

Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

January 12, 2026
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UNITE
FOR
GOOD

Celebrating 104 years of Service

UNITE FOR GOOD 2025-2026



With a smile and a nod, **PRESIDENT BRUCE GEE**, opened the Rotary Club meeting at 12:30PM and invited **PRESIDENT ELECT CHARLIE WEIDANZ** to welcome guests.

ROGER SMITH brought Peter Xu,

Yes to joy, even when despair is just around the corner. Yes to the good is like a rebellious defiance against the part of us that would rather stay in bed under the covers. Not pretending everything is perfect but choosing to keep watch for the good and saying YES to it.



ANNE CRIBBS introduced Theodore Timpson, Head of School at Tru School, **LEE LIPPERT** welcomed his wife of 42+ years, Carol, **DAVE SMULLIN** introduced his wife, Sharon, and **PRESIDENT BRUCE** announced his guest, Garry Lim, is very close to submitting a member application.



PRESIDENTS CLUB

BETSY BECHTEL joined the President's Club in honor of **TODD LEWIS** and his wife Megan who hosted a gathering at their house to celebrate art, related to a trip several Rotarians enjoyed last year.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SAVE THE DATE: Annual Fundraiser Dinner Saturday **April 18th** at Mitchell Park Community Center

SALLY TOMLINSON is looking for donations to the annual fundraiser silent auction benefiting our local non-profits. If you have a skill or connection, consider adding it to the menu of choices for the auction. Can you make a Susan's Downfall like the chefs at Café Pro Bono? Can you change a light switch or teach Salsa dancing? Can you arrange a tour of the Rivian plant? Consider using your strengths for good and give SALLY an email: sallytomlinson936@gmail.com

SAVE THIS DATE, TOO! March 5th at 6pm. **Chinese New Year Dinner at Chef Chu's**

THOUGHT OF THE DAY

Pastor **JACK CABANESS** who shared the "secret to life". [Kate Bowler](#) says the secret is not productivity or balance. It's YES! Yes to love even when it could end in heartbreak.

was announced by **GLORIA HOM**. \$100 per person. GLORIA will have details to register soon. Up to 100 guests – minimum 80. Sign up early and often. Invite your friends!

Backpack build at next Monday’s meeting for Martin Luther King Service Day. They will be delivered to WeHope after.

AI ROTARY HACKS

PRESIDENT BRUCE invited **HENRIETTA BURROUGHS** up to present on the new segment titled Rotary & A.I.

HENRIETTA uses AI both professionally and personally.

While she adeptly writes content for her profession as a journalist and editor, she does run it through an AI

platform to seek feedback and help with images. She also recently used it to put together a vegetarian Christmas meal. (Mushroom Wellington sounds delicious!) Finally, she used it to kickstart an exercise routine to improve balance, strength, and mobility. Look out Arnold!



recounted, “Putin invaded Ukraine,” and she knew she had to face the new reality. Assist Ukraine is a US-based non-profit dedicated to delivering critical supplies directly to Ukrainian soldiers on the front lines. Their humanitarian mission focuses on providing essentials such as generators, medicine, sleeping bags, and warm clothing—often on very short notice.



PROGRAM

KATHY TORGERSEN introduced [Dr. Olga Shpak](#), Executive Director at [Assist Ukraine](#). Dr. Shpak is a former scientist at the Russian Academy of Sciences. Before Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, she felt a strong calling to defend her

homeland. She quickly packed her bags and left Moscow; just two days later, as Dr. Shpak



The organization maintains a fleet of vehicles used for a wide range of transportation needs: moving soldiers to and from the front, transporting the wounded and medical supplies, and even returning the deceased to their families.

Dr. Shpak shared that during the early weeks of the invasion, she realized her background as a field scientist could be invaluable to those defending Ukraine. Assist Ukraine operates as a formal organization, but their approach is hands-on and direct. Rather than working through official military channels, they deliver aid straight to the soldiers themselves. This streamlined method ensures troops receive what they need quickly and safely, minimizing additional risk to their lives. Dr. Shpak emphasized that this support is critical not

only for survival but also for maintaining morale and mental health. She expressed heartfelt gratitude to the Rotary Club for their support, especially in supplying power stations and power banks. These resources are vital, she explained, as they enable soldiers to stay connected with their units—helping to prevent isolation, which can be as dangerous as enemy fire. Dr. Shpak noted that the war combines both traditional trench warfare designed to evade drones and modern tactics such as the use of reconnaissance drones. She concluded her remarks by inviting questions from the audience.

Audience Q&A

Q: How does the supply chain work—from contribution to the front line?

A: Assist Ukraine is a registered 501(c)(3) organization based in Alaska. Donations are received in the US, then transferred to a charity fund in Europe. From there, Dr. Shpak and her team receive and distribute the resources directly to where they are most needed.

Q: How close is the front line?

A: Kharkiv, where Dr. Shpak is based, was originally on the front line and is about 30 km (19 miles) from the Russian border. Today, the area between Kharkiv and Russia has become a highly militarized "kill zone," making any movement or activity extremely dangerous.

Q: How do you obtain fuel?

A: Despite the ongoing conflict, Kharkiv remains "open for business." Residents have adapted to the threat: when air raid sirens sound, daily life continues until the telltale noise of larger, bomb-carrying drones signals the need to seek shelter underground.

Q: What is happening to the children?

A: Many children have left the area, but those who remain face a disrupted education. Schools have been relocated underground for safety, but limited capacity means students must attend in staggered shifts—often only two days a week, a stark contrast to their peers in more peaceful regions.

MEETING ADJOURNED

President BRUCE closed the meeting at 1:30 with appreciation for our speaker. Some members stayed back to chat with Dr. Shpak. Another great meeting!

MEETING VOLUNTEERS

- Greeters: Leannah Hunt, Tim Misner**
- Welcome Desk: Rebecca Gerald**
- Hybrid Host: Dana Tom**
- Microphone: Mike Baird**
- Pinion Writer: Eric Jensen**
- Pinion Editor: Ginny Lear**

UPCOMING PROGRAMS & EVENTS

<p>January 19 12:15 - 1:30 PM Club Meeting</p>	<p>ERIC JENSEN, Hands On, Sleeves Up! At Meeting. Building Hygiene Kits for Samaritan House</p>
<p>January 26 12:15 - 1:30 PM Club Meeting</p>	<p>DUANE KALAR: The California Water System</p>
<p>February 2 12:15 - 1:30 PM Club Meeting</p>	<p>Rachelle Campbell, Program Director, Radiologic Technology, Foothill College: Topic: The Foothill Program and Our Vocational Scholarships</p>
<p>February 9 12:15 - 1:30 PM Club Meeting</p>	<p>Brian Fletcher, Stanford Law School Professor The Supreme Court's Emergency Docket</p>
<p>February 16 NO MEETING</p>	<p>NO MEETING, DARK PRESIDENT'S DAY</p>