

# Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

November 25, 2024

Writer: Hal Mickelson



Celebrating 102 years of Service

## THE MAGIC OF ROTARY 2024-2025



President **REBECCA GERALDINI** began our November 25 meeting by asking “Zoomers” and “Roomers” at the Baylands Café to invest a minute or two in greeting each other...

**BRUCE GEE** recognized Alex Kent, a visiting Rotarian from Burlingame; **ERIC JENSEN** presented his guest Liz Cowie; **AMY YANG** introduced Judy Severson; **ULLRICH SCHWERTSCHLAG** hosted Theresa Ronan, who will be the keyboard accompanist for our December 16 program.



**Abigail Adams wrote to her husband John in 1776**, “I long to hear that you have declared an independency. And, by the way, in the new code of laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make, I desire you would remember the ladies and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors.” However, that “generous and favorable” treatment did not follow quickly. The 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution in 1870 provided that voting rights cannot be denied on the basis of “race, color, or previous condition of servitude,” but said nothing about denial of the right to vote based on gender. Fifty years later, the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment decreed that voting rights cannot be denied on the basis of sex, but said nothing about other laws and practices that deny equality for women. An Equal Rights Amendment approved by Congress in 1972 is not part of the Constitution today because an insufficient number of states had accepted it by 1982, the deadline set for ratification. A cigarette ad in 1968 told women, “You’ve come a long way, baby,” but we can still ask whether we’ve come far enough.

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY



**DIANA DIAMOND** noted that Thanksgiving is frequently observed with thoughts about American history, and she offered a few reflections about what she called “herstory” instead.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS + HOLIDAY PARTY

President **REBECCA** announced that our club’s annual Holiday Party will take place on Wednesday, December 11, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., at the home of **PATTY MCGUIGAN**. You should expect good music, good food, and good cheer, and the event will provide a great opportunity to bring along a guest or two who may wish to know more about Rotary. Volunteers are needed to help out in shifts with setup, bartending and cleanup; please contact **PATTY** or Social Chair, **GREG HOOD**.

Our speaker on December 2 will be Elena Kadwany, Food Reporter for the Chronicle, who has promised to share inside information about the restaurant scene. On December 9, we'll have our annual club and Endowment Board elections, and we'll hear from Kenneth Lee of Stanford about Hindu Religious and Cultural Celebrations. On December 16, we'll enjoy a Holiday Sing-Along, accompanied by Theresa Ronan. To keep the decks clear for festive activities, there will be no TGIF's in November or December and no Monday luncheons on December 23 and 30. Monday meetings will resume on January 6. Our Endowment Board will meet December 3, at 9:00 a.m.; for information, please contact **BETSY BECHTEL**. Our club's Board will meet January 8, at 8:00 a.m.; contact **REBECCA**. Our Program Committee meets January 9 at 12:00 noon; contact **SALLY TOMLINSON**.

## TODAY'S PROGRAM

**MIKE REYNOLDS** introduced the day's speaker, **Desiree Lyon, CEO of Namaste Direct**, who joined us via Zoom to share information about her organization as a World Community Service project. She saluted our club as "valuable thought partners" as well as partners in raising funds. She explained that Namaste Direct is a "small, scrappy NGO" duly registered in Guatemala whose mission is to empower women to pursue their dreams. It's not only women who benefit; it has been proven that bringing women into a society's economic life means a much improved chance of breaking generational patterns of poverty.



The work of Namaste Direct began with a microloan program, but loans are now just one element of the services and activities that it makes available. Strategic alliances with other organizations address reproductive health, education and legal support

As an example of the progress that can be achieved, **Desiree** told us about a woman named Olga, who had received only a fourth-grade level education. She came to Namaste Direct with no assets in her own name. She used a Namaste loan to buy a grinding machine that she uses in preparing and selling coffee, chocolate and spices. She is one of 5,000 women who have benefited from Namaste's help.... Participants in Namaste's programs are matched with business advisers, encouraged to develop formal business plans, and provided with coaching and workshops on needed skills and techniques.... A more recent program, an alternative to microloans, is called "Cuchubal," a savings club. Each month, a different woman receives a share of the group's savings, matched by Namaste.



Before adjourning the meeting, **REBECCA** thanked the Rotarians who made it possible

## TODAY'S VOLUNTEERS

Greeters: **Eric Jensen, Jenn Tori**  
Welcome Desk: **Katie Seedman**  
A/V: **Dana Tom**  
Microphone: **Mike Reynolds**  
Pinion Writer: **Hal Mickelson**  
Pinion Editor: **Ginny Lear**

## UPCOMING PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

<b>December 2</b> 12:15-1:30pm Club Meeting	<b>Elena Kadvany, SF Chronicle Food Reporter</b> The Palo Alto Restaurant Scene and Life as a Food Reporter
<b>December 9</b> 12:15-1:30pm Club Meeting <b>Election of both Club and Endowment Board members</b>	<b>Kenneth N. Lee, Chaplin Associate, Office for Religious &amp; Spiritual Life Stanford University</b> Hindu Religion and Cultural Celebrations
<b>December 11</b> 5:30-7:30 pm	<b>Holiday Party! Festive Home of Patty McGuigan! Halls will be Decked!</b>
<b>December 16</b> 12:15-1:30pm Club Meeting	<b>A Holiday Sing-A-Long with Your Vocally-talented Fellow Rotarians</b> <b>Pianist Theresa Ronan</b>
<b>December 23</b> DARK	<b>No Club Meeting</b> <b>HOLIDAY BREAK</b>
<b>December 30</b> DARK	<b>No Club Meeting</b> <b>HAPPY NEW YEAR!</b>
<b>January 6</b> 12:15-1:30pm Club Meeting	<b>Erwin Chemerinsky, Dean and Jesse H. Choper Distinguished Professor of Law at the University of California, Berkeley School of Law</b> <b><i>No Democracy Lasts Forever</i></b>

