

# Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

July 28, 2025

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UNITE  
FOR  
GOOD

Celebrating 103 years of Service

## UNITE FOR GOOD 2025-2026

President **BRUCE GEE** opened with a mutual greetings between our attendees and Zoomers. We had no visitors today.

President BRUCE reminded the club that its annual club dues season. There is no increase in dues which remain at \$425 per year.

Dues are payable by check, online or at the welcome desk, making it very easy to pay promptly. President BRUCE hoped that no further reminders will be necessary and will not have to send his enforcers to "encourage" stragglers to become current.



community as well as the world. Parents make sacrifices to ensure the success and happiness of their offspring, as does Rotary, contributing small and large positive changes in our world. Parents and Rotary strive to leave the world a better place much like a family.

## PRESIDENTS CLUB

**MATT DOLAN** joined the President's Club in recognition of his work with the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation and announced an upcoming golf tournament on September 8th at Cinnabar golf course in San Jose.

## ROTARY LIFE HACKS

President BRUCE reminded the club of last week's life hack to double loop shoe laces preventing unintended untying. This week two life hacks were offered: **BETSY BECHTEL** wanted the club to know about a clever app, *Merlin* which will identify bird calls you may hear.

**RICHARD KELLER** demonstrated opening packages of hearing aid batteries (notorious for being difficult) with diagonal cutters.

Be sure to let President BRUCE know ahead of time if you have a life hack to share but impromptu hacks will also be accepted from the floor.

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

**JUDY KLEINBERG** provided the club with a heartfelt sentiment connecting her son's 50th birthday today and Rotary's mission and four way test. While all of us may not be parents we all had parents and understand that parenting is the hardest job you will ever love. Parents nurture their children much the same as Rotarians support the local



Two rules: The hack can be explained in 30 seconds and will save you at least a minute, giving you a 200% payback.

## PROGRAM



**RALPH ADAMS** introduced today's speaker, **David Mariani**. Ralph recounted his first notice of our speaker today when he first arrived in the Bay Area and saw the large number of apricots drying along highway 101. Since David's family's successful

agricultural work, he has been involved with numerous ventures in the South Bay, real estate development, banking, finance and led multiple companies over the years. Today David is here to share the importance of beekeeping.

David is familiar with Rotary as a speaker and observed that clubs' announcements often run long and speakers are always asked to be brief. Today the club allowed extra time for his talk and the inevitable ensuing questions.

David began unwinding his real estate career in favor of an area much more meaningful, the precarious beekeeping industry. He first became aware of the perilous situation we are in due to the rapid decline in bee population world wide. Bees are responsible for 3 out of every 5 foods we consume; and as Albert Einstein observed honey bee extinction means our own demise as well.

Bees are the very apex of the food chain meaning that their importance is of utmost concern. In the 1950's a 10% decline in bee population was viewed as very serious. Subsequent decades have seen dramatic decreases in population with a 70% decline in 2025. Beekeepers and the beekeeping industry are largely responsible for helping to reverse this decline but the odds are not in their favor. In addition to the decline in bee population, the number of beekeepers has

also radically declined. Moreover, there is also rapid turnover for new beekeepers entering the workforce.

David turned his attention to solutions which will not come from government or academia. The population collapse has many causes, however the spread of a lethal mite from a remote part of China in the US is a significant contributing factor. The increase in fake honey in the market is also undercutting the price of legitimate honey making it economically infeasible for many honey producers. We all need to be a part of the solution to the bee problem.



David spoke of emerging programs that promote the spread of beehives which will increase the feral bee population which helps bee biodiversity making them more resilient to pathogens, One program is the Bee Bank which helps finance the cost of beekeeping infrastructure which can be significant. Another program is Hives for Heroes which provides beehives to veterans and first responders suffering from PTSD. The program has been proven to provide much needed support to those struggling with this disorder.

David concluded with the message that general awareness and action on all of our part will be required to reduce the dangerous decline in our much needed bee population.

Question and answers;

He responded to the question of fake honey and why labeling is not an effective means to thwart counterfeit honey. The fake honey

producers are very skilled at evading detection so its an ongoing battle.

One questioner asked if the club could possibly tour the Hives for Heroes at the Palo Alto VA. David agreed to look into the possibility and get back to us.

Another question asked about the impact of climate change on the bee decline. While its a factor, bees have been around millions of years and have adapted to many changes in the earth's climate.

One member asked David to elaborate on the root causes of the decline. While the mite is a significant reason, beekeeping practices are also responsible. Hive design is hundreds of years old and favors the beekeeper's convenience not the health of the bee. Also agricultural pollinating practices have favored massive importation of bees which promotes spread of pathogens when millions of bees are imported to farms and orchards from all over the country.

Another questioner asked how the feral bee population helps the beekeeping industry. Increase feral bees increase the biodiversity making the entire population more resilient and helps to offset the over medicating of industry bees who are routinely given antibiotics. Over medicating contributes to turning pathogens into superbugs who are resident to antibiotics.

Should we support our local honey producers? Yes this helps to increase the broader awareness of counterfeit honey on the market. Are other countries experiencing the same population collapse? The European Union has many more hives than the US which is due to better agricultural practices.

Can we better eliminate fake honey from the marketplace? The USDA is working to rid the market of fake honey but producers are very clever in evading detection.

What is the impact of pesticides on the bee crisis? Pesticides and genetically modified organisms contribute to the decline. Measures are deployed by beekeepers to

minimize impact of pesticides and GMO's but much more work needs to be done.

Are there better insecticides available? Not at the present time. The best approach is to separate bees for insecticides wherever possible.

David concluded questions by sharing the beekeeping program recently deployed at De Anza College and hoped that this would be replicated throughout the community college system.

The club also acknowledged our own member, **LEN ELY** who is an expert local beekeeper.

President BRUCE thanked our speaker, David Mariani, and presented him with a Rotary banner with the 4 Way Test.

#### MEETING

### MEETING ADJOURNED

**President BRUCE** closed the meeting at 1:30 with thanks to our members for attending..

### MEETING VOLUNTEERS

**Greeters: Judy Kleinberg, Rene Morgan**  
**Welcome Desk: Rebecca Gerald**  
**Hybrid Host: Ben Threlkeld**  
**Microphones: Matt Dolan**  
**Pinion Writer: Steve Emslie**  
**Pinion Editor: Ginny Lear**

### UPCOMING PROGRAMS

August 4 12:15-1:30pm Club Meeting	<b>Zareen Khan, author and restaurateur</b> , in conversation with our own Henrietta Burroughs
August 11 12:15-1:30pm Club Meeting	<b>Herb Ritter, District Governor, 5170</b> Topic: Plans for 2025-2026
August 18 12:15-1:30pm Club Meeting	<b>ERIC JENSEN, leads us in a Hands On, Sleeves Up Project</b>
August 25 12:15-1:30pm Club Meeting	<b>STEVE EMSLIE, presents 3 NEW MEMBER TALKS</b>

