



Lamorindan



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

May 11, 2007

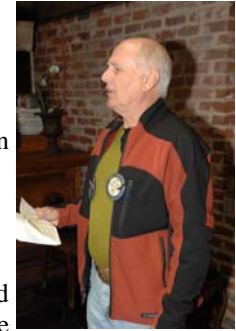
Cal Lee — Reporter
David Dickson — Pictures
Kevin Croak — Publisher

WHY WE NEED A LITTLE NEW BLOOD IN ROTARY

Thought for the Day from John Fazel: He hearkened back to the time gas prices went up when he was in college -- all the way to 35 cents/gallon.

SPEAKING OF WHICH ...

We were graced by a visit from Venera Maysuryants of M R S Furniture Upholstery, located right behind Steve Ware's Forge. In fact, that's how she ended up here, kidnapped from the Chamber Mixer a couple of nights ago. Looks like she may return; we hope so.



John doing the hearken

Also making an appearance was Andy Roodevelt. Notice that we don't say Papa Eddie. He was here too, but he's not as important. Eddie practically runs the Moraga Club and Moraga in general, but Andy may show a little rebellious streak and wander back over here on his own.

OTHER CELEBRITIES

Our most Honorary of Members, CC Sun columnist Harriet Ainsworth, was also here. We like to think it was because of our charm, but what probably made Harriet's day was being able to tower over our speaker who was cheated of a ballet career because of her height (see below). Another interesting sidelight was when Harriet and Patti Witalis compared military ranks. Bet you didn't know that Harriet was a lieutenant commander in the Navy in her day.

And then there was Assistant District Governor Larry Goldenberg. It was probably a disquieting experience seeing his underling in action, since Richard does tend to be somewhat disquiet. Not to mention his waltz with Eddie, which our speaker must have regarded with interest.



PINS AND FINES

But the Asst. Gov. may have been impressed with the creative way in which the Pres put us over the \$45,000 mark for the net Auction proceeds. A \$1 levy on each member without a pin (this is always an easy revenue source) brought us from \$44,996 to \$45,003. Pat Flaharty then scolded these folks, in his gentle way, by recounting how he and a French Rotary PDG struck up an acquaintance in the Chicago airport simply because they were wearing their pins.

Oh, yes, there were the usual recognitions. Dan Herbert's 32nd anniversary breakfast at the Claremont Hotel just cost him another \$30. Dave Dickson confessed to a modest celebration of Marla's birthday -- at the Kentucky Derby, in a box by the finish line, complete with hats and mint juleps. \$40 fine, \$5 WPWT fines to Paul Fillinger and Joe Metcalf, and a ridiculously low \$5 bragging fine to Steve Ware who practically broke the bank with his shrewd betting.



WE ACTUALLY DO DO A FEW THINGS

Such as Youth Exchange. That is, we do them if there are any hosts around. Eddie Roodevelt had two excellent pieces of advice. First, since Andy is his only child and he's turning him over to us, don't screw it up. Second, be aware of the risks of hosting an exchange student: Possibly becoming deeply fond of him/her, being exposed to foreign culture with possible visiting over there, being a role model and hero to a 16-year-old kid. We do need more hosting help with our incoming girl from Slovakia.

Or the Dictionaries. Next Friday we will frantically assemble dictionaries during the meeting, then immediately invade the four Lafayette elementary schools and give them to all 3rd graders. Tom Black said the dictionaries are coming; Thomas Raeth said wearily that they've already arrived (71 cartons). We'll have 700 labels to slap on next meeting. Seeing how the kids regard these beautiful and useful books as awesome makes it all worth while.

The chivalrous Paul Fillinger is hosting a gathering for members' wives this Wednesday at 7:30 P.M. to find out from the horse's mouth how we might acceptably approach potential female members.



Rafflin' Robert Riegg picked out the white ball.

THE NEW OLD PLAYHOUSE



We had the pleasure of welcoming Lois Grandi, founder and director of Playhouse West at 1345 Locust in Walnut Creek. This is by no means the first time we've seen Lois, but a few things have happened recently. The bottom line is that the old Playhouse West has become a spanking new theater, still with 49 seats but shining and sparkling, even with legroom.

What's the history that led up to this significant moment? Lois was born in Philly and, with her parents' strong support, started a full-time ballet career at age 4. After rushing to get out of high school early at age 16 and having put in her 5 hours of practice per night, she headed for New York and became a protege of the famous balletmaster Anthony Tudor. There was only one weakness in her campaign toward ballet stardom -- there aren't that many lead roles for a woman 4'10" high. But a brief period of depression was cut short when a dancer told her auditions were being held for the musical "The Boy Friend", needing someone to do the Charleston. This being no great challenge for her, she got her equity card at 17, and a new career was launched. Among her roles was Laurie in "Oklahoma", with 6'5" Peter Palmer playing Curly; Liesl in "Sound of Music" ("I Am 16 Going On 17"); and Tiger Lily in "Peter Pan" with Sandy Duncan.

It was Sandy Duncan who suggested she study acting. She did. She also got married, 6 years later. Her husband was a doctor stationed at Travis, which is what brought her to California. While raising kids, TV and film work in SF followed. Then in 1984 she founded Performing Arts Academy in Alamo. In 1990 she took her first job as a director, and the rest is history. In 1995, when she was teaching in an old church on Locust Street, she decided she wanted to be in charge and particularly to have artistic control. With student support, she converted the old church into a little theater, raising money from nothing, and opened a full season with Arthur Miller's "After the Fall". It sold out with nothing but word-of-mouth publicity, and grew from there. By the end of the 8th year there was insufficient space, so a move was made to the Leshner Center. This logistically didn't work out after 3 years, and other possibilities were explored unsuccessfully.



Sometimes it's all right in front of you. Lois ended up completely renovating Playhouse West, and from June 14 to June 24 it will start up with 8 performances of "Celebrate Playhouse West -- Our Musical Legacy", with excerpts from the 10 musicals the company has previously done. The next season will officially open in September with 4 Chekhov comedies.

Lois and her company have won a bushel of Critic's Choice and other awards. Previously, a couple of times, our club had the good sense to take over the theater for the evening and have a private performance. Is our Social Chairperson listening?



GUESTS

Harriet Ainsworth, Honorary LSR
Eddie Roodevelt, Moraga Rotary
Andy Roodevelt, Maybe Not Moraga Rotary
Venera Maysuryants, M R S Furniture Upholstery
Marla Wong, photographer's assistant

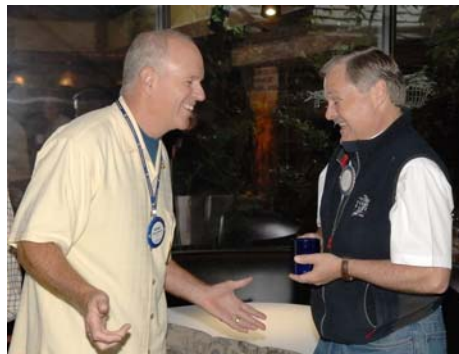


UPCOMING

- 5/18: Amy Worth, MTC (formerly Orinda City Council), regional transportation
- 5/25: TGITLFOTM -- Riegg?
- 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, Filinger's, with The Danes
- 7/13: Skip Skivington, terrorism preparedness
- 7/27: TGITLFOTM -- Davis?
- 8/31: TGITLFOTM -- Luscher?



President Rich takes the lead and shows his moves



So if Rich asks me to dance can I use my old reliable “ love to but I hurt my back while working as fire chief” excuse?