

# Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

November 10, 2025

Writer: Sally Tomlinson

UNITE  
FOR  
GOOD

*Celebrating 103 years of Service*

## UNITE FOR GOOD 2025-2026



President **BRUCE GEE** greeted all on Zoom and in the room, and invited **CHARLIE WEIDANZ** to welcome guests.

**AMY YANG** introduced her guest, Sam Deng, who grew up in Palo Alto and just graduated from

University College in London with a Master's degree in Democratic Institutions. He is currently exploring opportunities in public service.

**SALLY TOMLINSON** introduced Kate and Keith Melnick, who were visiting for the first time. They split their time between Connecticut and Palo Alto, and are looking to connect with the Palo Alto community and local service projects. Our speaker Barb Mackraz also had guests. She came with Sue Correll, Heidi Jackman, and Judy Kramer, who will be our speaker next week.

**GINNY LEAR** described the vigil and Rosary last night, and the memorial service this morning, for **MATT DOLAN**. We all know of Matt's love of Ireland and his pride in his Irish heritage. Ginny wondered why his daughter Lizzie had chosen the Isle of Skye (Scotland)

for her burial site, and it was because she fell in love with it on a trip. Matt will be buried beside her.

Gifts in memory of Matt will go to the **Palo Alto Rotary Endowment Fund**.

Palo Alto Rotarian, Mayor **ED LAUING** wrote that on Monday night he would adjourn the City Council meeting in honor of MATT "...a devoted husband, father, son, brother and impactful member of our community, whose leadership and kindness left a lasting legacy."

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY



In memory of **MATT DOLAN**, **ERIC JENSEN** shared the Irish blessing:  
"May the road rise to meet you. May the wind be always at your back. May the sun shine warm upon your face, the rains fall soft upon your fields, and until we meet again,

May God hold you in the palm of His hand."

## PRESIDENTS CLUB

**BRIAN STEEN** showed a picture of himself from 1973, looking trendy in his mop of hair and bell-bottom pants, standing with the Iowa State singers. In high school when he was

asked to join the choir, he thought he would prefer playing baseball, but then he saw all the girls in the choir and he decided to focus on choir! He has been singing ever since. He had pamphlets for the Bay Choral Guild on every table and encourages us to attend a performance. He reassured us that he will be in tuxedo and not bell-bottoms. The next performance is on November 22 and 23.

<https://www.baychoralguild.org>

**EJ HONG** wished Happy Birthday to **Peggy Stauffer**, who was watching on Zoom. EJ thanked Peggy for being kind and welcoming, and for making EJ's nervous daughter feel comfortable when singing for a Rotary party. EJ also thanked **ART STAUFFER** for talking so warmly to her at the first Rotary meeting she visited. He was always friendly and supportive, he coached and advised her during her presidency, and she asked him to critique her long-time member talk in advance of giving it last week. His criticism was that she did not adequately sing her own praises, nor did she reveal her true imperial self! Art then added his compliments for EJ, and after all these rounds of admiration, EJ joined the President's club 3-fold!

**ROB LANCEFIELD** removed the baseball cap that he wears for modesty in order to show us the impressive scar from his recent dermatological surgery. What was expected to be a minor lump removal developed into a massive excavation up his skull, but fortunately everything removed was outside the cranium and he still has his entire brain. Whew!

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Thanks to **ERIC JENSEN** for hosting the TGIF at the new Public Safety Building last Friday. Eric's creative catering skills were enjoyed as well!



**JULIE JEROME** announced that **STEVE PLAYER** has had a second surgery to repair a failed surgery on his hip. He is doing well recovering at the Vi. **JACK WOODSON** gave us all Steve's phone number so that everyone in the room could send him a text wishing him well. A flash mob of get well messages!

**ERIC JENSEN** announced that three service groups, our Palo Alto Rotary Club, the University Rotary Club, and the Palo Alto Kiwanis Club, will host a "Week of Thanks and Giving" through a progressive food drive collecting canned goods for the Downtown Food Closet. Please bring food to the November 17 meeting. Watch for an upcoming e-mail regarding what food items are needed.

Continuing the annual fundraising drive for The Rotary Foundation, **REBECCA GERALDI** gave an overview of the Foundation and thanked a list of names of those in our club who have already given. You can mail a check or donate online

<https://my.rotary.org/en/donate> . If you donate online, please let Rebecca know so that our club will get credit for your donation, to support our international projects.

**STANS KLEIJNEN** explained that our contributions to the Rotary Foundation has enabled our club to give grants to many projects: Namaste to empower 200 women in Guatemala; the Cuchubal match program for 36 women; water basins in two Guatemalan villages; bathrooms in Vietnam; migrant children in Thailand; and an eye hospital in India. And in our program today we will hear about Oliveseed and the work that our grant has supported with them.

## PROGRAM

**STANS KLEIJNEN** introduced our speaker, Barb Mackraz, who is the founder and Executive Director of Oliveseed, an organization that empowers youth, women, and communities



through literacy, education, water and sustainable livelihoods. Through our World Community Services grants program, our club has contributed small grants to Oliveseed for the past two years. They work in the Massai



region of Kenya and in rural Morocco. Our most recent grant was for sanitary kits for girls in Kenya to enable them to stay in school.

**Barb Mackraz** was inspired by seeing a very small school in

rural Morocco in 2013 and she thought, "I bet I could make a difference here." She chose to start with a library for a school on the Algerian border of Morocco. Teachers all over the country then came to her, asking for the same at their schools. She set up English (at the teachers' request) libraries all over Morocco. One of the students from a small desert community just graduated from UCLA film school last year. Her father had wanted her to get married at age 13. Now she is at Columbia.

Having established libraries in desert regions all over Morocco, Oliveseed now focuses on sponsoring a national short story competition.

In 2017 Oliveseed expanded to focus on the Massai community of Kenya. Their families live in mud huts without power and light. Literacy is 13% for men and even less for women. Girls are often forced to marry young. Oliveseed sets up libraries in schools in their region - one library was built with the support of our club. Oliveseed has even built a little library inside a village, which is a circle of mud huts. They installed solar lighting and the room is full of students on a dark evening.

In 2025, at the initiation of Barb Mackaz, we became a Sister City with Narok, Kenya.

According to Nelson Mandela, the greatest weapon for changing the world is education. Barb believes that one other weapon is women, so she has turned her focus to empowering Massai women. These women have to walk to collect water each day, so Oliveseed has built water towers to store water close to their villages. This gives them more time for other activities. Oliveseed built a Women's center where they can learn marketable skills. One project is making girls' hygiene kits. The women earn money, and almost all of them use the money to keep their kids in school.

Looking ahead: In Morocco, her involvement is now only with the writing competition. In Kenya, she hopes to expand the Women's work center so that it will be a self-sustaining enterprise. To make that possible, they want to add more solar for sewing machines and electric cycles for deliveries.

For more information about Oliveseed:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1YFtnkIxPKrwMWva8IRq4cf9GAobZv1IMqBMf4IOiN9s/edit?usp=sharing>

## MEETING ADJOURNED

President **BRUCE** thanked our speaker and our members.

## MEETING VOLUNTEERS

**Greeters: Nancy Peters, Kristina Lugo**  
**Welcome Desk: Rebecca Gerald**  
**Hybrid Host: Ben Threlkeld**  
**Pinion Writer: Sally Tomlinson**  
**Pinion Editor: Ginny Lear**

## UPCOMING PROGRAMS & EVENTS

<b>November 17</b> 12:15-1:30pm Club Meeting	<b>Judy Kramer, Nature Photographer</b> “Winter in Alaska, Glaciers and Northern Lights”
<b>November 24</b> 12:15-1:30pm Club Meeting	<b>Colin Schmidt and Bay Area Sports.</b> Impact of Soccer: June/July 2026, World Cup matches in SF Bay Area
<b>December 1</b> 12:15-1:30pm Club Meeting	<b>Gunn HS Choir Program</b> Our Annual Treat!
<b>December 8</b> 12:15-1:30pm Club Meeting	<b>Long-Term Members Talk</b> <b>Jon Stoumen, Jim Sutherland</b> <b>Mike Baird</b>
<b>December 15</b> 12:15-1:30pm Club Meeting	<b>Palo Alto Public Safety Professionals</b> Keeping the public safe during the Holidays

