

Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

June 28, 2021

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After a slide show featuring BEN THRELKELD at different ages, with his wife and two daughters at a variety of club activities, PP DANA TOM belled the Debunking to order at 12:31.



He commented on the great photos and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Then DANA thanked the debunking Committee: TRISH BUBENIK, STEVE EMSLIE, BRUCE

GEE, REBECCA GERALDI, GINNY LEAR, LE LEVY, HAL MICKELSON & KAREN ROHDE. He also commended REBECCA for creating all the graphics for the debunking. He then thanked HAL for “his creative genius and quick wit.” He was the one-man writer’s room, director, and producer, working with our talent—adding “He is my hero of heroes.”

HAL, “our master of mirth” will take us into the next section—How Well Do You Know Ben? What is BEN’s favorite hobby? (sailing) What time does he wake up? (4:30 am) Favorite dessert? (German chocolate cake) Food he refuses to eat? (shrimp) What career did he NOT consider besides Optometry? (voice-over artist) What does he enjoy



watching on TV (football games) Favorite U.S. travel destination? (Maine) How many years ago did BEN shave his head? (26—1995) What a Year for President BEN and Our Club—never to forget! All of accomplishments took place during an entire year with a pandemic and Zoom virtual meetings! Our club was non-stop, which included an amazing fundraiser; A wide variety of COVID-safe activities—TGIFs (and Wednesdays, too); Oktoberfest, Holiday & Chinese New Year parties; whiskey tasting; native pollinators; BRUCE GEE’s garden tour; and virtual travel; plus Coffee with a Rotarian and Palo Alto Trivia. What made it gratifying for everyone was that BEN often expressed his thanks. We ALL felt appreciated.

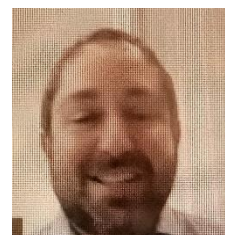
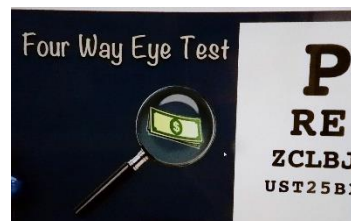
NOW FOR A WORD FROM HIS SPONSOR, DAVID SMULLIN: While being fitted for contact lenses, DAVID talked about the club’s leadership and fellowship, stating that joining was one of the five most important decisions

in his life. BEN seemed interested but explained that the timing wasn’t right. A year later, BEN expressed interest in joining—and the rest is history!



JON COWAN Presented the Eye Chart (4-Way Eye Test) set before “patients,” featuring nine charts

highlighting the year: Is it the



truth; Cash; bylaws; \$25 and up for Pres Club; Coffee with a Rotarian; TGIF; unmute yourself; another Zoom meeting without trousers; PA Rotary loves BEN THRELKELD. (HAL created the clever charts.)

What’s in a name??? Benjamin is a male name of Hebrew origin that means “Son of My Right Hand.” It is currently ranked the 7th favorite name for boys in the U.S. with common nicknames: Ben, Benny, Benjie. Some famous Bens are here with us today. Benjamin Franklin asked if BEN THRELKELD



ever thanked him for inventing bifocals. No! Did he ever thank him for the wisdom found in Poor Richard’s Almanac, such as “Fish and visitors stink after 3 days?” No! Instead, he goes to something he calls a Thought for the Day. He told us that it is up to us to celebrate BEN THRELKELD who provides good leadership, with skill in running Rotary meetings. He said that lack of attention by BEN THRELKELD is just “a pain in his liberty bell.” (aka ROB LYMAN)

“Big Ben” from the UK noted that BEN THRELKELD is monumental like he is, must stand tall in all weather because people count on us, and is glad that BEN respects clocks. He begins on time and finishes on time. He does everything on time. BEN also respects bells. His bell is not a big bell. We both believe that a good, solid, bell tone gives people a real thrill. So, Dr. BEN



THRELKELD, we thank you for a great year of Palo Alto Rotary. (aka HERSH DAVIS)

Ben and Jerrys' representative (aka STEVE EMSLIE) from Vermont announced bad news about taste

temptations no Cornea Crunch or Lens Crunch available. He did acknowledge new flavors arriving during this Rotary

year: Tiramizoom; Tutti Frutti Please Unmute Me; Peaches & Screen; Butter Pecan Time to Log On; French Vax-Nilla; Cookie Dough-n't Forget Your Mask; Mandarin Orange Tier; Praline Quarantine; Rotary Ripple; Blue Badge Blueberry; Ben-nana Walnut; and Pistachio-Cash-io.



BEN's accomplishments are the stuff of story and song. ELIZABETH SANTANA sang "We Only Have Eyes for You" with lyrics by LE LEVY.

After thanking ELIZABETH and LE, DANA moved on to remarks from BEN and CASH. Suddenly, a woman



appeared at meeting to announce that "Kids need Kiwanians. Kids don't need BEN THRELKELD. Kids don't need 20-20 vision." DANA stated that this was not on the program

and needed to get rid of the "Kiwanis Zoom Bomber." (aka EJ HONG) The screen was then filled with static and a notice of "Technical Difficulties," followed by a test pattern DANA explained that Rotary training did not prepare him for this.



DANA then introduced Palo Alto Rotarian and Palo Alto Mayor TOM DuBOIS who read part of a bogus proclamation and then moved to the real proclamation recognizing BEN's accomplishments.



DANA then introduced BEN's daughters Brooke and Anne who talked about what he's like as their

dad. He loves to swim and is funny when he pretends to swim on dry land. They described his three regular outfits. He loves the outdoors, sailing, hiking, swimming and REI. They finished by saying "We're proud of you and love you."



DANA then presented BEN with gifts via his wife Cindy. First came Past President badge and pins, followed by an engraved bell like the one he rings at meetings and a gavel (Best Rotary Virtual President, 2020-21) to use to call everyone to dinner. Next BEN found the framed eye chart, framed lyrics from LE, a True Food Kitchen gift certificate (with vegetarian options) and a collection of baby pollinator plants from a nursery recommended by Juanita Salisbury.

DANA asked BEN "as man of the hour" to share some summary thoughts: BEN said it was his pleasure to be president and felt the year met expectations. He pointed



out that Rotary is a team sport. When he listed what he was most proud of this year, he realized that very little had to do with him. Applauding the 11 new members really pointed to members' bringing guests and Karen's taking over from there.

Wonderful socials were turn-key events. He is optimistic about Rotary and celebrated the increased number of leaders, 25 in his two years, already incredibly active and committed to service. He then asked DANA to show the slide of the Board of Directors and thanked them for their support and willingness "to set him straight." He welcomed CASH as the new president, who brings "stellar leadership skills, knows the club and its culture and is a wicked hard worker." DANA gave him a new President's pin, as well as a shirt signed by members at MATT's hotel--and the Hawaiian shirt passed down for years...but rarely worn. He then thanked everyone for letting him "drive the Rotary RV this year."

DANA then asked CASH to also say a few words: CASH thanked BEN for a successful year, with a pandemic and transition to Zoom. He also appreciated BEN's calm nature, leadership style and countless hours of Rotary work. He also thanked BEN and DANA for training him. He welcomed KAREN ROHDE as President-elect and wished them a fun and successful, Centennial year.



DANA thanked all who helped make the debunking a success. What a year!! Best club anywhere! ASL applause, please! He hopes to see everyone soon—and in person. He adjourned the meeting at 1:33, with 70+ Zoom Cheers on many screens!