

# Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

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

## VISITING ROTARIANS

Rin Ajit Kothari of the Nigdi-Pune Rotary Club from outside of Mumbai was visiting, as was Debbie Seaman of the Emerald City Club in Seattle. She was a President of that club, and soon will be a “free agent” as she has moved.

## GUESTS

Syed Tanvder Hussain came as a guest of S. ZAFAR IQBAL. Marc Berman of Palo Alto City Council was the guest of LEE LIPPERT.

## OPENING REMARKS



HAL MICKELSON gave opening remarks. His talk came from renowned author Samuel Clemens, i.e. Mark Twain. When in financial trouble in 1894, after an unsuccessful investment in a typesetting machine, Twain agreed to a world lecture tour. Twain published an account of his tour in 1897, called Following the Equator. It contained many humorous epigraphs, which were later

collected as Pudd'nhead Wilson's New Calendar. HAL regaled us with several of Twain's wise and cynical epigraphs.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

BRUCE GEE announced that Criterion Travel added additional cabins for each of the cruises auctioned at the Crab Feed auction. A cabin on the Castles and Campaigns cruise is available at \$5,000.00 per person.



Flags were exchanged with

the visiting members. We learned that the Nigdi-Pune Club has 103 members and would like assistance with a school for kids.



LIZ KNISS joined the President's Club. She mentioned that at the invitation of DARYL SAVAGE she went to the production of “Bolero” at the Bing Concert Hall at Stanford. DARYL was recruited to perform. DARRYL played ping pong like a champ and danced her heart out, according to LIZ.

## WE CARE COMMITTEE

BRIAN SCHMIDT has recovered from his bike accident. A card was circulated for BOB BULMORE, who is managing well.



## PROGRAM INTRODUCTION

DANA TOM introduced our guest speaker, Sumbul Ali-Karamali. DANA said that our impression of Islam is dictated by the media. Islamophobia is on the rise. Ms. Ali-Karamali is the author of a book called “The Muslim Next Door: the Qur'an, the Media, and That Veil Thing.” She has a B.A. from

Stanford, a J.D. from UC Davis and a LLM in Islamic Law from the University of London. In addition, she comments for the Huffington Post. She is interested in opera, white water rafting, fantasy literature and “Star Trek”, among other things.

## PROGRAM

Sumbul Ali-Karamali told us she grew up in Los Angeles where she was the only Muslim around. She answered a lot of questions. When she got to Stanford, she felt like she was enrolled in Inter-Faith relations 101. She had to explain why she wasn't dating, and had to figure out whether there was pork in the dorm food, when nobody had any idea what was in there.

The subject of her talk was *Islamophobia for Fun and Profit*. She told us that new arrivals in America always face prejudices and that the very real violence of 9/11 has also influenced views of Islamic people. She told us that the historical framework with which the West views Islam, media amplification of that framework, and the Islamophobia industry are all at work to influence our views of Muslims.

She said that if you hate someone, the way they hold their fork will make you angry, but if you love them they can spill their plate on you and you will not be offended.



Once we have a framework, if the facts do not fit, then the facts are rejected. Muslim people that we like are treated as aberrations or exceptions to the general rule. It is possible to like a person and hate the group they

come from.

Because Islam came after Christianity, early Muslims were not afraid of Christianity. Religions that come later are often viewed as cults or false religions by the preexisting faiths. Some of the methodology that has arisen about Islam includes that Mohammad was an epileptic Catholic Cardinal who fled Arabia to found a new religion. The battle of Tours in 1732 has been portrayed as Charles Montel and the Franks repelling a Muslim advance on Europe. From the Arab side it was viewed as an effort to quell a rebellious border commander and the battle with the Franks was not intentional. The 11th Century poem, the Song of Roland similarly rewrote history of an incident involving Christian Basques in the 8th Century to feature a Muslim enemy instead. As a final example, a painting of at the Prado by Tomas Giner shows St. Vincent in the 3rd Century with a Muslim although Islam did not exist at that time.

Muslims have also been written out of history in the history of mathematics and the discovery of the circulation of blood.

In the media, 94% of movies have negative stereotypes of Muslims. TV shows such as "Homeland" and "24" reinforce the stereotypes, and 75% of news stories on Muslims are negative. Only 6% of terrorist acts since 9/11 have been perpetrated by Muslims. Nine out of ten news stories about Muslims have to do with violence and any violence a Muslim is involved with is attributed to religion.

There is no coverage of the approximately four million deaths of Muslims that are attributable to recent Western interventions. Violence in the Muslim world which is political is often described as sectarian. The media ascribes all behavior to religion.

There is also an Islamophobia industry, a network whose purpose is to put out misinformation. Approximately one hundred million dollars has been funneled by foundations into Islamophobic propaganda. Anders Breivik, the Norwegian mass murderer who shot young people at a political retreat, included anti-Muslim propaganda in his manifesto.

Nobody was concerned about Shariah Law or its alleged dangers until this issue was raised by David Yerushalmi. Yerushalmi acknowledges that he deliberately wanted to promote Islamophobia by writing about Shariah Law.

Islamophobia negatively affects our democracy. It affects the wisdom of our policy choices. It tends to spike in election years because fear is an effective tactic. It also affects the Muslim population because if you demonize people, they will feel isolated and be more likely to support extremism.

Katie closed the meeting with thanks to our speaker.

## PROGRAMS & EVENTS

April 11, Adam Levin, Chairman and Co-Founder, Credit.com & Identity Theft 911: "Swiped: How To Protect Yourself In A World Full of Scammers, Phishers and Identity Thieves"

April 18, Bill Liberatore and the Gunn Choir: Musical Program

April 20, Rotary Means Business, 5:30 pm, \$20 pp, Channing House, 850 Webster Street, Palo Alto

April 25, Anthony David Wagner, Professor of Psychology and Neuroscience, Stanford University: "Media Multi-tasking: Are There Effects on Attention, Memory, and the Brain?"