

Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

July 20, 2020

Reporter: SALLY TOMLINSON

Editor: LYLE CONNELL

President **BEN THRELKELD** called the virtual meeting to order wearing the traditional Bob Bulmore (President 1973-74) Hawaiian shirt that gets passed from one president to the next. If you want to wear this shirt, just sign up for a year of being president of the Palo Alto Rotary Club!

There being no visiting Rotarians, **CASH ALAEE** invited introductions of guests. **DANA TOM** welcomed Kim Bomar for her second meeting.



Opening Remarks came from **MIKE REYNOLDS**



who is inspired by the idea that "the biggest thing we do today might be a small thing" - a casual conversation, a shuttle to the doctor after a fall, a fishing outing with your child.

President **BEN** gave us a Zoom tip for times when you can't find the e-mail with the link, or if the link fails. Our website has a link to our Zoom meetings in the right hand column under the heading Zoom In With Us.

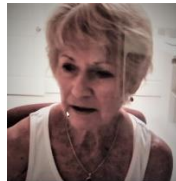
We have collected 679 cans of food, putting us 321 away from the goal of 1000 cans by the end of the month for Ecumenical Hunger Project. If you cannot deliver your bag of cans (with your name on it) yourself, you can order food to be delivered to **BEN's** office: Cambridge Optometry, 250 Cambridge Avenue Suite 102, Palo Alto, 94306.

PETER SHAMBORA announced the first TGIF of the new year, July 31, 5:30-7:30, featuring a virtual guided tour of **BRUCE GEE's** hydroponic garden. Take a photo of your own garden and use it as your Zoom background at the TGIF!



The votes are in. Taking advantage of our virtual meeting format, members got to vote on how our Zoom meetings compare with meeting at the Elks. Some people like Zoom better, some like it less, but no one said the virtual meetings are terrible.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: **MARCIE COX** announced that she is moving to Santa Barbara next week. She has been a member since 1996. Look her up if you are in Santa Barbara - her e-mail will be unchanged. **BEN** joined the President's club in **MARCIE's** honor.



Next week's program will be Tom Soh, Professor of Electrical Engineering and Radiology at Stanford, who will speak to us about real-time biosensor technology.

DANA TOM introduced Pastor Kaloma Smith to speak on The Experience of Race and Reform in Palo Alto.

Pastor Smith was born in Jamaica and grew up in Mt. Vernon, NY. He moved to Palo Alto about 17 years ago and



now is Chair of the Palo Alto Human Relations Commission and Pastor of the University AME Zion Church of Palo Alto

The Human Relations Commission has been charged with 2 tasks by the city council:

1. Lead the discussion on police reform, starting with "8 Can't Wait".
2. Write the history and current reality of what it means to be black and brown in Palo Alto.

8 Can't Wait is a bare minimum for reform. PA has to ask the question what does good policing look like. We have some good police officers. The City of PA is 60-70% compliant now. How do we have officers whose job is to deal with crime and not to respond to non-crime calls

HENRIETTA BURROUGHS asked about the role of schools. **Smith:** Paly has started a social justice program and other schools are interested. People don't realize that being black in the PA school system is one of the most difficult things a person can experience.

CHRISTIAN MARTINE asked about language and the conversations. **Smith:** Many of us go into conversations without the intention to listen. There are ways to set up a conversation where listening is a priority: first repeat what you think you heard, and then wait two minutes before responding. Ask why, how did you get to that conclusion, what is driving this decision?

DIANA DIAMOND asked if Palo Alto schools and police experiences are worse than in other parts of the Bay Area. **Smith:** He doesn't know about other schools, but the stories of local youth are the same as stories of their parents' and grandparents' generations. 70% of police calls in PA are initiated by residents who call police when they see black and brown people in their community. In addition, in PA it is 40% more likely for a black person to get stopped by police than a white person.

SALLY TOMLINSON asked about the HRC meeting to listen to black and brown experiences in Palo Alto. **Smith:** That listening session will take place at their first meeting in August. People will be sharing painful experiences. The task of the HRC and the community is to bear witness.

HENRIETTA asked for a recommendation for something we all can do. **Smith:**

1. Turn off the TV and turn off the news stations. Start reading books e.g. Bias by Jennifer Eberhardt, or Warmth of Other Suns by Isabel Wilkerson. Do this to understand the issues from a more intellectual and less news-driven point of view.
2. Go to the websites of BLM, NAACP, 8 Can't Wait, etc., and read their policies. Also read writings on the pro-policing side, to understand what their perspective is.