

Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

October 30, 2017

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HAL MICKELSON robustly led us in the Pledge,

President BETSY congratulated ANNETTE GLANCKOPF for fulfilling her promise to be a Rotary Foundation Double Sustainer if 20 or more Rotarians showed up in some effort at a costume. Many did, but none were as spectacular as ANNETTE'S. Some trick or treaters are going to be more charmed than frightened! [See second page for pictures by DAN QUINN. They are better if you zoom the page.](#)

BETSY then introduced her guest, Larry Norton, an emeritus Stanford executive officer.

For today's highly relevant Thought for the Day, SALLY TOMLINSON stood to quote the American computer scientist Alan Kay who, among other honors, has won the Turing Award.



"Some people worry that artificial intelligence will make us feel inferior, but then, anybody in his right mind should have an inferiority complex every time he looks at a flower".

Today's Three Truths and a Lie gave us a good deal of insight into the life before PA Rotary member DON MORGAN. Did he: 1) Rescue Emeritus Dean Roscoe Pound from a snowbank his first winter at Harvard Law? 2) Become a longtime doubles partner to Sandra Day O'Connor? 3) Disrupt the tennis game of the Emperor and Empress of Japan? 4) Take a private tour of the church inside of the Kremlin? It turned out to be all of the above except that it was actually a friend he was walking with who rescued the struggling Dean from the ignominy of falling into the snow. Interesting life experiences!



In the social activities department, word has it that those of us who missed BRIAN STEEN'S TGIF party last Friday missed a good one! BRIAN is posting photos on the PARotary Facebook page.



GLORIA HOM advised that we can all stop avoiding her in the hallway now that she has secured TGIF hosts for the rest of the year. The next will be hosted by JACKIE SCHOELERMAN on January 26th. But, there is still time to sign up for the Southern Indian Street Food experience @ The Indian Street Café in Sunnyvale, 4:00

pm on next Sunday, November 5th. Sign up immediately with KATIE, kseedman@presidiobank.com.

JIM SUTHERLAND introduced our speaker Okke Schrijvers, whose topic was Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning. A fellow Rotarian, Okke is also a Facebook employee and recent recipient of a Ph.D. in computer science from Stanford where he was a three-time recipient of the department's award for extraordinary service. What – at least for this audience - was even more important, he spoke clearly about the mysterious topic. Okke believes AI has the power to shape our society in the future, and so considers Rotarians in particular as appropriate audiences for learning about what AI can and can't do.



Okke defined AI by examples we all know; i.e. Siri, Alexa, video games, IBM Watson, etc. -- basically computer devices that interact with the world. He described machine learning as the process whereby a computer (machine) receives data input and produces an interactive AI program. As an example: Machine learning produces a program that recognizes the fourth image of a person after studying the first three images of the person that are presented and identified.



One reason AI has become relevant today is the recent emergence of huge quantities of data in places like social media, internet databases, and even cars. To the question of whether or not AI is likely to take away jobs, he acknowledged that if in fact all automobiles were driverless by 2020, as some have predicted, it would 'unemploy' about 3% of the US workforce. To the question of whether or not AI could become evil by turning on humans, Okke acknowledged that unintended consequences (think Mickey in the Sorcerer's Apprentice) are always possible, and that vigilance about carefully crafted specifications is of paramount importance. Personally, he does not expect a 'robocalypse.' To ease our concerns, however, he drew a distinction between Narrow AI, which marshals a computer's ability to do one task like driving a car, and General AI in which a computer learns to do new and different tasks. Narrow AI is here, General AI is 40 to 60 years in the future.

Much of the Q&A was focused on this question of unintended consequences.



CASH ALAEE presented a Rotary banner from his visit to Thailand



Commented [LC1]:

PROGRAMS AND EVENTS
 November 5, Indian Street Food Experience
 November 6, Kim Steinhardt, Writer and Marine Wildlife Photographer: "California Sea Otters"
 November 13, Pamela Ronald, Distinguished Professor in the Department of Plant Pathology and the Genome Center at the University of California, Davis: "Tomorrow's Table: Ecologically-based Farming, Plant Genetics and the Future of Food"