

# Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

January 5, 2026  
Writer: Jack Cabaness

UNITE  
FOR  
GOOD

Celebrating 104 years of Service

## UNITE FOR GOOD 2025-2026

### PRESIDENT BRUCE GEE

begin with greetings for the new year, and pondered whether "Happy New Year!" or "Happy New Year's" was the correct greeting. (In the opinion of this Pinion writer, "Happy New Year" refers to the new year in its entirety, while "Happy New Year's"—possessive, not plural-- is a wish for a happy New Year's Day celebration.)



President Bruce next had the Roomers and Zoomers exchange greetings, and then he introduced his guest Garry Lim who has now applied for membership, and our frequent visiting Rotarian Sophie Tsang, who has also applied to move her membership from the Palo Alto University Rotary Club. Welcome!

## THOUGHT OF THE DAY

**RANDA HOFFMAN** noted that it's easy to speak words of love to those we are in harmony with, but it is those that you are at odds with who need to hear words of love the most. This is one of several insights that can be gleaned from Catherine Ponder's book *The Dynamic Laws of Prosperity*, which includes reflections on the "dynamic laws" of health, love, success, and peace. In her Thought for the Day, Randa focused on insights about love. For example, one might say "Good Day"

to a cashier as a way of expressing unconditional, impersonal love. She cited a personal example of scowling at a driver who entered the doggie day care parking lot driving way too fast. Initially, Randa scowled at the driver in frustration, but she regretted the scowl and said, "that's okay." There are other simple expressions of impersonal love, such as saying, "I hope you have the strength to get through it" to someone who's having a hard time," or, even better: "I hope there's a good outcome." President Bruce thanked Randa for her Thought of the Day, noting that he imagined that even her scowl was a "scowl of love."



## PRESIDENTS CLUB

**LIZ KNISS** gave in honor of **KATHY TORGERSEN**, noting that KATHY is an example of someone who is "political in the right ways" and who is stepping up and making a big difference for many people. KATHY will bring our next speaker, Olga Shpak, Executive Director of Assist Ukraine.

KATHY will help to host events here for Olga as she shares her first hand accounts of conditions at the front in Ukraine.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**RANDA HOFFMAN** gave a Climate Action Committee Update, inviting interested club members to attend the Los Altos Rotary Climate Summit on January 10, 2026 from 12 – 4 p.m. She also mentioned the battery recycling project and future hands-on projects such as planting trees or battery recycling. The committee will also be getting in touch with those who filled out last month's survey about their interest in helping with or learning more about the Climate Action Committee.

**PRESIDENT BRUCE** made an announcement about the Rotary District 5170 Mid-Year Leadership meeting on Saturday, January 31 from 9 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. at the Downtown Fremont Event Center, which will include a chance to meet the Rotary International President Nominee (RIPN) Larry Lunsford. There's a \$35 cost for attending the event. Check with BRUCE about carpooling.

## AI ROTARY HACKS

PRESIDENT BRUCE shared some examples of how he had recently used Artificial Intelligence (AI). First, he used AI to create images of his grandson in a Santa suit carrying bags of toys. He then asked AI to create a series of graphics for a taste test game in which people would taste test different types of cheeses, different flavors of Lay's potato chips, and different flavors of La Croix. Then, BRUCE asked AI to do a head-to-head comparison of three different bids on a construction project and show what they include or don't include. Finally, BRUCE asked AI to create an infographic on the fight against polio, including the role played by Rotary International.

Next week, **JACKIE WHEELER** offered to show how she uses AI.

## PROGRAM

**SALLY TOMLINSON** introduced **SAMANTHA ENGELAGE**, the Project Manager of Palo Alto's Horizontal Levee Project.



**Samantha** presented fascinating details about how horizontal levees use nature to shape and protect the environment, and she shared specific updates about the current Palo Alto project. She contrasted horizontal levees with traditional levees. A traditional levee is an abrupt break between water and land, using boulders, bricks, and other greyscape (which she called "rip rap") to create a vertical or sharp incline barrier between land and flood-prone waters. In contrast, a horizontal levee is a gently sloping, vegetated berm that is on the water-side of a flood control levee, irrigated with treated wastewater. She detailed the advantages of horizontal levees, including wave attenuation (gradual loss of a water wave's intensity as its energy is absorbed by the horizontal levee); sediment accretion and accumulation; and protecting vulnerable animals, such as the salt marsh harvest mouse. In a traditional levee, with an open break between the levee and marsh grasses, a mouse would have to cross the open areas and would be vulnerable to predation by hawks. But in a horizontal levee, the mouse can migrate within the gentle, sloping marsh and be much less vulnerable to predators.



## MEETING ADJOURNED

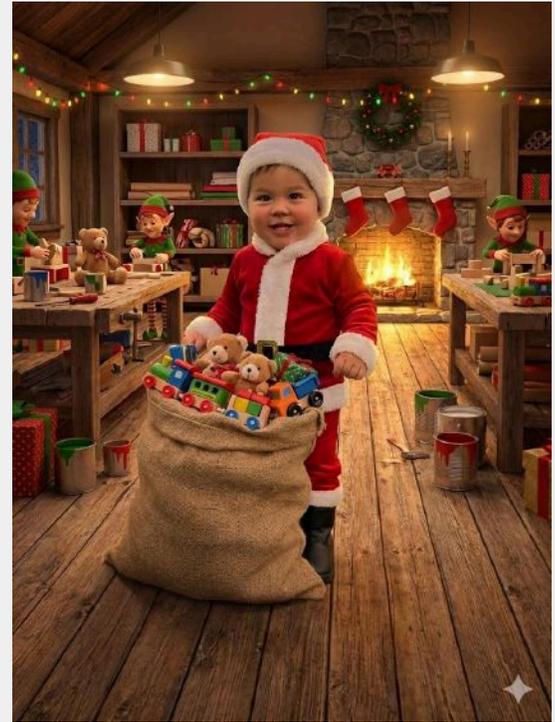
President **BRUCE** closed the meeting at 1:30 with appreciation for our speaker, giving her our new club banner, featuring the Palo Alto Baylands which are right outside our window..

## MEETING VOLUNTEERS

**Welcome Desk: Rebecca Gernaldi**  
**Hybrid Host: Dana Tom**  
**Pinion Writer: Jack Cabaness**  
**Pinion Editor: Ginny Lear**

## UPCOMING PROGRAMS & EVENTS

<b>January 12</b> 12:15 - 1:30 PM Club Meeting	<b>Dr. Olga Shpak,</b> <b>Executive Director of</b> <b>Assist Ukraine in</b> <b>Kharkiv:</b> Dispatches from the Ukrainian Front
<b>January 19</b> 12:15 - 1:30 PM Club Meeting	<b>ERIC JENSEN, Hands On,</b> <b>Sleeves Up! At Meeting.</b> Building Hygiene Kits for Samaritan House
<b>January 26</b> 12:15 - 1:30 PM Club Meeting	<b>DUANE KALAR:</b> The California Water System
<b>February 2</b> 12:15 - 1:30 PM Club Meeting	<b>Rachelle Campbell,</b> <b>Program Director,</b> <b>Radiologic Technology,</b> <b>Foothill College:</b> Topic: The Foothill Program and Our Vocational Scholarships



## AI examples at work

# THE FIGHT AGAINST POLIO: A HISTORIC JOURNEY & ROTARY'S IMPACT

THE TERROR ERA (Pre-1950s)	THE BREAKTHROUGHS (1950s-60s)	ROTARY'S CATALYST ROLE (1979-1988)	THE GLOBAL FIGHT (1988-Present)	CURRENT LANDSCAPE (As of 2026)
<p>Epidemics &amp; Fear. 57,000+ cases in 1952 US peak. 'Iron Lungs' for paralyzed breathing.</p>	<p>1955: Salk IPV (Injection) 1961: Sabin OPV (Oral Drops)</p>	<p>1979: PHILIPPINES PILOT</p> <p>6 Million Children Immunized. Proof of concept.</p> <p>1985: PolioPlus LAUNCH</p> <p>Fundraising thermometer: \$120M Goal (Raised \$240M+)</p> <p>First global private initiative.</p> <p>1988: GPEI FORMATION</p> <p>Global Polio Eradication Initiative spearheaded.</p>	<p>BOOTS ON THE GROUND</p> <p>Millions of volunteers. Reaching the unreachable.</p> <p>ADVOCACY &amp; FUNDING</p> <p>Securing \$10B+ from governments.</p> <p>THE 'PLUS' IN PolioPlus</p> <p>Beyond drops: clean water, health infrastructure, trust.</p>	<p>350,000 Cases/Year (1988)</p> <p>Today: ~99.9% Reduction</p> <p>WILD POLIO ENDEMIC (Type 1 only)</p> <p>20 MILLION SAVED from Paralysis</p> <p><b>THE LAST MILE REMAINS:</b> Tackling vaccine-derived strains and conflict zones.</p>