

Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

June 1, 2026

Writer: Randa Hoffman

UNITE
FOR
GOOD

Celebrating 104 years of Service

UNITE FOR GOOD 2025-2026

BRUCE GEE called the meeting to order to a full house — a terrific in-person crowd plus a lively contingent in Zoom land. With a parade of guests on hand, he handed the microphone to **CHARLIE WEIDANZ**, who introduced our visitors: Nancy Player, Christiana Weidanz, Sheryl Klein, Justin Wang, John Swensson, Ha Nguyen, Ted Boscov, and Nancy Coupal. Along with a delightful lineup of young guests: Julian Hong, a former high school student body president just wrapping up his first year at Harvard; Jack Hamilton, headed to Washington University in St. Louis; and Jack Lize, grandson of **PATTY MCGUIGAN**.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY



With graduation season upon us, and as the mom of a soon-to-be eighth-grade graduate, **ELIZABETH SANTANA** got us thinking about commencement speeches. She skipped her own (delivered, for

the record, by the Smothers Brothers) in favor of a worn, 25-year-old slip of paper she's carried since a summer-stock job in college: words from actor Frank Langella's 1987 address to the American Academy of Dramatic Arts. His charge, that no amount of fame, advice, or money will ever matter as much as the burning passion that wakes you in the middle of the night and forces you out of bed, landed beautifully. Protect that passion, ELIZABETH

reminded us, whether it's for your work, your kids, your community, or your service. **BRUCE** promptly nominated her as our official Debunking-night graduation speaker.

NEW MEMBER INDUCTION

One of the best parts of any Rotary meeting: an induction! With our membership chair in

Taiwan, **REBECCA GERALDI** stepped in to welcome our newest member, **SUNNY DYKWEL**, and

read the charge, noting that we know her to be a leader whose work and service reflect the mind and heart of our club. Sunny, ever gracious, said she felt humbled to stand among so many community icons. Welcome aboard, red badge and all.



BRUCE'S DEBUNKING

And the big one: Monday, June 29th, is **BRUCE'S DEBUNKING** celebration and the official passing of the gavel to President-Elect Charlie. (Rumor has it "**BRUCE G**" has been upgraded to "**BRUCE GPT**," so come ready to show him some GPT love.)

Tickets: <https://paloaltr Rotary Square Site/>

Address: Michael's @ Shoreline
2960 N Shoreline Blvd, Mtn. View

Time: 5:30 - 7:30

PALO ALTO ROTARY ENDOWMENT FUND

This quarter is our Palo Alto Rotary Endowment campaign, and **ART STAUFFER** gave us a reason to care about it that no pledge card ever could. At 92, he walked us through some 25 years in Rotary: reluctantly joining after settling back into Palo Alto, then finding his closest friendships through the homeless feeds at the Presbyterian Church, club painting projects (legend has it one distinguished doctor painted the sidewalk), and service trips to Guatemala and Brazil building stoves and distributing wheelchairs. To give back, ART has pledged \$1,000 for each year he's been a member and has challenged the rest of us to consider the endowment and our estate plans, too.



DANA TOM followed with the numbers: a \$25,000 challenge grant is live through June 30th, matching gifts dollar for dollar, with roughly \$5,700 claimed so far, plenty of match still up for grabs. Give online at tinyurl.com/PAR-Endowment, by check to P.O. Box 592, Palo Alto, CA 94302, or by check or credit card at any meeting. As a reminder, the endowment funds about a third of what we give to our charities each year.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

A few items to keep on your radar:

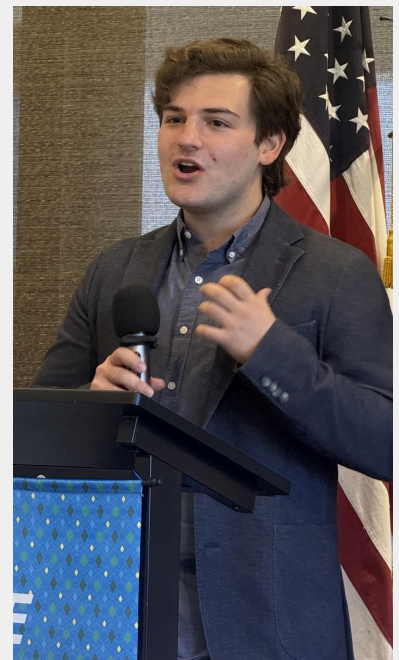
Even while we were dark last week, the club still showed up, and a great turnout placed the flags along University Avenue, in partnership with University Rotary. Thank you to everyone who pitched in.

REBECCA reminded us the fundraiser isn't over: a behind-the-scenes tour of our regional water facility (right across the street) runs a week from today for about an hour, just \$40, with 100% of proceeds going to our charities budget. Meet before the meeting; see Rebecca, Sally, Dwayne, Dana, or Bruce to grab a spot.

Mark your calendars for our last TGIF social of the season on Friday, June 19th, which will be at TIM MISNER's home in Palo Alto.
Time: 5:30 to 7:30

PROGRAM

Our program was a stunner. **BILL JOHNSON** introduced **Theo Baker**, the Stanford senior whose Stanford Daily investigation led to the resignation of university president Marc Tessier-Lavigne, and who, just days ago, released his debut book, ***How to Rule the World: An Education in Power at Stanford University***, an instant New York Times bestseller. Raised by journalists, his father is the chief White House correspondent for the New York Times, and his mother, a longtime New Yorker writer. Theo is also the youngest-ever recipient of the George Polk Award.



The title, Theo explained, isn't a metaphor: it's the name of a real, invitation-only Stanford seminar, run by a Silicon Valley CEO, where a dozen students a year are taught to "extract value" and get ahead at any cost. He described arriving at 17 as a tech-obsessed

coder who'd loved Stanford since age seven, only to find a "Stanford inside Stanford," an insider world of slush-fund parties, talent scouts circling freshmen, and venture money chasing teenagers before they've even had an idea. His reporting began with the campus "war on fun" (a bureaucracy so dense that throwing a party requires a class, an exam, and a "harm-reduction plan." It quickly escalated into the investigation that ended a presidency.

Theo was candid about the cost, legal threats arriving before he'd written a single word, opposing counsel with a roster of famous clients, and 250 interviews squeezed into a sophomore year, but just as candid about why it matters. Student journalism, and a free press generally, he said, is an important public good, and a genuinely enjoyable one. He fielded sharp questions about Silicon Valley's culture, about AI widening the gap between the anointed few and everyone else, and about whether the system still excludes the same people it always has (his answer: largely, yes). Asked about two legendary Stanford Daily editors, Phil Taubman and Felicity Barringer, he spoke warmly about the alumni network that stood by student journalists through the paper's most fraught Vietnam-era moments.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS & EVENTS

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 19 TGIF Social 5:30-7:30 pm	Home of TIM MISNER, Palo Alto Refreshments provided
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 \$100 per person

CLOSING

BRUCE thanked everyone who made the meeting hum: Charlie for the introductions, ELIZABETH for the Thought for the Day, and our steadfast Pinion editor, GINNY, who remains at the helm. He then invited members to stay for a book signing and called the meeting to a close. A genuinely memorable meeting.



MEETING VOLUNTEERS

Greeters: Bruce Swenson
Welcome Desk: Rebecca Gerald
Hybrid Host: Dana Tom
Microphone: Andres Calzada
Pinion Writer: Randa Hoffman
Pinion Editor: Ginny Lear