

# Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

January 23, 2023



Chartered: May 1, 1922

## WELCOME

**KAREN ROHDE** called the meeting to order at 12:30 pm. In the absence of the President-elect, KAREN called on several visiting Rotarians and guests. Raimund Erdmann and his partner, Kristen Erdmann, plus Theo Erdmann and Cedric Gysel, all from Brugg Aare Rhein Rotary Club, Switzerland; and Margaret Abe-Koga from Mountain View Rotary Club. Guests today were Ann Wilbur, introduced by her host **GLORIA HOM**, and Shoshana Shur, daughter of **GEOFF ZIMAN**.



special ICU at Stanford Hospital, nearing the end of her life. KAREN said it would be appreciated if ROTARIANS reached out to MATT and his family by email or text.

## IMPORTANT CLUB ANNOUNCEMENT

President **KAREN** reminded us that the Elk's Club is ending its time as the venue for our meetings.

**Our final lunch meeting at the Palo Alto Event Center will be on Monday, February 27.** Our new meeting location will be announced soon.

## PRESIDENTS CLUB

**ROB LANCEFIELD** joined in memory of the people killed in the recent Lunar New Year massacre. He noted the families must be suffering immensely.

## LUNAR NEW YEAR

**GLORIA HOM** talked about the Chinese (or Lunar) New Year. It's the most important celebration that Chinese and others who celebrate the Lunar New Year have. It's the largest migration in the world because people go home to pay homage to family and ancestors. It's extremely important



## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

**TRISH BUBENIK** presented the Thought for the Day. She reflected on a snowy day early in her teaching career, when she taught 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. She taught them how to catch snowflakes on their tongues, after tippy-toeing outside from their classroom. Normally challenging, the students had a wonderful time, and became more engaged and more cooperative because of their shared experience. This experience helped TRISH build community in her classroom.

## CARING THOUGHTS

**MATT DOLAN'S** brave adult daughter **Lizzy**, who was born with cystic fibrosis, is in a

because it's everyone's birthday. Everyone has a birthday when they are one month old, and men at 80 and women at 82. The only birthday for the year is Chinese New Year. GLORIA shared the origin story of the Chinese zodiac; the Buddha called the forest animals to him, naming a year for the twelve animals who came. The rat became the first by hitching a ride with the ox, and suddenly jumping off just before the finish line and dashing across it first.

GLORIA also discussed the elements cycle that compliments the zodiac signs, important colors and lucky gifts. During the Lunar New Year it is important to observe certain behaviors, since they can mean good fortune in the new year. She also spoke about the importance of Red Envelopes and the use of paper money, clothes, houses and now paper villages as part of ancestor worship. Many thanks to **GLORIA** for sharing her experience with Chinese (or Lunar) New Year.



## SERVICE CORNER

Many thanks to the six ROTARIANS who volunteered as ushers at the Palo Alto Players on January 22, 2023.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of every month, Rotarians have the opportunity to prepare and distribute food to insecure families at **Nuestra Casa**. It's a great opportunity to support families in need. The next opportunity is **February 1st**, at Rise City Church in Redwood City, from 2:00 to 4:00 pm and 4:00 to 6:00 pm. Please contact **CHARLIE WEIDANZ** for more info.

Volunteer to Join the **Neighborhood Canvass about Switching from Gas to Electric Water Heaters**, Saturday and Sunday, February 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>. Palo Alto Neighborhoods. Training is provided.

Sponsored by Palo Alto's non-profit 350.org Climate Team.

Thank you to donors **MATT DOLAN, BEN THRELKELD AND DANA TOM** for hosting the Blind Red Wine Tasting offered at the 2022 club fundraiser. Participants were given four red wines to taste and compare, along with comparison tips and complementary tasting cheeses and fruit.

## DISTRICT 5170 ANNOUNCEMENTS

**CASH ALAEE** and **JENN TORAI** are co-chairs for our participation in the District's annual **Youth Speech Contest**. Volunteer judges, officials and audience members are needed for the local round of competition on Wednesday evening, **February 8** at the Mitchell Park Community Center. Please check in with Cash or Jennifer to help.

An "International Women's Day" event is planned for Sunday, **March 19**, also at the Summit Center (\$60 for Rotarians, \$30 for guests).

The District Conference will take place Saturday, **April 29**, in a new one-day format at the Computer History Museum. More information is available for all of these District events as [rotarydistrict5170.org](http://rotarydistrict5170.org).

## TODAY'S PROGRAM

**SALLY TOMLINSON** introduced **BRUCE GEE** and **TODD LEWIS**, Palo Alto ROTARIANS who are farmers and own farms, who spoke about Water in California Agriculture.

**BRUCE** spoke on California's



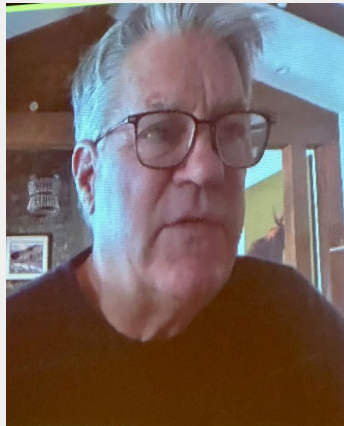
water issues, noting that California is in a drought, but there is some good news. The level of the snowpack is at over 200% for the year, helping to ensure water in the spring when the snow melts. State reservoir levels, however, are just barely getting to average levels, even after all the recent rainfall.

We're very fortunate to live in California, which has an agricultural system that provides reasonable food at reasonable prices. It's the number one agricultural state in the US, and much of our produce is exported. There are so many farms here because it's the ideal place, with the great combination of Mediterranean climate and rich soils, allowing crops to grow here that only grow a few places in the world, like almonds, pistachios, grapes and citrus.

A complex system of canals, reservoirs, pumping stations moves water throughout the state, for both farming and for use by the general population. Canals don't reach everywhere, so some farmers resort to wells for water. Because you have to pay for surface water but well water is free, historically, some farmers would use well water even though surface water might have been available. There were no regulations on underground water in CA until recently because there was plenty, so no one thought about it. Over time, the groundwater has been depleted. Now there are regulations that prohibit the pumping of groundwater, but it's pretty late. Now there are efforts to restore ground level water levels.

BRUCE also spoke about complex water rights and regulations that require an overhaul in order to maximize rainfall retention. BRUCE spoke about the need for a more drought resilient water ecosystem, and the need to update operating procedures based on better knowledge systems based on rain/weather forecasts. BRUCE stated that 95% of rain from the recent storms was lost as runoff, instead

of being sent down the state. Now, there are new efforts to recharge aquifers after rains. That's happening but may take time. Another problem is that some people have expensive water, others inexpensive. Ideally, there should be an exchange of water rights among farmers, but that's not currently on the horizon. The real goal is efficient allocation of water.



### **TODD LEWIS**

answered questions. A ROTARIAN asked about covering portions of the aqueducts with solar power, which would generate energy and reduce evaporation by 95%. Evaporation also is a huge issue.

There are lots of long-term projects that could lead to help—desalinization, recycling, ground water recharging, moving water around where needed—the answer is we need to do all the above. We didn't do a good job of capturing this storm, which was a tragic lost opportunity.

### **TODAY'S VOLUNTEERS**

Greeters: **Rob Lancefield, Kevin Curry**  
Welcome Desk/Cashier: **Katie Seedman, Rebecca Gerald**  
Meeting Set-Up: **Matt Dolan**  
Microphones: **Dana Tom**  
Zoom/Hybrid Host: **Ben Threlkeld**  
Pinion writer: **Kim Bomar**  
Pinion editor: **Ginny Lear**

## UPCOMING PROGRAMS/EVENTS

<b>January 30</b> Club meeting of 12:15-1:30 pm	<b>Bird Migration</b> – presented by Matthew Dodder, Executive Director of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society
<b>February 1</b> 2-4 & 4-6 pm	Distribute Food at Nuestra Casa
<b>February 6</b> Club meeting of 12:15-1:30 pm	"The Supreme Court: Court of Law or Court of Politics?" <b>Jeb Barnes</b> , Professor Political Science, USC
<b>February 6</b> 3:00 PM Zoom	Membership Committee <b>Contact Rebecca            Gerald</b>
<b>February 8</b> 8:00-9:30 AM Zoom	Board Meeting <b>Contact President            Karen Rohde</b>

