

Program: The Influence of Social Media on Hyper-Polarization and Incivility in the US

Speaker: Jeff Rasley, President, Scientech Club

Attendance: 125

Guests: Nancy Huesing, Bob Zoanky, Cyrus Behroozi, Jan Pfeil Doyle, Martha Boon, Greg Wright, Kevin Purrone, Patricia Jacob, Shirley Mueller, Sandy Bettner

Scribe: Bill Elliott

Editor: Bonnie Carter

Today's thought provoking talk on "The Case for Civility in this Era of Polarization" was given by our own Jeff Rasley. His opening claim is that "Human progress depends on cooperative communication." His talk comes from his own book *Polarized* which is a well-researched treatise on the topic of the divisions which have been increasing in our political discourse. The cause of this bitter polarization is proposed to be anger which has become "so extreme and strident in the Americas and Europe that it sometimes resembles mental illness, severed from the common sense of everyday life." There is even a new mental disorder dubbed "post-election stress disorder."

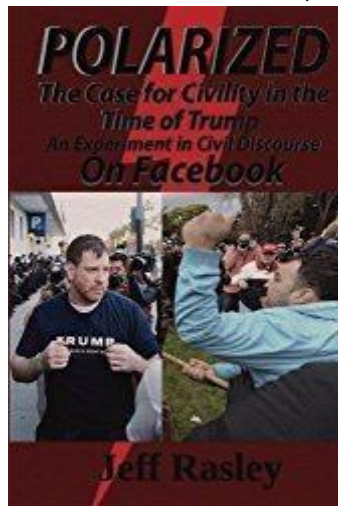
Currently, with the help of social media, rage can be expressed anonymously without rebuttal or social consequences. Some of this, the speaker maintains, is that we no longer have a common source for consuming the news, with cable news, network news, website news, and blog news, all giving us conflicting information. It is difficult to be sure what the real news is. News outlets and politicians seem to foster the contempt and fear that grips our citizens facing a changing world.

A second point that he made is that there is a great divide between the large cities, which have a concentration of wealth and great jobs, as well as great amounts of poverty, crime, and violence, and the countryside, which has very little violence and crime, but is showing areas of poverty, drug use, and increasing crime rates relating to drugs and drug crime.

He described the changing culture and political view growing among "millennials" (born ~1977-1994) that democracy is not important and socialism is a better way to go. He sees all of these trends leading us down the path to anarchy and violence with the end result not evident at this time.

Jeff's plea is that we take the time to listen to the point of view of others, respect varying points of view and go ahead to fight for your candidate at election time, let the victors serve out their terms, go about your everyday life and go ahead and fight for your candidate the next time. After all, the liberals need the conservatives, and the conservatives need the liberals to keep the ship of state on course. We all need each other (Scribes comment).

Jeff will have more books available for sale at the January 8 meeting.



Jeff Rasley

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Sciencetech Club - History Article

"Sciencetech Club – The First 90 Years"

Sciencetech Club is one of a myriad of non-profit organizations in Indianapolis but how many people ever have heard of it? Most likely they have not, because it is not a museum, a service club or a part of a national club. Since 1918, it has been a forum for the sharing of scientific, technical and educational information and it has remained true to its original purpose. Actually there is a service component in that Sciencetech Club participates in the Regional Science Fair, both by supplying judges and as a donor of cash awards to science teachers. In addition, through its Foundation, the Club awards scholarships to college students in the scientific fields.

"New Club Will Unify Technical Societies," stated the headline in the 31 Dec 1918 article in the *Indianapolis News*, the day after the inaugural meeting, held at the Athenaeum Club.¹ The Engineers Club of Indianapolis had sponsored the meeting for "the purpose of which is to co-ordinate activities of all scientific and technical societies, provides a center for social activities and enables scientific men to be helpful in matters of public interest."¹ Ten different scientific societies were represented that evening and the name "Sciencetech Club" was chosen from the seven names proposed.¹

There were 104 charter members in 1918 and there were many prominent names: Hugh J. Baker (steel fabricators), Dr. Frank Wade (head of Shortridge H.S. chemistry department for 38 years), D.J. Angus (inventor and co-owner of Esterline-Angus), Elwood Haynes (automobile pioneer owner of Haynes Automotive, the first man in the U.S. to drive an auto on 4 July 1894, and inventor of stellite, a pre-space age cobalt-chromium alloy) and Eli Lilly (later president of Eli Lilly Co. and founder of the Lilly Foundation in 1937, a major philanthropic organization.)²

Sciencetech Club is a local endeavor and is not affiliated with any national or state organization; it is unique to Indianapolis. The Club does not promote any cause and is non-political in nature. No petitions or personal solicitations are permitted at any meeting. It was not always that way, though. In 1927, a resolution called for the resignation of Mayor John L. Duvall and his wife, who was the city controller. The Mayor had been convicted in Marion County Circuit Court of violation of the State's Corrupt Practices Act by taking bribes from the Ku Klux Klan leader, D.C. Stephenson. Duval resigned in October 1927 after being sentenced to 30 days in jail and a \$1,000 fine.³ A by-laws change in 1932 ended the Club's involvement in political matters.⁴

Sciencetech Club has met weekly in a nearly unbroken line back to 1918. Traditions such as a weekly lunch and lecture, a clock to mark the time of the beginning and end of each meeting, introduction of members and guests at the lunch, and a monthly board meeting persist to this day. The Club is governed by a President, who serves for one year, and a Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer, along with 18 Directors, who serve in staggered terms.

Portion of article by Club member Bill Dick

2018 Scientech Club Annual Membership Dues Payment must be received by January 15, 2018

\$50 ___ Single Resident

\$80 ___ Family Resident

\$25 ___ Single Non-Resident

\$40 ___ Family Non-Resident

Resident = Marion & contiguous counties

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Additions/changes for 2018 Roster:

**Print this form - keep a copy - mail with your check payable to Scientech Club to
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