

Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

October 31, 2022



Chartered: May 1, 1922

WELCOME

Our tables were festive with Halloween gift bags at each place, and President **KAREN ROHDE** opened the meeting by telling us "do not open" them just yet. Too late! Many were already enjoying candy before finishing their veggies (which were especially good today, as judged by the folks surrounding this writer). But the mysterious strips of paper remained unopened for later.



THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

HAL MICKELSON observed that many of us are worried that the elections will not be followed by a period of alignment and agreement. Differences are strong but there are two things we can do to help. We can foster civil discourse, and there are members of our club who want to organize an interest group on civil discourse. And we can let Rotary be Rotary. Rotary is for everyone who wants to find good causes that will enable them to work together.



PRESIDENTS CLUB

TRISH BUBENIK joined in honor of **REBECCA GERALDI'S** son Wolfie who was in Seoul and witnessed the tragic stampede that killed more than 150 people. He immediately called his mother to let her know he was all right.



Festively-dressed **ANNETTE GLANCKOPF** AND **BRIAN STEEN** joined in honor of Halloween!

SERVICE CORNER

This week there is still space on **Wednesday** to distribute food with Nuestra Casa, and on **Sunday** to usher for the Palo Alto Players. Check your e-mails and our web page for

details about these service opportunities and others available next week.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

President Karen expressed our thanks to **BETSY** and **George BECHTEL** for hosting last Friday's TGIF. There will be no TGIF in November, but there is a Happy Hour on Nov 12, and the Holiday Party on Dec 14. Look for details in e-mails.

GEOFF BALL announced the Climate Collaboration Summit on Nov 12, 12:30-4 pm at Gunn High School. It is free, and you can get more information [here](#).

CASH ALAEE announced events associated with the Bloomington, Indiana Sibling City exchange. He highlighted the discussion of Civil Discourse on Friday morning. Stay alert for Cash's e-mail with details.

As our club's Chair this year, Cash also encouraged everyone to donate to The Rotary Foundation, explaining that 50% of your donation designated for the world fund stays there, and 50% comes back to our club so that we can direct it to a charitable project of our choice. Last year we gave \$9600 to the Tata Memorial Chemotherapy Center. You can mail a check or donate online through our website.

Karen announced the Spin to End Polio Sunday, Nov 13 at 11 am. Your payment will be matched 2:1 by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. And after you pedal fast to nowhere, you can join your fellow spinners for lunch at a nearby restaurant.



There are lots of committee meetings coming up. Check the website and Red Badgers can contact Karen to get more info.

HALLOWEEN SILLINESS

Karen explained that the strips of paper in our bags with candy were jokes to share at the table. Everyone had fun thinking like a ten-year-old to answer questions like "What is the best compliment for a vampire?" "* "You suck!" :)

TODAY'S PROGRAM

DANA TOM introduced our speaker, **Jennifer Mercieca**, Professor of Communications and Journalism at Texas A&M University. Dr. Mercieca is a historian of American political rhetoric, with a focus on the relationship between democracy and our nation's communication



practices. As author of "Demagogue for President: The Rhetorical Genius of Donald Trump," she has been hailed as probably the leading authority on Trump's rhetoric. Today's talk focused on **"Polarization, Propaganda, and Communication That's Good for Democracy."**



Up until the latter part of the 20th century, propaganda was in the hands of governments, but with the advent of talk radio, internet blogs, and social media, propaganda has changed. The new model of propaganda has turned us into its tools, and we, its consumers, have become horizontal propagandists. Whereas media originally sought the largest and broadest audience

possible, now we are in an attention economy, and media seeks attention of niche audiences. Outrage and other weaponized communication draws the attention of niche audiences. Political news falls into the category of niche communication, and it seeks to outrage. 57% of Americans say they don't consume regular political news, but 15-20% are very engaged with political news. Consumers of political news get outraged and engaged: the more news you consume, the more your inbox or feed will fill with appeals to get engaged. When you engage, you become a horizontal propagandist.

If we had training, we could distinguish between persuasion and propaganda. Persuasion affirms human dignity, invites, is dialogic, democratic, and difficult. Propaganda uses people as tools, it forces, manipulates, is anti-democratic and is easy.

In conclusion, Dr. Mercieca said that we have to think democratically, associate democratically, and communicate democratically. Citizens use communication for democracy, not warfare.

CLOSING ANNOUNCEMENTS

President KAREN thanked our speaker, and all for attending and wished all a Happy Halloween.



TODAY'S VOLUNTEERS

Greeters: **Dick Mansfield, Matt Dolan**
 Welcome Desk/Cashier: **Rebecca Gerald, Katie Seedman**
 Meeting Set-Up: **Matt Dolan**
 Zoom/Hybrid Host: **Dana Tom**
 Microphone: **Ben Threlkeld**
 Pinion writer: **Sally Tomlinson**
 Pinion editor: **Ginny Lear**

UPCOMING PROGRAMS/EVENTS

November 2 2:00-6:00 pm	Casa Nuestra Food Distribution
November 3 12:00 -1:30 pm	Program Committee meeting on Zoom
November 6 1:30 - 4:30 pm	Sign up to Usher for Palo Alto Players "Beauty & the Beast"
November 7 Club meeting 12:15-1:30 pm	Long time member talks: Iris Korol, Brian Steen, Annette Glanckopf
November 8 All Day	Election Day!
November 11 Veterans Day Earlier just this year	Rotarians place Flags on University Ave. 7 am. meet: Cowper 5 pm meet: High St.