

Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

July 6, 2026

Writer: Randa Hoffman

Create Lasting Impact

Celebrating 104 years of Service

Create Lasting Impact

Opening day arrived with a packed room and warm energy as **PRESIDENT CHARLIE WEIDANZ** rang in his very first meeting at the helm, thanking everyone for being there to kick off the new Rotary year together.

Zoomers and roomers alike were welcomed before Charlie handed things over to **President-elect ERIC JENSEN** to introduce our visitors for the day.



We were delighted to welcome visiting Rotarian TRACY HOA, joining us from the Rotary Club of Shanghai.

SALLY TOMLINSON introduced Diana Viscarra, visiting from the Upward Scholars, a program that helps adult immigrant students across San Mateo County move up the economic ladder through education and career support.



KANIKA SABHARWAL introduced her guest, Luke Farley, a familiar and



well-respected face in Palo Alto now with Commercial Business Bank of California, looking to open a branch right here in town.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

SOPHIE TSANG brought us a story about buffaloes and cows.

When a storm approaches, she explained, buffalo instinctively charge straight into it and get through as quickly as possible, while cows run from the storm and end up stuck in it even longer. The lesson, tied neatly to this year's theme: face things head-on, and you'll get through them faster.

SOPHIE'S Thought for the Day marked her last requirement toward earning her blue badge, and she reflected warmly on how welcome she has felt in the club since crashing our holiday party last year. As she put it, borrowing from Marie Kondo, if it sparks joy, it is worth keeping. Here is to a year ahead full of lasting impact.



PRESIDENTS CLUB

REBECCA GERALDI kicked things off in honor of President CHARLIE'S new role, sending him her best wishes for a fabulous year ahead.





GINNY LEAR joined in celebration of her 61st wedding anniversary, which fell on July 4th.

Past President BRUCE GEE thanked the organizing committee for an evening that was, in his words, way beyond what he expected.



YUDY DENG joined in recognition of Charlie's leadership through the Chamber of Commerce, and closed out Presidents Club with the exciting announcement that she is officially running for Palo Alto City Council.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SALLY TOMLINSON reported back on the club's recent fire extinguisher training session with the Palo Alto Fire Department at Fire Station 4.

The key takeaway: Extinguishers need to be replaced every ten years, no matter what the gauge says, since a needle in the green does not mean the unit is

still good. Take old extinguishers to your local fire station for proper recycling. She reminded everyone to use an A-B-C-rated extinguisher for general home fires, but never on a grease fire, where covering the pan with a lid is the safer move. Even after successfully putting out a small fire, and always call 911 to have the fire department come to confirm everything is truly safe.

JULY 4th, FLAGS ON UNIVERSITY AVENUE

The Fourth of July flag placement along University Avenue was a success, thanks to **CHARLIE WEIDANZ, BETSY BECHTEL, GEORGE BECHTEL, JACKIE WHEELER, GLORIA HOM,**



SIMON PENINGTON, and to **ANDRES CALZADA** for capturing it all in photos to share.

Following feedback from our recent member survey, the club tried something new this week: seven minutes of table conversation time before the program. More social time may be on the way if the feedback is positive, and time allows.

Looking ahead, the **Board Meeting** is this Wednesday at 8 a.m. [[ZOOM LINK](#)]. Next week brings one of the most popular meetings of the year:



Club Assembly, where the incoming board shares what they are working on for the year ahead.

PROGRAM

JUDY KLEINBERG introduced our club member and today's speaker:

KRISTINA LUGO, President and CEO of [Avenidas](#) which has served the community for 57 years. Founded in 1969 as the Senior Coordinating Council of Palo Alto and



rebranded in 1996. Today, a staff of more than 50, supported by over 300 volunteers, serves roughly 5,000 people through 62,000 service engagements a year across three locations: the downtown Palo Alto hub on Bryant Street, a converted fire station and police court that turns 100 next year; the Cubberley campus, home to the Chinese Community Center; and the Rose Kleiner adult day health center in Mountain View.

Kristina walked us through the breadth of Avenidas programming, from a door-to-door transportation program that has grown from a volunteer carpool into a fleet of three wheelchair-accessible minivans, to the Friendly Voices program, where roughly 100 trained volunteers place friendly calls to about 100 isolated older adults every week. She

spoke about Avenidas Village, a first-in-California membership model that connects neighbors for support and community, which the organization now hopes to expand into the South Bay, and the Rainbow Collective, a Santa Clara County-funded program that builds a sense of belonging for LGBTQ+ older adults. She also touched on the loan closet, a full slate of lifelong learning classes, health workshops, caregiver support groups, and the upcoming Annual Caregiver Conference on October 3rd.

Looking to the future, Kristina shared that Avenidas is deep in strategic planning, exploring new fee-for-service offerings including a concept called Avenidas Companions for solo agers, searching for a new Vice President of Programs, and watching closely as the Cubberley campus redevelops, which could open the door to expanded services for South Palo Alto.

During Q&A, Kristina noted that Avenidas services are open to anyone 50 and older, though most members join around age 72 to 74. She described ongoing partnerships with Stanford, including workplace wellness support and an upcoming Stanford speaker series this fall, and mentioned that a basic Avenidas membership runs just \$60 a year. She announced Avenidas' first-ever joint fundraiser with La Comida, coming up on September 24th at Mitchell Park, and encouraged anyone interested in volunteering, whether through Friendly Voices calls or activities at the Rose Kleiner Center, to reach out to the center for more information. Q&A followed.

CLOSING

President CHARLIE closed the program by noting that Kristina's entire career has been about creating lasting impact, reinventing what aging looks like, and giving Palo Alto's seniors dignity, support, and connection. Thank you, Kristina.

MEETING VOLUNTEERS

Greeter: John St. Clair III

Welcome Desk: Rebecca Gerald

Hybrid Host: Dana Tom

Pinion Writer: Randa Hoffman

Pinion Editor: Ginny Lear

UPCOMING PROGRAMS & EVENTS

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| July 8 8-9 a.m. Club Board meeting | Club Board Meeting [ZOOM LINK] |
| July 13 12:15 - 1:30 PM Club Meeting | Club Assembly: The Palo Alto Rotary Board gives us the scoop on the coming year! |
| July 20 12:15 - 1:30 PM Club Meeting | Fred Gibbons, Stanford Adjunct Prof. EE Topic: AI's impact on engineering and engineering education |