

Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

November 4, 2025
Writer: Jack Cabaness

UNITE
FOR
GOOD

Celebrating 103 years of Service

UNITE FOR GOOD 2025-2026

REMEMBERING MATT DOLAN

PRESIDENT **BRUCE GEE** began the meeting by acknowledging the common sadness following the sudden, unexpected death of friend and fellow Rotarian **MATT DOLAN** on Friday evening, October 31. With **MATT**'s death being so recent, President **BRUCE** announced that Rotarians could have time to share their grief around **Matt**'s death and their thanksgivings for the gift of his remarkable life and all that he brought to Rotary.



PRESIDENT-ELECT **CHARLIE WEIDANZ** introduced **Mike Hoffman**, who was visiting from the Rotary Club of Foster City. Mike had been president of the Palo Alto Rotary Club in 1980-1981. He sat with his predecessor, our 1979-80 President **JACK**



WOODSON. **JOHN ST. CLAIR** introduced his wife Lydia Kou. **DANA TOM** introduced Judy Huey (**Le Levy**'s widow), who then introduced her guest Kwang Park.

PRESIDENT **BRUCE** introduced Past President **IRIS KOROL**, who welcomed **Matt**'s widow **Anne** and their adult children **Susan** and **Matt**, whose presence we all so appreciated.

IRIS said that **Matt** and **Anne** had come to Palo Alto from Kansas so that **Matt** could become the manager of the Hilton Homewood Suites. Under **Matt**'s leadership, the Homewood Suites quickly became a focal point for community



involvement and charitable giving. Iris shared how she and Matt had felt an immediate connection, which Matt's son Matthew explained by saying that both Iris and Matt were very direct and liked to "call it like it is." Nonetheless, Matt was very much a people person, with his natural affinity for people resonating well with his chosen vocation of providing hospitality. Iris shared how she and Matt had bonded around the illness and death of Matt's daughter Lizzy, a heart-breaking example of what Iris calls "life's ugly surprises."

Matt's Services

Family and friends are invited to celebrate Matthew's life with a Vigil Service this **Sunday, November 9** from 4:00-6:30pm at Spangler Mortuary, 799 Castro Street, Mountain View. Reciting of the Holy Rosary will take place at 6:30pm.

Matthew's Funeral Mass will be celebrated on Monday, **November 10 at 10:30am** at St. Nicholas Catholic Church, 473 Lincoln Avenue, Los Altos

Matt, Susan and I will take Matthew to Scotland and lay him to rest, next to Lizzy at the Garden of Eternity.

***Sending our love and gratitude,
Anne, Matt, and Susan***

These services are open to all Rotary members.

MEMBERS THINKING OF MATT DOLAN

PRESIDENT-ELECT **CHARLIE WEIDENZ** shared how he and Matt had both come to Palo Alto around the same time and had become colleagues and friends. He noted that Matt was an extremely charitable person and how Matt and Homewood Suites had been honored as the winners of 2022 Tall Tree Award for Outstanding Business, an acknowledgment of how Homewood Suites had become a conduit for community service. Finally, Charlie said that Matt was one to face even the hard things with positivity, and how Matt had been one of the nicest persons he had ever met.

ULLRICH SCHWERTSCHLAG shared how Matt had always been someone that he had wanted to get to know better and how Matt's early death was a poignant reminder of how we cannot simply assume that we will have unlimited time to get to know the people around us.

SOHEILA MOZAYAN shared how Matt would go out of his way to hire people with disabilities and did all he could to empower them. She said that Matt gave unconditionally and "never knew how to say no." Finally she shared how Matt taught those around him to be kind and how to be present in hard circumstances, as exemplified by his family's presence at today's Rotary meeting. "Life won't be the same without him, but his legacy will continue."

DARYL SAVAGE shared about Matt's support of law enforcement, and how Matt, while taking a class presented by the FBI, had formed an instant connection with an FBI Special Agent, with the two of them talking and swapping stories at length. At the conclusion the Special Agent shook hands with several of the participants but he hugged Matt.

SALLY TOMLINSON spoke of Matt's strong love for his family, his readiness to help Rotary, how he was immediately ready with a 'yes,' and his wonderful humor, which was often self-deprecating.

CASH ALAEE told how Matt had secured a housekeeping job for his cousin April, after she and her family had won the green card lottery and were able to emigrate from Iran to the United States. April's husband was also able to get a job, and today their young daughter is a student at Escondido Elementary. Cash was very visibly moved as he exclaimed how Matt's generosity had truly changed their lives!

DANA TOM said that whenever he hears the phrase "the heart of a Rotarian" he thinks of Matt. Dana recalled the email that Matt sent following the death of his daughter Lizzy in which Matt wrote, "even after thirty years of

knowing it was coming, I was inadequately prepared." For Dana this was one more example of how Matt "wore his heart on his sleeve, and he had the biggest heart." Finally, Dana spoke about the "Lizzy got wings" fundraiser that Matt had started for Lizzy, and Dana said "Now Matt has wings, too, and is reunited with Lizzy."



Matt's widow **Anne Dolan**, speaking directly to the Rotary Club members, said, "You were an extension of Matt's family, which made you extended family to me."

The Dolan family is providing a link on Caring Bridge

www.caringbridge.org, where you may share your thoughts and read those from others.

PRESIDENT BRUCE presented each of Matt's family members with a small banner listing Rotary's Four Way Test of principles.



President BRUCE then shared that Matt had been serving on the board as treasurer and had been asked to be the next Club President to follow Charlie, to which Matt replied "YES!"

Matthew Dolan (Matt's son) alluded to those who had said that his father "could never say no," and quipped that, in fact, his father was quite capable of saying no, and had done so recently.

Following Matt's Monday morning service, our regular Monday Rotary meeting at 12:15pm will go on as planned. Being late to our meeting is acceptable.

Please join us.
United for Good,
Bruce Gee, President 2025-2026

PROGRAM

JIM SUTHERLAND introduced the three people giving Long Term Member Talks.

LEN ELY, a nineteen-year member, shared how he had once visited Rotary without joining, but when STEVE EMSLIE later invited him to Rotary, Len joined that time and enthusiastically got his blue badge within a year. Len's favorite thing about Rotary has always been the hands-on projects, particularly serving dinners to the unhoused at We Hope. He also particularly enjoyed being in charge of the turkey for the Rotary Christmas Party. Finally, Len said that the best part of Rotary was "all the people."



MARK STEVENSON, a sixteen-year member of the Palo Alto Rotary Club, has actually been a Rotarian for 35+ years, and Palo Alto is his fifth club. He recalled how his father had also been a Rotarian and had "The Object of Rotary" on his office wall. Mark has moved around for work and education, and has had various adventures "in the wilds of nature" and "in the wilds of commerce" (mountain climbing, sailing, freight train jumping, river running, the financial crisis in



2008, and most recently the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank in 2022). These experiences all led to Mark completing his recent book *Adventure Mindset: 22 Principles for Growing and Thriving Amidst Chaos and Change*. Mark shared a quote from his book: "You know you're in an adventure when you wish you could be back home talking about it." Mark generously shared free copies of his book for those who wanted one.

E. J. HONG, an eighteen-year member of Palo Alto Rotary, began her long term member talk by saying that "she could remember everything that each person in the room had said to her." She gave an example near the end of her talk when she described how



she had once been nervous about running a meeting, and the late GEORGE WHEATON asked her, "Have you run a meeting?" E.J. replied "yes," and then George simply said, "Well, okay then." E. J. shared how she mostly remembers the kind words and kind actions. E. J. is an attorney who has worked as a civilian attorney for the Navy and in a boutique litigation firm, which she disliked, in no small part due to the 80 + hour work weeks. She was able to go back to doing legal work for the Navy, where she had the opportunity to work on the contracts for Marine One (the U.S. presidential helicopter), and she was able to walk through Marine One. E. J. shared about four prominent role models in her life. The first was her mother, who had survived the Korean War and was among the first Korean women to go to college. The second was a high school teacher named Anna who took on E. J. after E. J.'s mother died. The third was a judge who was a tough yet fair educator and who had a very strong work ethic. And the fourth has been Rotary "where role models are cultivated."

MEETING ADJOURNED

President **BRUCE** closed our meeting noting that today we witnessed the humanity of our club. Thank you all for your attendance and participation.

MEETING VOLUNTEERS

Greeters: Randa Hoffman, Jackie Wheeler
Welcome Desk: Rebecca Gerald
Hybrid Host: Dana Tom
Pinion Writer: Jack Cabaness
Pinion Editor: Ginny Lear

UPCOMING PROGRAMS & EVENTS

<p>November 7 TGIF. Join us any time between 5 pm and 7 pm.</p>	<p>TGIF at new Palo Alto Police Building on Birch Street Food snacks & water available. No alcohol beverages served Parking across the street in 300 block of Sherman Avenue.</p>
<p>November 10 12:15-1:30pm Club Meeting</p>	<p>Barb Mackraz, founder and ED of Oliveseed World Community Service</p>
<p>November 17 12:15-1:30pm Club Meeting</p>	<p>Judy Kramer, Nature Photographer "Winter in Alaska, Glaciers and Northern Lights"</p>
<p>November 24 12:15-1:30pm Club Meeting</p>	<p>Colin Schmidt and Bay Area Sports. Impact of Soccer: June/July 2026, World Cup matches in SF Bay Area</p>
<p>December 11th Club Holiday Party 5-7:30 pm SAVE THE DATE!</p>	<p>PATTY McGUIGAN'S Festive Holiday Home</p>