

# Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

September 9, 2019

Reporter: SALLY TOMLINSON

Editor: LYLE CONNELL

President DANA TOM called the meeting to order with an announcement that we will no longer say the Pledge of Allegiance at the beginning of every meeting. The board takes seriously any possible change of tradition, and this was not the first year they received the suggestion to eliminate the weekly pledge. They gave it careful consideration and reached a unanimous decision. Rotary is an international organization and we welcome guests from around the world. Some of our members and guests will be more comfortable starting meetings without the pledge, a practice that other clubs such as Palo Alto University Rotary and San Jose Rotary have long adopted. While recognizing that some will regret this change, Dana noted that "one of the greatest strengths of our club is our ability to respect our diversity and unite around our common values centered around working to change lives for the better."

**BEN THRELKELD** introduced two **VISITING ROTARIANS**: Charles Arnold visited us from Tiburon. He is a former member of the Palo Alto Club.

Jamir Ousman is visiting from Trinidad and Tobago, which, he explained to the geographically challenged, lies just 7 miles east of the coast of Venezuela. He is serving his 4th term as president of his club, and is here visiting his daughter and grandchildren.

**THOUGHT FOR THE DAY:** **MATT DOLAN** gave us three



truths and a lie to consider: 1) his father handled lions for a circus and arranged for Matt and his brother to meet the 3 stooges who cussed at the children and then posed for a picture all together, 2) Cardinal Dolan is a relative of Matt's and provided a commencement address and bought a T-shirt from Matt's college, 3) in Wichita, as chairman of Lion's club Matt organized the first annual fundraiser, 4) during one college summer he put up a giant billboard saying his IBM was a lemon. The fundraiser is the untruth, but only because it was for Cystic Fibrosis and not the Lions.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS, REPORTS AND REMINDERS

**DIEGO OSORIO** is our newest member, so please introduce yourself when you spot him.

**CHALMERS SMITH** fell and broke his hip last week. He is at the Terraces recovering.

Thanks go to:

- **DANA TOM** for opening his house for the TGIF last week. The next one will be at **PETER SHAMBORA'S** house the last Friday of September (the 27th).
- **BRUCE GEE, GINNY LEAR, and TIM WATSON** for hosting a fun Paella Party on Friday as a fundraiser from the Crab Feed auction.
- **LINNET KWOK, BEN THRELKELD, MIKE McMAHON, LEE LIPPERT, GLORIA HOM, and MARY ANN GEE** for putting up and taking down flags on University Avenue for Labor Day.

**HAL MICKELSON** announced that **DICK BUSH's** celebration of life will be Sunday, September 29 starting at 1:30 at Peninsula Golf and Country Club, 701 Madera Drive, San Mateo. Please RSVP to Patty McGuigan. This will indeed be a festive celebration of Dick and his life.

In preparation for Veteran's Day, the program committee invites **ALL CURRENT OR FORMER MEMBERS OF THE MILITARY** (of the US or its allies) to bring a photo of themselves from their time in service to a club meeting during September, and to prepare a 3-5 minute story of a meaningful memory to share on Monday, November 11. Please contact **SALLY TOMLINSON** or **JIM SUTHERLAND** with your photos and to let us know if you are willing to share a memory.



**Tim Watson**, Chair of the World Community Service Committee, introduced **Stephanie Klose** and **Lucas Pinzon** of Esperanza Juvenil (Boys Hope Girls Hope), which is an organization that our club supported last year with a grant of \$8000. This boarding school in

Guatemala nurtures and guides kids who are motivated

but whose families cannot support their education. 50% are of Mayan background (many learning Spanish for the



first time), 60% are girls. The goal is that they graduate from college. In Guatemala, 8% of children access college and only 2% graduate, but 100% of these students graduate from college!

(Tim reminds his committee that they will meet on Wednesday, September 25, 7-8:30 PM, at his office at 873 Santa Cruz Ave, Suite 202, Menlo Park, CA 94025.)

**PRESIDENT'S CLUB:** DUANE KALAR described a 2004 sailing trip on which he met DICK BUSH. They talked about Polio, and Duane described Rotary's involvement in reducing Polio, inviting Dick to consider joining Rotary. Duane contributed \$1200 to the Rotary Foundation in Dick's honor.



**PROGRAM – Geo Blackshire, Palo Alto Fire Chief**



LIZ KNISS introduced Chief Blackshire, who joined the Palo Alto Fire Department in 1997 just after graduating from college. He was appointed interim chief in January 2019, and promoted to chief in June.

The mission statement adopted by the firefighting team is, "We are a professional team of men and women dedicated to safeguarding and enriching the lives on anyone, anytime and anywhere with compassion and pride."

Most calls are for medical emergencies, and predictions are that will increase by almost 50% over the next 10 years as the population ages. They have a paramedic on every vehicle that goes out, and Palo Alto operates its own ambulance service for quicker service.

Palo Alto also shares resources with others: four team members went to help fight the Camp Fires in 2018, and two went to Florida recently to help with Hurricane Dorian.

Chief Blackshire shared his three goals:



- Maintain the good response times, even as demand increases. Currently, 94% of medical responses are within 8 minutes, 89% of fire within 8 minutes.
- Increase diversity, with a focus on women. The number of women has decreased to 6 out of about 100 professionals. He has a variety of strategies in mind to bring that number up.
- Focus on firefighter mental wellness. More firefighters die of suicide than die fighting fires. Chief Blackshire wants to change the culture to acknowledge vulnerability and recognize when someone needs help.

Our thanks to Chief Blackshire for his informative talk and leadership in our community.