

# Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

September 29, 2025  
Writer: Sally Tomlinson!

UNITE  
FOR  
GOOD

Celebrating 103 years of Service

## UNITE FOR GOOD 2025-2026A

President **BRUCE GEE** opened by thanking Past President **REBECCA GERALDI** for filling in for him last week on short notice.



**CHARLIE WEIDANZ** welcomed visiting Rotarian Chieko Nishino, visiting us again from the Osaka South East club. **DANA TOM** introduced return visitor Susan Huch, and we were also joined by Riaz Ali-Karamali, our speaker's husband.

Many thanks to **Terry and MIKE MCMAHON** for hosting the TGIF at their home. BRUCE noted it was well attended, and such a great success, that King Lear had to be dragged away when it was time to leave...so many interesting people!

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY



**BRUCE GEE** "forgot" to make sure there was someone to give the THOUGHT FOR THE DAY, so he seized the opportunity to do so, making this only his second such moment in his 16 years of

membership! Bruce chose to combine his thought with the Rotary Hack, by sharing with

us a book called "The Power of Nice." This slim book impressed Bruce with its examples of the many ways in which being nice pays big benefits. Being nice is a Rotary Hack! And he noted that it is good to share it with a room full of nice people!

If you want to be scheduled for a thought of the day, let **ERIC JENSEN** know.

## PRESIDENTS CLUB



There were many good reasons for people to join the President's Club today. **EJ HONG** joined in honor of our speaker Sumbul Ali-Karamali and her husband Riaz, who are her longtime friends.

**JACKIE WHEELER** joined in thanks to her

son, who invited her to Italy (at her own expense )to help celebrate his birthday. **RALPH ADAMS** joined to honor his wonderful wife who married him on September 10, fifty-nine years ago!

## BLUE BADGE CEREMONY

BRUCE invited **JACK CABANESS** to come to the podium to receive his blue badge. JACK'S badge was awarded last



week, and today it appeared.



**KANIKA SABHARWAL** received her blue badge after **LINNET KWOK** described all that Kanika had done to earn her new status. KANIKA was sponsored by **KATIE SEEDMAN**.

## PICKLE BALL 2.0 ON SATURDAY/SUNDAY

**LINNET** reminded us of the Pickle Ball tournament that will be this weekend at Mitchell Park. She hopes you can come by on Saturday between 2 and 3 pm, when there will be a cake cutting and BRUCE will give a short speech to celebrate our club's community connections. This is an opportunity to gain visibility for our club in the community.

## PROGRAM



**DANA TOM** introduced our speaker, **Sumbul Ali-Karamali**. Sumbul earned a BA from Stanford and a JD from Davis and a law degree in Islamic Law from the University of London School of Oriental and African Studies. She is author of "The Muslim Next Door," "Growing Up Muslim," and

"Demystifying Shari'ah." She writes and speaks to promote intercultural understanding in the world. She joined us to speak about "Understanding your Muslim Neighbors: Chai, Star Trek and Fasting for Ramadan."

Sumbul grew up in Long Beach where she was the only Muslim that people she encountered knew. She was the "alien species." Her mother

wore a sari, they drank chai tea instead of coffee, and although she didn't want to talk about religion, it kept coming up. Even through college, her dietary restrictions, need to pray during the day, fasting for Ramadan – all of this brought attention and questions. In recognition of the western public's need for accurate information, she began writing books.

**FOOD:** Many conversations about Islam are sparked around food. Muslims must eat halal food, but halal simply means "allowed". Foods that are not allowed include alcohol, pork, carrion, animals that eat carrion, and blood. Any meat must be killed as humanely as possible with a sharp knife to the throat, away from other animals, with a prayer, without torture, and the blood must be drained before cooking.

**ORIGIN OF ISLAM:** Islam started in the year 610 when Mohammad went into his meditation retreat. He heard a voice that he and those around him came to believe was the angel Gabriel. Mohammad's Christian friend said he must be a prophet. Mohammad thought of himself as preaching the religion of Abraham. He would preach what he heard the angel Gabriel telling him, and the Qur'an is the recording of those preachings. The Qur'an emphasizes the belief in one god; charity; mercy and compassion; the advancement of women; the environment; justice and society. The Qur'an is very pluralistic, saying that you don't have to be Muslim to go to heaven; intermarriage is allowed; God made you into different nations and tribes so you could learn from one another; forced conversion is never allowed.



## **FIVE PILLARS (tenets) of Islam;**

1. Statement of belief: "There is only one God, and Muhammad is the messenger of God."
2. Prayer 5 times a day
3. Fasting for Ramadan
4. Donation to charity – at least 2.5% of total wealth
5. Pilgrimage once in a lifetime if you are able

## **TWO Islamic HOLIDAYS:**

- Eid ul-Fitr is the holiday celebrating the end of Ramadan.
- Eid ul-Adha comes a few months later, and celebrates God sending down a lamb so that Abraham did not have to sacrifice his son.

**WOMEN:** Sumbul points to herself as evidence that Islam does not demand the oppression of women. In the 7<sup>th</sup> century, Mohammad and the Qur'an gave women more rights than British women would have for another 500 years. They could own and control property, inherit their father's estate, divorce, enter a contract in their own name, have custody of their children if they desired, and they had access to their husband's money. Around the world, Muslim populations have elected women as their leaders. Too often people compare American women to Muslim women who are in another (oppressive) country. Within the United States, Muslim American women are the second most highly educated group after Jewish women.

**JIHAD:** Jihad means "struggle" or "strive." There are two kinds of Jihad. Internal Jihad is the struggle to become a better person. External Jihad is the struggle to make society a better place by the word, by the hand (charity), by forbearance, or by the sword in self-defense or to overthrow oppression. Islam defines rules of engagement of a legitimate Jihad by the sword: there must be no killing of non-combatants; no killing of children or elderly, no poisoning the water supply, no committing suicide, and many other restrictions.

**SHARIAH** is the religious guideline of Islam, it does not impose those rules on non-Muslims.

In conclusion, Sumbul notes that there is an American/Western tradition of viewing Islam as the enemy, as it has also done with Judaism historically. She speaks and writes and works in the hope that one day we can turn that view of Islam into one of friendship.

**BRUCE** thanked our speaker and gave her Rotary International's Four-Way Test banner.

**Sumbul** appreciated it very much and had noticed the first line "IS IT THE TRUTH".



## **MEETING ADJOURNED**

President BRUCE thanked our members for their attendance and attention today. .

## **MEETING VOLUNTEERS**

**Greeters: Charlie Weidanz, Jackie Wheeler**

**Welcome Desk: Rebecca Gerald**

**Hybrid Host: Dana Tom**

**Pinion Writer: Sally Tomlinson**

**Pinion Editor: Ginny Lear**

**REMEMBER PICKLE BALL THIS SATURDAY, OCTOBER 4-5! MITCHELL PARK.** ABOUT 2-3 PM, THERE WILL BE CAKE!

## UPCOMING EVENTS & PROGRAMS

October 4-5 Mitchell Park, PA	<b>PA Rotary + PA Pickleball Club Tournament</b>
October 6 12:15-1:30pm Club Meeting	<b>3 New Members Talk: YUDY DENG, MIKE GULLARD, TIM MISNER</b>
October 13 12:15-1:30pm Club Meeting	<b>Marshall Burke, Associate Prof in the Doerr School of Sustainability</b> Topic: Climate Change, Is it Real and What to do about it.
October 20 12:15-1:30pm Club Meeting	<b>Bill Guttentag, Stanford GSB and film and TV writer-director</b> Topic: The Intersection of Art, Commerce, & Tech in Entertainment
October 27 12:15-1:30pm Club Meeting	<b>Bob Joss, The Philip H. Knight Professor and Dean, Emeritus, Stanford Business School</b> Topic: Leadership

**YOU'RE INVITED!**

# Cake Cutting and Community Celebration

**Saturday, Oct. 4 2:00-3:00 pm**

Mingle with Community Leaders  
Celebrate Pickleball in Palo Alto  
Support Local Charities  
Eat Cake

Picnic Tables beside Pickleball Courts 3 and 4  
Mitchell Park, 600E Meadow Dr, Palo Alto, CA



**Rotary**  
Club of Palo Alto

