

Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

February 9, 2026
Writer: Hal Mickelson

UNITE
FOR
GOOD

Celebrating 104 years of Service

UNITE FOR GOOD 2025-2026

The Monday luncheon meeting of the Rotary Club of Palo Alto was called to order by President **BRUCE GEE** promptly at 12:30 pm on February 9, 2026, with welcoming words to loyal members who participated by Zoom and to a roomful of Rotarians who attended in person....

BRUCE asked President-Elect **CHARLIE WEIDANZ** to lead the introduction of visitors and guests: Rotarian Dr. P. K. Choudhary joined us from the Rotary Club of Gauhati-West in India and former Rotarian Ajit Agrawal from the Rotary Club of Bangalore South.... Bob Sutis was the guest of **HAL MICKELSON**, Ken Kershner and Jennie Savage were the guests of BRUCE GEE, and Andres Calzada was the guest of **KANIKA SABHARWAL**.... Dr. Choudhary exchanged



club flags with President Bruce and presented BRUCE with a brilliantly embellished red-on-white stole bearing the name of the Gauhati club.



THOUGHT OF THE DAY

As a Thought for the Day, **ULLRICH SCHWERTSCHLAG** reflected on the "Basic Laws of Human Stupidity": Inevitably, we underestimate the number of stupid individuals in circulation. The probability that a certain person is stupid is independent of any other characteristics of that person. Non-stupid people constantly forget that at all times, in all places, dealing with a stupid person invariably turns out to be a costly mistake

PRESIDENTS CLUB

GINNY LEAR joined the President's Club to mark the passing of **Dick Henning**, an all-time great Rotarian as measured by his long service, the effectiveness of his leadership and the vast number of his friendships. He earned his degrees at San Jose State, Santa Clara University and USC. He began as an English teacher, debate adviser and swim coach at Sunnyvale High School; eventually, he became a vice president at Foothill College, serving Foothill until his retirement in 1997. Dick may have been best known as the founder, in 1968, of the Foothill College Celebrity Forum, where reportedly he helped Joe Biden tune up his performance between Biden's first and second nights on the podium. Within Rotary, Dick co-founded Camp RYLA, the District Speech Contest, and the PETS training program for incoming Presidents; he generously provided countless Forum tickets



for our charity auctions. He was able to attend a meeting of Los Altos Rotary where he was a member for 58 years, a week before his death. He will be missed.

RED AND BLUE BADGE RECOGNITIONS

LINNET KWOK inducted new Red Badge member **SOPHIE TSANG**, and presented a Blue Badge to **TIM MISNER**. LINNET told SOPHIE, "We know you to be a leader, and our principles will be safe in your keeping..." And



she told TIM, after reviewing his steps to earn the Blue Badge, "We congratulate you for your commitment and engagement."



CHINESE NEW YEAR DINNER MARCH 5th

Tickets are now on sale on our website for our **Chinese New Year Banquet at Chef Chu's** Thursday evening, March 5, 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. GLORIA HOM and GREG HOOD are organizing it. Friends welcome! [Reserve your spot here.](#)

"CRABSOLUTELY!" ANNUAL FUNDRAISER

BRUCE noted that the annual Rotary fundraiser will be **April 18th at Mitchell Park**. Silent Auction items are requested by **SALLY TOMLINSON**.

Details to follow, Save the Date!

A live auction item there will be a [cruise by luxury yacht highlighting the UNESCO Treasures of Ancient Greece, circumnavigating the Peloponnese, September 17-26, 2026.](#)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

President Bruce noted that our club's Climate Committee is planning to join Canopy for a tree planting project in Mountain View from 9:00 a.m. to noon on Saturday, February 14; please contact **Randa Hoffman** for the location and other details. Sign [up here](#).

We'll be dark next Monday, February 16, in observance of George Birthington's Washday

PROGRAM

Brian Fletcher, was introduced by DANA TOM.

Brian graduated magna cum laude from Yale College and summa cum laude from Harvard Law School, where he was president of the law review; he then clerked for Judge Merrick Garland and Justice Ruth Bader



Ginsburg. In government, Brian has been Associate Counsel to the President, Counsel to the Attorney General, and Special Counsel to the FTC; he practiced for several years in appellate and Supreme Court litigation with Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr. He was Principal Deputy Solicitor General from 2021 to 2025. At Stanford, he has been Co-Director of the Supreme Court Litigation Clinic and is now Edwin Heafy, Jr., Visiting Professor of Law.

Brian began by observing that it has become common for the Supreme Court to deal with high-profile Presidential policies on its “emergency docket,” sometimes called the “shadow docket.” As background, most of the Court’s other work is its “merits docket,” about 60 cases per term that move through a “very deliberate process” that often takes several years. Most have been briefed and argued before two lower levels of courts; those courts have ruled on them with written decisions; and at the Supreme Court, they are fully briefed and argued orally before all nine Justices.

In contrast, a case on the “emergency docket” skips most of these steps because someone or something can’t wait for the normal process. Traditionally, 90% of the docket comprised death penalty cases. Emergency docket cases are handled less formally, with less transparency; they’re briefed in just days or just hours; there’s no oral argument and there are no written opinions, merely an announcement that an application is granted or denied.

Prior to the first Trump administration, the government sought relief on the emergency docket just eight times over 16 years. However, there were 41 applications for emergency docket relief in the first Trump term, 19 in the Biden administration, and 33 so far in Trump’s second term. The first Trump administration had an 80% success rate in these cases, the Biden administration 56% success, and the current Trump team 81%.

In many cases, lower courts are blocking Administration actions but the Supreme Court via the emergency docket is holding back the lower court orders until the cases have been fully litigated. Critics observe that the Court is deciding many critical issues without regular briefing or oral argument; they complain that the Court is often providing the relief sought by the Trump administration without actually resolving the question of whether the conduct at issue is legal or illegal.

At right: photo of stole given to BRUCE today

MEETING ADJOURNED

President BRUCE closed the meeting, thanking our speaker as well as today’s club volunteers. **See you all in TWO Weeks!**

MEETING VOLUNTEERS

Greeter: Dave Smullin, Eric Jensen
Welcome Desk: Rebecca Gerald
Hybrid Host: Ben Threlkeld
Pinion Writer: Hal Mickelson
Pinion Editor: Ginny Lear

UPCOMING PROGRAMS & EVENTS

February 16 NO Club Meeting	PRESIDENTS DAY NO MEETING
February 23 12:15 - 1:30 PM Club Meeting	Matt Sharp Chaney, Wildlife Ecologist, MSROD Topic: Bay Area Bats Demystified
March 2 12:15 - 1:30 PM Club Meeting	Hon. Yong-ho Tae Topic: North Korea
March 9 & 16 12:15 - 1:30 PM Club Meeting	Details Coming Soon!
March 23 12:15 - 1:30 PM Club Meeting	Jon Osaki, filmmaker and ED of JCYC Topic: Alternative Facts: The Lies of Executive Order 9066

