

Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

January 10, 2022

Reporter: GEOFF ZIMAN

Editor: LYLE CONNELL

The bell rang to open the second meeting of 2022. It started, as usual, by President-Elect KAREN RODHE welcoming guests. CHARLIE WEIDANZ had two guests from Leadership PA - Nada Djomehri, a realtor of Aussie/Iranian origin and Lesley Milton, the PA City Clerk. LEE PFAB's guest was Lisa Lewis-Cogswell.

In his Thought for the Day, KEN SANCHEZ reviewed how Rotary's humanitarian mission and service to others motivated him to join our organization. In concluding he quoted how always being compassionate and generous leads towards a better world. LIZ KNISS joined the President's Club to honor BEN THRELKELD for his professional services, seeing BEN at the recommendation of BETSY BECHTEL. Ultimately LIZ's vision was improved. In doing so, Liz underlined



the value of the Rotary circle.

The president then shared the board's concern about the possibility of unwanted, disruptive intrusion to our virtual meetings known as Zoombombing or Zoom Raiding. He explained briefly how, if such an event occurred, the interruption would be handled. More details would be forthcoming shortly. The next Board of Directors Meeting will be Zoomed on this coming Wednesday January 12 at 8:00 AM. The primary item of discussion will be determining the form of future meetings.

The City of Palo Alto's Sustainability and Climate Action Plan Ad Hoc Committee is hosting a webinar about Wildfires and Sea Level Rise on Thursday, January 13, at 9:00am. This presentation will provide an overview of climate change adaptation planning efforts. [See January 10 meeting notice for more details and link.]

There is a change in the date for the ushering at "Men on Boats" at PA Players. It will now be on Sunday, February 6, from 1:00 to 4:30 PM. Members were reminded that they should let CASH know if they are intending to go to the dinner for the incoming Rotary President Jennifer Jones on Sunday, February 27.

REBECCA GERALDI inducted YASSINE LAGHZIOUI as our newest member.



YASSINE hails from Morocco and speaks multiple languages. His sponsor is DANA TOM. YASSINE has a passion for hardware innovation and entrepreneurship and described joining our club to be a big honor.



It was announced that our major Centennial Celebration event will take place on Saturday, April 30th so members should make a note to save that date. An essential element in celebrating our club's centennial is highlighting historical aspects.

TRISH BUBENIK presented a tribute to the distinguished Dr. Robert Smithwick who was a longtime prominent member in our club. He passed away in 2013 at the age of 92. In 1957, Bob Smithwick was a founder of the Foothill-DeAnza Community College District which became a model for the 116 community colleges in the state. He served as a Trustee on the local college board for 35 years. Our vocational scholarship program is named for him and, in the last 15 years, it has served 150 community college

students, with awards totaling approximately \$150,000. Trish concluded



Robert Smithwick Vocational Scholarship Program

- Named after Palo Alto Rotarian Robert Smithwick
- Served as Vice Director of the CA State Health Department under Governor Ronald Reagan
- Served on The White House Council on Health under President Lyndon B Johnson
- Founder of the Foothill/De Anza Community College Program and District
- Became the model of the entire California State Community College Program
 - Boasts 116 Community Colleges
 - Serving 1.8 million students



her remarks by making a President's Club donation in Bob Smithwick's memory and honor.

SALLY TOMLINSON introduced our speaker Ahmad Thomas who, since 2020, has been the CEO of the Silicon Valley Leadership Group. He is a born and bred Californian with a military family background and a Wharton MBA. The title of his talk was "The Pledge 25x25 Initiative and other Racial Justice and Equity Programs." The Silicon Valley Leadership Group, was founded in 1977 by former club member David Packard and is a business organization of the most dynamic local companies working to shape the innovative economy of California and the nation. The speaker started by reviewing the key concerns of his organization - Housing,



Transportation, Health Care/Equity and Climate/Energy. From that he explained the steps being taken and the Pledge 25X25 Initiative to promote diversity and inclusivity. The objective of this initiative is to have 25% diversity in leadership in Silicon Valley companies by 2025. He then explained what this metric means and the necessary steps to achieve it. This involves having boardroom executive suite diversity, exchange programs with historic black institutions and overcoming false perceptions in hiring and recruitment. An important point made was that achieving diversity and equity was not just a social imperative but one that leads to increased competitive advantages for the businesses involved.



HENRIETTA BURROUGHS asked about the extent of hostility to the changes. The speaker indicated there were arguments against the initiative like it being better to let the free market solve the problem. Despite this, the initiative enjoys a high level of support. DANA TOM questioned the extent of acceptance beyond the top suite. The speaker explained the need to fight the false perception that diverse talent does not exist. ROB LANCEFIELD commented on the effectiveness of driving change from the top as Truman did in integrating the military in 1948.

Today's Pinion Volunteers were GEOFF ZIMAN and LYLE CONNELL and the Zoom Co-hosts were BEN THRELKELD and DANA TOM.

Monday, January 17, 12:30, Hands On for MLK Day of Service at Homewood Suites, 4329 El Camino Real, Palo Alto, from 12:30 -1:30 PM. We will be building winter backpack kits for LifeMoves, breaking the cycle of homelessness. No regular meeting.

Monday, January 24, 12:30, ZOOM Meeting, Program: New Member Talks: Larry Klein, Tom DuBois, Ken Sanchez