



Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

Weekly Newsletter

Date July 7, 2008

Reporter: GEOFF ZIMAN

Editor: LYLE CONNELL

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

[Palo Alto Rotary - Speakers Schedule](#)

Jul 14 – James Desmet-Bacon – How to buy Wine

July 21 – Steve Ritchie – Wetlands Restoration

July 28 – Keith Humphreys – Rebuilding Iraq's mental Health Care System

Our new President **MIKE COUCH** seemed to want to start the year by shaking us out of our comforting complacency by rearranging our meeting room. In a smart move, MIKE indicated that the change was initiated by KEVIN CURRY; so any complaints could be directed at KEVIN, and not at him. Not content with just this innovation, MIKE had us remain standing while SKIP HOYT lead us on the piano for a rousing chorus of God Bless America. A questionnaire was also passed out at the meeting to help members provide some guidance to our Board on various club affairs. Could it be that our club is developing greater democratic tendencies?

In opening remarks, **SY GREENSTONE** made use of the afterglow from the July fourth celebrations to share some pertinent quotations on democracy. To your reporter, the prize item was that of James Bovard – “Democracy must be something more than two wolves and a sheep voting on what to have for dinner.”

LARRY BAILEY welcomed one visiting Rotarian – Ginny Lear from the Los Altos Rotary Club – and one visitor – Taher Fatehi introduced by **ROB LANCEFIELD**, who was standing in for **KELLY MORARIU**. **LARRY** returned later to honor the seven people who helped feed the homeless on Wednesday, July 2 – **LARRY BAILEY**, **TOM GRACON**, **PIETER KARK**, **KELLY MORARIU**, **CARMEN VALVERDE**, **GEOFF** and **ANN ZIMAN**. Larry reminded the club that more volunteers are needed to sign up for this vital service.

WALT HAYS then took the podium to explain that club financial contributions to international projects involving Rotary Foundation matching grants provide opportunities to award Paul Harris Fellowships. He surprised **LINDSEY NORTH** by honoring her as a newcomer with a Paul Harris Fellowship for her WCS project work. Even more surprised was your humble reporter **GEOFF ZIMAN**

who was given a Paul Harris pin with five sapphires as an oldcomer in recognition of his work with the club's water harvesting projects in India.

KEVIN CURRY and **STEVE PLAYER** each joined the President's Club in honor of their newly arrived grandchildren. **TODD LEWIS**, not yet ready for that status, also joined in honor of the incoming Club president, and his skilled coaching of his son's all-star baseball game that allowed a win to slip away.

ART STAUFFER wanted to thank a long list of people who had helped make the deposing of **ROB LANCEFIELD**, a success last Monday evening. He particularly mentioned: **M.C. HAL MICKELSON**, **BILL BUSSE**, **LE LEVY**, **WALT HAYS**, **RALPH ADAMS**, **DARYL SAVAGE**, **STEVE PLAYER**, **JOAN PLASTIRAS**, **EJ HONG**, **CASH ALAEE**, **SCOTT GLISSMEYER**, **BRIAN STEEN**, **JOHN KIDD**, **LARRY BAILEY**, **KEVIN CURRY**, **GLORIA HOM**, **STEVE MADSEN**, **JOYCE CUSICK**, **RUTH SCHNEIDER**, and supportive wives **PEGGY STAUFFER** and **JUDY HUEY**.

Our new President **MIKE COUCH** provided a short review of his personal background, which enabled him to include a quick pitch for some distressed real estate that he wants to unload. A great place to find the full personal details for MIKE and other members is to go to our club website www.rotarypaloalto.org and enter the *For Members* section with a password (obtainable from **BOB McCOWAN**). MIKE emphasized helping youth is his primary goal for the year.

Our speaker today was ably introduced by **SHERRI SAGER**. Dr. William Benitz, Chief of Neonatology at the Lucille Packard Children's Hospital gave a very enlightening presentation on the current situation on infant mortality in the world. It is impossible to give full credit in this report to the many facts presented; but here are a few: Of the 10 million child deaths each year in the world, 6 million are preventable. For nations with populations over 750,000, the United States ranks 33rd in health care; Cuba and France have the lowest infant mortality, which can be attributed to making prenatal care mandatory. There is a significant and persistent disparity in infant mortality between Afro-American and white populations in the U.S. Throwing money at the infant mortality problem is not the solution – community support plays a larger role. In conclusion, Dr. Benitz made a strong case for a single-payer universal health care in this country.

Next Vocational Visit: This will take place at IDEO at 100 Forest Avenue, PA from 10:30 AM until 1 PM on Tuesday, July 15. The number of places is limited so sign up quickly.

Other Acknowledgements: A relieved **ROB LANCEFIELD** for greeting us; a second-time-around red-badged **ANDY COE** for taking our money; a patriotic **STEVE PLAYER** for leading the flag salute.

Final word from your Reporter: The notorious poet and songster **LE LEVY** has announced his retirement from the ranks of Pinion writers after many years of valiant service. This is, therefore, a good moment to remind our members that we need more of them to step forward to assume this critical duty. As will be evident from this report, being a Pinion Reporter is an excellent way to be able to provide slanted and biased accounts of what took place and even to insert a measure of self glorification. Please let **LYLE CONNELL** know if you are interested. He will be pleased to hear from you.

