

Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

June 22, 2026
Writer: Eric Jensen

UNITE
FOR
GOOD

Celebrating 104 years of Service

UNITE FOR GOOD 2025-2026

The energy was palpable as every chair in the room was filled and more than 20 members joined virtually, filling the air with lively conversation and warm camaraderie — a fitting send-off for **PRESIDENT BRUCE GEE's** final meeting at the helm as he rang us in at 12:32 pm. Sharp! There were no visiting Rotarians or guests.



for youth titled "Panama Youth Olympic Inspiration" program – a program our club launched with a Rotary Club in Panama. "Every young person deserves someone who believes in them. Through Rotary we have the opportunity to be that source of encouragement – not only in our own community but around the world. The Olympic motto is 'Faster. Stronger. Higher. Together.' I can think of no better description of Rotary's work as well."

PRESIDENT BRUCE reminded us all that the closing ceremony of the Olympics is not the end – but just the beginning for these athletes.

GREMLINS and PRESIDENTS CLUB

It was at this point of the meeting, the technology gremlins started acting out for **PRESIDENT BRUCE's** final meeting as PRESIDENT. The audio stopped working for both roomers and zoomers. The always vigilant **BEN THRELKELD** jumped into action and was joined at the tech table by the ever-ready **DANA TOM**. Rotarians persevere!

PRESIDENTS CLUB

Eight club members joined Presidents Club: **REBECCA GERALDI, STEVE PLAYER,** and **ERIC JENSEN** in honor of Bruce's term as President. Well done! **BETSY BECHTEL** joined to recognize **STEVE EMSLIE's** pizza skills and for her grandson's new opportunities. Not to be outdone, **ANNE** bragged about her grandson's photo placement on a respected periodical. **GLORIA HOM** joined to highlight her attending the Rotary International Convention in Taipei. A frequent attendee, she said there was nothing conventional about the

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

ANNE CRIBBS was invited up for Thought of the Day where she proudly announced Olympic Day on Tuesday June 23, 2026.

Our club Olympian shared that being an Olympic athlete changes one's life. The lasting values learned by the Olympic athletes include perseverance, discipline, respect and being a good teammate through service to others. She shared her excitement around a recent Rotary Palo Alto global grant



international convention. It is a source of inspiration like no other – that’s why she has attended 30 of her almost 40 years as a member.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ANNE returned to the podium to announce [“Thursday Live”](#) on California Avenue coming up this Thursday. The club will have a table to share about Rotary, and she is looking for club members to host it this Thursday (and all summer long). Email ANNE if you are interested in sharing the joy of Rotary.

GINNY LEAR shared with us the **DIANA DIAMOND** and **JULIE JEROME** could use our healing thoughts. Get well soon you two!

GINNY also presented a membership vote for **KANIKA SABHARWAL** to serve as Chair of Club Operations for PRESIDENT CHARLIE’S year beginning July 1. Spoiler alert: She was approved

The Cottage”



Last weekend **REBECCA, GINNY, ERIC and Linda JENSEN, and MIKE FOGARTY** ushered at Palo Alto Players performance of [The Cottage](#). Patrons got in and out unscathed and this show is guaranteed to make you laugh. It runs through this weekend - **not to be missed!**

CHARLIE shared his update about the **Rotary International Convention** he recently attended: “Inspiring” to witness Rotarians around the world coming together for sharing and fellowship. 37,000 attendees filled a space the size of our SAP center. He even spent time with **RALPH ADAM’S** “little brother”.



He was joined by **REBECCA, GLORIA, and LINNET KWOK.**

Charlie and Rebecca celebrated finding each other among 37,000 Rotarians from around the world!



SALLY TOMLINSON invited members to fire extinguisher training with our Palo Alto Fire Department firefighters this coming Saturday. The one- or two-hour event will include Rick’s Ice Cream. Contact SALLY or REBECCA if you are interested in attending. \$50 donation suggested

PA ROTARY ENDOWMENT FUND

DANA promoted the Palo Alto Rotary Endowment fundraising drive: \$1.5 million in assets with 5% going back each year to support our charities. \$62,000 this year alone. [Give](#) early and give often to qualify for this year’s match opportunity thanks to **PATTY MCGUIGAN, BRUCE SWENSON, DUANE KALAR, KATHY TORGENSEN, & DANA TOM.**



TGIF SOCIAL June 19th, Thank you, TIM!

PRESIDENT BRUCE thanked **TIM MISNER** for hosting last Friday's TGIF social event. **TIM**, now heading up the Climate Action Committee, reminded attendees of the opportunities to improve our carbon footprint – especially if we are considering the replacement of a car. If you need another car, consider an all-electric one. Every time a member converts a combustion powered vehicle with an electric, TIM will donate to the Presidents Club. Not available in all states. Terms, conditions, and exclusions apply. Check with TIM for more information.

PROGRAM

JAKE YOO, Chair of the Program Committee, opened the program portion of the meeting by expressing heartfelt thanks to everyone on the Program Committee for their dedication in bringing outstanding content to our meetings throughout the year.



Thanks to **BETSY BECHTEL, DIANA DIAMOND, MARY ANN GEE, STANS KLEIJNEN, PAM KRUDOP, HAL MICKELSON, DARYL SAVAGE, ULLRICH SCHWERTSCHLAG, JIM SUTHERLAND, BEN THRELKELD SALLY TOMLINSON, DANA TOM**. Did we miss anyone?

Rotarians come for the talks — but they keep coming back for the friendships. Once again, the Program Committee delivered with an exceptional presenter: [Dr. Jim Bender](#), a seasoned maritime professional whose career has taken him from the deck of Oracle's America's Cup team to competitive sailing programs across the globe. A personal connection made the introduction all the more fitting — Jim and Jake's daughters sail together competitively.

Dr. Bender's work extends well beyond the racing circuit. He is also deeply committed to developing the next generation of boat builders. Twenty-five years ago, he founded the Adriatic Maritime Institute (AMI) with a powerful mission: pairing at-risk youth apprentices with "Heritage Boat Builders" — experienced elder craftsmen who pass down generations of knowledge. As their [website](#) describes it, AMI is dedicated to preserving maritime heritage by using traditional watercraft as a platform for youth development. Dr. Bender brought this work to life through photos, videos, and the kinds of stories that stay with you.



One program stands out in particular. Set on the banks of the Una River in the former Yugoslavia, it brings together two groups of children who live on opposite sides of a deep divide — Catholic youth on one bank, Muslim youth on the other. Dr. Bender gathers them on an island in the middle of the river, where Heritage Builders teach them the ancient art of boat building side by side. From that shared work, a community takes shape — and lives are changed forever. Remarkably, Dr. Bender funds this program on a budget of \$10,000 or less per year, largely through the sale of t-shirts.

Dr. Bender then turned closer to home, introducing us to the [Peninsula Youth Sailing Foundation](#). Like the Adriatic program, it serves low-income and at-risk students —



teaching them boat building skills that translate directly into careers. As Dr. Bender put it, "If a kid can wire a boat so it's waterproof and fail-proof, they can do it in a house or a business." The program builds on itself: older students teach the younger ones, and eventually all of them race the boats they've built with their own hands, developing self-confidence and resilience along the way. Earlier in the meeting, ANNE reminded us that every young person deserves someone who believes in them. **Dr. Jim Bender** is exactly that person.

CLOSING

With a smile on his face, a twinkle in his eye, and a nod to the tech gremlins,
PRESIDENT BRUCE rang us out for the last time.

MEETING VOLUNTEERS

Greeter: Bruce Swenson, Jackie Wheeler
Welcome Desk: Rebecca Gerald
Hybrid Host: Ben Threlkeld
Pinion Writer: Eric Jensen
Pinion Editor: Ginny Lear

UPCOMING PROGRAMS & EVENTS

<p>June 29 NO lunch Meeting</p> <p>President BRUCE's Debunking</p>	<p>Michaels @ Shoreline Restaurant 2960 N Shoreline Blvd, Mtn. View Time: 5:30 - 7:30</p> <p>Free Parking</p>
<p>July 4 8 a.m. & 5 p.m. Flags on University Ave</p>	<p>8 a.m. - Meet at Waverley and University Ave. 5 p.m. Meet at High St and University Ave. Questions? Contact Eric Jensen</p>
<p>July 6 12:15 - 1:30 PM Club Meeting</p>	<p>Speaker: 5th District Supervisor Margaret Abe-Koga Outreach and Engagement</p>
<p>July 13 12:15 - 1:30 PM Club Meeting</p>	<p>Club Assembly: The Palo Alto Rotary Board gives us the scoop on the coming year!</p>
<p>July 20 12:15 - 1:30 PM Club Meeting</p>	<p>Fred Gibbons, Stanford Adjunct Prof. EE Topic: AI's impact on engineering and engineering education</p>