

Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

May 11, 2026
Writer: Sally Tomlinson

UNITE
FOR
GOOD

Celebrating 104 years of Service

UNITE FOR GOOD 2025-2026

BRUCE GEE called the meeting to order at 12:30 after the roomers and zoomers said hello to each other.

CHARLIE WEIDANZ introduced his daughter, Christiana, and Nancy Coupal from Coupa Café. **STEVE**

EMSLIE introduced his guest and former employer, Frank Benest. **JAKE YOO** introduced Robyn Reiss, who used to work at Stanford and CS Warriors. She's a huge sports fan and throws the best Palo Alto Halloween potluck and party. **KRISTINA LUGO** brought Maureen Breen, the Avenidas CFO who was Andrew Luck's Resident Fellow. Big hugs to Maureen from Andrew! **CHARLIE** welcomed Sunny Dykwel.



Dick's main theme was Rotary's Service Above Self. There are many ways to do this, especially with all of the nonprofits. Hands On service speaks most to him. DICK referred to our late member Le Levy's many contributions for hands on service. He recalls hands-on support at Eastside Prep. Dick has started a group at The Forum in Cupertino that is also hands-on, bringing the spirit of Rotary wherever he goes, prioritizing Service Above Self in all he does.

PRESIDENTS CLUB

BRUCE started by announcing the birth of his granddaughter. **BRUCE SWENSON** in honor of **ART STAUFFER's** donation to the PAR Endowment Fund. ART summarized his many contributions both during his presidency and during international trips. **JACKIE WHEELER** joined in honor of **KATHY TORGENSEN's** Lifetimes of Achievement award.

ANNOUNCEMENTS and DEBUNKING

BRUCE announced the passing of former long-time member Laurie Liston.



REBECCA GERALDI asked that we all sign up for **BRUCE GEE's Debunking**, June 29th. \$100 per person at Michael's at Shoreline Restaurant. You can [sign up here](#). Or at the meetings in June. **NOT TO BE MISSED!**

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

DICK MANSFIELD gave the Thought of the Day. BRUCE reminded us about Dick's many contributions to the club throughout his many years.



Epic Day of Service. On behalf of Rotarians who participated, **ERIC JENSEN, GINNY LEAR** and soon to be member Sunny Dykwel,

Sunny told how special the day was and that it brought together a community of volunteers



through the 125 Rotarians and West Valley College students. Guided by Rise Against Hunger, nearly 30,000 meals of healthy grains were put together, in one morning. They would be shipped to SouthEast Asia out of the Port of Oakland.

PALO ALTO ROTARY ENDOWMENT FUND

Tim Watson announced the final push for the Endowment Fund. He shared a cute dad joke that the soccer girls needed to snap them out and cheer them up to beat the Palo Alto Club 2-1! Thank you for your contributions. Tim reminds the Club about Planned Giving gifts as well. The Endowment supports over \$60K in grant funds every year

PROGRAM

RENE MORGAN introduced **Andrew Luck**, General Manager of the Stanford Football program. A retired professional football player, RENE shared highlights of his history with Stanford and his celebrated return to "the Farm" last year. She noted the excitement surrounding his return and the leadership role he has taken in helping guide the future of Stanford Football.



Andrew began with humor, jokingly inviting any Cal graduates in attendance to leave if they wished, immediately setting a warm and conversational tone. He then reflected on his deep personal connection to Palo Alto and Stanford, sharing stories about his family and noting that he met his wife at Stanford and now feels fortunate that their children are growing up in the community. He described Stanford as one of the best universities in the world and shared that his own goal has always been to pursue excellence both academically and athletically.

Andrew spoke passionately about rebuilding Stanford Football and creating an environment where student athletes are surrounded by exceptional coaches, mentors, and leadership. He emphasized that Stanford's uniqueness has always been its ability to combine elite academics with highly competitive athletics, and that restoring that identity is central to the future of the program.



He shared pride in key wins this past season, particularly victories over Cal and Florida State, noting that reclaiming "The Axe" carried special significance. Only one player currently in the locker room, he explained, had previously experienced holding the Axe before this season. He framed these wins as important first steps in rebuilding the culture, pride, and confidence of the program. Throughout his remarks, Andrew took a thoughtful and somewhat meandering approach, weaving together personal stories, leadership lessons, and the rapidly changing landscape of college athletics. He discussed the realities of recruiting in today's environment, including the transfer portal, the elimination of the former rule requiring transfer athletes to sit out for a year, and the

growing impact of NIL (Name, Image, and Likeness) compensation opportunities. He acknowledged the increasing financial complexity and competitiveness of college athletics, noting that universities now operate in ways that resemble salary-cap systems for athlete compensation.

Andrew candidly shared that Stanford was slower than some institutions to adapt to NIL and related changes, but emphasized that the university is now working to become more proactive, creative, and collaborative in its approach. He also noted the challenges that accompanied the transition period, including the loss of more than 25 players through the transfer portal, which impacted continuity and team culture. Despite these shifts, he stressed that high school recruiting will continue to be the lifeblood of Stanford Football and remains central to building a sustainable and values-driven program for the future.

Andrew also reflected on the deeper purpose and culture he hopes to rebuild within the program. He spoke about the importance of “service over self” and believing in something larger than oneself, acknowledging that football is not only physically demanding but emotionally and spiritually challenging as well. He described football as a “collision sport” that tests athletes physically, mentally, and emotionally.

While Stanford finished the season 4–8, Andrew emphasized that all four wins came at home and that there was a noticeable shift in energy and spirit at Stanford Stadium over the course of the year. He acknowledged that the ultimate goal is winning, but expressed optimism that the program is moving in the right direction and steadily rebuilding toward future success.

CLOSING

BRUCE closed the meeting thanking Andrew Luck and gifting him with a Rotary Four-Way Test banner.



MEETING VOLUNTEERS

Greeters: Sophie Tsang, Bruce Swenson
Welcome Desk: Rebecca Gerald
Hybrid Host: Ben Threlkeld
Pinion Writer: Kristina Lugo
Pinion Editor: Ginny Lea

UPCOMING PROGRAMS & EVENTS

May 25 NO CLUB MEETING	Memorial Day observed No Club Meeting
May 25 U.S. FLAGS ON UNIVERSITY AVE. PROJECT	Memorial Day of Service Flags up at 8 a.m Flags down at 5 p.m.
June 1 12:15 - 1:30 PM Club Meeting	Theo Baker, Senior at Stanford, Journalist and Author of <i>How to Rule the World: An Education in Power at Stanford University</i>
June 8 12:15 - 1:30 PM Club Meeting	Adam Dawes, retiring CEO, Embarcadero Media Topic: Local Journalism: Restoring Stability to Embarcadero Media
June 15 12:15 - 1:30 PM Club Meeting	Mark Clifford, President, Committee for Freedom in Hong Kong Foundation Topic: <i>Jimmy Lai and the End of Hong Kong Freedom</i>

June 22 12:15 - 1:30 PM Club Meeting	Jim Bender, Author Topic: Boats Building Bridges: Connecting Cultures Through Craft and the Sea
June 29 President Bruce's Debunking 5:30-7:30 pm NO lunch Meeting	Michaels @ Shoreline Restaurant SIGN UP NOW! Online or at a meeting in June \$75 per person