

# Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

August 5, 2024

Writer: Hal Mickelson



Celebrating 102 years of Service

## THE MAGIC OF ROTARY 2024-2025

The Rotary Club of Palo Alto came to order at the call of President **REBECCA GERALDI** at 12:30 on August 5, 2024, both in person at the Baylands Café and virtually via Zoom. President Elect **BRUCE GEE** introduced visiting Rotarians and guests: Leif Erickson visited as President of the Palo Alto



University Rotary Club; **JULIE JEROME** introduced her daughter Jessica, visiting from Chicago; and **KATIE SEEDMAN** presented Kanika Sabharwal of Heritage Bank...



Mark Stevenson



**Mark Stevenson**, turns 70 on August 31st. We'd know you anywhere, Mark!

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

**Betsy Bechtel** offered a Thought for the Day, attributed to the Irish poet and dramatist William Butler Yeats: "The world is full of magical things patiently waiting for our senses to grow sharper..."



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

President Rebecca noted that this month marks the "**Rotary anniversaries**" of members **Tony Carrasco**, who has been part of our club for 28 years; **Mike Couch**, also 28 years; **Sally Tomlinson**, 19 years; and **Geoff Ball** and **Jenn Torai**, each two years....

## DOING GOOD IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

**Eric Jensen** thanked the Rotarians who participated in the Canned Food Drive, conducted in partnership with Richard Schoelerman of the Palo Alto University Rotary Club....



## PRESIDENTS CLUB

Joining the President's Club were **Mary Ann Gee**, whose husband Tim turned 70 yesterday; **Liz Kniss**, whose granddaughter Caroline is celebrating her 21st birthday....and,

## ROTARY HOUSING REQUEST

An active Rotarian in Newberg, Oregon, Larry Strober, has grandson, Cole, who is earning a doctor's degree in physical therapy from Oregon State University and is preparing for ten weeks of clinical study at the Packard Children's Hospital. Cole and his grandfather are seeking a place where Cole can stay from September 23 to December 6. You will enjoy the opportunity to help if you can....

## SEARCHING FOR THESE DISPLAYS



Someone, and Rebecca doesn't know who, has been generously storing a snazzy set of freestanding display panels that were assembled to showcase our club's activities at our Centennial Gala; if you have them, contact Rebecca, so they can be taken off your hands....

## ROTARY PICKLEBALL: October 5th & 6th

Please save the date for an **inaugural Palo Alto Rotary Pickleball Tournament**, October 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> at Mitchell Park, to be presented in cooperation with the Palo Alto Pickleball Club....

## ROTARY BELONGS TO EVERYONE

With the endorsement of our club's Board of Directors, **President Rebecca** plans to focus on a different element of diversity and outreach during each and every month of the 2024-25 Rotary Year.

Next Monday, August 12, the focus will be the world's Indigenous Peoples. The focus for September will be our Hispanic Heritage; October, World Mental Health; November, will mark the Transgender Day of Remembrance... 2025 topics to be announced...

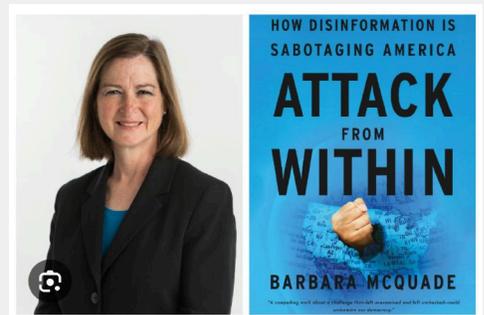
## TODAY'S PROGRAM

**Dana Tom** introduced the day's speaker, Professor **Barbara L. McQuade** of the University of Michigan Law School, who joined us via Zoom. Her undergraduate and law degrees were both earned at Michigan.



She was appointed by President Barack Obama as the U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Michigan, the first woman to hold that position, and she served in that role from 2010 to 2017. Many of her cases as a prosecutor related to national security. In Ann Arbor, she teaches courses on criminal law, national security and data privacy. Her book, *Attack from Within: How Disinformation is Sabotaging America*, was published in February, 2024.

As Professor McQuade observed, we're mired in a "toxic stew" of false or



misleading information that provokes strong emotional reactions, thereby sowing discord and confusion. Much of the disinformation transmitted online is intended simply to get us angry; much of it comes from people who aren't who they say they are. In large measure, the problem results from the combination of technology that permits fast communication and a ferociously polarized political environment

As a New Yorker cartoon said, "On the Internet, no one knows you're a dog." No one realizes that a mysterious "Army of Jesus" is the work of Russian operatives or that a group that calls itself "United Muslims of America" has the goal of provoking reactions against the Muslim community.

**What can be done?** We need to improve media literacy and restore the importance of civics education. We need to find ways of increasing civic engagement – need more citizens doing what Rotarians do. We can encourage our neighbors to have healthy skepticism about the attention-getting claims and assertions they see online, to assess the credibility of sources, and to go beyond the headlines in "click bait." Almost all of us sometimes can be trapped into believing what we see in headlines without looking at the stories behind them.

In the Q&A session, Professor McQuade noted five things that can be done about problems with social media without violating the First Amendment by attempting to monitor content: 1. We can demand greater regulation of the ways data is collected about us. 2. We can reduce or eliminate legal immunity for algorithms that promote "engagement," that give us more of what we've looked at already; at least we can require disclosure of the use of those algorithms. 3. Require elimination or disclosure of "bots" that amplify what we're seeing or argue with us. 4. Require disclosure of AI-generated content. 5. Require disclosure that advertising has been paid for.

Also in Q&A, Professor McQuade cited four "fact checking" resources: Snopes, simply <https://www.snopes.com/> ; FactCheck, a service of the Annenberg Public Policy Center, <https://www.factcheck.org/> ; NewsGuard, <https://www.newsguardtech.com/> ; and Politifact, <https://www.politifact.com/> If you're buying a copy of Professor McQuade's book and you'd like a signed bookplate for it, please request it from Dana Tom no later than August 19, and include the name that should be inscribed for the recipient.

## TODAYS ROTARY ZOOMERS

You may have thought no one was taking names, but: Among the Rotarians participating via Zoom were **Duane Kalar, Mike McMahon, Geoff Ziman, Dick Mansfield, Bill Fogarty, Tom Gracon, Trish Bubenik, David Smullin, Pam Krudop, Art Stauffer, Sally Tomlinson, Jenn Torai, Dennis McGinn, Greg Hood, Andrew Pierce, Jon Stouman, John O'Keefe, Steve Madsen, Ed Shikada, Diana Diamond and Judy Kleinberg.** So glad you could join in!

## TODAY'S VOLUNTEERS

**Greeters: Charlie Weidanz**  
**Welcome Desk: Katie Seedman**  
**A/V: Ben Threlkeld**  
**Mics: Dana Tom**  
**Pinion Writer: Hal Mickelson**  
**Pinion Editor: Ginny Lear**

## UPCOMING PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

<b>August 12</b> 12:15-1:30pm Club Meeting	<b>Corina Gould, Arizona State University,</b> Professor of Indigenous Sustainability and representing the Confederated Villages of Lisjan/Ohlone... <b>Melissa Nelson,</b> from the Sogorea Te' Land Trust <b>Topic:</b> The Land Back Movement and the West Berkeley Ohlone Shellmound Site
<b>August 19</b> 12:15-1:30pm Club Meeting	<b>Hands On, Sleeves Up Project at the Club for Grateful Garments</b>
<b>August 26</b> 12:15-1:30pm Club Meeting	<b>Palo Alto City Council Candidates Panel</b> Moderator, Gennady Sheyner, Journalist
<b>September 2</b> NO MEETING	<b>DARK - LABOR DAY</b>
<b>September 9</b> 12:15-1:30pm Club Meeting	<b>Gina Dalma, EVP, Community Action, Silicon Valley Foundation</b> Hispanic Heritage
<b>September 16</b> 12:15-1:30pm Club Meeting	<b>Jill Duerig, District Governor, 2024-2025</b> Our Rotary District 5170