



The Anatomy of A RUMOR

Tuesday, June 19, 2018, 6:30 pm, Laguna Woods Village Performing Arts Center, Dining Room 1

Ru·mor, noun – A currently circulating story or report of uncertain or doubtful truth.

Research on How Rumors Work

Berinsky, Adam J., Ph.D.; “Rumors, Truths and Reality: Political Misinformation in the Modern Age”; Lecture, American & Comparative Political Behavior Workshop, Yale University; New Haven, CT; April 27, 2018.

Buckner, H. Taylor, Ph.D.; “A Theory of Rumor Transmission”; *Public Opinion Quarterly*; Spring, 1965.

Clark, Taylor; “The 8-1/2 Laws of Rumor Spread”; *Psychology Today*; November 1, 2008.

DiFonzo, Nicholas, Ph.D.; *The Watercooler Effect: An Indispensable Guide to Understanding and Harnessing the Power of Rumors*; Avery; 2008.

DiFonzo, Nicholas, Ph.D.; “Rumor Psychology: Social And Organizational Approaches”; *Psychology Today*; October 1, 2008.

Shibutani, Tamotsu; *Improvised News: A Sociological Study of Rumor*; Bobbs Merrill; 1966.

Singal, Jesse; “How to Fight A Rumor: Stopping rumors means understanding not why they're ugly, but why they're necessary”; *Boston Globe*; October 12, 2008.

“The Psychology of Rumors: 6 Reasons Why Rumors Spread”; *Social Psychology Online*; September 15, 2015.

Village Resources for Rumor Management

The key to rumor management in any community is transparent communication of decisions and activities. In Laguna Woods Village, our major tools for communication include:

Our website, LagunaWoodsVillage.com, covers every aspect of the Village and is constantly updated. As a resident, if you are not receiving regular Village emails, click on “Subscribe” at top of home page. Also see links on home page to social media – Facebook Twitter, and YouTube.

Board Minutes and Resolutions are permanently available online. **Detailed Agenda Packets for Board Meetings** are available online shortly before and after Board Meetings.

Village Television provides a wide range of informational programming seven days a week, including:

- Live coverage of Board Meetings, later repeated several times.
- The weekday news program, “This Day” (live at 8:30 am, repeated at 12:30 pm and 5:00 pm) covering Board news, club news, large and small social events, and much more.
- Regular programming on special topics.
- Many Village Television broadcasts are also available online. (Go to YouTube.com and enter “Village Television” in search. Additional Village-related videos may be accessed by entering “Laguna Woods Vlg” in YouTube search.)

Broadcast schedules are on the community website.

Village Resources for Rumor Management *continued*

“The Breeze,” a monthly email and print newsletter covering activities of the Governing Boards of the three Mutuals and the Golden Rain Foundation (GRF).

“What’s Up in the Village,” a weekly email “blast” sent out on Fridays, covering activities of clubs and the Recreation Department.

Red Alert, an email and telephone warning system for residents.

“The Scoop.” The newest Village communication tool is currently under development. “The Scoop,” a page on the community website, will present timely and accurate information on topics of special current interest.

The Globe, weekly community newspaper edited and published for Laguna Woods Village residents by the *Orange County Register*. Available by subscription for home delivery on Thursdays. To subscribe, call 949-837-5200.

How to Check Out A Rumor★

Get the official word. Contact a reliable source such as a government agency, a professional society, or a company or organization with expertise on the subject.

Verify the source. Be suspicious if the original sender is not identified, yet you are urged to “pass it on”; if the information is vague or one-sided or suggests a dire and widespread threat you never heard of; if the email insists “this is not a hoax.”

Visit a myth-busting website that lets you search by key words or phrases. Here are three widely-respected fact-checking sites:

Snopes.com

The Snopes.com web site was founded in 1994 to

research urban legends and has since grown into the oldest and largest fact-checking site on the Internet – widely regarded by journalists, folklorists, and laypersons alike as an essential resource. Snopes.com is routinely included in annual “Best of the Web” lists and has been the recipient of two Webby awards.

FactCheck.org

A project of The Annenberg Public Policy Center, FactCheck.org is a nonpartisan, nonprofit “consumer advocate” for voters that aims to reduce the level of deception and confusion in U.S. politics.

TruthOrFiction.com

A “mythbusting” website about urban legends, Internet rumors, e-mail forwards, and other questionable stories or pictures, founded in 1999 by Rich Buhler, a journalist also known as the “Father of Modern Christian Talk Radio” at KBRT. Topics are rated by the site’s staff as “Truth” (if true) or “Fiction” (if untrue), or, if unverifiable, are given ratings such as “Unproven” or “Disputed.”

**Edited from plasticmythbuster.org, published by the American Chemistry Council.*

...One More Resource

A fast and easy way to obtain extremely current news and opinions is through **Twitter**.

You don’t have to be a Twitter subscriber.

Just enter “**search.twitter.com**” into a browser and you will be taken to a page that says “See what’s happening right now.” Enter your topic as specifically as possible, click “search,” and be ready for a cornucopia of information.

Twitter is widely used by law enforcement, journalists, government officials, and others who need timely information. In 140-character tweets, on-the-scene information is being posted to Twitter 24/7 by eye-witnesses worldwide. It’s up to you, however, to judge the accuracy of the reporting.