

Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

January 28, 2019

Reporter: HAL MICKELSON

Editor: LYLE CONNELL

Our January 28 meeting was convened by PRESIDENT GINNY LEAR, who asked STEVE MADSEN to lead the Pledge. Ginny reminded us this is our year to “Be the Inspiration....”

PAULA SNYDER, a repeat visitor from Franklin, Tennessee, shared a fascinating fact about the Rotary Wheel: The present six-spoke, 24-tooth version was regarded by experts as unrealistic because it was missing a “keyway” slot, needed for it to be attached in order to accomplish its work. Addition of the keyway completed the current wheel design, approved in 1929.



PRESIDENT-ELECT DANA TOM offered introductions: TREVOR LOVELESS was the guest of PETER SHAMBORA.... ELIZABETH WOLF was introduced by CHARLIE WEIDANZ.... MARIKO YOUNG was hosted by GINNY LEAR.... ROY LABBAN was the guest of OANA MARCU.

NANCY CHAN spoke enthusiastically about the inspiration she has received from author and speaker Mark Victor Hansen. A thought from Hansen: “You and I aren’t remembered for what we acquire, but for what we contribute.”



A “We Care” report: DAVE SMULLIN reported a phone conversation with HONORARY MEMBER DICK FREEMAN, who said his mobility is still limited, but he’s down to one doctor visit per month....



HAL MICKELSON joined the President’s Club to thank the day’s speaker, TOM EHRLICH, for decisive advice he provided 48 years ago: “Professor Ehrlich was Dean of the Stanford Law school when I was in my senior year as an undergraduate. I asked him whether I should attend Stanford, the law school he ran, or Harvard, the law school he had attended, His response was crisp: ‘Hal, I can tell by looking at you that you’re a lifetime Californian. Three years on the East Coast will be good for you...’”



We welcomed our newest member, JESSICA SUN, sponsored by CHARLIE WEIDANZ. She studied Art & Architecture at Washington U in St Louis and she’s a real estate professional with Alain Pinel.... BRUCE GEE conducted a tour of our club’s new, enhanced website. Everything is cleaner and more-up-to-date. Check it out.



Our speaker, TOM EHRLICH, was introduced by PRESIDENT ELECT-ELECT BEN THRELKELD. Ben noted that Professor



Ehrlich graduated from Harvard College and Harvard Law School, clerked for Judge Learned Hand, and served as Provost of the University of Pennsylvania and President of Indiana University. While at Indiana, he was an honorary member of the Rotary Club of Bloomington.

Professor Ehrlich’s focus was the need to develop the capacity for civic engagement as an element of higher education.... As a nation, we’re motivating high school and college students to show compassion by volunteering to assist the homeless or to tutor children in disadvantaged neighborhoods. What we’re not doing is giving them the skills they need to participate in public discourse or the knowledge they need to be thoughtful voters. Young people’s basic knowledge of government has plummeted. Forty percent are unaware that the Constitution vests the power to declare war with Congress. They’re bombarded with information, but they’re not trained about how to separate fact from fiction.... Fewer than 18% of colleges require a course in U.S. history or government. More college students voted in 2018 than in 2016, but despite that improvement, fewer than 50% vote.... Ehrlich called for a “civic Sputnik moment,” recognition that students at every level must be prepared for participation in public life. The good news: Where pursuit of political engagement has been added to the undergraduate curriculum, it has proven useful in making young people more effective citizens. For further information: Professor Ehrlich’s book, *Educating for Democracy: Preparing Undergraduates for Lives of Responsible Political Engagement* (2007). As Benjamin Franklin said, “We have a republic, if we can keep it.” Keeping it will require our citizens to be better prepared to participate in democracy.