

Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

October 14, 2024

Writer: Eric Jensen



Celebrating 102 years of Service

THE MAGIC OF ROTARY 2024-2025

Club President **REBECCA GERALDI** opened the meeting on October 14th promptly at 12:30PM and called on President-elect **BRUCE**



GEE, who called on **ELIZABETH SANTANA**, who introduced the Palo Alto Players Artistic Director, Patrick Kline, as her guest today. **BRUCE** acknowledged a member of the speaker's Rotary Club in Gig Harbor, Washington. Walker

Allen, a friend of **ANNETTE GLANCKOPF**, would join later to listen to today's keynote from a fellow club member.

President **REBECCA** informed the attendees of the letters of thanks from children who attended the play last month, "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory". The club provided a grant to enable the performance to take place for local school children to enjoy; for many it was their first experience with live theater.

ROTARY ANNIVERSARIES & BIRTHDAYS

President **REBECCA** acknowledged this month's Rotary anniversaries and birthdays including **DIANA DIAMOND** at 35 years and **RALPH ADAMS** at 34 years.

October birthdays were revealed along with a fun quiz of "name that child" where four pictures of youngsters were displayed and attendees guessed who they belonged to. Thank you to all who sent a photo.

Celebrating an October birthday:

Charlie Weidanz - 10/8

Judith Steiner - 10/10

Liz Kniss - 10/11

Eric Jensen - 10/15

Dave Van Atta - 10/20

Karen Rohde - 10/22

Barbara Gross - 10/25

Christina Chu - 10/26

John St. Clair - 10/28

ROTARIANS VISIT RI HQ, EVANSTON, IL

REBECCA reported on a visit to Rotary "HQ" in Evanston, Illinois, with herself, **GLORIA HOM**, **DANA TOM**, and **DANA's** spouse, Nancy. Our club grouped up with local clubs and districts and heard about such topics as membership, social media, upcoming enhancements to websites, and Rotary Foundation. This was an international event with Rotarians from all over the world. President **REBECCA** invited **DANA** and **GLORIA** to give their thoughts. **DANA** highlighted his conversation with the Editor of the Rotary

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY



JAKE YOO treated the club to one of his favorite quotes from the movie the Darkest Hour: "Success is not final, failure is not fatal; it is the courage to continue that counts."

Magazine, WEN HUANG. DANA encouraged members to write in letters to the editor and had the opportunity to speak about our work in Vocational Scholarships Program. Keep an eye out for a club profile in an upcoming edition. GLORIA added she was surprised that only 12 staff members produce the magazine – very efficient. GLORIA appreciated the time spent getting to know REBECCA, DANA, and Nancy. Hearing how other clubs managed was also enlightening. They got to meet REBECCA'S brother who is a governor of his District.

PICKLEBALL P.S.

President REBECCA recapped the PickleBall tournament managed by **LINNET KWOK**, who is out of country. Give LINNET a big thank you next time you see her! Details: 115 participants. Over \$10,000 raised, donations plus net on costs, for local charities. AND, the community was exposed to the Rotary brand and what we do. A success in so many ways!

THE ROTARY FOUNDATION & POLIO PLUS

MIKE REYNOLDS spoke about a District 5170 grant that our club was instrumental in applying for and receiving. The grant will be managed by our club and partially support an international charity that helps low/no-income vulnerable women in Guatemala who are victims of predatory lending. This is another example of what can be done through the Rotary Foundation.

Past President, **KAREN RHODE**, announced it is Week Two of the current fund-raising campaign for the Rotary Foundation and Polio+.

TRF has a 4-star Charity Navigator rating (highest level). **Her message was simple: everyone give something.** It is the club's goal to get 100% participation at any level. Our club recommends \$200, the "Double Sustainer" level; but even \$25 is welcome – just



participate and complete the gifting online or using the return envelope members recently received. For questions, email or call KAREN

TODAY'S PROGRAM



ANNETTE GLANCKOPF introduced Rotarian **BOB BARANSKI**; member of the Gig Harbor, Washington Rotary Club. Speaker BOB would gift our club

with an incredible understanding of the power of Rotary through a story of tragedy, connection, and maybe a little magic. BOB's real-life story is deeply personal and takes place in March 2023 involving his daughter, son-in-law, and friends in crisis.

For background, BOB's daughter, Cory, and (yet-to-be) son-in-law, Chris, both graduated from University of Washington with degrees in Oceanography. Both student athletes, she in sailing and he in rowing, didn't get together until after graduation. Both were very active in the Seattle sailing community where they got to know each other. They eventually they bought a 45-foot sailing boat, renovated it, and lived on it for a few years prior to getting married. In 2021, they planned to leave tethered life and sail their boat, the Constellation, to the United Kingdom.



BOB was stunned at the decision but his daughter, Cory, was able to start a new career and son-in-law, Chris, was able to continue work remotely for the University.

They set sail down the west coast. Amidst their adventures, they adopted a puppy, Stella, in San Diego. They eventually got to the Panama Canal. Regulations required a crew of four to motor the canal, so they recruited their old roommates, Talia and David. Prior to setting sail through the canal, the four spent time sailing the waters off the Panama Pearl Islands.

While anchored, shortly after dinner on Monday, March 28th, the story takes a turn for the worse. BOB relays, with a father's emotion, the incident. A stealth panga boat rammed the Constellation, whereby four males with machetes and guns boarded and terrorized the crew for 90 minutes. The details can be read in the Rotary club's blog post: <https://blog.rotary.org/2023/04/18/rotary-net-work-helps-family-attacked-by-pirates/>. The pirates took anything valuable: all their electronics, navigation equipment, fishing gear, foul weather gear, and David's luggage (that included his passport), and about \$13,000 in cash that was to be used for the trip to the UK.

BOB received the news from his daughter the next morning. He and his wife were stunned as the experience was told to them by Cory, thousands of miles away in a foreign country with few resources. It took a while, but BOB realized Rotary might be able to help and set out to connect with a club in Panama. After half an hour of searching on the internet, he came across a site in Spanish that said Rōdārē -something. Not being able to read the words, he recognized the Rotary logo. He then called his club's President, Vince, to see if they could get a contact at the Panama club. The local club contacted Evanston, who contacted Panama, and Bob was provided with the phone number for the local club President, MARCO. When BOB finally got through to MARCO, MARCO said "what do you need?"

Up to this point, the Panamanian authorities were less than helpful to the crew of the sailboat but MARCO dispatched another Rotarian to meet the crew (all accomplished within three hours of BOB calling his club's president). While this post does not do justice to the power of Rotary, the connections made

all the difference. One Rotarian contacted the Panama Department of Tourism, Panama Department of Military, the US State Department, marina owners, who all became involved and eventually the sailboat was repaired and the crew could transit to Florida via the Cayman Islands. Rotarians in Caymen Islands even assisted.

Even Stella, the puppy, was miraculously found days later by a Panamanian military crew who saw her on an uninhabited island out at sea. Stella became a story for Panama and the Minister of Tourism started to move mountains. BOB said it turned from tragedy to Disney. There was a lot of fanfare about reuniting Stella with Cody and Chris. While the pirates were never captured and the property has been replaced, BOB says the crew did get mental health assistance and, as of this writing, Cody and Chris still own a sailboat ...a bigger and better boat docked on the East Coast. For now, however, they live in Seattle awaiting the birth of their first child. But don't worry, the new boat is getting outfitted with a crib.

BOB reflected that "when there is a significant challenge or problem that needs to be solved, what I see in Rotarians is that people with the right skill set lean in and help. They recognize opportunity where their expertise can make a difference...And that's why I will always be a Rotarian "

Speaker BOB then reminded the attendees of what Past President KAREN told us earlier: the reason Rotarians' give is because someone asked.

With that, President REBECCA adjourned.

TODAY'S VOLUNTEERS

Greeters: **Richard Keller, Karen Rohde**

Welcome Desk: **Katie Seedman**

A/V: **Dana Tom**

Microphone: **Steve Madsen**

Pinion Writer: **Eric Jensen**

Pinion Editor: **Ginny Lear**

UPCOMING PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

October 21 12:15-1:30pm Club Meeting	Stephanie Crosby, Dean of Disability Resources and Veterans Resources, Foothill College Disability Resources and Veterans Resources at Foothill College
October 25 TGIF 5:30-7:00 pm	TGIF: Location to come... Bring a bottle of wine to share. Appetizers provided by the Club.
October 28 12:15-1:30pm Club Meeting	New Member Talks: Mary Ann Gee; Mike Fogarty, Jake Yoo
November 4 12:15-1:30pm Club Meeting	Jenna Daugherty, Trans Activist: How I went from a Christian fundamentalist kid to an agnostic trans activist
November 11 NO meeting	Veteran's Day. No Meeting Post flags on University Avenue
November 18 12:15-1:30pm Club Meeting	Garth Illingworth, Professor Emeritus, Astronomy & Astrophysics, UC Santa Cruz Discoveries from the James Webb Telescope