

# Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

September 18, 2023



Chartered: May 1, 1922

## WELCOME MEMBERS & GUESTS



Past President **BETSY BECHTEL** stepped right up to the podium as a guest conductor, substituting for President **LIZ KNISS**, and called us to order for our

September 18 meeting.... Hybridity (!) was quietly facilitated by **BEN THRELKELD** and **JOOP VERBAKEN**.... Jake Yoo from the Palo Alto University Rotary Club was a visiting Rotarian and Bing Wei was the guest of **ANNE CRIBBS**.

## QUOTE FOR THE DAY

Our Quote for the Day was presented by **KATIE SEEDMAN**: "You may not always have a comfortable life, and you will not always be able to solve all of the world's problems at once, but don't ever underestimate the impact you *can* have, because history has shown us that courage can be contagious and hope can take on a life of its own." (Michelle Obama, Keynote Address, Young African Women Leaders' Forum, Regina Mundi Church, Soweto, South Africa, June 22, 2011.)



## WE CARE FOR OUR MEMBERS

In the "We Care" department, **JULIE JEROME** noted that **TRISH BUBENIK** was recovering

at Webster House after a brief stay in the hospital; a card was circulated.

## PRESIDENTS CLUB

**STANS KLEIJNEN** recognized **GLORIA HOM** for leading a thoroughly enjoyable tour of Chinatown in San Francisco, a crab feed auction item



**TIM WATSON** offered a rave review for "Matilda" the musical, presented by Palo Alto Players. Still time to see it. September 22, 23, closes the 24th.

## TGIF "Farewell to Summer!" 9/29

A TGIF "Farewell to Summer Social" is planned for September 29, 5:30 to 7:30 pm, at the home of **MIKE & TERRY MCMAHON**, co-hosted by **TOM & HELEN GRACON**. Please, if you can, bring a bottle of wine; appetizers will be provided; do invite your spouse, a guest, or a potential member...

## ANNUAL SPIN TO END POLIO - 11/19

**LINNET KWOK** revealed that you can "Spin to End Polio" on November 19, 11:30 a.m. at the PA JCC; please contact Linnet at: [linnetkwok@hotmail.com](mailto:linnetkwok@hotmail.com) to register or for further information. *It is not a race.*

## THROWBACK GAMETIME

Acting President BETSY decided we had just enough time for two rounds of Three Truths and a Lie, her signature Presidential game.

**STEVE PLAYER** declared that he had been born in San Francisco, grew up in San Mateo, and had an uncle who invented television. It was – an ingenious trick, three truths and no lie. STEVE'S uncle was Philo Farnsworth.

**RICK BLOCK** averred that he had been born in Settle, had six grandchildren, has been married 54 years and attended Harvard Law School. In fact, RICK attended Yale Law School. **LE LEVY** may suggest that we notch for the Blue side on the giant Red v Blue scorecard....

Kyle began by saying that he felt close to Rotary from his experience in RYLA, the Rotary Youth Leadership Awards, and Interact, the Rotary program for high school students, both in District 7780, in Maine.



## TODAY'S PROGRAM

Our speaker, introduced by **RYAN ELLIOTT** was **KYLE HIETALA**, Program Director and Head Coach of the Palo Alto High School Speech & Debate program.

Kyle's topic: "Persuading and being Persuaded: Insights from Speech & Debate."

Kyle is entering his second year as Program Director for debate at Paly. At Yale, he was second place Novice of The Year in the American Parliamentary Debate Association (APDA) as well as North American (NorthAms) Champion in 2017. Kyle previously coached at St. Luke's School, The Spence School, and Sidwell Friends. He is serving as president of the National Parliamentary Debate League (NPDL) and VP of the California Coast Forensic League (CFL).



Kyle noted that in our time, more and more people are writing and rewriting history without much in the way of quality control. There are strong incentives to spread false beliefs that appeal to what Kyle called "the reptilian parts of our brains." Honing the skills needed for debate helps students parse through information and evidence; it's a skill that can be taught and learned. Still, we're in an age when holding certain false beliefs can be a "tribal badge of honor."

It's a debater's job to adapt to different judges and audiences and to take account of listeners' interests and experiences. We're more inclined to be persuaded if we feel good about ourselves. Good debaters know that it's hard to win agreement when people sense you're out to prove them wrong.

Kyle suggested that, just as we want to be persuasive, we should learn to be persuadable. We should know what our values are, and hold onto them, but we should be willing to re-examine our beliefs. As Kyle put it, we need to improve our "belief formation software..." Q&A: What if someone just won't accept the results of the last election? Sometimes, said Kyle, you argue for the benefit of other listeners and not for the person whom you're debating.

## TODAY'S VOLUNTEERS

Greeters: **Iris Korol, Susan Lutter**

Cashier/Welcome Desk: **Katie Seedman**

Zoom/Hybrid Host: **Ben Threlkeld, Joop**

**Verbaken**

Microphones: **Dana Tom**

Pinion writer: **Hal Mickelson**

Pinion editor: **Ginny Lear**

## UPCOMING PROGRAMS & EVENTS

<b>September 25</b> 12:15-1:30pm Club Meeting	<b>District 5 SCC</b> <b>Supervisor Joe Simitian</b> Bridging the Divide
<b>September 29</b> 5:30 - 7:30 pm	<b>TGIF:</b> Home of Mike & Terry McMahon, co-sponsored by Tom & Helen Gracon
<b>October 2</b> 12:15-1:30pm Club Meeting	<b>Fred Guttenberg,</b> <b>Author,</b> "American Carnage," "Shattering Myths that Fuel Gun Violence"
<b>October 9</b> 12:15-1:30pm Club Meeting	<b>Kenan Moos, President and Co- Founder,</b> <b>Justice Vanguard</b> "The Marathon"
<b>October 16</b> 12:15-1:30pm Club Meeting	<b>District 5170 Governor Hung Wei</b> Annual Club Visit