



# Lamorindan



The Weekly Newsletter of the Rotary Club of Lamorinda Sunrise  
Meetings Friday 7AM at Postino's Restaurant in Lafayette

May 25, 2007

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## MOVING, SHAKING, AND ACTION

This was a big day for Bob Riegg. He had to be deeply thoughtful in the morning, then host a wild thoughtless TGITLFOTM in the evening. His general topic was Action, quoting Churchill, Hemingway and Oscar Wilde. Churchill liked to make things happen, Hemingway never confused movement with action (contemplating a TV actress), and Wilde regarded action as the last resource of those who don't like to dream. Which category describes Bob?

## NEW AGENDA, NEW FACES

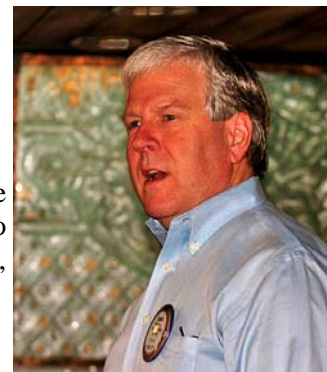
The Pres cheerfully admitted that his agenda page arrived this morning absolutely blank. He found that if he left it out, invisible gremlins would write down suggested subjects. Therefore, the meeting this morning went more smoothly than usual.

Venera Maysuryants was back, and already has had an effect -- she cost George Chaffey \$10 for mispronunciation. Poor George. No one heard his learned, organized, reasoned and articulate speech last week. Everyone heard this one.

We also met Allan Pennebaker of Orinda Motors. If that organization sounds familiar, it's because Dave Watson and Joe Masciantonio also hang out there. We might end up having the smoothest running cars in all of Rotary.

## ALL KINDS OF OCCASIONS

Chuck Yeager actually remembered Miriam's birthday this year. She drove the point home by making him go to a friend's birthday party on that day. So flowers and all that were a bit late in the day. This produced \$20 + \$5 + \$5, somehow.



Thomas Raeth spent his and Tamara's 16th anniversary behind the Giant dugout -- oh, she was there too. Some Mother's Day sushi was also enjoyed. These innocent activities only cost \$20.

Patti Witalis's 39th anniversary was a bit more serious. Roger is still shaky from his recent physical problems, and an oxygen tank and shunt unfortunately had to be in the mix. But it was a great relief and joy to all when Roger showed up at the Riegg TGITLFOTM and was a hearty participant. Oh, and it was also a joy to relieve Patti of \$25.



The bermudaed Skip McCowan and his spectacular legs were goaded into standing on a chair to observe his birthday of yesterday, which had been celebrated by going to Tahoe and servicing his boat. This was also appraised at \$25.



Chuck Kenney was a big winner. Well, he always is, but this was with the help of Lady Luck -- he hit the jackpot at the Lafayette Noon Club's event, Concert at the Rez, and won a new BMW convertible sports car -- for 3 days. Also, his birthday comes up on June 2nd, and he'll treat everyone to dinner -- in New Orleans, where he'll be with the Berkeley Rotarians fixing up the place. Outrageously, Chuck exulted that this was his last meeting with Rich as the Pres. Naturally, \$50 was levied, of which \$5 each was paid



by Gillett Johnson, Steve Hanna, Joe Masciantonio and Alex Arnold.

Buddy Burke is starting a new job, with the new Virgin Airline on the West Coast. He apparently slid his resume under the door at exactly the right time, so that poor new innocent company is having him start on June 4. There then was a discussion of training Virgins which we don't dignify with any attention here. \$20.

We were graced by the presence of Cameron Shearer, he of the College Fund, who is now Royalty. Not only is he son of the President, but he's going to Camp Royal. His daddy went a little overboard on the PR, and the masses rose up as one and shook him loose of \$25.

And finally, the observance of a unique 5th anniversary. That's how long it's been since Brad Davis, together with young Richard Shearer, Orinda's Don Jenkins (who was here today and stole the Raffle), and several others, took the bike ride from here to Ashland to make a grand entrance for the District Conference hosted by our then-Governor Susan Wait. Brad apparently has now recovered because he signed up for the Lodi Century Ride on May 19th, and by golly, saw Steve Hanna doing the same thing. Mr. Davis, on a biking high, kicked \$100 into the Endowment Fund without even being asked.

#### BLUE CHARLIE

Well, his CD didn't work, and he wasn't sure which church in Concord is hosting the event, but Charlie Franklin did know the Blue Star Moms will be there on June 23rd to assemble the big shipment to the troops in Iraq for July 4th. He showed a sample of the 500 pillow cases which have been made, and of the individually addressed boxes. Don't worry, he'll be back with details for sure.

#### EXPOSURES

#### LOOK SHARP, FEEL SHARP, BE SHARP



Gillett Johnson said he was blessed growing up, so they couldn't have given him too hard a time about that old Gillette Blue Blades ad.

Luckily for Gillett, his father was the only one of 10 siblings who ever left Tennessee. He ended up in the Finger Lakes region of New York State. He tried selling trees in the woods, but that was pretty tough in the Depression. Gillett's mother had a slightly different background. Her mother came from France to New York City, and she herself taught music, dance and the arts in the neighborhood.

Gillett's first job was tying grapevines in the Upper New York country, which presaged his lifetime interest in wine. He went to Hobart William Smith College, despite the fact that Steve Ware had been there before him and the ROTC building had burned down.

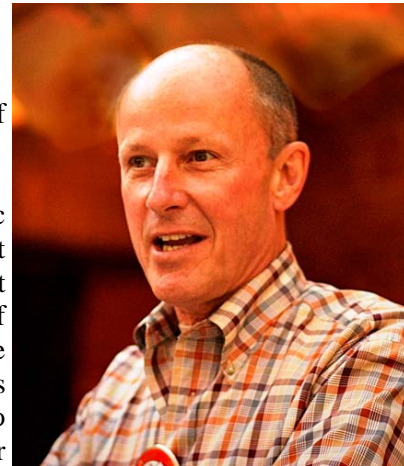
He became an aggressive student (finally), first in pre-law and international business, then at American University in Paris by way of Parsons School of Design. Following that, he went from a stock boy to a currency trader on Wall Street. He met Tamra and they couldn't stand each other. Seven years later they happened to re-meet in SF, and the result was somewhat different.

15 or so years ago he got back into the industry he loves best, Vino, first in SF and then in the East Bay. He enjoys life in Lafayette, with Tamra, kids Patrick (14) and Chloe (11 this very day), and Romeo the Paper Retrieving Dog.

## ARNOLD IN CALIFORNIA

Alex Arnold actually does have a place in Arnold, but we're ahead of our story.

He was born in Seattle one of 6 kids, all brought up in strict Catholic school, with a feeling of being responsible for everything that went on. He went to 3 grade schools, 3 high schools, and 3 colleges. At 14, when his father was transferred to California, he came by himself to St. Joseph's Seminary in Mountain View. It was a year before the rest of his family moved down, during which he put in 6-day weeks and got a lot of individual attention. The students were divided into several athletic squads, and Alex competed with much older schoolmates which took him up a notch.



They moved to Pleasant Hill, what there was of it, in 1960. College Park High School didn't offer much that he hadn't already learned, so he went, well, kind of wild, despite the fact that his roommate in an apartment was a deputy sheriff.

He then made a somewhat fateful choice between Vietnam and marriage. The marriage actually didn't work out in the end, but then it wasn't Vietnam. Kaiser Engineers, Armstrong Business College, and managing a 15-unit Oakland apartment all at once did not make for an easy existence. There were two kids, then divorce, after which he was really alone for the first time, a humbling experience. Things turned around in the late '70s when he met and married Mary Jane, got his kids back, and bonded and blended with her son. He's lived in Moraga ever since.

There were 7 different jobs in sales and marketing, notably at Xerox in the '70s when he really learned how to knock on doors. Also included were a sales training company of his own, and National Semiconductor, and Hitachi mainframes, and a temporary placement business. He now is preparing to conquer the real estate world, and is taking courses at St. Mary's.

To Alex, the four Passions are: (1) Spiritual, at which he has been greatly helped by Pat Flaharty and others; (2) Health, including running, mountain climbing, motorcycles (2,000-mile trip each year); (3) Family, with four kids ranging from 40 yrs old to a recent graduate from Villanova, and a brother who is a dentist in Arnold where Alex bought property; (4) Fellowship, definitely including Rotary.

## MOVING, SHAKING, AND ACTION AT TGITLFOTM

Since everything that goes around comes around, we're back to Bob Riegg. He definitely went around as host of the evening's TGITLFOTM (Every so often we should explain that's "Thank God It's The Last Friday Of The Month"). He masterfully quelled an exceptionally boisterous crowd by having the wives tell of their favorite vacation experiences. Now this seems like dangerous territory, but each storyteller was pretty discreet, with perhaps just a barb or two from time to time. Husbands were not given equal time; who said the world is fair? But Bob and Pat's marvelous food, the wine brought by the thirsty visitors, and the beautiful back-patio scene soothed everyone.

## GUESTS

Don Jenkins, Orinda Rotary  
John Sherry, Lafayette Rotary  
Allen Pennebaker, Orinda Motors  
Venera Maysuryants, M R S Furniture Upholstery  
Cameron Shearer, royalty to be confirmed  
Katie Rose



## UPCOMING

6/1: Dr. John Bernardin, District Literacy Program Chairman  
6/8: Shelley Sandusky, attorney, death Penalty in California  
6/17-6/20: International Convention, Salt Lake City  
6/21: 3/4 Century Club with Michael Muir, 10:30 - 1:30  
6/22: Henry "Bud" Wolf, child abuse  
7/6: TGITLFOTM, Fillinger's, with The Danes  
7/13: Skip Skivington, terrorism preparedness  
7/27: TGITLFOTM -- Davis?  
8/31: Our first working TGITLFOTM -- at the Raeths', sticking labels in dictionaries to be distributed at the beginning of the school year



Bob was on a tight schedule on Friday. He hosted a great TGITLFOTM party, did some last minute packing and hoped a jet Saturday morning to start a multi week excursion to eastern Canada.

