

Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

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Reporters: WALT HAYS

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STEVE PLAYER opened the meeting with the flag salute. President GINNY thanked the members who installed and collected the flags on Armistice Day (GLORIA HOM, ROB LANCEFIELD, LEE LIPPERT, MIKE McMAHON, JULIO NIÑO, JIM SUTHERLAND, and BETSY BECHTEL). She relayed a story that in 1938, singer Kate Smith, with concern for the country's mood, asked Irving Berlin to compose an uplifting song. He already had "God Bless America" ready. Kate & Irving agreed that all royalties would be designated to the Boy & Girl Scouts, bringing them millions of dollars. Ginny asked if any members had relatives who fought in World War I and several hands went up—and then asked those who served in any war to stand, and many did.

DANA TOM introduced visiting Rotarian Hung Wei from Cupertino, who in turn introduced her guest Grant Chang, who came to learn about Palo Alto Rotary. KATIE SEEDMAN's guest was husband Eric; ELIZABETH SANTANA's was Jessica Sun; and PETER SHAMBORA's was Trevor Loveless.

In Opening Remarks, ELIZABETH SANTANA said that though she and her brother are 10 years apart and she saw little of him growing up, he inspires her the most, being an EMT and firefighter in Butte County who goes in to fight the fire while others are evacuating. The risks are hard on the family, but he is willing to make that sacrifice to save lives—as were our veterans.



PAM BRANDIN joined the President's Club to celebrate her retirement; and

LEANNAH HUNT joined in honor of the veterans and of GLORIA HOM, the first woman member of Palo Alto Rotary.



Past President BETSY BECHTEL showed a video about people who benefit from our support of The Rotary Foundation.

BETSY introduced the speaker, JAMES (JIM) KEENE, City Manager of Palo Alto since 2008. He previously served as City Manager of

Berkeley and Tucson, has held office in several government-related organizations, and received awards, including one for Career Excellence from the International City Management Association. He describes himself as being also "a philosopher, poet, grandfather, and runner in the twilight of a mediocre athletic career."



JIM admitted that while he is a member of our club he hasn't attended, because of the press of council meetings—over 1200 in his 30-year career. He sees a city as a "partnership for a good life," and therefore thinks of their inhabitants not just as residents but rather as "citizens," with roles to play in achieving the city's goals—and he feels that Palo Altans often don't sufficiently appreciate how good they have it.

JIM arrived at the onset of the "Great Recession". He had to cut staff and deal with pension deficits. The remaining staff are doing a better job, and the city is considered a leader in pension reform. It is also



a leader on the environment, having adopted a Climate Action Plan calling for an 80 percent reduction in carbon emissions by 2030 and already achieved 50 percent. He thinks of Palo Alto as a "start-up city," being a leader in many areas, including infrastructure completed; strong sister-city programs that spread our environmental ethos; third in the nation in commitment to biking; adoption of a Comprehensive Plan; and mobilization to prevent suicides—but it too often seems that while everything is good, nobody's happy. For example, how many cities would complain about "too many jobs?"

Questions: HENRIETTA BURROUGHS asked if he feels he made any mistakes. He answered that some proposals for grade separation with Caltrain could seriously divide the city. BETSY BECHTEL asked if he agrees with the 50-foot height limit; and he responded that eight stories may be better in certain areas, e.g., along El Camino, and will probably be adopted out of necessity.

In conclusion, Jim expressed gratitude for the opportunity to serve, and citing his strong relationship with former Mayor Larry Klein, affirmed that in the end it's the people that count.

SPEAKERS AT OUR COMING MEETINGS:

November 19, Richard Walker, Professor Emeritus of Geography, UC Berkeley, and author "Pictures of a Gone City": "Pictures of a Gone City: Bay Area Prosperity and Inequality"

November 26 Judge Leonard Edwards, Retired, Santa Clara County Superior Court: "Speaking Up for a Child: The Child Advocate Program in Santa Clara County"