

Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

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VISTING ROTARIANS

Steve Ross, with the University Club.

GUESTS

LE LEVY introduced his guest Peter Hart, a renowned bird photographer. VIC ROSASCO introduced his guest Jim Rutter, an archivist of Stanford Athletics. DIANA DIAMOND introduced her guests Booker Morey and Ron Andrews. JULIE JEROME introduced her guest, our speaker, Marilou Seiff of the Marine Science Institute.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

REBECCA GERALDI announced that the backpacks given to foster kids were well received and read a thank you card.

PRESIDENT'S CLUB

ROGER SMITH joined with a magnanimous \$1,000 gift to the endowment because he believes in the endowment. He said this would be an advance of his subsequent donation upon entry to Alta Mesa.



CYRILLE BETANT joined the President's club. He is returning



from a month long trip. He had no flags to bring back from African Rotary clubs but he did have one from the Ukraine.

LE LEVY auctioned off some Stanford vs. Rice tickets, which eventually raised \$90 for the club.



PROGRAM



Julie Jerome introduced Marilou Seiff from the Marine Science Institute. She has a B.S. and M.S. from Stanford and she has been Executive Director of MSI since 1998 dating back to the days of Bob Rutherford, a Rotarian.

The Rotary Club grant supported four programs. Students from the East Palo Alto charter schools and tennis academies were taken on a discovery voyage and an inland voyage (a trailer with fish and trucks in it). There were ocean labs for fourth graders featuring animals from intertidal region and one discovery voyage with the emphasis on biomimicry. Biomimicry is the study of how we may emulate nature's patterns to solve human issues. For example, velcro was discovered by analyzing the way burrs adhere. Butterfly wings which are not colored with dye, but use their microscopic shape to create colored light, were emulated in cellphones and TV screens. Marilou told us we have an open invitation to go on their trips, which leave 6 days a week from either Redwood City or San Francisco.

DIANA DIAMOND then introduced our regular program with Paul Saffo, a futurist who consults with both corporations and government. His talk was on Myth and Origin of Silicon Valley.



A futurist looks at two things: what he would like to happen and what he thinks will happen. He has kept a collection of history that never came to pass such as helicopters and flying cars. He is an Associate Professor of

Engineering at Stanford and Singularity University and member of the Atlantic Council. He has degrees from Harvard, Cambridge and Stanford.

Paul Saffo told us he is a historian of the future. He said the rearview mirror is the best forecasting tool. Silicon Valley works because we have been getting the right myth. Silicon Valley is not necessarily home to good management.

Edmond Halley's map of the world showed California as an island. This myth was important in leading to the subsequent exploration. Paul told us that change takes a long time to get started. While we all look at the inflection points in the S curve of innovation there is a long period before any change happens. Doug Engelbart was working on his ideas years



before they became useful. Tim Berners-Lee came up with the idea for the World Wide Web in 1989. Often we mistake a clear view for a short distance, as one might in the desert.

In biology innovation is slow-it comes from mutations that usually fail. Still we innovate even though most things we do will not work.

In the innovation cycle there are visionaries who come up with the ideas, innovators who apply them, and entrepreneurs who make them into products like Steve Jobs and empire builders like Bill Gates who make them into corporations.

Why do people do the irrational thing of wanting to innovate? Silicon Valley is built on disrespect for authority. It is deeply embedded as part of our culture, beginning as early as the Traitorous Eight who left Shockley Semiconductor to join Fairchild in 1957. Paul showed us a medal of defiance Charles H. House got from his employer, HP, for ignoring a directive to stop working on large screen displays. We need to cherish failures, especially someone else's failure. The building housing Varian was originally built in the Stanford industrial park with the option of being turned into a school.

Tim Berners-Lee invented the World Wide Web on the Swiss-French border but it took California to make it a thing. Even Hollywood developed here because theater owners in New York wanted to get away from Thomas Edison's claims of patent violations.

It could be that as a nation the myths that once sustained us are now holding us back. We must export our myths from California for a brighter future.

In response to a question from HENRIETTA BURROUGHS, Paul said he agrees that innovation is part of the human spirit. To be called an innovator in Victorian, England was an insult. In some places it would get your head cut off.

HAL MICKELSON noted that only in California are employers barred from using non-compete clauses. Paul said San Francisco needs to think like a city state. The nine Bay Area Counties would be the seventeenth biggest economy in the world. California has the sixth greatest GDP in the world.

PROGRAMS & EVENTS

November 21, Chris Bischof, Founder and Principal, Eastside College Preparatory School: "Closing the Achievement Gap: Challenges, Successes and Lessons Learned"