

# Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

August 29, 2022



Chartered: May 1, 1922

## WELCOME

President **KAREN ROHDE** called the meeting to order at 12:35.

Three Rotarians had guests to introduce. John St. Clair III was the guest of **TOM DUBOIS**. John has lived in the area for about 25 years. He is a realtor and vice

president of the board of La Comida, and is interested in learning more about Rotary. Simon Pennington was the guest of **GINNY LEAR**. Simon is the Foothill College Associate Vice President of Community Relations, Marketing and Communications. Simon spoke to our club in 2019 and Rotarians were happy to have him join today's meeting.

Lotus Yee Fong was the guest of **STANS KLEIJNEN** and **JOOP VERBAKEN**. Lotus is from Beijing, China, and now lives in Palo Alto. Lotus attended Rotary's centennial event, and Rotarians hope to see her again soon.



provides an approach and a process to address conflict, solve problems and make decisions to achieve the desired outcome and help us be more successful. RALPH described the origins of the four-way test, which was used by a Rotarian banker to turn a failing bank into a successful one in about 40 years. He added, this Rotary code of conduct provides an ethical and effective guide for Rotarians to use for their personal and professional relationships. He concluded that the Four-Way Test is helpful to build a community of 2 or 320 million.

## NEW MEMBER INDUCTION

Along with Membership Chair **REBECCA**

**GERALDI** and his sponsor, **STEVE EMSLIE**, Rotarians welcomed **KHASAN,**



**MUSABAEV**, a software engineer, as the newest Rotarian and a rising leader in our community. **HASAN MUSA**, his preferred name, moved to the US about three years ago and has been living in Palo Alto ever since. He's looking forward to meeting and connecting with more people and getting involved with the Palo Alto community. **HASAN** and his brother founded an iPhone health IT startup to

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

**RALPH ADAMS** presented the Thought for the Day on building community through conflict transformation. This requires addressing conflict through the lenses of empathy, accountability and trust. RALPH said this is very compatible with the four-way test, which

assist physicians in interacting with their patients. HASAN loves hot chocolate and ice cream and he is looking forward to helping others in the community. WELCOME TO ROTARY!

## PRESIDENTS CLUB

**ROGER SMITH** joined the President's Club in honor of a "wonderful Rotarian," **GLORIA HOM. BETSY BECHTEL** joined in honor of **LIZ KNISS** for hosting Chili & Chill & the Palo Alto Players at her home for our Charities Fund.

## ACTIVITY ANNOUNCEMENTS & THANK YOU

Huge thanks to Megan and **TODD LEWIS** for their San Francisco Art Insider Tour. Two cars, ten people, six galleries, five rules of art collecting, going from coffee to beer, pastries to pizza, a great day for all, benefiting our Charities Fund.

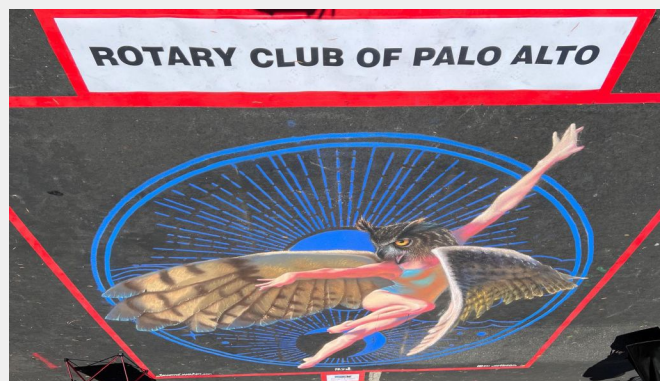
A few openings for the September 9, 5:30 pm paella party in **BRUCE & Jane GEE'S** backyard, co-sponsored by **GINNY & King LEAR**. \$75 per person, benefiting our Charities Fund.

Many thanks to **MATT DOLAN** for hosting with **CAROLE WHITEHILL** our TGIF last Friday at the Avalon Towers. A good chance to visit with members in a relaxed setting on a perfect weather evening. With a drumroll, KAREN had **NADA DJOMEHRI** pull the winning name to receive a bottle of wine. **TOM GRACON** was it, for returning the Pulse Survey in a timely manner.

The September TGIF will be at the Palo Alto Junior Museum and Zoo. Details to come.



## PALO ALTO FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS AND CHALK ART DISPLAYS SUPPORTING YCS



A busy weekend in downtown Palo Alto and for Rotary, too. We sponsored Sharyn Chan, an artist from Santa Barbara who came to participate in the at the Youth Community Service Chalk Art Display.



And, we promoted Rotary thanks to being able to share the Palo Alto Chamber of Commerce booth with their President and our tireless Community Service Chair **CHARLIE WEIDANZ**. Thanks to **REBECCA GERALDI, STANS KLEIJNEN, JOOP VERBAKEN, CASH ALAEE, GEOFF BALL, BETSY BECHTEL** for your promotions of our club and activities to festival visitors.. Our brochures and signs were created by **REBECCA**.

## ROTARY CLIMATE ACTION COMMITTEE

**"SEASPIRACY"** Watch this Netflix documentary on your own, then join in a discussion September 14, 7:30-8:30 PM, on Zoom, led by **CASH ALAEE** and **GEOFF BALL**. And, look for the Rotary email with details on the **Climate Action Event**, Saturday, September 10th, 8 AM-1 PM, in San Jose at the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors Chambers.

## TODAYS PROGRAM

Today's speaker, Palo Alto Rotary's first woman President **GLORIA HOM**, was introduced by Ginny LEAR. Gloria spent her formative years in Asia, as her father was a career diplomat with the Chinese government. She came to America to finish high school at Lowell High School in San Francisco. Gloria has a Bachelor's degree in Economics/Political Science from Dominican College in San Rafael and a master's degree and teaching credentials from San Jose State University. Her Doctorate is from the University of San Francisco with additional graduate work from Stanford University and UC Berkeley. Gloria also published an anthology collected from her students, *Chinese Argonauts, an Anthology of Chinese Contributions to the Historical Development of Santa Clara County*. Gloria retired after 30 plus years as Chairman and Professor of the Economics Department at Mission College in Santa Clara. She served on several boards with a focus on educational policy. Gloria has received several awards, including an Avenidas Lifetimes of Achievement award in 2019.



Gloria spoke to Rotarians about her grandfather,

**Thomas Foon Chew**, who came to America as an 8 year old in 1897 and died a multimillionaire (of pneumonia) at the age of 42, having established the third largest cannery in the United States.



**Thomas Foon Chew**, the owner of Bay Side Cannery, built a produce canning empire with numerous canneries, including remaining locations in Alviso and Palo Alto. Because he was the first in the world to perfect the canning of green asparagus, he was known as the "Asparagus King."

Gloria did not know her grandfather; he died before she was born. She gathered this history from local books and papers, and anecdotal stories from her relatives.

Thomas's father came to the US during the time of the Chinese Exclusion Act (with a rare merchant's visa). In 1882, 10% of the population in California was Chinese, compared to only 0.002 percent of the nation's population. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 suspended Chinese immigration for ten years and made Chinese immigrants ineligible for naturalization in an effort to curb the influx of Chinese immigrants to the United States, particularly California. It was the first significant law restricting immigration of a specific ethnic or racial group into the United States.

Having a family in China, Thomas's father returned to China to bring his son to America. This took two years, but eventually he was able to bring Thomas Foon Chew to America. Thomas's mother came 5 years later. Thomas stayed with relatives in Los Gatos, where he attended an ethnically diverse school.

An important figure in the success story of Thomas Foon Chew is AP Giannini, whose father, Luigi Giannini, came to the US during the Gold Rush. He bought 40 acres in Alviso and farmed it. Five years later he was involved in a dispute with an employee who shot him dead. Giannini's wife kept the business and four years later remarried. Her new husband did not like farming, preferring to be a produce broker. The family then moved to San Francisco, but kept the farm. This is where AP Giannini learned the produce brokerage business. He started at 13 and was so successful that he retired at 30 to look after the financial holdings of his stepfather and married the daughter of a real estate mogul. He then moved into banking, opening Bank of



Italy with five friends. He was the first in San Francisco to give loans to small businesses and immigrants, instead of serving only the wealthy. He went on to found the Bank of America.

During this time, Thomas was farming the 40 acres in Alviso. He and AP Giannini became fast friends, so Thomas had no problems obtaining seed money for the farm. Thomas was 17 at the time of the great quake of 1906 and was in a prime position for financial success.

Thomas's first cannery, in Alviso, was huge, and employed over 600 diverse employees. Thomas also used several innovations to increase efficiency, like having the fleet of cars that picked up and dropped off workers at the beginning and ending of the workday, be converted to delivery trucks in between. He also designed a fruit and vegetable sorter, which sorted asparagus, apricots and plums of different sizes onto a hand-cranked conveyor belt; different sizes of fruit and vegetables would fall through different sized slots into the appropriate boxes. Because he valued education, Thomas opened schools at the canneries.

The Mayfield cannery in Palo Alto was located on what has been the Fry's location, situated on nearly 60 acres. The Mayfield cannery did not have a diverse workforce, given extensive



racial restrictions in Palo Alto at the time. It was built on a levee so the trucks could back up to the deck for loading and unloading the boxes. Peaches, pears, apricots and tomatoes were canned in Palo Alto. Thomas's empire grew to include numerous canneries, as well as fisheries in Oregon, and rice in Dos Palos, California.

Gloria shared interesting details about the labels used by Bay Side. Produce canned under the Bay Side label was premium; others, not necessarily. All had the Bay Side logo on them and UC colors, since Thomas was a UC fan. "Low quality but not illegal," read one label. "White labor exclusively," read another, indicating superior quality.

Thomas married Lee Gum Ching, who was a third generation American from a wealthy Chinese family in Oakland. She had bound feet though she was not from China, and spoke only Chinese.

She and Thomas had a child every two years. Two died in childhood, but seven survived to adulthood. Thomas had terrible asthma (he reportedly chain-smoked cigars) so the family moved to Los Gatos. Thomas purchased the property (and all property that he purchased) in his children's names because they were US citizens.

With the Great Depression of 1929, demand for produce dropped significantly. At that time, with his terrible asthma, a lot of stress, and significant debt which led to the eventual foreclosure of the canneries, Thomas died at age 42 in 1931. His funeral was held in San Jose on May 9, delayed until after Chinese New Year, but he was honored with a memorial parade along Grant Avenue in the heart of San Francisco's Chinatown. Twenty-five thousand people turned out to honor him that day, including civic leaders and dignitaries.

## SERVICE CORNER

**Monday, September 5<sup>th</sup>** – Labor Day Flags on University Ave 8:00 am – Meet at Cowper & University to put flags up, 5:00 pm – Meet at High Street and University to take flags down. Co-sponsored with Palo Alto University Rotary

**Wednesday, September 7<sup>th</sup>** – Distribute Food at Nuestra Casa: 2:00 to 4:00 pm and 4:00 to 6:00 pm. Contact Charlie Weidanz or sign up at link in email

**Climate Action Committee** conference on Green Transportation and Clean Energy,

**Saturday, Sept 10th**, from 8:00 am to 1:00 pm, at the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors Chambers in San Jose, followed by three optional tours from 2:00 to 4:00 pm. Nancy Pelosi and Nuria Fernandez, keynote speakers. \$20 in person (includes a tour), virtual attendance free. To register: <https://events.humanitix.com/2022environmentsummit>

**Sunday, September 11<sup>th</sup>** – National Day of Service: Partnering with Youth Community Service (YCS) and Environmental Volunteers Science kit building and habitat restoration in the Palo Alto Baylands

### CLOSING ANNOUNCEMENTS

KAREN thanked GLORIA HOM for helping us better understand this important part of our local history. Thanks to members and guests who attended and those who made the meeting possible today.

### TODAY'S VOLUNTEERS

Greeter: **Betsy Bechtel**  
 Welcome Desk/Cashier: **Katie Seedman, Rebecca Gerald**  
 Room Set-Up: **Matt Dolan**  
 Zoom Host: **Ben Threlkeld**  
 Pinion writer: **Kim Bomar**  
 Pinion editor: **Ginny Lear**

### UPCOMING PROGRAMS/EVENTS

September 5	<b>Labor Day. No meeting, still activities! See below...</b>
September 5	<b>Post Flags on University Ave. 8 AM and 5 PM.</b>
September 5	<b>Guided Tour-Palo Alto HS. 10 - 11:30 AM. Meet at the Bell Tower. Parking available. Contact Gloria.</b>
September 6	<b>Membership Committee Meeting: 11:30-12:30. Zoom Contact Rebecca Gerald</b>
September 6	<b>Endowment Board</b>

	<b>meeting, 9-10 AM</b> , same Zoom link as Club meetings. Contact Betsy Bechtel, Chair, if any questions.
September 10	<b>Rotary Climate Action Committee Event. Saturday, 8 AM-1 PM.</b> Details emailed to all members. Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors Chambers 70 West Hedding St., San Jose. Live, \$20, Virtual, free. Contact Cash Alae or Geoff Ball.
September 12	<b>New Member Talks:</b> Bruce Winterhof, Geoff Ball, Rick Block
September 13	<b>Club Board Meeting, 8:00-9:30 AM. Contact President Karen for Zoom details</b>
September 14	<b>Climate Action Committee "SEASPIRACY" Watch this Netflix documentary on your own, then join us 7:30-8:30 PM, on Zoom. Cash Alae and Geoff Ball</b>

## YOU'RE INVITED

Please join this special event, hosted by the Palo Alto Rotary Climate Action Committee

Before the event, please watch the Netflix Documentary SEASPIRACY Then, join our Zoom gathering to share ideas and actions

**Wednesday  
September 14  
7:30 – 8:30 PM**

Please RSVP to [parotary@gmail.com](mailto:parotary@gmail.com) for Zoom login and passcode info

**Palo Alto  
Rotary**

