England, the 11th day of November is known as Armistice Day. The commemoration is slated more towards remembrance of the First World War, rather than veterans from all wars. It is referred to as Poppy Day, alluding to the poppies that grew in the mud of the battlefields of Western Europe in World War I. In England, there has never been an equivalent to the G.I. Bill, which has given our veterans such valuable educational opportunities. GEOFF noted that in the last 100 years, more than 39,000,000 U.S. men and women have served in conflicts, more than 400,000 of them killed in combat, with more than 1,000,000 wounded. The important thing to remember is not the actual numbers, but that each one of them represents someone's cherished loved one and that much larger numbers of family members over many generations have been dealing with the effect and have been saddened by the losses. On Veterans' Day, we should all take a moment to honor our veterans, as well as those of our allies, for their contributions to the freedom and liberty that we are privileged to enjoy.



ANNOUNCEMENTS



NINA MOORE announced the holiday party on December 6, 2015 from 6-9 p.m. at BRIAN STEEN'S house. Members are asked to sign up on the forms available on tables at lunch or an approximate count can be made of how many are coming for the caterer. REBECCA announced that the Hands-On Sleeves Up program would be putting up flags on Veterans' Day and providing volunteers for the Junior Museum and East Palo Alto Library.

JULIE JEROME spoke to us about the Palo Alto Rotary Endowment. HAL NICKELSON told us about the importance of the Rotary Endowment Fund, whose investments and income go to the annual charities. HAL described himself as a mugwump, that is a fence sitter around the issue of whether one should give to the Annual Charities or the Endowment Fund, noting that everyone should contribute to one or the other and also to the Rotary Foundation. HAL also told us about planned giving, i.e., the Death Squad, and that one should remember the Endowment Fund in one's estate plan.



HENRIETTA BURROUGHS introduced our speaker, Dr. Walter Bortz. She noted his topic as the question of would you like to live to be 100? HENRIETTA noted that in that case, the Death Squad promoted by HAL NICKELSON will need to wait. Dr. Bortz' father was a gerontologist and President of the American Medical Association. Dr. Bortz himself is former President of the American Gerontological Society. He has authored 8 books and was instrumental in founding Avenidas in Palo Alto and also the East Palo Alto Senior Center. He has run 40 marathons and still runs 40 miles per week.

Dr. Bortz began by saying he is 85 years old. It is never too late to start and always too soon to stop taking care of yourself. He believes in self-sufficiency and autonomy. He told us that almost everything we know about aging is wrong. He spoke recently at the Meharry Medical School, one of two historically black medical schools. The students were, of course, younger, southern, and more female than the students in his day. Their knowledge is greater and the money has changed. One thing that hasn't changed is the mission of medicine which is the assertion and assurance of human potential.



Dr. Bortz spoke of Jeanne Calment who lived to be 122. He spoke of studies of super-centenarians, those who live to be 110 years or older, of whom there are 200 or so. Dr. Bortz noted that you don't want to be 115, but living to 100 is reasonable.

Dr. Bortz said that many die of health illiteracy rather than old age, including Steve Jobs and Albert Einstein. In fact, most people die of health illiteracy.

In reviewing the massive construction of new facilities as the Stanford Medical School and hospitals, he asked what are they doing to keep people out of the hospital? Medicine is business now. He said we need a new paradigm and that we all have the potential to live to be 100 if we don't screw it up.

Dr. Bortz noted if a person has a why, they can deal with the how. He believes it is important to be necessary and that while death is a good answer to a lot of problems, it is not right to go until you are ready.

Dr. Bortz said that rights come from responsibility and that knowledge creates responsibility. Thus, the older you are, the more knowledgeable you are, the more responsible you are. In closing, Dr. Bortz looked around the room and suggested that he could write Viagra prescriptions for a few of the attendees.

In response to questions, he said there is some structural lag in our society. We need more preventative medicine. Zimmerman's Law is that no one notices when things go right. Medicine is now largely about money. He thought it would be useful for everyone to have a pedometer and for their insurance rates to reflect their level of activity. Dr. Bortz also noted that the best way to keep a sound mind as one ages is exercise, as it affects brain chemistry. Life has to be worthy and you must be valuable. When you cease feeling that you have any value, euthanasia is not prohibited in his view. He noted that of all the forms of exercise, aerobics seems to derive the most benefit.

PROGRAMS & EVENTS

November 16, Stefan Heck, Consulting Professor at the Precourt Institute for Energy at Stanford University: "Revolution in Transportation"

December 6, Holiday Party, 6-9 p.m. home of President-elect Brian Steen