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The Weekly Newsletter of the Rotary Club of Lamorinda Sunrise

August 29, 2008

Tom Black — Pictures
Rich Shearer — Reporter
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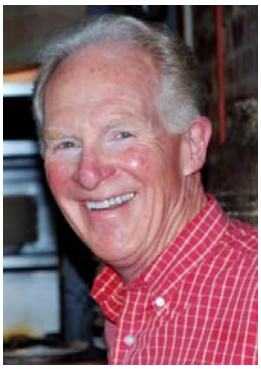


GUESTS AND VISITING ROTARIANS

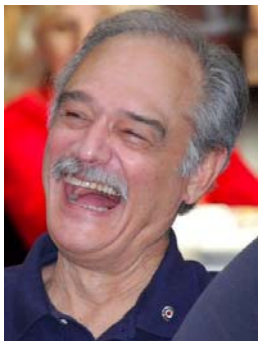
Rick Ashburn - Paul Fillinger's son-in-law (but he's welcome anyway)
Steve Snyder - Lafayette
Cameron Shearer - Rich's little boy is growing up
Rudy Reich - Orinda
Bill Pugh - Benicia
Jay Lifson, who later magically turned into A.J Nielson - both of Lafayette

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Rich Shearer and Tom Black each had birthdays. Tom was in Canada. Rich wasn't. Didn't seem to matter to President Pat.

Shhhh. Don't tell Jackie Welles that she has a birthday coming. Ray seemed to think it was a secret or something. Of course, I may be confused about something here. Lord knows it wouldn't be the first time.

And a real birthday, as in somebody being born. Paul Fillinger announced that he and Glenda are grandparents again. It seems that there was a Chines baby that needed a home, and there were their China-based daughter and son-in-law with more love than they knew what to do with. And the rest, as they say, is history. Many congrats to the Fillinger clan.



ALL HANDS ON DECK NEXT WEEK

The turnout was great for last Friday's combination TGITLFOTM/ book prep at the Raeths'. Thanks to all who were there, special thanks to the Raeths for hosting us, and extra-special thanks to Tamara Raeth, who has really taken this project by the horns. Now all we have to do is distribute there great dictionaries to every third grader in the Lafayette School District, which we will do at immediately following our next meeting after getting some tips and a pep talk from Mr. Dictionary, George Chaffey. It doesn't get more hands-on than this, the teachers are grateful and the kids are a hoot. So you'll be there, right? Right?

AND SPEAKING OF BEING THERE . . . .

Keep October 4, s'il vous plait. We will be working at the Las Trampas facility in what Buddy Burke calls "The Big Day" (and hopefully the first of many "Big Days" for us at Las Trampas). What will we be doing? The details are still being worked out, but it will involve hands-on work for a great cause, and it will involve Lamorinda Sunrisers having a good time. And isn't that all you really need to know? See you there.

Oh, and there will a prep day sometime in advance, but Buddy is still nailing the where-and-when of that. I suspect he'll let us know in due course. And thanks, Buddy, for heading this up.

MORE GOOD WORKS TO BE DONE

Joanne Luscher let us know that Project Homeless Connect is coming around again. This program is similar to the just-completed East Bay Stand Down, *i.e.* one-stop shopping for medical, dental, social service, legal, etc., problems, but this one is aimed at the homeless of Contra Costa County. To learn more, let's hear for Joanne herself:

"An estimated 15000 people are homeless in Contra Costa County each year, and on any given night more than 4800 are homeless. This includes children

"For the third year on Sept. 10 there will be an attempt to meet some of their needs. Volunteers will help through helping connect them to benefits, medical care, social services and more.

“We helped with this program two years ago. We did have a little more notice though. This year it will be held at the Antioch fair grounds and only about ten days from now. We did find it very rewarding, but with this short amount of time, we will need to sign up directly. Applications to volunteer may be found online at http:// cchealth.org. It does not require a full day but probably ½ day would be expected.

“If you are not able to volunteer but would still like to contribute they will also accept donations. Checks may be sent to Greater Richmond Interfaith Program/Project Homeless Connect, 597 Central Ave Suite 325, Martinez Ca. 94553. We can also use donations of coats, gloves, hats and scarves. Since this is last minute, just bring them next Friday to the meeting

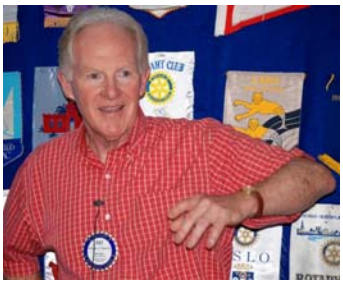
“Please also let Bob Heinen know if you are contributing time or money.”

Thanks, Joanne, for getting this info to us on short notice. This is an easy way to Make Dreams Real and to show that we Get It.

MYSTERY ROTARIAN

This week’s Mystery Rotarian was 19 before traveling more than 100 miles from home. He also was on a Bobby Knight-coached team. (You remember Bobby Knight, the former U. of Indiana basketball coach known for coaching brilliance, bright red sweaters and just a weeeee bit of a temper.) He had something listed, too, but I didn’t catch it (and there’s a first). Who else but Bob Heinen, who was on the United States Military Academy b-ball team for a minute or two when Knight was coaching there. Bob says that Coach Knight “taught me there is more to life than basketball . . . although that’s not what he was trying to teach me.” Bob may not have made the team. But he did make Sports Reporter for the West Point newspaper, and thus got to cover . . . wait for it . . . the basketball team and Coach Knight. Apparently, Coach Knight was not amused, but he knew better than to throw a chair at someone who knew how to throw a grenade.

IT'S NOT QUITE "DUELING BANJOS," BUT STILL . . . .



President Pat still wants your shirt size for the spiffy new white "I Get It" Lamorinda Sunrise shirts. Steve Ware wants your shirt size so he can give you a spiffy not-so-new blue Lamorinda

Sunrise shirts. If they can't sort this out, Pat and Steve will face off after next week's meeting with marshmallows at ten paces.

GEEZ, AS IF SHEARER DOESN'T MAKE ENOUGH NOISE

Forty-Niner tickets magically appeared at today's meeting. Eight of them, to be precise. Their owners apparently could not use them, so up they went for auction. Prez Pat committed a real faux pas by inviting Rich Shearer to be Auctioneer for a Day, which sent many members diving for ear plugs. While that was going, Krysten Laine put up the winning bid ($100) which will go to some good work or other. Not only does Krysten get it, she got it.

A LITTLE HELP HERE, PLEASE

This reporter's notes a notation that says, and I quote: "Jim Brencic - bid on the way." I have no idea what that means, but it seemed important enough to write down at the time, so I guess I ought to report it. Make up any story you want about this. Jim won't mind. I won't either.

WELCOME HOME, VENERA

The good Ms. Matsuryants has been absent from our midst for a bit, and now we know why: she was back in Russia or thereabouts for a while. Glad to have you back, Venera.

WE ARE SEEING THE FUTURE, AND IT LOOKS PRETTY DARN GOOD

Becky Ware, our secret agent at Acalanes High, reported today on all things Interact. She is Co-President of the Acalanes High Interact Club this year, and recently attended a meeting with the District 5160 Head Interact Guy (Jim Cambier), the Lamorinda Sunrise Interact Advisor (Steve Ware - he and Becky seem to be acquainted somehow) and some Interact members from other area high schools, and Becky is excited about applying the results of that meeting to the year to come. Plans include, but are not limited to, working more closely with the Stanley Middle School Opportunity Knocks program and coordinating Acalanes Interact and Lamorinda Sunrise projects. The main recipient of Acalanes Interact's good works this year will be the LN-4 project, which is a most deserving effort. Thanks for the report, Becky. The Interact Club is clearly in good hands.

ART & WINE FESTIVAL, DEAD AHEAD

Alex Arnold is looking for a few good Rotarians, but we'll do instead. The Ruht Beer Float Stand is no more, but that doesn't mean that there will be no Lamorinda Sunrise presence at the annual Lafayette Art & Wine Festival;. Instead, we will be (a) helping with parking and directing people and (b) manning a booth to let people know about Rotary in general and Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary in particular. The Club has done a pretty good job of stepping up to the plate so far, but Alex still needs some people. Qualifications: a pulse. Yes, that means you qualify.

YOU CAN'T MAKE UP STUFF LIKE THIS

The meeting was going along smooth as silk, when out of nowhere, Pat Flaharty, President, with a bemused expression on his face, turned to Joanne Luscher and asked" "Joanne, why are you wearing Barry's badge?" Now Barry Durlester is a fine fellow, but having moved to Reno he is no longer a member of Lamorinda Sunrise, much as we would gladly take him back with open arms. Nor is he, technically speaking, female, and he doesn't bear that much of a resemblance to Joanne. Joanne brushed these issues aside with an explanation that nobody heard because we were all laughing too hard.

PROGRAM:

The final Friday of the month. You know what that means, of course. (Cue the them from "Jaws.") It means Expose Yourself, where members tell us whatever it is they think we ought to know about them. Today, we had two highly entertaining presentations to which I cannot possibly do justice.

Mike Wilson

First up was Mike Wilson. Since Mike hasn't been a member that long, he could tell us anything he wanted to and we wouldn't know the difference. He decided to tell the truth anyway.

Mike is a native of Susanville, California in 1963. A state prison was built there son after, which explains the family's move to San Leandro when Mike was two. He and his family moved to Moraga in 2001.

Mike is a graduate of Castro Valley High School and CSU Hayward (now CSU East Bay). He went to work for World Airways more or less just in time for it to get out of the regularly-scheduled passenger business. (Mike swears this is just a coincidence - I'll let you be the judge.) When this happened, the company had an "End of the World" party in which each station shut down operations in order around the world. (Mike says this was actually pretty fun - once again, I'll let you be the judge.) After that, Mike worked for PMI Mortgage, then for Better Office Systems selling office equipment, an experience Mike described as boot camp for sales people, hard as heck but great for building experience.

Then, in 1989, Mike went to work for State Farm Insurance and hasn't looked back. He started in South Hayward, went to the Alameda office in 1990, and came to Lafayette in 2006.

Oh, remember that State Farm jingle? Of course you do. Well, says Mike, Barry Manilow wrote it. Whether Manilow violated the Geneva Convention by doing so was left unexplored.

Mike has been married to Michelle for 20 years, and in the middle of his presentation he ponied a contribution to the coffers in honor of her birthday on August 24. Mike met Michelle somewhat fleetingly in church on New Years Eve, was smitten, and moved heaven and earth to get whoever it was in his family that knew her to introduce them. It worked. They have two kids, Rachel Lynn and Alexander Russell. They also have Woodrow Wilson. No, this isn't some ghoulish story of stealing the remains of the 28th president, it's a dog. A rather charming dog at that. We saw photos of all of these folks, plus shots of Mike's parents various siblings and other rabble.

Mike describes himself as a photographer, explorer, adventurer, world traveler, practical joker, off-roader, mountaineer, sailor, fisherman, and some other things I didn't get down, Oh, there was one more thing he mentioned: Lamorinda Sunrise Rotarian. Mike like our style and decided he wanted to join us. The feeling's mutual, Mike.

Buddy Burke

Next came the one and only Buddy Burke. Buddy promised a very serious presentation. Fortunately for us, he lied.

Buddy was born in Uvalda, Georgia, between US-221 and US-1. We saw the supermarket owned by Buddy's cousin - it's called the Mercantile. We also saw Buddy's Mom & Dad, the local highway system (pre-and post-scraping) and the main source of shopping for all non-food items: the Sears catalog.

This is tobacco country, and Buddy certainly knows the crop, having spent many a youthful hour working in the fields.

Buddy was the valedictorian of Robert Toombs Central High School, Class of '75. He showed us the class photo and let it be known that more of his classmates went to prison than went to college. Buddy, knowing that orange jumpsuits don't look good on anyone, chose college. First to Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College for an A.S. in Math, then to Valdosta State College for a B.S, in Business Management.

So where does an upwardly-mobile young from Uvalda, Georgia, go from college? The U.S. Air Force, that's where. So off Buddy went, first to learn to fly jets and then to fly refueling tankers, the planes that refuel other planes while both are flying. And from their? Flying jets for Pan Am, American and, finally, Virgin America. He's no longer flies the jets, but he is still with Virgin America.

But without a doubt, as far as Buddy is concerned, the best that has ever happened to him is Holly Landers, his blushing bride. We saw many photos of the two of them together, including: Prom Night, 2007; Buddy's late, lamented flying machine; Buddy's version of origami-as-pillow-arranging; and a whole bunch more.

Many thanks, Buddy. And try to lighten up, okay?

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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: Weekly Meeting-Dictionary distribution to local third graders Friday 09/5/08 7:00am Our own George Chaffey gives us the history of the program, and shares some responses from the local community. Not to be missed, this is a special day for Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary.

Club: Board Meeting Tuesday 09/09/08 07:00am - 08:00am

Join the board for the monthly meeting at John Fazel's office in Orinda. The Prudential office is right across the alley (same side of street) from Peets (up stairs). Stop by Peets if you want a cup of coffee &/or something to eat.

Club: Weekly Meeting-Michael Mendonca, creator of the LN-4 prosthetic hand Friday 09/12/08 7:00am

Michael Mendonca, creator of the LN-4 prosthetic hand program shares his experiences in designing, manufacturing, and distributing the hands.

Club: Tentative "Help out" day at Las Trampas Saturday 09/13/08 7:30am

Tentative date to get together at Las Trampas to do some of the prep activities before our big planting day.

Club: Weekly Meeting-Booked, info on program forthcoming Friday 09/19/08 7:00am

Club: Lafayette Art & Wine Festival Friday 09/19/08 07:30pm - Sunday 09/21/08 05:30pm

The club will provide support for the festival this year during the whole event - Contact Alex Arnold for your time slot.

District 5160 Event: Group Study Exchange ... next meeting! Tuesday 09/23/08 12:45pm

The next hosting meeting will be held on Sept. 23 at 12:45 at the Hampton Inn and Suites on 800 Mason Ave , Vacaville, CA. Click here for details. Posted by -Zoomie-

Club: Weekly Meeting-Expose Yourself Friday 09/26/08 7:00am