

# Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

November 16, 2020

Reporter: SALLY TOMLINSON

Editor: LYLE CONNELL

President BEN THRELKELD once again presided over an excellent meeting.

CASH ALAEE introduced VISITING ROTARIANS, and REBECCA GERALDI wins the prize for family participation, with her father Len representing Rohnert Park Rotary and brother Daniel hailing from San Ramon Valley Rotary!

KAREN ROHDE hosted guest Mora Oommen from YCS, DAVE SMULLIN zoomed in his son Craig, CASH ALAEE introduced Florian Riedel, and KIM BOMAR brought her friend Danielle James.

KIM BOMAR brought us the thought for the day, focusing on the need for healing relationships. She called on inspiration from teshuvah, the Jewish four-step process of fixing a broken relationship. These steps are



Verbally confess your mistakes and ask forgiveness.

Express sincere remorse, resolving not to make the same mistake again.

Do what you can to right the wrong and to appease the person who has been hurt.

Act differently if the same situation happens again.

This process can help even when there is not a specific relationship affected. What thoughts do you have in the shadows, thoughts you would not like to face up to? Is there someone you can share them with, and perform teshuva on yourself? KIM called on us to be purposeful about how we act with others and commit to siding with our better angels.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS, REPORTS AND REMINDERS:

Membership Chair KAREN ROHDE encourages us to bring a guest (or two or more!) to the December 7 meeting when former Ambassador Michael McFaul will speak on the subject of "Great Power Competition". We will have a competition of our own to see who brings the most guests, and the winner will get a bottle of wine.



For pointers on inviting and sponsoring potential new members, log into the member section of the website and go to "Sponsor New Members"

<https://rotarypaloalto.org/6775/Page/Show?ClassCode=Page&Slug=sponsor-new-members>

How festive can you look from the waist up? Don your duds, and come to the Holiday Party!! It will be December 9, 5:30-7PM, and features a guided wine tasting from Neely Wine. You can pick up your wine samples between 12/2 and 12/9 from 8:30 AM to 5 PM at 250 Cambridge Ave, Suite 102. No fee or registration, but wine samples will go to the first come first 50 people.

Can you abide another election? Don't panic! On December 14, our final meeting of 2020 (Yay to the end of 2020!) you can vote on the 2021-22 Club board and Endowment board. Easy, peasy! Then you will be rewarded with Bill Liberatore and the Gunn Choir to perform for our holiday treat.

With gratitude for their support of the Rotary Foundation, President BEN presented Paul Harris Awards to ZAFAR IQBAL, ROMAN KAGARLITSKY, LINNET KWOK, KAREN ROHDE, DANA TOM, and MICHAEL WICK



Our food drive goes through the end of the month, so please continue to bring cans or dry goods to Ben's office. PAM KRUDOP, looking smashing in a smurfy-blue hue (computer cameras are fickle that way) shared a letter from Mora Oommen thanking us for our support of Youth Community Services. Next week we will see a video about YCS

THANKS TO HELPERS: Pinion Editor LYLE CONNELL writer SALLY TOMLINSON and photographer GINNY LEAR.

Today's program featured Raj Mathai, News Anchor for NBC Bay Area. GINNY LEAR introduced Mr. Mathai, who anchors the 5, 6 and 11 PM news. He joined KNTV in 1998 as sports director and transitioned to primary news anchor in 2011. Local boy Raj graduated from Los Altos High School and San Diego State University.



Mr. Mathai described this as the most challenging year of his professional life, and the most fascinating. The year presented us with three huge stories happening at the same time: Covid-19;

the social justice movement; and the presidential election.

After warming us up with the tale of a chewing gum debacle in the first moment of his first sports broadcast in Yuma, Mr. Mathai opened up for questions.

Moving from sports to news was not difficult because sports people are able to just talk without being stiff, and are accustomed to dealing with breaking events, and for looking for the elements of a story that connect with human emotion.

Selecting the stories to focus on is a group process. They have a diverse newsroom and everyone fights for their story, their point of view. Editorial meetings are at 9 am, 1 pm, 5 pm and 9 pm, and they could be working on a story all day long only to decide to drop it at the last minute.

There used to be two sides to a story. Now that is not necessarily so: if the President is telling you a square is a circle, they have to report that it is not a circle but the President is saying it is a circle. How can journalists close the credibility gap? The President has forced journalists to check everything more carefully. They need to continue checking and do a credible job.

What is the future for TV news? Viewership has gone up 50% this year because of the three big stories of covid, social justice, and the election, but the future is not clear. Comcast/NBC tells their TV news group to "do your job accurately down the middle and we will find the platform for you".

When asked if he has had any problems because of his Indian background, he could only recall that people in Yuma couldn't figure out his ethnicity, but he hasn't noticed any doors being closed to him.

Some stories do make him emotional. He had to fight tears this year when covering black lives matter protest, and last year at the Gilroy Garlic Festival shootings. On the flip side, he gets emotional at every Olympics when he sees multiple cultures together in town sharing food and laughing.

A day in the life of Raj Mathai. Technically he works from 3 PM – midnight, but he wakes at 8-9 AM and reads Twitter, watches CNN, Fox News, MSNBC, always focused on the news.