

Rotary Club of Altadena

Sparks

OFF THE ROTARY WHEEL
AN AWARD-WINNING NEWSLETTER



ROTARY:
MAKING A
DIFFERENCE

November 02, 2017

This Week

Jim Gorton
Capitals of
Central Europe
A Journey through
the Heart of the
Former Austro-
Hungarian Empire
Program Host:
Dennis Mehringer

Having missed celebrating our 25th wedding anniversary [daughter, Caroline, Fall 2012: “why didn’t you guys do anything for your 25th wedding anniversary?” – Jim: “It’s next January, do the math,” – Caroline, “Not if you do the math ...” Jim: we decided that we wouldn’t miss our 30th and that we’d do something special, the something and its specialness left pretty much up in the air. As we found ourselves halfway through 2016, however, with the big Three-Oh staring us in the face as of January 3rd, we decided we needed to get serious.

Being loyal watchers of various PBS television series, we were more than somewhat familiar with a well-known river cruise line and all of the glamorous spots which it was advertised could be seen from the comfort of shipboard. Romance and adventure were implied,
Please turn to This Week p. 3



Dialing In

By Steve Kerekes,
President



It’s become a Humpty Dumpty World

“When I use a word,” Humpty Dumpty said, in rather a scornful tone, “it means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less.”

“The question is,” said Alice, “whether you can make words mean so many different things.”

“The question is,” said Humpty Dumpty, “which is to be master – that’s all.”

Through the Looking Glass,

Chapter 6,

by Lewis Carroll



This week’s article continues to ask “Is it the Truth?” in the context of Rotary and service above self. This excerpt is taken from the online article “Truth Is Stranger Than It Used to Be” by Michael McKinney, published online by Vision.org in their Fall 2006 issue and can be found online in its unadulterated form at <<http://www.vision.org/visionmedia/philosophy-and-ideas/what-is-truth/1656.aspx>>



Humpty Dumpty’s attitude is all too prevalent today. Truth has become whatever we wish it to be – that’s all. It is whatever we decide it to be. We are

the yardstick; we are the master. The old, traditional concepts look the same and are discussed in the same way, but they do not have the same meanings as they used to.

Sure, there’s a consensus on truths such as *two plus two equals four* and *the earth revolves around the sun*, but is there a body of truth to explain the bigger fundamental questions:

- Who are we?
- Why are we here?
- What should we be doing?
- How are we to interact?
- Is this life all there is?

The human mind longs for answers to these questions, and while they once seemed within our grasp, they now appear to be intangible.

Today truth has come under the Big Top. It’s a circus full of sideshows. We have for

Please turn to Dialing p. 4

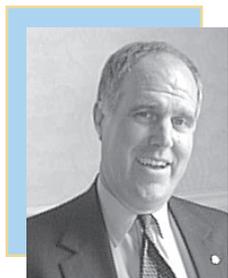
Greeter of the Week

November 02
Mindy Kittay

November 09
Sterling Louviere

November 16
Tom McCurry

Program Review



Occasionally the elected leaders of our community come to visit the Rotary Club of Altadena and update us on developments at the local and state level. This past Thursday Chris Holden, the California State Assemblyman representing the 41st district was a guest at the club and gave the members a short update on things being enacted and considered in Sacramento.

Assemblyman. Holden is a local prod-

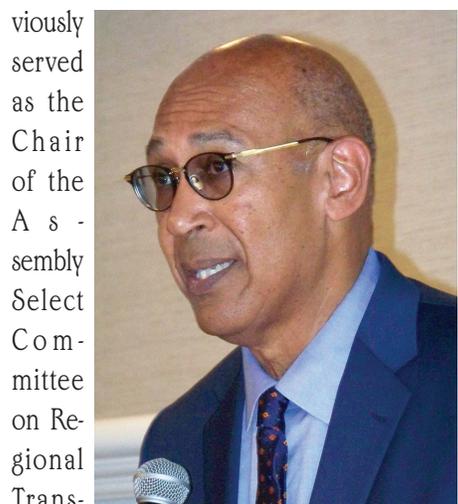
uct, having graduated from Pasadena High School and San Diego State University. He first ran for elected office in 1985 being a candidate for seat 3 of the Pasadena City Council. He lost that race by a narrow margin to incumbent Loretta Thompson-Glickman. He ran again four years later in 1989, and this time was successful. He was appointed Mayor of Pasadena in 1997. During his term as mayor, the Pasadena City Charter was amended to allow for the open election for the office of mayor. He lost the election for mayor in the 1999 General Election to Bill Bogaard. Despite that loss, Holden continued to serve as a Pasadena city councilman until 2012, serving 24 years in office. He is the second longest serving councilmember in Pasadena history.

He was first elected to the California state Assembly in 2012, and has been re-elected in 2014 and 2016. The 41st District stretches from Pasadena in the west to Upland in the east. The district includes the communities of Pasadena, South Pasadena, Altadena, Claremont, Monrovia, San Dimas, Sierra Madre, Rancho Cucamonga among others.

Holden currently chairs the Assembly Committee on Utilities and Energy. This committee provides oversight of the California Public Utilities Commission. That committee also is where legislation regarding renewable energy projects originate.

He also serves on the Judiciary Committee, the Environmental Safety and Toxic Materials Committee, and the Business and Professions Committee. Holden also has a strong interest in transportation issues, having pre-

viously served as the Chair of the Assembly Select Committee on Regional Transportation and Interconnectivity Solutions. This committee has been active in developing and funding the Metro Gold Line extension.



Holden also believes strongly in the concept of financial literacy as part of the California public schools curriculum. He feels that the Pasadena Unified School District is a model district in the area of financial literacy. Holden is also involved with projects at the state level to reduce the high cost of housing in the state.

When he is not performing his duties in the California Assembly, he is involved with his real estate firm, CHMB Consulting. His father, Nate Holden was a former California State Senator and Los Angeles City Councilman.

Boyd Hudson ○

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November
Rotary Foundation
Program Chair, Dennis Mehringer
 Nov. 02 - Capitals of Central Europe

Congratulations

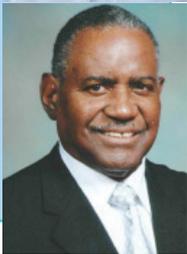
Birthdays

11/06 - Mindy Kittay
 11/08 - Sterling Louviere
 11/09 - David Campbell
 11/13 - Ed Jasnow
 11/20 - Steve Kerekes

Anniversaries

11/01 - Jacque Foreman & Bruce Conroy

Rotary Foundation Mission



The Rotary Foundation is a not-for-profit corporation funded solely by voluntary contributions from members and friends of Rotary who support its mission to advance world under-

standing, goodwill, and peace.

Using Rotary Foundation grants, Rotary's 34,000 clubs across the globe develop and carry out sustainable humanitarian projects and provide scholarships and professional training opportunities that promote peace, fight disease, provide clean water, sustain mothers and children, improve education and strengthen local economies.

The Foundation is a worldwide leader in the efforts to eradicate polio through its partnership with the World Health Organization, UNICEF, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

When Rotary launched its *PolioPlus* program in 1985, more than 350,000 people were afflicted with polio each year, and the disease was endemic in more than 125 countries. Since 1988, Rotary and its partners in the Global Polio Eradication Initiative have immunized over 2.5 billion children, reducing the incidence of polio by 99 percent and eradicating it from all but three countries. Rotary has contributed more than \$1 billion and many thousands of hours to eradication effort.

The Foundation also funds the training of hundreds of peacemakers through the Rotary Peace Center program, which enables fellows to pursue a master's degree or professional certificate at one of Rotary's

partner universities. Through academic training, study, and practice, the fellows become leaders who promote peace and aid conflict resolution in their communities and around the world. ○

This Week

Continued from p. 1

but being skeptics and of a certain age, we were ready to settle for comfort and scenery. Enough said, we clamored for admission to this not so select world.

Accordingly, at the end of October we signed up for a Danube river cruise with Viking from Budapest through Vienna ending in Nuremberg, to take place at the end of September 2017. Since there cannot be too much of a good thing, we decided to tack on a few days in Prague and go back to Vienna for a few more, since the cruise stopped there for only one day.

On Saturday, September 16, at 2 in the afternoon, we found ourselves wedged into

KLM's version of super basic economy for a 10-hour flight to Amsterdam, which, after a two-hour layover, continued with a two-hour flight to Budapest. Thus, we found ourselves 24 hours later (the 9-hr. time difference having done its bit) boarding our ship, which was docked at a quay on the Danube in the midst of Budapest.

A little over 1,000 photos later, a week of rain and clouds and a week of sunshine, we found ourselves retracing our journey back to LA on KLM.

What happened in between – with considerably less than 1,000 photos – is the subject of my talk this Thursday. ○

> > **THIS WEEK'S MEETING** < <

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 2

Smiser Scout Center

3450 E. Sierra Madre Boulevard

Pasadena 91107

See You There

Dialing

Continued from p. 1

our approval an endless cacophony of ideas. The fringes are attacking the core. Nonsense is taking center stage. All opinions and feelings are valid and up for grabs, because society no longer considers any truth to be absolute. Instead, there are many beliefs, many realities ... *many truths*.

It would be difficult here to give a complete overview – even in a very general way – of the history of humanity’s relationship with truth. We cannot possibly cover all the complexities and nuances of a good epistemological study. We can agree, however, that people have always been on a quest to know, always sought the answers to the big questions. We have searched for truth, order and the meaning of life. And when the answers we’ve come up with have left us wanting, we’ve gone off in all kinds of creative new directions.

In Search of Truth

In the Middle Ages, people wanted to contemplate God, to study God, to understand and advance His will as they saw it. The quest for truth became a function of the dominant religion of the day, Roman Catholicism. Prayer and the church’s reading of the Scriptures took the place of self-determined intellectual inquiry. The church overshadowed all. In the mind of the average person, there was one God, one church, one truth.

In reaction to the domination and perceived excesses of the church and the medieval system, a gradually rising attitude of secularism brought a new emphasis on the individual’s direct and private relationship with God. There was a resurgence of classical thought, and the church began to be called into question on almost everything.

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Consequently human beings began to

see things in a new way. Francis Bacon stands out as one who got the intellectual wheels turning in a new direction. While not a scientist himself, Bacon is credited as the father of the scientific method. He saw in science something far more profound than his predecessors had: a way to improve the human condition. The determination of truth, once the province of God, the church, and possibly the *divinely ordained* king, was now within anyone’s grasp: reason with a common touch.

This seemingly subtle reorientation created a profound change, however. The world would now be seen through scientific eyes. The right to determine truth would be pulled down from the heavens and handed over to the inductive, quantitative realm of science. This empirical approach lies at the core of our thinking today.

Equipped with the new tools of science, humans aspired to revolutionize the world. What followed, in fact, was a series of revolutions and explorations, and the subsequent conquest of the planet.

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The new approach was applied and adapted to all areas of life. Modern society, beginning with the Scientific Revolution and on into the Age of Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution, was built on a foundation of science and the technology that resulted from it, with the invisible hand of capitalism financing its inexorable rise.

As tools of and by themselves, they proved effective in advancing knowledge of the physical realm, but as a foundation for all truth, they were deficient.

• • •

Following Hegel and Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche, the last of the three great German philosophers of the 19th century, came

along and made the definitive statement that set the stage for what was to follow. Contemptuous of those who had tried to secularize morality by divorcing it from Christianity, Nietzsche pronounced God dead. This meant the death of truth – in particular, the truth of any authority beyond the self. By the beginning of the 20th century, his nihilistic thinking began to weave its way into the fabric of society. What was once thought of as incomprehensible and absurd, even offensive, became widely accepted.

• • •

The modern world searched for truth scientifically. Modernism possessed a confident worldview. Believing that nothing exists beyond what our senses can perceive, modernists determined truth as they experienced it. Modernism, with its unconditional belief in objective reality, saw truth as the result of statements that could be either proved or disproved.

It was an idea founded on a false assumption: that the human being is autonomous, his/her own authority. This idea that we alone can determine reality and truth has made truth self-legitimizing. However, although it sounds inspiring and appeals to our basic human nature, it is not a reliable formula by which to determine all truth.

• • •

But instead of going back to the basics and rethinking our premises, we now say that no one is right and everyone is right. This is relativism of the most brazen sort. With a loss of confidence, we see the world as a by-product of many realities and many truths:

- Everything is possible and nothing is certain.
- Truth is a story. It isn’t the end, it’s the means.

○

A Humpty Dumpty World, Indeed!



(l to r) Assemblyman Chris Holden, Craig Cox with New Member Maria Perez-Arton in front, C. Ray Carlson, Steve Kerekes, President, Sarah O'Brien, President Elect, and John Chase, District Governor Elect

**SECOND
SATURDAY
BLOCK PARTY**

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public library

SATURDAY, NOV. 11TH • 1 - 6 P.M.

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Libraries**

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ALTADENA LIBRARY DISTRICT PRESENTS THE

Second Saturday

2017-18 CONCERT SERIES*

October 14	<i>Upstream*</i>	March 10	<i>DeRumba</i>
November 11	<i>The Tone Brothers</i>	April 14	<i>Kenny Sara and the Sounds of New Orleans</i>
December 2	<i>Upbeat Swing Orchestra</i>	May 12	<i>The Podunk Poets</i>
January 13	<i>Kai Clark with special guests John York & Carla Olson</i>	June 9	<i>Crown City Bombers</i>
February 10	<i>Gerry Rothschild Band</i>		



*October 14th's Second Saturday Concert featuring Upstream is sponsored by the office of Los Angeles County Supervisor Kathryn Barger.

All other Second Saturday Concerts are supported in part by funds received from the Pasadena Tournament of Roses Foundation.

Free live music, delicious food and drink, and good friends... all right around the corner!



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