

# Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

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PRESIDENT-ELECT BRIAN STEEN opened the meeting, and HENRIETTA BURROUGHS led the flag salute. The one visiting Rotarian was Bob George, an architect from San Bruno. DICK BUSH introduced has guests, Ken and Manon Lye, from Weymouth, England, noting that she wrote a book about the passing of a half million U.S. service men through Weymouth on their way to Omaha Beach

as part of D-Day.

TRISH BUBENIK gave opening remarks, describing a visit to Helsinki in which after several futile attempts to express their desire to get a train, they finally succeeded by saying "choo-choo."



DICK FREEMAN described a form of insurance fraud where companies use life insurance policies to continue premium payments after the beneficiary dies.



The day was rich with President's Club donors: DAVE THORNTON described seeing the cherry blossoms on a trip to Japan, and added that after nine grandchildren he was blessed with his first great grandchild.

RALPH ADAMS reported on a cruise that included Guernica, Spain, infamous as the first place military force was deliberately used on civilians.



LE LEVY reported that a group of members travelled to Guatemala to visit several of our international projects, including fuel-efficient stoves and a great school for underprivileged kids. Participating were LE and his wife Judy, the STAUFFERS, the SWENSONS, the MCMAHONS, JAYNE BOOKER, BRIAN SCHMIDT AND WALT HAYS.

BRIAN STEEN reminded us that the next TGIF will be on Friday, April 29, on the roof of Channing House starting at 5:30.

ELIZABETH SANTANA noted that she will be playing a role in Stephen Sondheim's Into The Woods, and that members are offered a price break for the program on



Sunday, May 1 at 2 pm. When making reservations, say "Rotary" for discounted tickets.

PAM KRUDOP introduced the speaker, Anthony Wagner, Professor of Psychology and Neuroscience at Stanford, who spoke on the topic of "Multi-Tasking: Are There Effects on Attention, Memory and the Brain?" He opened by noting the familiar fact that new communication technology has become steadily more ubiquitous and time-



consuming.

His key point, however, was that while people may think they are multi-tasking, they are actually task-switching, and the result is that their work is slower and less accurate.



For example, experiments have shown that the reaction time of a driver using even a hands-free phone is worse than that of a drunk. Use of a phone or other voice-activated system leads to "inattention blindness", which may cause the driver to miss seeing a biker or pedestrian. To illustrate, he showed a famous video of students passing balls in a circle and asked members to count the passes; and even those who correctly counted 15 completely missed the fact that someone in a gorilla costume walked into the circle!

He then touched on Media Multi-Tasking, noting that many youth attempt to take in several sources at once. Counting the time on each, the average child is exposed to 11 hours of media/day. Tests show that such activity makes it more difficult to focus on one task, and impairs the child's "working memory capacity." He concluded, however, by stating that the data are incomplete and more research is needed.

Questions: BETSY BECHTEL asked if talking to a passenger causes the same problems. He said no, because the passenger is also watching the road. ANNETTE GLANCKOPF asked about the effects of billboards and flashing signs. He said their purpose is to distract drivers from their goal by attention-grabbing novelty. Finally, ROB LANCEFIELD noted that his wife claims that his ability to switch task is slow and getting slower, and he asked if that tendency is caused by aging. The answer was yes.

## PROGRAMS & EVENTS

May 1 Palo Alto Players –"Into the Woods" at Lucie Stern Theater, 2:00 PM

May 2, Steven Adelsheim, MD, Director, Stanford Center for Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing

May 9, Clive Berkman, Executive Chef at Garden Court Hotel: "Culinary and Gastronomic Trends"