

Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

March 10, 2025

Writer: Steve Emslie



Celebrating 103 years of Service

THE MAGIC OF ROTARY 2024-2025

President **GERALDI** called the meeting together at 12:30 PM.

BRUCE GEE asked for introductions of attending guests:

JUDY KLEINBERG introduced her guest, Yudy (that is correct) Deng, Palo Alto Parks and Recreation Commissioner, visiting for the second time.



THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

SALLY TOMLINSON provided inspirational thoughts regarding wonder and amazement and provided suggestions on how to incorporate magic into our everyday life. Sally reminded us to appreciate natural beauty, grandchildren, music each and every day. She pointed out that doing so will provide mental and physical benefits such as expansion of our perspective and better health. Make sure to make room for wonder and appreciate the good things around us.



PRESIDENTS CLUB

ULLRICH SCHWERTSCHLAG joined the President's Club in recognition of his return to good health and attending in person Rotary meetings.

BRIAN STEEN joined the President's Club to announce his upcoming choral concerts in Palo Alto this Saturday and in Campbell on March 16. He distributed business cards with details.

LEANNAH HUNT joined the President's Club in honor of the passing of her son-in-law, Matt Robinson's mother who was a respected member of our community.

REBECCA GERALDI joined the President's Club to recognize **BRUCE GEE** who attended the Rotary President-Elect Training Conference (PETS) last weekend in San Jose. BRUCE gave a summary of his observations which included the breadth of Rotary's reach into the community as well as how other clubs provide service to their respective communities while retaining the shared values of Rotary. He also recognized President Geraldi for becoming a Rotary Assistant Governor for our Area.

To Celebrate BRUCE, REBECCA tossed him a confetti shower!



MARCH 15! IT'S HERE! FUNDRAISER

This year's Annual Charities Fundraiser and Social Dinner is **Saturday, March 15.**

"The Magic of Rotary" benefits our local and

international charities. It will be held at the

Mitchell Park Community Center, starting at 5:30 pm.

Many thanks to our sponsors including **EJ HONG** who is

underwriting the cost of

the crab. Volunteers are needed to help with setup. Arrive by 2:30 if you can help with setup. Thank you!

At the event there will be a **Live Auction** with 4 special items - check those out when you look online!

Last Minute Tickets for dinner are \$125 per person, through Wednesday. Always Fun!

The **Online Auction** closed Monday at 8 pm, with lots of happy winning bidders!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Global Epic Day of Service: President GERALDI announced that Rotary International has designated Saturday May 17, 2025 as a comprehensive day of service for all of Rotary. She is working with the University Rotary Club and East Palo Alto Bayshore Club to determine a joint project which is likely to be environmentally oriented yet to be determined.

PROGRAM: 3 LONG TERM MEMBER TALKS



JIM SUTHERLAND, Chair of the Long Term Member Talks introduced the members speaking this afternoon, Dave Van Atta, Bruce Swenson and Jack Woodson.

DAVE VAN ATTA: Dave has been a Rotary member for 26 years but has had a spotty attendance record as of late due to business commitments. Dave appreciates the opportunity to connect with old friends and to get acquainted with new members.

Dave came to Palo Alto to practice law with his good friend John Hanna in 1993. Since then he has enjoyed a busy and active practice in real estate law. Prior to coming to Palo Alto, Dave started his law career working for Boise Cascade as a real estate attorney. After Boise Cascade, Dave moved to law firms in Oakland and San Francisco. In those days, there was much interest in investment U.S. real estate from overseas, especially in Asia. Dave came to Palo Alto when a recession hit and the overseas practice diminished.



As a Palo Alto real estate attorney, Dave worked on a variety of projects such as Santa Row and Millennium Tower!

Dave entered real estate law at the suggestion of his law professor, Richard Powell, a hard nosed and demanding teacher. Dave has never regretted his decision.

Dave grew up in the East Bay community of Kensington where his father was a nuclear physicist at Lawrence Livermore Labs as the Associate Director. He had an idyllic youth and attended U.C. Berkeley

Dave joined Rotary soon after arriving in Palo Alto and has been very active in several nonprofit groups such as the International School, the Palo Alto Club and many other organizations. He and his wife JoAnn live in North Fair Oaks between Atherton and Redwood City. JoAnn and he enjoy overseas

travel. He also dabbles in watercolor painting and cycling.

Dave then provided an overview of local real estate market conditions which have been greatly impacted by the COVID 19 pandemic. The office market has collapsed and many commercial projects may not proceed due to underwriting uncertainties. Retail has fundamentally changed due to the pandemic and the growth of online retail. He is concerned that our region may have lost some of its luster.

Dave ended by expressing his gratitude to be able to reconnect with the Club and appreciates Rotary's good work in the community.

BRUCE SWENSON: Bruce's parents, both midwesterners, his mother from Oak Park Illinois and his father from Ottumwa Iowa a small largely Swedish town. His parents met at a small college in Mt. Vernon Iowa. They married shortly before WWII when Bruce was born. After the end of the war, Bruce was joined by 5 brothers and sisters.



After the war, the family moved to the Midpeninsula where his father attended Stanford on the G.I. Bill. At Stanford, his father studied at the School of Education as a PhD student. Bruce acquired his love of teaching and learning from his father devoting his career to education. Bruce's father was instrumental in the expansion of the community college system after the war. As a result, the family moved to Fullerton California. Bruce's formative years were spent in Orange County where he was a standout tennis player. Bruce also recalled

Orange County's beautiful beaches and surfing. Bruce was a Boy Scout and attained his Eagle Scout badge.

While in high school, Bruce was shocked to hear that his father would be moving the family to Santa Cruz where he was named the founding president of Cabrillo College. From there, Bruce attended Stanford as a math major. His time at Stanford included a semester in Florence Italy.

After graduating Stanford, Bruce attended University of Wisconsin as a graduate student in mathematics. He was able to get in touch with his midwest and Scandinavian roots and the role they played in that region.

Bruce met his future wife, Barbara, at the University of Wisconsin. It was love at first sight that developed into a 57 year marriage! Their family grew to include 2 daughters, 2 sons-in-law and 5 grandchildren.

Bruce spent his career in education, teaching math at Foothill College as a faculty member, Dean and Vice President. Bruce was also very active in real estate both locally and in North Carolina

Bruce retired in 1999 and has been traveling the world with Barbara visiting numerous countries. Bruce, an avid cyclist, biked cross country. Also in his retirement, he was elected to the Foothill/DeAnza board of trustees serving on the board for 13 years. He currently serves on the District's Foundation Board,

JACK WOODSON: Jack began with a joke that his long member talk could have really been a vocational one since he has had a multifaceted career. He also mentioned his talk today was inspired by a presentation he heard from Chris Bischoff, founder of East Side Prep to help him realize how grateful he is for the opportunities he has been afforded in life.

Jack's grandfathers hailed from Colorado where they were humble and hard working men providing for their families. The realities of the Great Depression meant they were not

able to attend college. Jack's family moved to California during the depression with the hopes of finding work. The family settled in San Mateo where Jack was born. The family moved frequently in order to improve the family's quality of life and education of their children.



Jack attended Carlmont High School and was awarded a scholarship to Stanford where he studied architecture. After attaining his

undergraduate degree, Jack spent the next 2 years on active duty with the Army Reserve and as a draftsman at a homebuilding company and marrying his wife Jolaine.

Jack returned to Stanford as a graduate student in architecture. Jack was offered a job with a local firm as a graduate student, avoiding the painful exercise of soliciting for a job. Jack became a licensed architect and became partner. His robust practice was home remodels and additions. Bob Brown, long time Palo Alto Rotary member and founder of Vance Brown Construction, asked Jack to design what was then a new building type, tilt-up buildings. This began a long and successful relationship with Vance Brown.

Building has always been economically volatile in Silicon Valley. At the onset of the recession of the early 1990's Jack began his next career as a building developer being involved with many subdivisions and new home development. The work proved to be exciting and satisfying, but as he approached his 65th birthday he began to consider retirement. This is when Jolaine suggested he join her in real estate sales. Jolaine was already a successful realtor. Consequently, Jack became her assistant and she became his boss. They continue to enjoy success in local

real estate but also manage to stay in touch with friends and family.

Jack ended by reflecting on the many opportunities he has had and how grateful he has been to be a member of our community.

RALPH ADAMS then joined the President's Club to honor Jack as a former client.

BRUCE GEE encouraged the Club to check out old Pinion's online to see the work of our many older members.

CLOSING REMARKS

At 1:30, President **REBECCA** closed our meeting with a reminder to be sure to be inside at Mitchell Park on March 15!

The more the merrier, always!

TODAY'S VOLUNTEERS

Greeters: **Leannah Hunt, Jackie Wheeler**

Welcome Desk: **Katie Seedman**

A/V: **Dana Tom**

Microphone: **Len Ely**

Pinion Writer: **Steve Emslie**

Pinion Editor: **Ginny Lear**

<p>March 15 5:30-8:00 pm Annual Dinner & Fundraiser Mitchell Park</p>	<p>Join Us for the annual crab and pasta fundraising dinner and auction at Mitchell Park. Tickets are \$125 per person Tables of 8 are available</p>
<p>March 17 12:15-1:30pm Club Meeting</p>	<p>Mark Garcia, Santa Clara County Sheriff's Lt., Retired <i>30 Years in Law Enforcement</i> <i>"My 5 Bad Days"</i></p>
<p>March 24 12:15-1:30pm Club Meeting</p>	<p>ANNA Eshoo, Member US Congress, Retired <i>Perspectives on Women's History in the Past 30 Years</i></p>
<p>March 31 12:15-1:30pm Club Meeting</p>	<p>Victor Tom, Chief Scientist at BAE Systems: How Rocket Science Made its Way into Major League Baseball and the Strike Zone</p>