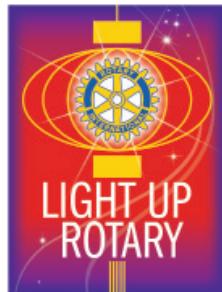




Rotary Club of Altadena

sparks

OFF THE ROTARY WHEEL
AN AWARD-WINNING NEWSLETTER



January 22, 2015

This Week Shawnt Bazikian and Matthew Davidian *Bikes 4 Orphans* Guest Program Host: Mike Zoeller

Shawnt Bazikian and Matthew Davidian will present their project *Bikes 4 Orphans*, providing bicycles to orphans in Africa and throughout the world, so they can have access to school and a brighter future. They believe teenagers can make a difference in this world, and this is their way of combining their passion for cycling with charity.

Shawnt Bazikian is a 16-year-old junior at St. Francis High School. He has been volunteering at many organizations during junior high and his freshman year but didn't feel as if he was making a huge difference in the world. He found out that the only way to do so was to begin his own organization, so he and his brother Sebouh began *Bikes 4 Orphans* to make a change in the lives of Orphans. He saw changes when he personally delivered the bicycles in Armenia and he was able to teach the children how to ride their bikes and saw their appreciation. At that moment, he knew that he had directly impacted the lives of these orphans.

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REFLECTIONS by Hal Yorke, President BEEFLECTIONS

on Debiasing . . .

In science, debiasing is the process of eliminating biases one may have in one's raw data. In the case of estimating the likelihood of finding Earth-like planets in the *Goldilocks Zone* (not too hot, not too cold for life) around stars, one has to account for the fact that our best method to find such *exo-Earths* requires very special conditions. The exo-Earth, as it orbits around its host star, must cross directly in front of the star, so that it blocks a tiny fraction of the star's light.

Consider a scaled down version of the solar system: one to one billion. The Earth would be the size of a small marble, about 500 feet from the 8-foot diameter Sun. The likelihood of seeing the Earth pass in front of the Sun would depend on having a telescope located in just the right direction, only 0.0064 percent of all possible directions. So when astronomers actually do discover an Earth-like planet around a Sun-like star in the Goldilocks Zone, it means that there are probably some 16,000 cases among the stars that one examined and rejected, for which the orientation simply was non-optimal. This process of renormalization is called *debiasing*.

Using the process of debiasing, astronomers are now confident that about $\frac{1}{2}$ of all stars have planetary systems, even though they cannot detect all of them using present telescopes.

Biases also occur in our everyday life, often rooted in our culture or prior experiences. Biased thinking allows us to make snap judgments, like avoiding an accident when we observe the subtle signs of a dangerous driver and are able to anticipate a sudden lane change. We call this intuition. It helps us to recognize anger on the telephone after a few words or realize that we were the object of conversation, when we unexpectedly enter a room.

However, biases and snap judgments are not always good. Probably more times than not, they lead us to less than optimal thinking and action. Our biases

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Greeters

January 22

Julius Johnson

January 29

Steve Kerekes

February 04

Sterling Louviere

Program Review

If We build It, They will Come



Speaking with *a lost voice*, Denise Wadsworth gave a passionate talk this past Thursday. Wadsworth, a speech and language pathologist in San Marino who has received degrees from Indiana University and Texas University, decided to take on the *most important work that she has done in her life* when she turned 50. She asked herself at 50, "what am I going to do

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www.altadenarotary.com

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Photography Jacque Foreman

with my life?" This led her to her passion: veterans and their health and well being.

Wadsworth stated that veterans are ignored when they come home. Some veterans suffer from PSD, some are injured or have suffered injuries, or all of the above. This makes it hard to be successful as a civilian in the work place. She went on to say that the main reason individuals enlist in the military and go to war is so that they can go to school. Another reason is kids don't know what to do with their lives, so they join the military, so that the military can take care of them. When they come back from their service, they don't know how to cope with civilian life. She stated that there are 50,000 veterans in the San Gabriel Valley with no health care facility for miles. She spoke of a typical scenario: A veteeran has to wait 3 months to see a doctor at a VA facility, and when he/she finally gets an appointment, it is necessary to travel to the VA facility, the nearest



being West Los Angeles or Long Beach. Wadsworth was very passionate in saying that "it is wrong that veterans don't have services [nearby]."

Pasadena Community College (PCC) currently has a new veterans resource center. She approached PCC and told them about a plan for health care for the veterans. PCC came back and said they were willing to change the location of the campus veteran's resource center, if

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January Rotary Family Month

Program Chair, John Frykenberg

Jan 22 - Bicycles 4 Orphans

Jan 29 - To be Announced

February World Understanding Month

Program Chair, Theo Clarke

Feb 05 - Liliana Garcia, Director of both the Altadena Senior Center and Altadena Community Center: A Look at the Centers

Feb 12 - Ralph Mauriello, Former Dodger and Singer Extraordinaire: A Glimpse of Two Worlds

Feb 19 - 4-Way Speech Competition

Feb 26 - Dan Stover Club Leval Competition

Congratulations



Birthdays

- 01/03 - Betty Ferris
01/10 - Santosh Srivastava
01/14 - Bill Reader
01/27 - Ann Rider Hill
01/27 - Barbara Yorke

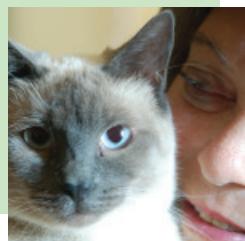


Anniversaries

- 01/03 - Jim & Karen Gorton
01/04 - Mike & Carol Zoeller
01/22 - John and Joan Frykenberg

Chairmen's Corner

by Jacque Foreman, Public Awareness Chair



If you can't be found, no one can give you their money. Yes, it's as simple as that. So why would those members who are in business turn down free advertising?

I know it requires a bit of work on these members' part; they have to write a paragraph that describes what they do, but it can be quite short. And I'd like to have a business card that can be reproduced.

Reflections

Continued from p. 1

may be rooted in the outdated expert opinions of yesteryear or the hand-me-down opinions and biases of our parents or friends. It is hard for us to accept the fact that our minds may be working in ways we have little control over and that we probably know much less about our biases than we think we do, but much of our thinking is automatic and can not be turned off at will.

Ideally, debiasing should be a high priority of education. What could be more important for a society than knowing how to avoid some of the main impediments to making good decisions and sound judgments? Debiasing should be the basis of critical thinking. However, few high school students and most college students will graduate without even knowing the extent of their own biases — much less having been taught how to diminish their power over us. ○

Why are You Making it so Hard for People to give You their Money?

That's all!

I'm not saying that a lot of people coming to our Rotary website are looking to hire someone to do a job or provide them with essential information, such as how to obtain health care in that very confusing world.

However, many business relationships happen by accident. So why not take advantage of this opportunity? It won't cost

you one dime in money, but a bit of their time. I can help you write your paragraph, but I need a place to start — the one that you write.

Being on the Business Page in our website will help you dig your well before you are thirsty. Why not make the decision now and send me your paragraph and business card this week, so I can add it to what is already there? ○

This Week

Continued from p. 1

Matthew Davidian is a senior at Clark Magnet High School in La Crescenta who has long been involved in community activities. Throughout high school he has been involved in the YWCA, the American Red Cross, Key Club, and, since the 10th grade, *Bikes for Orphans*. Now the President at the La Crescenta/Glendale Red Cross Chapter, he has learned much about the power of helping others around the world through volunteering. When the Bazikian brothers approached him to join *Bikes 4 Orphans*, he couldn't resist joining and helping them with this outstanding cause. "It has been an amazing journey so far here on *Bikes 4 Orphans*, and I can't wait to see how we will continue to change the lives of orphans this new year" says Davidian.

To find out more about *Bikes 4 Orphans*, visit their blog spot at <http://bikes4orphanges.blogspot.com/> and review the organization's flyer for their Annual Bike-A-Thon/Hike-A-Thon event on February 28. ○

Program

Continued from p.2

Wadsworth could prove that money could be raised for the facility, an estimated \$250,000. PCC is willing to give space for two suites, restrooms, and parking if the \$250,000, can be raised.

Currently money is starting to be collected for the facility. There are multiple channels to try and raise the money: San Marino charities, PCC foundation, direct donations (unitedforvets.org), along with current discussions with the VA. Wadsworth stated that she is very passionate about trying to get funding for this project. She stated that they want the first half of the funding by the end of January and the second half by May or June.

Denise Wadsworth concluded her talk by saying the the veteran's health care facility would be for all veterans, and not just for those who have served in Afghanistan or Iraq. The goal is to complete the facility, and then move forward, duplicating it in other locations. She concluded stating the motto of this project "If we build it, they will come." John Casci ○



MONEY MATTERS

by Linda
Wilkes

Economic Update

Jobs Strong, Wages Less So

A mixed Employment report was well received by bond investors. Mortgage rates moved to the lowest levels in more than a year.

The Employment report released on Friday [January 01] showed that the economy added more jobs than expected in December. For 2014, the gains were an impressive 2.9 million, the most since 1999. The Unemployment Rate declined from 5.8 percent to 5.6 percent, the lowest level since June 2008. This strength normally would drive mortgage rates higher, but it was more than offset by a big miss in wage

growth. While Fed officials would like to see an annual wage growth of 3 percent to 4 percent, wages were just 1.7 percent higher than one year ago.

In a major development, the FHA announced it would reduce the annual mortgage insurance premium it charges on new FHA loans from 1.35 percent to 0.85 percent. This change, to be implemented near the end of January, in effect will lower mortgage payments on FHA loans the same as a 0.50 percent reduction in rates. Lower rates have made home ownership more affordable, and this change reduces the cost of ownership even more. The reduction will benefit

many people, particularly first-time home buyers, due to the low down payments and relaxed credit standards associated with FHA loans.

The next piece of labor market data will be the JOLTS report on January 13. This report measures the level of job openings and labor turnover rates, and it is closely watched by Fed Chair Yellen. On January 14, Retail Sales, which account for roughly 70 percent of US economic activity, will be released. In addition, there will be Treasury auctions on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. ○

Find Linda Wilkes on line: <http://www.myprospectmortgage.com/lwilkes>

The Playhouse Project Continues

This project is almost finished. On Saturday, January 17, we pretty much completed what we could before the playhouse is assembled on the cement footing that we poured a couple of weeks ago at the Altadena Christian Children's Center.

Mike Noll, the project director, had us doing several pieces of the puzzle at the

same time. While some of us were priming 2x2 boards, others were staining 2x4s, and others were screwing on new floor joists.

When I arrived at about 8a, Steve Cunningham and David Smith were already there. Steve Kerekes came a bit later. Then Mike Noll arrived with coffee and water and breakfast-type stuff along with the

tools and supplies we would need.

Mike Zoeller, John Frykenberg and Craig Cox seemed to arrive just in time as we needed another set of hands. The playhouse was assembled so the roofing pieces could be cut. Again this week I got to play with primer and stain in addition to taking pictures. ○



Please turn to p. 6 for more photos

Don Applegate's

Hilarious HISTORY

It's a pretty safe bet that, sometime in your life, you've had cause to exclaim: "There oughta be a law against that!" It can't be overemphasized that we all need to be cautious about what we wish for. Because, over the centuries, innumerable people have articulated those words; and the next thing they realized new regulations were being imposed. And so it has been, everywhere, decade after decade. Although, in fairness, probably many of those laws were conscientiously deliberated by the serious legislators who created them.

On the other hand, it's a struggle to imagine just how serious were the French lawmakers of the 1950s who forbade flying saucers from landing in any of France's myriad vineyards. It appears as though the airheads who dreamed that one up had themselves landed in a vineyard where they heavily partook of the crop as they guzzled and giggled through the construction of that absurd decree. Oh NO! Was Paris piqued with planet Zarglepus? Why were those galactic folks now prohibited from whirring down among the vines? Was there a genuine reason for wanting cosmic travelers to stay away from local grapes? Were inordinately pricey parking tickets to be issued as a means of dissuading aliens from alighting? And...how badly impaired were the mental faculties of the persons responsible for this drivel?

But don't misunderstand – this has not been an anti-Gallic statement made here since, the French are no more nor less nutty than the lawmakers of any

other nation; but oh, to have been a fly on the wall when and where that legislative masterpiece was concocted! Or, any of the tens of thousands of other—and equally imbecilic edicts—that have come and gone throughout history. And yet, we certainly don't need France or anyone else to supply us with yukkers like the one just cited. No, our own domestic product is ample in quantity and fiercely competitive in the Global Gala of Silly Statutes.

Examples of this? So glad you asked! There's the town of Waterville, Maine that says "No, No, No" to blowing one's nose while out on the street. Though they consider it crass to do nasal purging when on some raucous public thoroughfare, apparently they feel it's much more refined to noisily tune your trombone during a performance of Hamlet's soliloquy at the local playhouse...or, maybe as you dine at an upscale restaurant.

On the opposite coast, Washington's lawmakers hammered out an unsporting restriction that required all bicyclists to support their hind quarters only on a regular, permanently affixed seat...but never on the seat column itself. A controlling measure, it totally disallowed persons from settling down onto that bare metal shaft which, to some, provided a cheap thrill, and for others a dry run rehearsal for their upcoming sigmoidoscopies.

Now really...is my tart sarcasm any more unnecessary or over the top than the ludicrous law that inspired it? How could the clods who conceived that mindless mandate ever justify the time

A Backward Glance at . . . Laws Part I

and expense in putting such bilge on the books? Did they really feel they were performing an urgently needed public service by admonishing bicyclists not to pedal their velocipedes while sitting atop a tubular pole?

We could submerge ourselves in fathomless conjecture and still not arrive at a satisfying explanation for that and all other laws, past or present, long gone or still hanging on, that are as inane as that bicycle seat claptrap.

Of course, laws are necessary...for to be without them would mean never attaining civil or criminal justice; an almost certain, catastrophic descent into chaotic anarchy; plus a complete obviation of lawyers. Ah, well, there's at least a tiny benefit after all.

We positively must have laws—some of them, anyway. However, those have been nearly equaled by countless *legislated gems* of the type in this article. And when reasonableness is severely challenged by silliness, what are we to do except shake our heads, express incredulity and snort with derision? Maybe even laugh at such as this: If you are someone who has felt the boundless joy of collecting...wait for it...seaweed, and who reaches lofty elation whenever able to find the crafty algae in the dark (at its most elusive), then you'd be well advised to avoid New Hampshire. Because solons there have sought to suppress your mirth by making it unlawful to do such gathering at night! The mind reels! Can you believe such insensitivity? What

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History

Continued from p. 7

gave those granite skulls of the Granite State the right — or reason — to deprive its residents of this wickedly fun and entertaining pastime? But, some might argue, why not just do this activity during the day and preclude scrapes with the law? Because, in daytime, the raw adventure

of this event utterly vanishes, leaving enthusiasts standing on a sun-drenched shore surrounded by hillocks of kelp that make no effort whatever to avoid detection...that's why.

Oh, pleeee! New Hampshire's legislators cannot have been drug-free when

they brewed up that pot of lunacy; but thankfully, here in California we're thousands of miles away from such tyrannical restrictions as that. Instead, we have our own idiotic, often funny regulations, showcased in Part II. See you in the past, in the very near future!



More Playhouse Photos





FEBRUARY 28
FROM 9 AM TO 12 PM

Glendale Sports Complex - Catalina Verdugo Trail

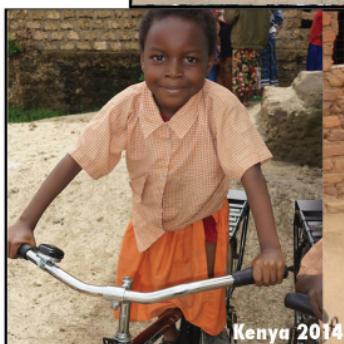
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