



# Lamorindan



The Weekly Newsletter of the Rotary Club of Lamorinda  
Sunrise

July 25, 2008

Tom Black — Pictures  
Rich Shearer— Reporter  
Kevin Croak & Patti Witalis — Publishers

## GUESTS AND VISITING ROTARIANS

Jackie Welles - Ray's one and only  
Yolanda Peeks - ditto for Thomas  
Brian Barstad - Not sure whose one and only he is, but he is Buddy Burke's friend  
Chloe Johnson - Bugged dad Gillett to bring her today  
John Baker - former Lamorinda Sunriser, and still the USS Hornet's biggest booster  
Blondelle - the Sevilla's most recent Guide Dogs for the Blind, a lovely black Labrador Retriever



## BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Jim Brencic celebrated his 9<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Of course, he 'fessed up last week for the same thing. Gillett Johnson celebrated his birthday early so he'd have some cash to put in the fine bucket.



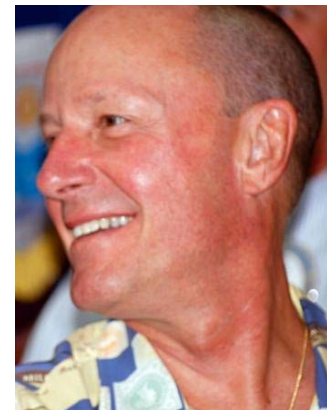
And speaking of birthdays, Hays Englehart announced the birth of granddaughter Lola Belle Cooley. In addition to the joy of the event, the assembled multitudes agreed that this is the coolest baby name that has come down the pike in many a moon. Congrats, Hayes and Regina

### “HOW CAN WE MISS YOU WHEN YOU WHEN YOU WON'T GO AWAY?” SAYETH GEORGE CHAFFEY

Bob Riegg was here today. Unremarkable, normally, but it was announced a few weeks ago that he was taking a leave of absence so that he and blushing bride Pat could travel the world, slay dragons, and whatever else strikes their fancy. So what gives? Paul Fillinger, that's what. It turns out our former Scheming Despot not only spilled the beans, but did so a month or so early. So we will, in fact, have Bob to kick around a little longer.

## BEKIN'S FAVORITE CUSTOMERS

Walt Nelson was called upon to explain one of his Mystery Rotarian items from last week, *i.e.*, moving 14 times in 17 years in his ill-spent youth. Turns out his Dad kept trying to find the right house to buy via something like the lease-option route, and kept not finding it



**IT MAY ALL COME FROM THE SAME POCKET . . .**

Paul Bettelheim left fliers on all our tables explaining the differences between the various places where the funds liberated from our wallets and purses ends up. He then stood up and explained it out loud for those of us who don't know how to read. Here is a very brief recap. Fines and recognitions go to the Club's operating fund. \$130 per year on your bill goes to The Rotary Foundation, the funding arm of Rotary International and its myriad programs around the world. You can also make donations to The Endowment - technically the Lamorinda Sunrise Endowment Fund, or some such - which funds our Club's do-good efforts. The Endowment is mainly funded by our annual Dinner and Auction (which is why this Reporter, in his other guise as this year's Auction Committee Chair, plans to nag the hell out of all of you to help out), and is being grown in order that it can generate enough interest so that we don't have to do the damn Dinner and Auction every year at some point in the future. Questions about this? Ask Paul B.



**MYSTERY ROTARIAN**

This week's Mystery Rotarian ranked a mention in the "Unclear on the Concept" in the late, verbose Herb Caen's column for pointing out that a SF eatery advertised a lovely lunch of "fat-free salmon w/french fries." He had two other distinguishing items as well, but my note-taking skills abandoned me at the critical moment. In any event, we're talking here about our own Ernie Furtado.

**MONEY FOR FLOOD VICTIMS**

Joanne Luscher and Tom Black volunteered to help previous enlistees Walt Nelson, Cal Lee and Rich Shearer at the Lafayette Safeway in shaking down the public for cash to send to the Cedar Rapids Sunrise Club to help with recovery from the devastating floods that nailed Iowa a few weeks ago. And Gillett Johnson and Prez Pat Flaharty each dropped a check into the till. Thanks, guys.

Which reminds me - in addition to the Club and other area Clubs chipping in and standing in front of local Safeway's with proverbial hat in hand, part of the fund raising strategy involves passing that self-same proverbial hat so we can each drop in whatever we feel comfortable giving. So if you'd like to help out, please make the check payable to "LSR Endowment," make a note on it that it is for "Iowa" or "Iowa flood relief." Your support is very much appreciated.



## MEMBERSHIP MOMENT

Membership Co-Director Walt Nelson rose to announce that we need mentors for the great new members we are bringing in. ‘Nuff said.

Or not. Brad Davis griped about something or other to do with mentoring, and was paid for his transgressions to the tune of \$20. At least he now knows where that money is going, thanks to the info about three items up.



## A GREAT WAY TO SPEND AN EVENING

Former Lamorinda Sunriser John Baker paid a visit this morning and announced what should be a great time out - an evening concert by the one and only Glenn Miller Orchestra (don't count on Glenn himself being there). Where? If you know John, you already know the answer: on board the USS Hornet, docked as always in Alameda. Did I say *an* evening? Try *two* evenings. August 1 and 2, to be specific. Interested? Call 510-521-8448 ext. 282, or go to [www.HornetEvents.com](http://www.HornetEvents.com).

## A GREAT WAY TO GIVE SOMEONE A HAND

We got a letter from the District thanking us for our ongoing support for the LN-4 artificial hand program. Don't know what it is? Ask Prez Pat, Past-Prez Paul Fillinger, Past-Past Prez Rich Shearer, or check it out on the District's website (there's a link to the District 5160 website from the Lamorinda Sunrise website).

## GET OUT OF TOWN

Fearless Leader Pat Flaharty, in his never-ending quest to have all of us Get It, let it be known that he is learning about, and impressed by, the incredible number of world travel do-good opportunities available through Rotary and its 32,000+ Clubs. For example, the Foster City Club has put together a trip to China to deliver wheelchairs to folks who need them. Interested? Talk to Pat.



## UH, WE ALREADY KNEW THAT

Remember January, 2001, when the national press was all a-dither over outgoing Clinton Administration staffers removing the “W” keys from their computer keyboards? Who'd 'a thunk we'd have something similar happen here? Well, we did. It turns out that the bag o' marbles we've used for the Raffle week-in, week-out for years went missing in the transition from the Fillinger Administration to that of our current Grand High Poobah. This, of course, led to the obvious observation that Paul has “lost his marbles.” No one argued the point.



**PROGRAM:**

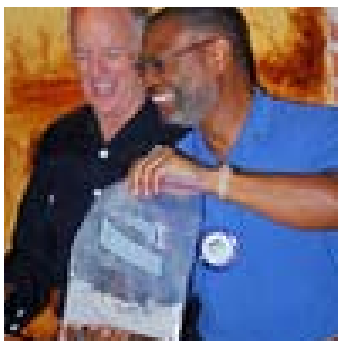
It was the last Friday of the month, so you know what that means: Critical Mass in San Francisco. That, and another installment of “Expose Yourself.” This month, Thomas Peeks and Mike Edwards were the honorees.

Thomas Peeks focused on and truly major event in his and wife Yolanda’s lives: The Oakland Hills Fire of 1991. Yes, they lost their house and virtually all their possessions.



As you likely remember, this was a Big Deal. Thomas told us how big: 3 square miles of urban hillside burned; \$2 billion in damage; 25 killed; 150 injured; 2843 single-family houses and 437 apartments and condos destroyed.

Thomas recalls waking up to a perfect, sunny, blue-skies Sunday. Then the wind picked up. Then there was some smoke in the air. Then there was the sight of nearby trees literally exploding into flame. Thomas and tried watering down his roof with a garden, but the water evaporated as soon as it hit the shingles, if not sooner. That made it clear - time to get in the car and get out. Yolanda had gathered some important papers - including what proved to be critical insurance papers - and she and Thomas got in their cars and left. Thomas tried to go back briefly for a set of presentation documents that were due the next day at work. He quickly made the wise choice - it’s too dangerous and not worth it.



When Thomas and Yolanda were allowed back onto their street, their suspicions were confirmed - their house was gone, excepting only part of the foundation. Fortunately, they had their original insurance policy, thanks to Yolanda’s foresight, and the policy covered full replacement cost. (You can’t get policies like that any more.) In addition, the contractor who built their house. Even more remarkable, the architect was still alive (age 90) and still had the original drawings. This meant that there was no question with the insurance company that the “original” house was being rebuilt, and thus more or less everything was covered. And so the house was rebuilt. Unfortunately, Thomas and Yolanda found the process, which took a year and a half, “tedious.”



Next up was Mike Edwards, who, as a fire fighter with the City of Alameda, helped fight the Oakland Hills Fire. He and his crew were wrapping up fighting a fire in Alameda that day, when Mike looked up and saw smoke and then flame. He suggested to his boss that someone be sent to get food and drinks lined up, because it was clear that they were heading into the hills.



Mike noted that many people are very reluctant to leave in the face of big fire. He had three pieces of advice in such situations, though: one, get out; two, get out; and three, get out. Mike also stressed the importance of clearing away brush - defensible space is often the difference between a home that can be saved and one that will be lost. In fact, firefighters will often do a form of triage, choosing to expend their efforts on saving houses with defensible space because those are the homes with the best chance of survival.

Mike also noted that his crew in the Oakland Hills Fire didn't even try to save homes with wood shake roofs - it was simply pointless.

Mike also noted that there were major water pressure problems in the Oakland Hills Fire. Hopefully, the water delivery system has been improved since 1991.

Thanks, Thomas and Mike, for sharing your experiences and insights from a day that changed so many lives and still lingers in our collective memory.

### UPCOMING EVENTS:

Our website Calendar (<http://www.rotarycoco.org/cgi-bin/caldisp.pl?club=53>) will have even more info, but here is a fair sampling:

### Club: East Bay Stand-Down

Thursday, August 7 to Sunday, August 10, 2008

East Bay Stand Down, Alameda County Fairgrounds, Pleasanton. Help veterans who are having a rough go of it at this four-day one-stop-shopping extravaganza of caring. Contact Patti Witalis or Brad Davis for more info or help signing up.

