

PIERRE R. SCHWOB

200 SHERIDAN AVE STE 403  
PALO ALTO CA 94306  
TEL 1-650-330-8050

December 16, 2005

President Hennessy,  
Dear Friends and Family,

[Click here for a picture](#)

Allow me first to say is a really big Thank You to my very dear friend Dan DeYoung who, as we were sitting down for lunch with a few KIPAC members at the Faculty Club on the last Friday of September, looked me in the eye and said "Pierre, Jane Stanford's watch is going on sale this evening at eBay – you should buy it and give it back to Stanford!" - Just like that. He then told us the story of the watch that appeared that day in the San Jose Mercury News.

I knew of Jane Stanford's jewelry donation which was told to me by Hilarie Faberman upon my first visit to the Center but this was the first time I'd heard of the sale. You'll see that it was indeed very lucky timing!

As I got back to my office at the end of the afternoon, I thought of Dan's words and logged-in on eBay – perhaps for the second or third time in my life. And, here came the second indication of good Karma: the bidding for the watch opened as I came to the page.

So I placed a small bid to test things and got an immediate note that my bid was under the reserve price. Fair enough, I thought – let's try something a bit more reasonable... And so it went until, on my fifth bid, I got the message "Reserve Met. You are the highest bidder. The auction closes in ten days."

Then, I won't go into details, I had to leave immediately for ten days in Switzerland to take care of my step-mother who was not well. (She's in good health now.) Well it seems that my placing 5 bids in just a few minutes scared potential competitors away because I won that auction without a fight.

One of the nice things about this is that I'll never have to tell how high - or low - I was prepared to go. And this, I'm afraid, shall have to remain a secret... But the truth is, even I didn't really know. What I did know, was that it was unthinkable to let this heirloom disappear again and that Stanford simply had to have it back.

So there it is – and it is, believe me, entirely my pleasure to have been at the right place, at the right time, with the right friends, and in a position to play my little role in this ultimately very romantic story.

I want to close by remarking on two things: first, this watch was manufactured in Geneva by Patek Philippe in 1866 – just one year after Lincoln's assassination – when Dan DeYoung, here, was still in short pants. To many Americans, 1866 seems like ancient times. As a man from Geneva, 1866 seems fairly recent. But I do appreciate what this watch means historically and affectively to all of us and to Stanford.

And the really last thing I want to say is that, when I look at that watch, I don't wonder if an Intelligent Designer made it – I know it was Patek Philippe. I don't wonder why it was made. It was made to please – and to measure time, because time is precious. And when I have the occasion to watch people like Roger Blandford and Peter Michelson ponder the mysteries of our Universe, I don't wonder who made them. I know it was Evolution by Natural Selection... and a sprinkle of sex. But I do wonder at the blessing they – and other faculty members – offer me when they share so generously of their precious time on this Earth.

Thank you.