

Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

January 18, 2021

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President BEN THRELKELD called the virtual meeting to order, welcoming everyone to the special Martin Luther King, Jr. Day program to honor the key spokesperson for the non-violent Civil Rights Movement. BEN commented on the overlap between Dr. King's teachings and the Rotary 4-Way Test and encouraged Rotarians to remember Dr. King's teachings in our interactions with others, to help ensure a more just, equitable and friendly world.

There were no VISITING ROTARIANS, though there were several guests.

HENRIETTA BURROUGHS brought us our Thought for the Day on the importance of truth. If our leaders had told the truth over the past several years, she said, we wouldn't be dealing with today's crisis. HENRIETTA noted that Dr. King frequently spoke on the importance of truth, and shared a few of his inspiring quotes, including: "Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that."

HENRIETTA also compared Dr. King's teachings to the Rotary 4-Way test. She concluded that our loyalties must transcend our race, tribe, class and our nation, which means we must develop a world perspective.



REBECCA GERALDI discussed plans for the annual fundraiser on Monday, March 29, 2021. The theme is "Hats off to Rotary." It will include music and both live and silent auctions. The committee is planning for a very fun event. Save the date!



KAREN ROHDE presented a membership update, noting that four new members will be introduced soon. Rotarians were encouraged to assist with the winter membership campaign by encouraging friends to consider joining the Club.



The Rotary Club of Saratoga is hosting a conversation on the History of Rotary in Taiwan by Past Rotary International President Gary Huang. Please register here: <https://tinyurl.com/PastRIPresidentGaryHuang>

NEXT WEEK'S PROGRAM

Next week's program will feature James Eggers, Director of the Loma Prieta Chapter of the Sierra Club, discussing equity and inclusion in the Sierra Club.

DANA TOM introduced our speaker John Hibbing, the Foundation Regents Professor of Political Science at the University of Nebraska. Previously a NATO Fellow in Science and a Guggenheim Fellow, he is the author of the recently published: *The Securitarian Personality: What Really Motivates Trump's Base and Why It Matters in the Post-Trump Era.*



Prof. Hibbing's presentation focused on what distinguishes traditional conservatives from "Trump Venerators"—his enthusiastic supporters. He discussed numerous findings of his research, which included attending Trump rallies and focus groups and conducting national surveys. Trump Venerators-- people who strongly agree he's one of the best presidents in American history--are slightly whiter, poorer, older and less well-educated

than traditional conservatives, comparably rural and somewhat less religious, though these differences are not significant. They are not bitter about their treatment (at least, not under the Trump presidency); they do not describe themselves as angry or frustrated; they don't feel more socially unfulfilled than traditional conservatives; and they're not, as some claim, adrift uneducated males.

They are insiders—those who want to protect from outsiders values of person, family, culture and country that they consider the historical core of the country. Outsiders can become insiders by their support of insider values (like Ben Carson and Herman Cain, hence Trump Venerators' insistence that they are not racist). Similarly, those who don't oppose outsiders or who share outsider beliefs, are considered outsiders-- even white males, because they're perceived as a threat. Outsiders who live in the country are the greatest threat. Hibbing coined the phrase "Securitarians" to describe them.

Securitarians' greatest concerns are immigration, national defense, immigration and law and order. Liberals, in contrast, care about racial justice, women's rights, healthcare and income inequality. Only 7% of liberals claim to feel threatened by immigration, compared to 75% of Trump Venerators. Trump Venerators fear criminals, China, terrorist attack and immigrants, while liberals feel threatened by natural disasters, the environment, race and sex inequality.

Hibbing does not consider Trump Venerators authoritarian because they do not like being told what to do, they are not submissive, they resist authority (like Dr. Fauci), they are independent social disrupters, and they're somewhat aggressive. Overwhelmingly, Trump Venerators agree that about the worst thing a person or country can do is project weakness.



Finally, Hibbing hypothesized that the roots of the fear of outsiders are evolutionary; humans care less about the economy than they do "the tribe over the hill." Fear of outsiders is urgent in a way that capital gains taxes and transgender bathrooms are not.

Prof. Hibbing's talk generated numerous questions, the answers of which are summarized below. Trump Venerators have a focused negativity about individuals that they consider threatening, revealed by MRIs. There's a biological component of who becomes a Trump Venerator (including a physiological response to one's environment), though it is subject to the usual debate on nature versus nurture. Some Trump Venerators don't fear immigrants, their vision of America simply doesn't include them (despite their own immigrant history). Economic interests don't seem important; their vision of America is more important to them than their economic security. Also, they're not just anti-government; Trump Venerators are equally negative toward immigrants, liberals and the federal government. Prof. Hibbing believes there's a core group of Trump Venerators, though amplifiers like Fox news may bring these inclinations out in others.

As for how we move on as a nation, Hibbing responded that focusing on a moral obligation (tolerance, for example), won't help. But a solution crafted as an America First issue—we need to do better than another country, for example—is more likely to succeed. Prof. Hibbing believes who is considered an insider may change over time, but we'll always have this insider/outsider distinction.

With hope for a better world. BEN thanked everyone for attending. The meeting was officially adjourned at 1:39.