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# Listening In

May 22, 2017

## CALL TO ORDER

The May 22 meeting was called to order at 12:18 p.m. by **President David Bernardi**. Before and after that, Rotarians enjoyed their lunch of herbed chicken, beans, salad and cheesecake.

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Longtime Rotarian **Joe Ayoob** rose from the Italian table to lead the Pledge of Allegiance and the Thought for the Day, quoting Theodore Roosevelt: *"If you could kick the person in the pants responsible for most of your trouble, you wouldn't sit for a month."*

## VISITING ROTARIANS AND GUESTS

Visiting Rotarians and guests included Novato Rotarian **Lori Frugoli**, wife of member **Gary Frugoli**, and **Wes Bard**, the new executive director of *The Tamalpais* in Greenbrae. Also joining Rotary was **Tracey Tate**, executive director of *Opportunity for Independence*, a job developer working with disabled adults.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Friday, June 16 is **Fran White's** installment as our next president. The club gave a round of applause to the current officers. **Margaret Deedy** reminded all of the need to RSVP asap for the installation of officers event.

**President Dave** reminded everyone that Rotary will be dark on Monday, May 29. Dave also announced that at his final meeting on June 26, his son will visit from Duckhorn and discuss wine and host a tasting. Excellent attendance is expected at that meeting.

Rotarian **Brian Powell** announced the scholarship committee met last week, and that five \$5,000 scholarships were granted. One was via the San Rafael Women's Club, one was a *Mario Ghilotti Scholarship*, and three were from our Rotary club. He noted that many students this time wanted to be engineers. Brian challenged **Dan Dufficy** that he would match whatever Dan pledged. Dan generously donated \$500, followed by **Beth Fernbacher's** \$200 contribution. This sparked a flurry of bell-ringers for scholarships during the announcements: from **Laura Bertolli**, **Mayor Gary Phillips**, **Otis Bruce**, **Sherry Rogers**, incoming **President Fran**, and many, many, many others (sorry for missing some of you). Scholarships had a tremendous day.

**President Dave** announced that the *Marin Independent Journal* won 11 awards at a state convention last week. IJ Publisher **Rob Devincenzi** pledged a

bell-ringer toward scholarships for the recognition.

## MARBLE GAME

**Tom Whelan** announced that the pot was up to \$616 and there were 28 marbles. Forty-nine-year Rotarian **Dan Dufficy** held the lucky ticket, but was not able to pluck the winning marble. A gift of wine was taken home.

## APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

**Mary Ellison**, owner of Minuteman Press of Marin, under the classification of Printing Services, has applied for membership. She has been approved by the board.



Retired Dr. Richard Head of Mill Valley talks cancer prevention and immune systems to Rotarians May 22.

## PROGRAM SPEAKER

After spurring a well-deserved round of applause for himself as an outstanding speaker series chairperson, **Otis** introduced our speaker: **Dr. Richard Head**. Dr. Head is notorious for appearing on *"Late Night With David Letterman"* for having the best (or worst?) name in California in the late 1990s. Watch [youtube.com/watch?v=FLDs7Dtgw\\_M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FLDs7Dtgw_M). Helena Marsh is still blushing from his explanation.

In all seriousness, Dr. Head of Mill Valley, who is retired, provided a captivating talk on game-changing advancements in cancer research. He is a graduate of UCSF Medical School and completed his residency at Stanford. He writes a blog: [letswakeupfolks.blogspot.com](http://letswakeupfolks.blogspot.com).

Dr. Head specializes in research and writing about cancer prevention innovation. As his blog says, *"We are entering a new phase of cancer treatment, allowing our own powerful immune system to stop cancer in our bodies."*

He said if there is a gene mutation, say one from your mother, which was abnormal, and a good gene from your dad, the good will override the bad. But if both genes are recessive, that will become problematic. Toxic conditions, exposure to diesel fuels, smoke, paint, etc. can also impact cells, setting us up

for disease. Chronic infections can also be picked up during birth, and carried for life, impacting cancer risk.

Epigenetics are impacted by our life activities: exercise, diet, exposure to toxins, stress, etc. Epigenes can be turned on, by these factors, impacting our genetic composition.

Our bones, gut lining and blood replace themselves all the time. Every few weeks our blood replaces itself, he said. In all of our body, we have stem cells. When adult cells die off, part of the adult stem cells are activated. Whenever a cell divides, it has a 200 percent chance of abnormality. These cells are often damaged. We are replacing a lot of our bodies with damaged cells as we grow older, he said. Even the stem cells that remain are damaged, affecting a new chance for cancer.

He said when we feel badly due to ailments the flu, we are not feeling the flu; we are feeling our immune system attacking the illness. When the regulation is not working properly, people can get an auto-immune disease. Each cancer cell may have multiple drivers. Antibodies made in labs can bind to and engulf these antigens. They can block the ability of that cancer cell to duplicate itself. A vaccine containing these antibodies can attack tumors.

Rotarians leaned in to learn about the ability of tobacco plants to produce antibodies within days of being injected with a toxic genome.

Dr. Head said new cancer checkpoint inhibitors on the market have very high success rates. Studies showed 85 percent success rate for melanoma patients, 67 percent success rates for kidney cancer patients, and 67 percent success rate for bladder cancer sufferers.

*"Ultimately what we would like to have is a vaccine,"* Dr. Head said.

He expects women will eventually be able to be vaccinated against breast cancer, through the use of these sophisticated inhibitors. Alzheimer's patients have also benefited from inhibitors in tests, he said. The checkpoint inhibitors are expected to be effective before and after cancer has been detected, he said.

- submitted by Rob Devincenzi

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**June 5th – Rachel Ginis, Executive Director - Lily Pad Homes**

**Topic: Secondary Accessory Dwelling Units - new laws and trends in Marin for Affordable Housing!**